

Getting fed up

The good people are getting sick and tired of lawbreakers. A look back in our history plainly shows that when the good people get fed up they do something about **it**.

It's a pleasure to see news each day of the "good guys" having turned over another rock making some rat crawl out from under it.

As cities nationally study the efficient Phoenix Police Department and the Sun City Posse, they should notice that citizens are becoming involved. Here it has been made possible for a citizen to call Crime Stop about suspicious activities without fear of reprisal.

Let's continue to help, as complete involvement by responsible citizens will halt criminal activity.

DEWEY G. LAWS
Sun City

Posse in Sun City is 'eyes' for sheriff

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.

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."

Sun City posse is "eyes" for the sheriff



Clipped By:

tericson

Wed, Nov 17,
2021

THE SUN CITY SOCIAL SECURITY POSSE

if members have their way, the only criminal elements in town will be exhaust fumes, bad cigars and the golf course sand trap

by Dan Lee



Marvin Van Dera is captain of the world's largest sheriff's posse.



"If you were in Sun City at one in the morning, I guarantee you would be under observation."

Marvin Van Dera — in Sun City it is Captain Van Dera — and Herbert Machemer were sipping coffee at Sambo's in Sun City. Both wore Maricopa County deputy sheriff uniforms, though neither is paid by the county to enforce the law.

"I believe we're the largest sheriff's posse in the United States, and probably in the world," Van Dera said. "When we first got the posse going we had a few problems with personnel. One or two resigned because they said they didn't think they might possibly get into physical contact police work. They thought it was just some sort of social club.

"Some guys, especially from back east, like the word

'posse,' and they thought it would be great to have these credentials in your pocket to flash around at a cocktail party. It doesn't work that way, and we're very particular now about who we take in. We don't have the problems we once had."

Van Dera is a retired Navy captain who worked in naval intelligence and later for the State Department in Vietnam. He is captain of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse, which has 251 members. Machemer is his training officer. The main purpose of the posse is to reduce crime in Sun City, which has no police because it is unincorporated.

The captain had assembled his first shift of possemen

at a Sun City office building earlier in the evening. He said he prefers not to reveal just how many men he has on patrol at any given time, but there were several uniformed men in the parking lot behind the building. They wore white helmets and trained flashlights on cars as they drove in, making a log of which units arrived.

In one office of the building a dispatch station was set up, including a scanner to monitor communications from the sheriff's department. As each posse member arrived, he checked out a radio from the office and connected it into his car. There were only three first aid kits in the office because the posse has run short on funds. One man began preparing a log in which he would

record all radio communication between the dispatcher and the posse cars during the evening. Possemen attached removable sheriff's office emblems to the sides of their private cars.

An officer of the posse who was standing outside the door said, "We're looking for all types of law infringement or lawbreakers. If we see loiterers, for example, we check them out. And if we find they have no business in the area we alert the sheriff's department.

"If we see a bunch of teen-agers loitering, say, in an area where there are vacant houses, we put a car on observation. If they perform any suspicious acts the sheriff's department is notified, and our cars stay on

Sun City security

observation until a deputy arrives. He is the one who takes the necessary action to eliminate them.

"Often when our people approach, the suspicious characters will leave. Our people stay in observation and follow them until they leave Sun City.

"We have lists of cars belonging to security guards at shopping centers, or to cleaning details, et cetera, so that we don't chase the wrong person. If you were

'two former sheriffs, retired FBI, Secret Service and military'

running around here at one o'clock in the morning. I assure you you would be under observation."

The man said he didn't want his name printed. "There's an election going on, and I wouldn't want anybody to think I was trying to . . . you know . . ."

Each year the posse members elect nine lieutenants, and the lieutenants elect their captain.

Before they started their patrol the men gathered in groups and talked. Some were military straight with set lips. Others were more mellowed, with humor in their eyes. A few seemed to be unsure they belonged in uniform, and almost nervously they kept a hand half-raised, ready to give someone a fraternal pat. They were a lot like a group of young men except their qualities were more firmly etched in their faces and manner.

"We've got some physically capable fellows in our group," Van Dera said. "There are former boxers and wrestlers and so on. They're not all old and decrepit like some people might picture. We've got two former sheriffs, retired FBI men, a retired Secret Service man who worked under Truman, and about half of us are retired military."

He said the posse was started with 39 men two years ago. New members are qualified in traffic control, first aid and marksmanship. They attend lectures by qualified members of their own groups as well as from the Sheriff's Academy at Pioneer, Arizona. Some carry credentials qualifying them as second man in a patrol car, which means they are qualified to ride with a regular deputy sheriff and handle all law enforcement duties that deputy assigns them.

A member of the posse can make an arrest only if he witnesses a felony. A regular officer can act on probable cause. One man said, "If we see a man with a TV we believe belongs to a motel, we can't do anything but observe. A citizen does not have the right to interfere with other citizens. The law is slanted so much against the businessman and the homeowner that we have to be trained and very careful.

"We are always in training. If the sheriff calls up and says, 'Okay, the Japs just attacked San Francisco,' we become regular deputies subject to the same powers and limitations as regular deputies." The man said he represented those with a military background, although his career was primarily in business.

Most of the patrol cars had left on their beats when Van Dera and Macheimer left the parking lot. Van Dera demonstrated an external speaker mounted on the hood

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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

Picture on Page B-22

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 Citians 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."

Sun City Posse activated 07 Dec 1973



Clipped By:

tericson

Wed, Nov 17,
2021

Sun City making plans for own sheriff's posse

SUN CITY — A sheriff's posse is being formed to assist in event of disaster in this retirement community.

Andy Wagner, a Sun Citian who works in Sheriff Paul Blubaum's office, is directing the effort.

Applications obtained through the sheriff's office will be accepted for the first unit through Aug. 22. Applicants will be photographed, fingerprinted and given training at the sheriff's department.

Wagner said that men wanting to serve in the posse

should be in good health. Men with law enforcement experience are especially sought. He estimated that there are more than 100 retired law enforcement men in Sun City.

"But," said Wagner, "we can find a spot for most anyone in the posse or in some area of the Sun City Emergency Service."

Wagner, who retired from the New York City Police Department, said disaster situations where the posse could help would involve such events as explosions, floods and tornadoes.



Helping the Posse

The Sun City Host Lions Club presented a check to the Sun City Posse as a way of saying "Thank you" for the support the agency provides to the Sun City community. Pictured are Posse member Roberta Lambin and Shirley Gerhart from the Sun City Host Lions Club. [Submitted photo]

POSSE

Posse schedules annual open house

County supervisor to be featured speaker

By Diana Graettinger
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT
NEWSMEDIA

The Sun City Posse is 45 years old this year and will celebrate during its annual open house.

The event is scheduled 1-3 p.m. Sunday March 4 at the posse headquarters, 10861 Sunland Drive.

"This is going to be a great event," Mike Murphy, Posse commander, said. "We are looking to have a very nice day."

In addition to viewing the "nuts and bolts" of how

the Posse works, visitors will have a chance to win a large number of door prizes donated by many of Sun City's clubs, along with hearing guest speakers.

"All of the rec clubs have been great and have created quality items that they donated to us. Area businesses also have been generous with the items they have donated," Mr. Murphy said.

Clint Hickman, Maricopa County District 4 Supervisor, will be the featured speaker. He will be available to answer questions.

Representatives from the Posse's Block Watch, Vacation Watch and recruitment programs also will speak. The Posse's Color Guard

unit will open the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Posse members will be in each department to talk about what that department does for Sun City residents. Visitors will view the internal operation of the dispatch unit, the training room and see the Posse's new logo that adorns its vehicles and uniforms.

There will be plenty of fun things to view, including MC-SO's SWAT team, K-9 unit, the agency's Booking Unit and the MASH Unit, which rescues dogs, the Sun City Fire Department and representatives from Luke Air Force Base.

Editor's Note: Ms. Graettinger is Sun City Posse public information officer.

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RECRUITMENT

Posse agencies face challenges

Westbrook, Sun City West remain with MCSO

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Posse organizations in three Northwest Valley communities will face challenges in the new year.

Sun City, Sun City West and Westbrook Village in Peoria, all age-restricted communities, have Posse organizations to help keep crime down and provide other services. Westbrook and Sun City West are affiliated with



Mike Murphy



Bob Carneiro

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What are your opinions on this issue? Send responses to rbradshaw@newszap.com.

the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, but Sun City's posse split from the sheriff's office in November 2017.

Sun City's split is hoped to solve one of that group's challenges — declining numbers due to court-ordered training. But posses in Westbrook and Sun City West continue to see declining member numbers, making maintaining a strong patrol presence in the community difficult.

Posse officials are also awaiting the results of an analysis of the countywide program by an advisory group formed by Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone. The Sheriff's Penzone's Executive Advisory Committee

» See Recruitment on page 18



One of several changes residents will notice at the Sun City Posse headquarters, 10861 W. Sunland Drive, is a new sign. Part of the de-affiliation with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office was to eliminate all MCSO references. However, the Posse and MCSO will continue to work closely together. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

Recruitment

» From page 1

is in the midst of conducting a comprehensive analysis of posses associated with MCSO, according to Mark Casey, MCSO spokesman. SPEAR began its review Aug. 29 and has not set a date for completion, he added.

"We could not deliver top notch service without the commitment of our hundreds of volunteer posse members and their leaders," Mr. Penzone said at the time. "They provide expertise, services and assistance to MCSO every day. Our commitment is to provide heightened support, coordination and oversight, to ensure the highest quality of service to our community."

SPEAR, formed in January 2017, in its first assignment conducted a review of Tent City that was completed in March of 2017. Following presentations of its recommendations to the sheriff, Tent City was shut down.

There are 36 posses acting on behalf of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office that conduct a wide range of duties and services.

Mr. Penzone will make the final decision on any changes to the posse system, according to Mr. Casey.

"The analysis of the posse by SPEAR continues," Mr. Casey explained. "There is no set date for conclusion of its work and it has not yet formed specific recommendations for the full posse program, including those posses operating in the Northwest Valley."

Sun City

Getting more volunteers in uniform and on patrol in the community is the key to posse survival. Sun City Posse officials believed the best way to do that was to defaffiliate from MCSO.

Sun City officials were in the final stages of the transition from MCSO affiliation to being a standalone entity, according to Mike Murphy, Sun City Posse commander for 2018.

"We are working hard this week trying to pull it all together," he said Dec. 27. "We are building a plan to go forward."

The Posse Governing Board met Dec. 29 to finalize the year's goals. Mr. Murphy has an optimistic outlook.

"We are looking forward to the greatest Posse year ever," he said.

The new commander said getting the word out about the Sun City Posse was a high priority for the group. Leaders will also be looking to con-

SPEAR members

Grant Woods, chairman, former Arizona Attorney General.

Linda Elliott, One n Ten executive director.

Dr. Ann Hart, NAACP president.

Will Humble, University of Arizona Health Science Center Health Policy and Evaluation.

Jonathan Koppell, Arizona State University College of Public Service and Community Solutions dean and professor.

Pat McGroder, attorney, Gallagher and Kennedy.

Mary Kim Titla, UNITY executive director.

David K. Udall, attorney and founder, Udall Shumway.

Lisa Urias, Urias Communications president and CEO.

Mike Watts, Sunstate Equipment founder and executive chairman.

Jason Wong, financial consultant.

duct more events at the Posse headquarters, 10861 W. Sunland Drive.

"We are also looking at the 'emergency centers' in Sun City to see what we can do for them," Mr. Murphy said.

Posse leaders welcomed five new members who com-

pleted basic Posse training and there are another 5-6 currently in training.

"We have 12 more in the pipeline," Mr. Murphy said.

As a standalone entity, Sun City Posse is no longer required to send recruits through the 20 hours of MCSO training required by the court order handed down by District Judge G. Murray Snow. That training included "anti-biased policing" and training for activities Posse members would never be involved in, such as arrests, detaining suspects and traffic stops.

Mr. Murphy welcomed new members.

"We have a job for everyone," he said.

Sun City West

Still affiliated with MCSO, the Sun City West Posse leadership's main priority is recruiting, according to Bob Carneiro, Sun City West Posse commander.

Unlike Sun City's Posse, the Sun City West organization is still required to have its recruits and members go through the court-ordered training. That is just one factor in declining Posse members in Sun City West, according to the commander.

"People don't want to go through the training or travel to it," Mr. Carneiro

said. "It creates some measure of frustration, especially for those who are initially approved but have to wait up to six months before they can start patrol."

He added during that waiting period, some recruits find other things to do with their time.

"There are a lot of things to choose from here in Sun City West," Mr. Carneio said.

The aging process of retired residents are also a factor in declining numbers.

"We got a couple new members, but we are losing them faster than we get them," the commander said. "We're trying to work with MCSO to make the process easier."

Posse members are available as speakers to groups upon request. Mr. Carneiro said that gives Posse leadership opportunities to explain what the Posse does and its importance in the community.

Sun City West Posse officials are not looking to add programs to its services, according to Mr. Carneiro. Posse members will focus on the Vacation Watch, Block Watch and home security checks as their priorities, he added.

"This is our community, so we're going to do what we can to keep it as safe as possible." Mr. Carneiro said.

Westbrook Village

Peoria's Westbrook Village like the Sun Cities, supports its law enforcement coverage from the Peoria Police Department with its posse affiliated with MCSO.

Westbrook Village Posse Commander John Schiff's group is seeing declining numbers. "We have interviewed a lot of people, but they get turned off by the travel downtown (to deliver applications for training) and the length of time it takes to get to training," he said in a Sept. 8 interview with the Sun City Independent.

At the time, Mr. Schiff had not heard about a PORA Sun City West initiative to secure volunteer attorneys provide the training in the Northwest Valley communities.

"Anything that keeps from going downtown would help in recruitment," he said.

The PORA initiative has to gain results as the Sn court order requires training be provided by attorneys from the Maricopa County Attorney's office.

Mr. Schiff did not return phone requests by press for comments for this story.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.

POSSE



Albert's 20 years

Mary Heiser, Sun City Posse commander, right, presented Anna Albert with a certificate recognizing her 20 years of service with the all-volunteer organization. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

Wednesday,
Dec. 20, 2017

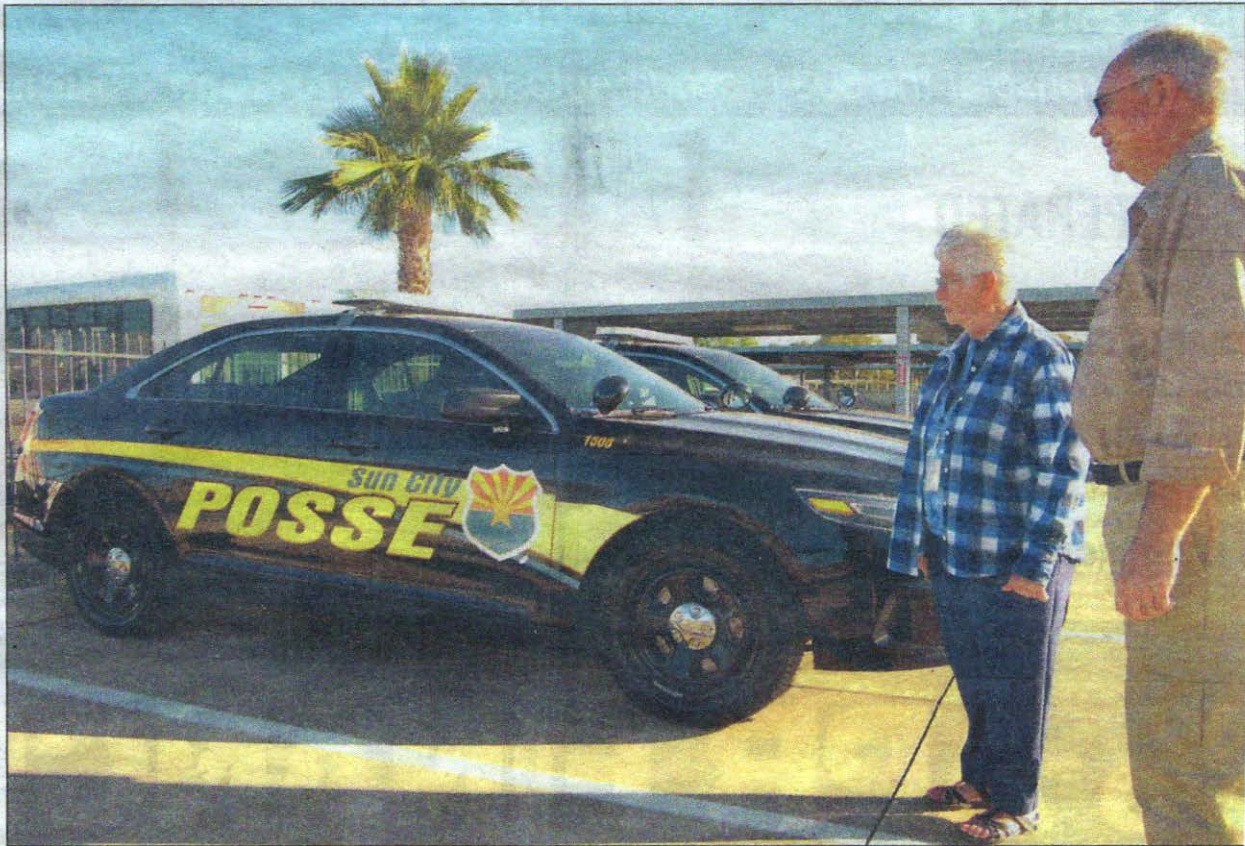
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DECALS



New look Posse

Mary Heiser, Sun City Posse commander, and Tim Lambin, Posse garage and grounds officer, look over Dec. 14 two of the three vehicles redecaled with the agency's new logo and markings. When complete, the Posse will have up to 11 vehicles remarked. Agency officials are still working on getting all members in their new uniforms and expect the car decals and uniforms to be complete by the end of the year. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

MORE CRIME

Residents concerned about Posse switch

Fear increase in crime, traffic issues

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Some Sun City residents are concerned that traffic and crime will increase after the Sun City Posse is no longer affiliated with Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

The matter was a topic of some discussion during the Oct. 18 Sun City Home Owners Association Traffic and Safety Committee meeting. Jim Powell, committee chairman, believes the de-affiliation is a mistake that could prove costly to residents.

"It is a huge step backwards," he said.

Mr. Powell is particularly concerned that the Posse will no longer have radio connectivity with MCSO and must rely on cell and other phones to communicate with

the sheriff's office.

Posse officials decided to terminate their affiliation with MCSO beginning Nov. 1 to avoid mandated training that has been a deterrent to recruiting for the all-volunteer agency. Posse members are required by court order to complete 20 hours of training covering the Fourth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The training must be repeated annually.

Additional training calls for Posse members to learn about tasks they do not even do, such as traffic stops, arrests, handcuff use and others.

The court order was the result of a racial profiling case against former MCSO Sheriff Joe Arpaio.



Jim Powell



Art Jenkins

The training is having ripple effects to other posses. Sun City resident Jim Stark has been a member of the Air Posse for many years, flying his own plane helping with mostly search and rescue efforts.

"Now they're saying we will be removed from the Air Posse if we don't take a course about the proper way to take complaints," he explained. "C'mon, how many complaints are we going to take at 10,000 feet."

He added the Air Posse was scheduled to meet this week and the first thing on the agenda was to discuss whether it should continue.

Art Jenkins, a committee member and former Posse

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Switch

» From page 3

commander, said the de-affiliation has been discussed for at least four years since his tenure as commander.

Mr. Powell wishes there was some way to work out the differences so the Sun City Posse would stay affiliated with MCSO. However, Mr. Jenkins said the training requirements were not coming from MCSO but the

court order.

Mr. Powell is concerned because MCSO does not have a traffic division designated for the Sun Cities. He believes having marked cars that looked like MCSO vehicles served as a deterrent.

"Sun City is 13-14 square miles with 35,000-40,000 people," he said. "The fact that we don't have a (MCSO) traffic division is a shame."

Posse members also can no longer assist with traffic con-

trol in the community unless they complete intermediate training, above and beyond the required court ordered civil rights training.

Carol Lawry, Recreation Centers of Sun City board member, said that is costing RCSC money.

"Now we have to have two police officers at our Sun Bowl shows for traffic control," she explained.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.

SC Independent May 10, 2017
of Sheriff Posse

PROJECT



Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Capt. Paul Chagolla reassures Sun City Posse members that Sheriff Paul Penzone supports the Valley's various posse organizations. [Independent Newsmedia/Rusty Bradshaw]

Sun City Posse not disbanding

Agency will continue community activities

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Sun City Posse is not going away any time soon.

Posse Commander Mary Heiser addressed during the group's regular business meeting May 2 rumors of the group disbanding. She said the rumors were completely false.

"We are not disbanding," she said. "That is totally a rumor and people need to stop spreading it."

The Posse conducts patrols of the community, serving as the eyes and ears for Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. The Posse conducts a number of other community service efforts, including Vacation Watch, Funeral Watch, Block Watch, assisting MCSO with traffic control at accident and other incident scenes, traffic control at other community events and others.

MCSO officials remain supportive of the all-volunteer Posse, and believe it is pivotal to the county law enforcement agency's mission.

"The sheriff has said repeatedly, publicly and in the

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Posse

» From page 2

pages of the Independent that the posses are a valuable asset and integral to MCSO's efforts to be engaged with the community and to keep it safe," Mark Casey, MCSO public information director, stated in an email. "He remains committed to working with Posse leadership to-

ward those goals."

He called rumors of Sun City Posse disbandment completely inaccurate.

Capt. Paul Chagolla, MCSO District 3 commander, echoed that statement while thanking Posse members May 2 for their efforts.

"I have one of the largest districts, and what we do would not be possible without the Posse," he said.

He added Mr. Penzone is supportive of the posses.

"He needs them and wants them," Mr. Chagolla said.

Mr. Penzone was elected sheriff in the November 2016 election, unseating Joe Arpaio, who held the office for more than 20 years. MCSO is under a lot of scrutiny, Mr. Chagolla said.

"We cannot sacrifice standards, including court or-

ders," he said, referring also to the posses.

A court order from District Judge G. Murray Snow related to the racial profiling case requires posse members to undergo the same training as sworn deputies. That and other requirements in the order have hurt recruiting for the Sun City Posse because some former and prospective members did not believe

it necessary to receive full deputy training when some elements of deputy work, including traffic stops and arrests, are not part of the posse's scope of activity.

Mr. Chagolla said he knows first-hand the value of the Sun City Posse.

"My first experience with MCSO was a Posse member," Mr. Chagolla, who grew up in Peoria, said. "When I was

young, before I was even interested in law enforcement I was at the Sun City lake and was told I should not be there."

He added District 3 would need six more full-time deputies to handle the volume of calls handled by the Posse

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com. Continue the discussion at www.yourwestvalley.com.

POSSE

Sun City Posse moving toward transition

Agency will retain its name

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sun City Posse officials continue their work to transition to an organization with no affiliation with Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

They met with MCSO officials Oct. 6 to work out details of the transition. Mary Heiser, Sun City Posse commander, said the meeting went well

and they are looking forward to getting back to their roots.

While there are some changes to be made, one thing will remain the same — the organization will retain the name Sun City Posse.

"Our meeting with MCSO went very well," Ms. Heiser said. "Even the name was accepted (The Sun City Posse, Inc.)."

MCSO officials were in-



Mary Heiser

terested in making sure that references to MCSO and "Sheriff" were removed from vehicles and the Posse headquarters building, she added.

Matt Giordano, MCSO chief of enforcement, said the agency is able to retain its name because it was the name prior to affiliation with MCSO and the county sheriff's office is not part of the name.

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Posse

>> From page 4

The Posse vehicles and uniforms will have a different look and all references to MCSO will be removed from all Posse property. The transition is expected to be complete by Wednesday, Nov. 1.

Mr. Giordano said MCSO officials anticipate a continued good relationship with the Posse.

"It will continue to be an amicable relationship," he said. "There will be some bumps along the road, but we can work those out."

He added MCSO officials believe the Sun City Posse is a professional organization.

"They are very prepared for this change and they are very organized in their everyday activities," he said.

Mr. Giordano said the Posse's switch could be beneficial to growing the agency's

membership.

"We are hopeful this will allow more community members to get involved," he said. "Any time we have extra eyes and ears in the community, it is a good thing."

While the Posse will continue to use the headquarters, vehicles and equipment in their possession, there will be some changes in operation.

"The Sun City Posse will no longer have connectivity to our radio system after Oct. 31," Mr. Giordano said.

However, Posse members will still be able to contact MCSO by phone.

While the Posse currently has no members that are qualified armed posse, there have been QAP members in the past. Mr. Giordano said Sun City Posse officials will have to decide, once they are no longer MCSO affiliated, whether they want members to be QAP.

"If so, they would have to conform to all applicable State laws," he said.

Qualified armed posse members are trained by MCSO and are required to qualify annually when carrying a weapon, according to Mr. Giordano. However, they are not granted any special authority to carry weapons outside of when they are working under the direction of a sworn MCSO official, he added.

So far, Sun City Posse officials' decision to not be affiliated with MCSO is an isolated case. Mr. Giordano said there are 36 different posses in MCSO and each has different functions.

"What might work in Sun City might not work for the others," he said.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.

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POSSE



Mary Heiser, Sun City Posse commander, right, presents Tom Jordan with a certificate as winner of the summer vacation watch contest for performing 715 extra patrols. Vacation watch is one of several community service program offered by the all-volunteer organization. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

Sun City Posse to cut MCSO ties

Organization plans to continue same level of service

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Sun City Posse is going back to its roots.

Posse officials sent a letter to Maricopa County Sheriff's Office leaders informing them the all-volunteer Sun City agency wants

to end its affiliation with the county sheriff's posse program. The Sun City organization leaders plan to continue offering the same services it has for years, but as a separate entity.

The affiliation is targeted to end Tuesday, Oct. 31.

"There is no bad blood between us and MCSO and this is not about the new sheriff," said Roberta Lambin, Posse executive officer. "We just want to get back to our roots, which is providing service to our residents."

MELENDREZ CASE

The American Civil Liberties Union with Manuel de Jesus Ortega Melendrez filed a lawsuit in 2007 claiming Maricopa County Sheriff's Office engaged in racial profiling of Latinos during traffic stops made during crime suppression operations/saturation patrols.

They also claimed MCSO unreasonably prolonged the traffic stops of Latinos to determine whether they were lawfully present in the United States.

After extensive discovery from 2007 to 2012 and a bench trial in the summer of 2012, the Federal Court ruled against MCSO. That led to U.S. District Court Judge G. Murray Snow's order outlining restrictions and requirements of MCSO to make sure the agency did not violate people's Fourth (unreasonable seizure) and 14th (unequal treatment) Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution.

Dropping the affiliation means the group will have new uniforms and their vehicle will no longer match

MCSO's. But little else will change — except the court ordered training that has

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SC Independent October 11, 2017
VF SC Sheriff's Posse

Jumphed

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been an anchor to recruitment for the past four years.

"Everyone knows it has been difficult for us because of the court order," Ms. Lambin said. "We lose people normally because of age and illness. This has made it hard to recruit new members."

Sun City Posse and MCSO officials met Oct. 6 to discuss the transition. Results of that meeting were not available at press time.

"We are hoping for a smooth transition," said Tim Lambin, Posse board member.

Sun City Posse officials expect to continue a strong working relationship with MCSO, according to Danny Moore, Posse operations officer.

Led by resident Andy Wagner, who worked in Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Blubaum's office, the Posse started in 1973 as a group to assist in the event of a disaster in the community. Resident Paul Morrill was chosen to lead the civil defense-type agency. The group was elevated to posse status by Maricopa County Sheriff Jerry Hill in 1976.

"It was just a bunch of guys patrolling with CB radios," Ms. Lambin said.

Over the years after coming under the MCSO posse program umbrella, the Sun City Posse grew to a peak of 290 members in the late-1970s. Those totals slowly began to drop due to attrition. However, the sharpest decline in members came after District Judge G. Murray Snow's Oct. 2, 2013 court order relating to the 2007 Melendrez racial profiling case against MCSO.

Ms. Lambin said during her 2014 term as commander, there were 132 members manning various patrol shifts in the community. However, there are now less than 50 members available for patrol and less than 100 total Posse members, ac-

ording to Mr. Moore.

Mr. Lambin said dropping the MCSO affiliation will allow the Posse to have more flexibility in recruiting members, and Posse leaders hope that will bring more prospective candidates to volunteer.

"We will continue to have background checks and the Posse will maintain its by-laws, rules and regulations," Ms. Heiser said.

However, recruits will not be required to be vetted by MCSO, which is a long-drawn out process, according to Ms. Lambin.

"Now we hand a recruit and application and it is 29 pages long," Ms. Lambin said. "The required training is also difficult for people because of the travel required and because the training includes a lot of things we don't even do."

Dropping the MCSO affiliation will mean starting over for the Sun City Posse.

"We are talking about survival," Mr. Lambin said. "We will be rebuilding, but we are confident we can do that. We think we can do a better job."

Ms. Haiser said the changeover is already in progress. Sheriff's decals

will be stripped from the existing fleet of vehicles and replaced with new ones reflecting the organization's new look. Uniforms will also be changed.

"We own everything, so we don't have to turn anything back to MCSO," Mr. Lambin said.

He added all existing Posse programs — vacation watch, funeral watch, Block Watch and others — will remain in place after Oct. 31. The only task the agency will drop is traffic control at accidents and other law enforcement situations.

"That doesn't really change much because we haven't done that in a while because we have very few trained to do it," Ms. Lambin said. "But we will still do things MCSO does not do."

Sun City Posse officials believe their decision will be watched closely by other posses in age-restricted communities.

"Service by posses in age-restricted communities is limited," Mr. Lambin said. "I expect they will be watching us closely."

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.



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MSgt Ron Cummins, left, and Lt. Micheal Murphy work closely together on the maintenance and upkeep of the Sun City Posse's building and grounds, and they take their jobs seriously. [Submitted photo/Diana Graettinger]

Keeping the place in shape

Posse pair teams for maintenance

By Diana Graettinger
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT
NEWSMEDIA

A pair of Posse members work diligently to keep the organization's headquarters, 10861 Sunland Drive, maintained and functioning.

Together, Lt. Micheal Murphy and MSgt. Ron Cummins have nearly 20 years experience ensuring that the Sun City Posse administrative building and its grounds are a showcase for the public. They take pride in what they do, ranging from changing a light bulb to making sure the building's air conditioning system is maintained, to taking care of the

facilities extensive outdoor landscaping.

Posse headquarters comprises a 13,000-square-foot building that sits on five acres of land in the heart of the community.

In addition to the administrative building, there is a nearly 3,000-square-foot garage and three parking lots, including a covered parking area behind the building.

Mr. Murphy, formerly of Rochester, New York, has been a Posse member for the past three years. Mr. Cummins, formerly of Lincoln, Nebraska, is a 14-year Posse member.

"He is my right-hand-man," Mr. Murphy said of Mr. Cummins, who handles the landscaping chores. "He knows everything because he has been here and has

done it."

Mr. Cummins used to own his own landscaping business. For 10 years he was the building and grounds manager at the Posse.

"My age was getting to me," he said, explaining why he retired.

In addition to overseeing the day-to-day operations of the building and its grounds, they also handle safety issues, oversee building codes, manage the building's janitorial service, supervise repairs and are responsible for signage, among other duties.

They have also work with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office to have minimum security prisoners do some of the ground maintenance work at no cost. Most recently, women prisoners spent time at Posse headquarters.

"We had the women inmates come out twice to pull weeds and trim bushes," Mr. Murphy said. "We didn't have any trouble with them at all."

The men work about 50-90 hours per month, and it is all volunteer.

"Right now we are doing a lot of major things," Mr. Murphy said. "We have yearly maintenance, we installed a cardiac defibrillator. We are working on the air conditioners."

Their teamwork even includes setting up for a recent ice cream social at the Posse building.

Both Mr. Murphy and Mr. Cummins hope more people will join the all-volunteer organization that is funded through donations and not tax dollars.

Mr. Cummins, who is not a golfer, said he had never prepared for life after working. So when he saw an ad for the Posse, he decided to join.

"It is fun, it keeps you busy, it keeps your mind active," Mr. Murphy said, referring to Posse work.

Residents do not have to be a patrol officer to be a member.

"There is a job here for everyone at the Posse," Mr. Murphy added. "We can always find something for them to do that they'll be happy with."

Mr. Cummins agreed.

"And you don't have to work at it day and night," he said of the volunteer schedule.

Editor's Note: Ms. Graettinger handles publicity for the Sun City Posse.

NEIGHBORHOODS

Posse Block Watch program needs help

Coordinators want to update program

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Coordinators of the Sun City Posse's Block Watch program want to update program information and they are seeking input from participants.

Residents currently serving as a captain or co-captain of a Block Watch that established their group before January 2017 are asked to contact Jean Schmidt or Toni Ashby. Residents can make contact in person at Posse headquarters, 10862 Sunland Drive, or call 623-972-2555, extension 132 or 133. If neither coordinator is available at the time of the visit or call, residents are asked to leave a message with their name, address and

telephone number to allow re-contact.

The Posse Block Watch office is open 10 a.m.-noon Tuesdays. However, Ms. Ashby and Ms. Schmidt are flexible with hours if appointments are made.

"We want to meet with you all," Ms. Ashby said.

In addition to updating Block Watch records, the program coordinators want to update captains and co-captains about the program.

"Your input is very important," Ms. Schmidt said.

Block Watch was designed to have neighbors watching out for each other. Participants work with law enforcement, including the Posse, to help reduce crime and improve the quality of their neighborhoods. However, the program does not encourage residents to take an ac-

tive part in law enforcement and act as vigilante groups.

Block Watch participation includes becoming acquainted with neighbors, working together to identify and solve problems in the community, helping law enforcement by being aware of and reporting any unusual activities as they occur.

Residents know best what is "normal" in their own neighborhoods, therefore the best observers, according to the Block Watch concept.

Residents who do not have a Block Watch in their neighborhood are encouraged to start one, according to Ms. Ashby.

Call 623-972-2555.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com. Continue the discussion at www.yourwestvalley.com.

SAFETY

New members lead Block Watch

Ashby, Schmitt send message to criminals

By Diana Graettinger
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT
NEWSMEDIA

There is a new dynamic duo in the community and they have a message for burglars and thieves — do not mess with the people of Sun City.

MSgts Toni Ashby and Jean Schmitt are the new heads of the Sun City Posse Block Watch program. They hit the ground running attending meetings, talking with new Block Watch organizers and spreading the word about this valuable safety program.

The purpose of Block Watch is for neighbors to get together to exchange names, phone numbers and the names of close relatives or friends who may have a key for a neighbor's house. Once a program is set up, all a neighbor has to do is watch. Each home is presented with a blue and white sign that alerts bad guys that the house is part of a Block Watch program.

The two ladies have not always been in charge of the Block Watch program. In January they were dispatchers; earlier this year they were promoted to Master Sergeants and put in charge of the Block Watch program. They did on-the-job training with former Block Watch or-

» See Watch on page 3



MSgts Toni Ashby, right, and Jean Schmitt of the Sun City Posse display some of the new signs available from the posse's Block Watch Program. [Submitted photo/Diana Graettinger]

Watch

» From page 2

ganizer Laraine Schweig. Soon the job was theirs.

Ms. Schmitt said they meet with the public at fairs, at Sun City and SCHOA activities, and during the Posse's open house, where they talk about Block Watch. Interested people are invited to the Posse headquarters and given a captain's folder that explains the program. The individuals return to their neighborhoods and invite others to join. Both Ms. Ashby and Ms. Schmitt attend the first meeting, and they travel all over.

"We have met them here in our conference room, we have gone to peoples' houses, we have attended barbecues and we have gone to restaurants and talked about the program," Ms. Schmitt said.

It is all free.

It is another one of the public services provided by the Sun City Posse, which also is an all-volunteer program supported by the generous donations of people in Sun City and not taxpayer dollars.

Another way people learn about the program is they

see the signs in neighborhoods that already have the program and call the Posse to learn more.

A new program offered by Block Watch this year is a sign that pet owners can put in their windows. In the event of an emergency, it alerts the police and fire department that a pet is inside, whether it is a dog, cat or an iguana. The sign was created by Posse Secretary Annie Larson.

"She did a great job and she deserves the credit," Ms. Ashby said.

There also is a metal sign that costs \$20, and is placed on utility poles by Posse members. Several area neighbors have donated the money for the signs for their neighborhoods. Recently, Dawn Lake residents joined the program.

"You go around Dawn Lake and they have 36 metal signs on all of the poles," Ms. Schmitt said.

The women are enthusiastic about what they do and they also are huge supporters of the Posse. They hope more people will join the Posse and become part of the organization. They also encourage people to call the Posse at 623-972-

2555 to get more information about Block Watch. They have office hours 10 a.m.-noon Tuesdays at Posse headquarters, 10862 W. Sunland Drive.

"We are not real strict about that, we spend a lot of hours here," Ms. Schmitt said.

Ms. ASshby said they are easy to contact.

"We are very, very flexible," she said.

Editor's Note: Ms. Graettinger is Sun City Posse public information officer.

OPEN MEETINGS

SUN CITY FIRE DISTRICT BOARD

OF DIRECTORS meets 9:30 a.m. Tuesday, June 20 at 18602 N. 99th Ave. Visit www.suncityfire.com or call 623-974-2321.

YOUNGTOWN COUNCIL meets 7 p.m. Thursday, June 15 at 12030 Clubhouse Square. Visit www.youngtownaz.org or call 623-933-8286.

RCSC ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

meets 1 p.m. Wednesday, June 21 in upper level board room at Lakeview Recreation Center, 10626 W. Thunderbird Blvd. Call 623-561-4600.

RCSC CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS COMMITTEE

meets 10 a.m. Wednesday, June 14 in upper level board room at Lakeview Recreation Center, 10626 W. Thunderbird Blvd. Call 623-561-4600.

Editor's Note: Meetings are subject to change without notice by the governing entity.

SERVICE

Familiar faces on the streets

Longest serving female Posse members keep watch

By Diana Graettinger
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT
NEWSMEDIA

Add their birth years together and they have spent more than 150 years on earth, which is important.

But more importantly, they have donated more than 30 of those years to patrolling the streets of Sun City, among other duties.

Anna Albert, 76, and Sopa Goff, 75, are patrol officers with the Sun City Posse. Together they are the longest serving women patrol officers of the Posse.

Ms. Albert has been with the posse for the past 20 years, while Ms. Goff has been a member for near-

ly 14 years. Between them they have logged thousands of hours of volunteer service. Last year, Goff contributed 640 volunteer hours to the posse. While Albert has donated upwards of 400 hours per year, before she broke her hip. But the broken hip did not deter her — once healed she was back at work.

The two women, like their fellow patrol officers, are the eyes and ears of Sun City. Their duties include everything from checking the homes of residents who are away on vacation, or just being a winter visitor, to assisting the Sun City Fire and Maricopa County Sheriff's departments in the event of an emergency.

They both are familiar faces. Ms. Goff often can be seen resourcefully directing traffic at Sun Bowl events on Sunday nights.

Ms. Albert is original-

ly from upstate New York, while Ms. Goff is from Thailand, giving the Posse an international flavor.

They agreed that they give generously of their time because they like what they do.

"I like the Posse, it is like a second family," Ms. Albert said.

Ms. Goff agreed.

"I like to help people and be with people who have a similar interest," she said of the Posse.

Neither woman plans to retire anytime soon. Asked if they might reach the 100-year-mark and still be patrolling the streets, they both chuckled.

What they like about their volunteer work is how appreciative the people of Sun City are.

"If people need help, we can help them," Ms. Goff said.

Asked why people should join the posse, Ms. Albert



Sun City Posse Commander Mary Heiser, center, congratulated Anna Albert, left, and Sopa Goff who together have donated more than 30 years to patrolling the streets of Sun City. They are the two longest serving women patrol officers at the Posse. [Submitted photo/Diana Graettinger]

said it was a great way to meet people. Ms. Goff agreed. She said that people come from all walks of life and that is what has made being a member of the Posse so interesting.

Posse Commander Mary

Heiser praised the two women.

"The Posse works because of people like them. They are dedicated and they are generous with their time. We are a stronger organization because of volunteers like Anna

and Sopa," she added.

The Posse is an all-volunteer organization that is supported through donation from Sun City residents, not tax dollars.

Editor's Note: Ms. Graettinger is Sun City Posse public information officer.

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SUN CITY INDEPENDENT

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Going back to their roots

Posse transition not flawless but moving forward

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

With two weeks under their belts as an unaffiliated entity, Sun City Posse leaders continue the transition.

The Posse terminated its affiliation with Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Oct. 31. The move, which has been discussed for up to four years, came from planning by the group's Long Range Planning Committee. Being unaffiliated gives the Posse more flexibility and allows its members and recruits to avoid the increased training mandated by District Judge G. Murray Snow relating to the Melendrez racial profiling case against former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

While the transition has not been flawless, the Posse is moving forward and con-

IF YOU GO:

What: Sun City Posse membership meeting

When: 9 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5

Where: Posse headquarters, 10861 W. Sunland Drive

ducting business as usual as much as possible.

"This is transition," said Danny Moore, Posse treasurer. "It has been a lot of work to get where we are."

He added Posse members could have shut down operations for a month or two while getting everything in place.

"But we wanted to continue our service to the community without interruption," Mr. Moore said.

A visit to the Posse headquarters, 10861 W. Sunland Drive, will reveal all references to Maricopa County Sheriff's Office are removed, including on uniforms and vehicles. Visitors will also notice a mixture of uniform types and with the vehicles.

» See Transition on page 18.



Roberta Lambin, left, Sun City Posse executive officer, presented Vicki Foelsch with a certificate recognizing her 10 years with the organization. Ms. Lambin is wearing the new style Posse uniform. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

Transition

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Instead of the tan shirts and brown pants that matched MCSO uniforms, some Posse members are in the new uniforms — black pants and blue/gray polo shirts with a new Posse logo on the left breast. However, not all the new uniforms were in by last week and some members were still wearing the old-style uniforms with MCSO insignia and badge removed.

The Posse is also down to six vehicles for patrol as the other eight were being re-decaled, according to Mr. Moore.

However, the Posse may already be seeing the fruits of deaffiliation where recruitment is concerned.

“We have six new recruits and two more prospects,” Mr. Moore said.

While the Posse ended its affiliation with MCSO, they will continue to work closely with the sheriff’s office.

The break from MCSO appears to have not affected the Posse’s ability to gain financial support from the community. The organization’s annual fundraiser started in October and is seeing consistent

results so far.

“We sent out 27,000 letters,” said Carol Perko, Posse fundraising coordinator. “We are starting to get some back, about 500 per day.”

Roberta Lambin, Posse executive officer, said the reaction from residents in those letters has been nearly all positive.

“We have had a few take some jabs at us, but the vast majority have been positive,” she said.

New leadership

The Posse is also gearing up for its annual election of new governing board members and commander.

Nominations were announced at the Posse’s Nov. 7 regular meeting. Sergio Laurente and Mike Murphy are candidates for the commander position. Those seeking to fill seven seats on the board are Toni Ashby, Vicki Foelsch, Roberta Lambin, Fred McMeekin, Danny Moore, Richard Nonini, Gene Papineau, Jean Schmidt and John Soltis.

The positions will be filled during the election at the next Posse membership meeting 9 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 5 at Posse headquarters, according to Dave Miller, Posse Nominating Committee chairman.

MELENDREZ CASE

The American Civil Liberties Union with Manuel de Jesus Ortega Melendrez filed a lawsuit in 2007 claiming Maricopa County Sheriff’s Office engaged in racial profiling of Latinos during traffic stops made during crime suppression operations/saturation patrols. They also claimed MCSO unreasonably prolonged the traffic stops of Latinos to determine whether they were lawfully present in the United States.

After extensive discovery from 2007 to 2012 and a bench trial in the summer of 2012, the Federal Court ruled against MCSO. That led to U.S. District Court Judge G. Murray Snow’s order outlining restrictions and requirements of MCSO to make sure the agency did not violate people’s Fourth (unreasonable seizure) and 14th (unequal treatment) Amendment rights under the U.S. Constitution.

Members who cannot attend the meeting to vote can do so by absentee ballot available Saturday, Nov. 18. All absentee ballots must be returned by 5 p.m. Monday, Dec. 4, according to Mr. Miller.

Mr. Laurente, who was out-of-town on a family emergency and had a friend present his remarks at the Nov. 7 meeting, has been in the Posse seven years. His background includes 18 years as a state employee in accounting. He and his wife also ran a care center in Peoria until last year.

Mr. Laurente wants to help implement the new Posse structure and programs. He was described as a team player and generous with his time.

Coordinating the Posse’s buildings and grounds, Mr.

Murphy was a member of the Long Range Planning Committee that prepared for the deaffiliation.

“The decision to withdraw from MCSO was not easy,” he said. “But now we can get back to our roots.”

He said the Posse currently has a good team in place, but needs more members to be more effective. He related a time when members fought over who was assigned to patrols because there were so many members they only had 2-3 rides per week.

“I want us to get back to the time when rides were limited,” Mr. Murphy said.

He has a background in fire prevention.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.

REBRANDING

Posse sporting new logos

Establishment year, state flag incorporated

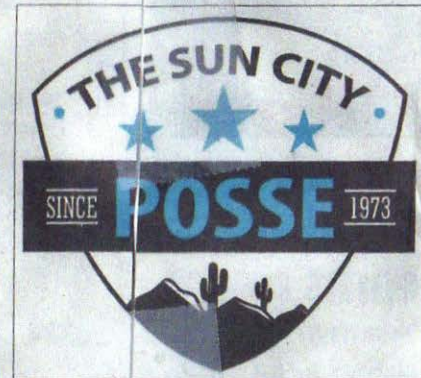
By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sun City residents will see something new with the Posse.

The all-volunteer organization had two new logos designed. They will be used on internal publications, literature shared with the community and business cards. The main logo is already in use in a newly released brochure featuring Sun City service organizations.

The main logo incorporates the Arizona flag in the design and the Posse's year of establishment, 1973. An alternate logo was also designed to be used on casual shirts worn by front desk staff and others. The casual shirts will replace the baby blue ones currently used.

The new logos were first announced in the Posse's internal newsletter, the 10-14. In addition to the service brochure, the



public will see the logos on signs directing visitors to the Posse headquarters, 10862 W. Sunland Drive. New signs will replace old black and white ones previously in use on Del Webb Boulevard and Agua Fria Drive.

"The new, more brightly colored signs, and those with the logo, will make it easier for residents to find us," the newsletter stated.

The new logos will not be used on Posse uniforms or vehicles.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com. Continue the discussion at www.yourwestvalley.com.

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BLOCK WATCH



Jean Schmitt, left, and Toni Ashby review how Block Watch works in Sun City to a small group Nov. 29. Residents are encouraged to form block watches in their neighborhoods to help deter crime. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

Keeping eyes on neighborhoods

Posse offers review of Block Watch

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Not all may be as it appears in the neighborhood.

Landscapers are busy working on a property on Dawn Lake. Three men are raking leaves, mowing grass and trimming bushes and trees. All appeared quite normal.

But all the while a truck that appears to be a landscaping company vehicle is backed into the driveway right up to the garage door and others are emptying the house of its contents.

This story of an actual event was related by Toni Ashby, Sun City Posse Block Watch co-coordinator, as she and her colleague, Jean Schmitt, gave a presentation

on the program Nov. 29 to a small group. While they had hoped for a larger crowd, it did not dampen their enthusiasm for the program they believe can help deter crime in the community.

"An active Block Watch has been proven to be a deterrent to crime," Ms. Schmitt said. "That is especially true if an entire block is participating."

She added crime seems to be on the rise, with a new victim every two seconds.

"Awareness is our best defense," she said.

The Posse has coordinated the program for years and a number of neighborhood watches remain active. But Ms. Schmitt and Ms. Ashby want to see more neighborhoods sporting the distinctive Block Watch signs in home windows and light poles.

"There is no contract and there are no fees," Ms. Schmitt said.

GET INVOLVED:

Enrollment forms: Sun City Posse headquarters, 10861 W. Sunland Drive
Call: 623-972-2555
Visit: www.suncityposse.org

Block Watch is not designed to be a neighborhood patrol with residents acting as police or vigilantes. Rather, it is designed for neighbors to get to know each other and their habits so they can recognize things that are out of place in the neighborhood, according to Ms. Ashby. Sharp-eyed neighbors in the above-mentioned incident could have helped stop the crime in its tracks had they known their neighbors' routine and habits.

"It's not being nosy, it's being watchful," Ms. Schmitt said. "Awareness is the real key to cutting down on crime."

Residents sharing their daily life information with their neighbors helps estab-

lish what is normal in a neighborhood so things out of the pattern can be spotted, Ms. Ashby said. She added the more detailed information provided to Maricopa County Sheriff's Office deputies investigating crimes gives them more opportunity to solve them. The Posse has resources that helps Block Watch participants know what information to gather in suspicious circumstances, Ms. Ashby said.

A Block Watch can be started with as few as two people and there is no maximum to the number of watch members, according to Ms. Ashby. Enrollment forms are available at the Posse headquarters, 10861 W. Sunland Drive. Call 623-972-2555 or visit www.suncityposse.org for more information.

Once enrollment forms, which list all members of

» See Block on page 7

Block

» From page 1

the watch and their contact information, are received, Ms. Schmitt and Ms. Ashby meet with the designated block captains and members. They provide basic information about the program and the Posse, and they offer tips to avoid becoming crime victims.

Residents are encouraged to never open their doors to strangers.

"Talk to them through your locked security door," Ms. Schmitt said.

Ms. Ashby said no doors



Toni Ashby demonstrates how homeowners can protect from break-ins by inserting a screw or nail into the door to match a hole drilled in the door jam. It keeps the door from being lifted out if the hinges are removed. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

should have the hinge pins on the outside, which would allow a criminal to remove them to gain access to the home. She also suggested putting screws or nails with about half their length sticking out to correspond with holes drilled into the door jams.

"That way, when the door is shut and hinge pins are removed on a locked door, the door cannot be lifted off the hinges," she said.

They encouraged residents to get a lockbox, available from the Sun City Fire and Medical Department for \$65, for their home. The box holds a spare key to the home with the fire department having the only key to the box. These devices allow emergency personnel to enter a home more quickly and with no damage.

Ms. Ashby related an incident in which the Posse conducted a welfare check at a home that had no lockbox. Emergency personnel had to break a window to gain access to the garage then had to break through a connecting door to get into the home to find the resident unconscious.

"It took 20 minutes to get to her," Ms. Ashby said. "Plus

she had all that damage to repair."

Sun City Community Assistance Network has a program that purchases lockboxes for residents who cannot afford them, according to Hugh Duncan, Sun City CAN board president.

With scams proliferating at a high rate, Ms. Schmitt urged residents to never give personal information to a caller, or someone who comes to the home, especially if the caller initiated the contact. She also said residents should not hurry through such encounters and be cautious

throughout.

"It takes two people for a scam to work — the scammer and the victim," she said. "If you don't participate, it won't work."

The Posse also offers its Vacation Watch program for residents who are away from their home for extended periods of time. They also offer the Vial of Life, which is a small vial in which health condition, medication and other information can be stored in residents' freezers. The information inside can help first responders in the event of an emergency.

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MCSO

Protecting the community

Sheriff shares MCSO changes, plans

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office officials are researching ways to improve law enforcement in the Sun Cities.

That was the overriding message from Sheriff Paul Penzone when he visited the Jan. 8 Sun City Home Owners Association annual meeting. The sheriff was the guest speaker at the event and touched on MCSO efforts in the area and those of the respective community posses.

"We are looking at our organization to find ways we can staff more effectively," Mr. Penzone said.

He added MCSO is facing shortages across the board and other difficulties. He explained the department is the same size, in terms of personnel, as it was in 2007. He also



Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone addresses the Sun City Home Owners Association board and a packed Arizona Room at the Fairway Recreation Center, 10600 W. Peoria Ave., Jan. 8 during the SCHOA annual meeting. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia]

the standard that it has been difficult to retain quality staff.

"Growth will come. But it will come at a cost," he said. "In the meantime, we have to find what it will take to ex-

fectively."

The sheriff said reliance on and support of the posses will continue.

"The posses are the best example of an extension of

zone said. "Our objective is to improve on the posse system, not eliminate it or suppress volunteers who want to help law enforcement."

Mr. Penzone's advisory

the posse system and is expected to make recommendations within the year, although a firm timeline has not been established, according to Mark Casey, MCSO

MCSO

» From page 1

spokesman. The same panel evaluated Tent City last year and recommended its closure.

"We had a total prisoner population of up to 8,000," Mr. Penzone said. "We found that the population had decreased to an extent that we could save some money by shutting down Tent City."

The one permanent structure on the site is now being used to house the existing MCSO prisoner drug rehabilitation program. Some of the funds saved from closing the tent jails was used to establish a special response team for problems in Maricopa County's other detention facilities and to purchase Tasers, according to Mr. Penzone.

In addition to the posses, MCSO officials work with residents in other ways to improve law enforcement.

"SCHOA is working with Capt. (Paul) Chagolla (MCSO District 3 commander) to determine the types of crimes in Sun City and their location so we can develop a list of needs," said Greg Eisert, SCHOA board member of Governmental Affairs Committee chairman.

Mr. Penzone also said his staff is working with District Court Judge Murray Snow's office to find reasonable modifications to take the burden of extra training that is now required off volunteer posse members who do not conduct the tasks covered by the extra training.

"We hope to get changes in the court order as soon as possible, but that will take time," the sheriff said.

The Sun City Posse de-affiliated itself from MCSO in November. But Mr. Penzone had praise for the group.

"Sun City is the crown jewel of the posses," he said. "If we could replicate it in all areas, that would be great."

The sheriff said MCSO has had about 60 percent compliance with the Snow court order in the past year, an improvement from prior to his election.

MCSO operates under a \$320 million budget, with most — about 61 percent — spent on detention, according to Mr. Penzone. He added MCSO officials returned about \$3 million to various municipalities that were housing prisoners for the sheriff's office. That helped those municipalities offset the cost of that housing. He also said MCSO needed more

deputies, and he wants to determine how much of a pay increase to MCSO personnel will be fair to all.

"Unfortunately, that means I will be coming to you (tax-payers) for more money," Mr. Penzone said.

He also believes the posses need more members to increase their effectiveness.

MCSO established a prescription drug drop-off box at the District 3 station, 13063 W. Bell Road, to supplement the twice-yearly drug take back events. In response to a resident's question, the agency also continues to focus on animal abuse cases, according to Mr. Penzone.

"The MASH unit still exists, although it needs upgraded, and detectives are assigned to these cases," he said.

He added staff is researching potential funding for upgrading the MASH unit.

"We thank you for the patience you've shown during our transition into the office," Mr. Penzone told the Sun City audience. "I hope you will continue to show patience because in the end you will have confidence in the results."

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.



Affordable High



Schweig retires

Mary Heiser, left, Sun City Posse commander, presents Lorraine Schweig her badge mounted on a plaque to commemorate her retirement from the all-volunteer organization. The Posse meets 9 a.m. the first Tuesday of each month at Posse headquarters, 10862 W. Sunland Drive. [Independent Newsmedia/Rusty Bradshaw]

POSSE

Large turnout tours Posse headquarters

Event also included county and fire representation

By Diana Graettinger

SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The 2017 Sun City Posse annual open house March 15 drew a large turnout.

The fun day has been conducted for a number of years and is a favorite of Sun City residents. In addition to viewing the inner workings of the organization, visitors had an opportunity to see just how important the Posse is to Sun City. Visitors viewed the internal operations of the dispatch unit, the training room and the various programs, like the Block Watch.

The Posse is a community-based organization that is supported by Sun City resident donations, there is no tax money involved in the operation of the group.

Posse members, who all are volunteers, were in their various departments dressed in their Class A dress uniforms during the open house. They talked about all of the things the Posse does for Sun City. Lt. Vicki Foelsch was on deck in the Operations Department. She explained she works with the patrol officers who report directly to her. She has about 55 officers under her charge.

"It keeps us busy," she said.

Master Sgt. Courtney Galura was standing watch in the Supply Department. She explained it is her job to see to the needs of each of the officers who are already Posse members or who recent-



Mary Heiser, right, Sun City Posse commander, welcomed a Sun City resident to the posse's March 5 open house. There was a large turnout for the annual event. [Submitted photo/Diana Graettinger]

ly joined the organization.

"They get everything they need from supply so they can do their jobs — they get their uniforms, their hats — everything comes from supply because it has to be specifically made for the Posse," she said.

Volunteer Sylvia Herman, who has been a Posse member for 16 years, described her role as a dispatcher. She is responsible for staying in touch with patrol officers while they are on duty and fielding not only emergency calls from the public, but all calls that come into the dispatch service.

Lt. Jackie Reyes, who was directing visitors to each of the departments, said she was pleased with the turnout and said the open house was a valuable learning tool for the public. But in addition to learning about each of the departments, visitors

had an opportunity to win some fantastic prizes. Many of the prizes were donated by members of the various Sun City clubs, including silver jewelry and paintings.

In addition to meeting Posse members, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office's K-9 unit and the SWAT team were there. The Sun City Fire and Medical Department had one of its fire trucks and a new ambulance to show off.

Although the county's new sheriff was invited, according to Mary Heiser, Posse commander, he was unable to attend.

"He was invited but he must have had some other commitment, so we are, as Uncle Sam says, putting on our own show," the commander said.

Editor's Note: Ms. Graettinger is Posse public information officer.

SHERIFF'S POSSE

A LOSING BATTLE?

Added training makes Posse recruits hesitant

By Rusty Bradshaw
and Matt Roy
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Despite support of the Sheriff's Posse system voiced by new Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone, the Sun Cities organizations face an uphill battle for increased membership — at least for a while.

The posses have faced additional training for two years, following District Court Judge G. Murray Snow's order in the wake of the Melendrez racial profiling case against former Sheriff Joe Arpaio. Part of the order requires sworn deputies and Posse members to complete 20 hours of training most of which focuses on the Fourth and 14th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution to ensure bias-free policing. In addition, this training has been offered only at the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office headquarters in downtown Phoenix.

After the initial 20 hours,

» See Posse on page 8



New Sun City Posse recruit Joe Sendelbaugh, under the supervision of Posse Commander Mary Heiser, performs a pre-patrol vehicle check as part of his local training. [Independent Newsmedia/Rusty Bradshaw]

Posse

» From page 1

deputies and Posse members must do 10 hours of reminder training annually.

"That's a lot of traveling and into heavier traffic," said Mary Heiser, Sun City Posse commander. "That is burdensome and intimidating to some people."

The additional training is scaring off some recruits, and some longtime Posse members are leaving the organization because of it. Add that to naturally dwindling numbers as members get older then die, and the posses appear to be fighting a losing battle of attrition.

While Mr. Penzone and his new administrative staff see the value in additional training, they also understand the need to find ways to help the posses cope.

"We are trying to make the posses as professional and efficient as we can and with a level of training they did not have before," said Mark Casey, MCSO public information director. "But at the same time we don't want people driven away."

Mr. Casey said MCSO officials are working to make training less difficult for Sun Cities residents by conducting it in those communities.

"We will also make them audience appropriate," he said. "But at the same time, we need to comply with the Snow order."

Posse members have three levels of training available. The 20-hour course, and its annual followups, are included in the basic level. But this year two sections of traffic control were moved from the basic level to intermediate. The latter includes training on prisoner transports, pre-booking use of force, defensive tactics and mechanical restraints, all activities the posses would not be involved in. Unfortunately, Posse members who do not participate in intermediate training would not be eligible for traffic control duties.

"People can help at the Sun Bowl in the parking lot, but not in the street," Ms. Heiser said.

The posses would still be able to secure area perime-



Sun City Posse members Jack Page, left, and Mike Murphy talk to a resident about joining the Posse during the Sun City Home Owners Association's Jan. 19 annual meeting. [Independent Newsmedia/Rusty Bradshaw]

directed traffic at accident and other incident scenes, as well as special events. Fewer Posse members able to direct traffic means that task will fall to sworn deputies, stretching personnel in District 3 more.

"We know that traffic support is important," Mr. Casey said. "We are analyzing how that change will affect traffic control."

He added the new administration is researching many aspects of MCSO operations.

"That will help us make decisions about the disposition of deputies," Mr. Casey said.

Ms. Heiser said Sun City Posse lost a number of members because of the switch of traffic training to the intermediate level. The Sun City Posse has 46 members for patrol and another 34 associates who perform non-patrol duties, according to Ms. Heiser. There are also four members who retired from the Posse but continue to help where needed and another that helps with training, she added.

"We have a number of applications in for new members," Ms. Heiser said.

But training can be a problem to increasing numbers in other ways.

"We recently had three go downtown for training, but two did not pass," Mr. Page said.

It takes about three months for recruits to clear an MCSO background check, according to Ms. Heiser. They are then fingerprinted and photographed before they get their T-number (for training). Basic training, including the bias-free 20-hour training, is completed before they get their P-number (patrol), and are then further trained in

TO GET INVOLVED:

Sun City Posse
10862 W. Sunland Drive
623-972-2555
www.suncityposse.org

The Posse requires members to have an Arizona driver's license to operate their vehicles and members must be available nine months of the year. Ms. Heiser said the Posse Governing Board will research options for policy changes that could help build and retain high membership numbers.

"Aside from all that, until we see what will happen with the new sheriff, we are doing all we can do," she said.

Sun City West Posse is facing similar challenges.

"That's where we're losing all our members," said Sun City West Posse Commander Bob Carneiro.

For new recruits and longtime sworn posse members alike, the additional training is seen as a burden, especially since it only applies enforcement duties posse members never carry out, such as traffic stops and arrests, Mr. Carneiro added.

After 21 years as a patrol sergeant in the city of Mount Vernon Police Department in New York and nearly eight years in the Posse, because he has not completed intermediate training Mr. Carneiro can no longer direct traffic when car crashes occur at Sun City West intersections.

"This is where I'm getting all my headaches now," said Mr. Carneiro. "When accidents happen, what do I do? Do I just drive by and wave?"

Of Sun City West's sworn posse members, four have completed the intermediate

ters at accidents and other incidents, according to Jack Page, Sun City Posse recruiting officer.

Mr. Casey was not certain at press time whether the decision to move traffic training up a level was an MCSO decision or one dictated by adjustments in the Snow order.

In the past Posse members

Sun City.

Posse members man booths at local expos and other events to recruit new members, according to Mr. Page. They also speak at various Sun City groups and promote the agency when they are on duty, he added.

"Our own policies hurt us a little bit, too," he said.

level training and seven have completed the MCSO Qualified Armed Posse training. The remaining 89 are in limbo until the Posse receives further clarification, said Mr. Carneiro.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com. Continue the discussion at www.yourwestvalley.com.

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SHERIFF'S POSSE

PATROLS WILL REMAIN

New sheriff wants Posse expansion

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

There will be a new sheriff in town, and he is a fan of the Posse.

Paul Penzone will take over as Maricopa County sheriff in January and he will not only keep the Sun Cities Posse organizations in place, he wants to use their success to expand the program countywide. He also envisions added roles for the Sun Cities groups.

"The Posse is a great asset for the community," Mr. Penzone said. "I am a great fan."

There was some concern in the communities that Mr. Penzone would significantly change or eliminate the posses.

"We had heard some rumors that it would change or go away," said Danny Moore, Sun City Posse commander. "But in his acceptance speech he said he

» See Posse on page 11



Sun City Posse Sgt. Dave Miller checks out a residence during a Vacation Watch patrol. Newly elected Maricopa County Sheriff Paul Penzone plans to expand the posse system countywide, using the Sun Cities groups as examples. See related story on Page 10.

Posse

» From page 1

wanted to expand them.”

Those same rumors were heard in Sun City West.

“But I found it hard to believe because the Posse is such a great asset to our community,” said Jan Vejraska, Sun City Posse public information officer. “It is a deterrent to crime having those cars out there.”

Some residents were also confident there would be no changes for the posses.

“I think Paul Penzone is smart enough to continue the various posses,” Sun City resident Janet Miller stated in an email. “I was never concerned that Mr Penzone would dismantle the sheriffs posse; I voted for him!”

Ms. Miller also feels more comfortable with the Posse under a new sheriff.

“I feel safer with him as he believes he will be more interested in enforcing the law and less in personal publicity,” she stated.

Sun City West resident Tom Bell was encouraged to hear Mr. Penzone sup-

port the Posses during his campaign.

“They are a very important part of our structure here in Sun City West,” he stated in an email. “Naturally, I expect that he will review the way they operate, and may suggest some changes to make them more effective, which would be great for us.”

He hopes Mr. Penzone makes the review a priority, and gets it done in the first few months of his tenure, to remove any nervousness for residents.

Sun City West resident Glenn Litscher, a retired California Highway Patrol officer, believes the Posse is a valuable asset to the community but not being trained or qualified to enforce traffic laws is a detriment. “The sheriffs do not enforce traffic laws in Sun City West — period,” he stated in an email.

Mr. Penzone wants the same support and enthusiasm as seen in the Sun Cities in other communities that have posses. He plans to use the experience of Sun Cities Posse members to achieve that.

“We want to tell the



Paul Penzone

stories of those who have been in it (Posse) for a long time,” he said. “We will use those as recruitment tools.”

In addition to recruitment for other posse groups, Mr. Penzone sees a need to recruit in the Sun Cities. Both groups have seen their numbers dwindle in recent years, both through attrition and due to the increased training required by Judge Murray Snow’s order in the racial profiling case against MCSO.

Mr. Moore said the Sun City Posse has 60 members for patrol and 40 associates who perform other duties. The agency used to have nearly 200 members. Sun City West Posse lost a lot of people, mostly due to the increased training, according to Ms. Vejraska. But the Sun City group seems to have rebounded faster than Sun City. Sun City West has 95 members qualified for patrol, 82 associates and 14 recruits in training.

“I don’t know why Sun City was hit so much harder than we were,” she said.

Sun City Posse officials insert an introduction and invitation to join in its annual fundraising letters and have booths at all the community craft fairs and expos.

“We have talked about having an open house that is specifically for recruiting, and that is still a possibility,” Mr. Moore said. “We also tell our members that part of their duties is recruiting new members.”

Ms. Vejraska said her group provides speakers to many groups in the community, and is emphasizing its courtesy ride program.

“That gives people a chance to see exactly what we do,” she said.

Increased training, focusing on traffic stops that is a duty not performed by the Sun Cities posses, from the Snow order has turned off some potential recruits, and Mr. Penzone believes that is unfortunate. But he also believes the additional training has its beneficial side.

“Circumstances outside of our control has held the

posses to a standard they are not used to,” he said. “We can use the training to improve our skill set.”

Familiar with the Posse duties that release sworn deputies to more important tasks, Mr. Penzone believes there is more the posses can do.

“We see a growing challenge of heroin in our communities,” he said. “We can train those (posse members) that are interested and have the talent to reach out to our youth.”

The Sun Cities posses

can be a part of that, addition to working in other duty categories unique to the specific communities. However, Mr. Penzone does not believe in putting posse members in harm’s way, such as having posse members riding with sworn deputies.

He also wants to see the posses more engaged with other law enforcement agencies.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com. Continue the discussion at www.yourwestvalley.com.

SUN CITY POSSE

Posse will have new leadership

Members to elect commander, board governors

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

The Sun City Posse will have new leadership at the beginning of the new year.

The all-volunteer agency that provides a variety of public safety services will see its

members elect a new commander in December, along with members of the board of governors. Members will make their selections for these positions during the annual election in December.

For the first time in several years, there will be more than one candidate for the commander's position. Sergio Lorente and Mary Heiser each threw their names into

the hat.

Mr. Lorente has served as the Posse treasurer. Ms. Heiser is the agency's chaplain and training officer.

"It is good to have a choice for commander," said Danny Moore, completing his second straight year in that position.

Posse members voted last year to adjust their bylaws to allow for a repeat commander when the only candidate for the 2016 post had to withdraw due to health. The change allows a commander to serve a second consecutive term if there are no commander candidates for the election.



Sergio Lorente



Joe Orlando



Mary Heiser



Mike Murphy



Warren Hoffman



Jackie Reyes

Four Posse members stepped forward to be candidates for the agency's board of governors. However, that is three short of the vacant seats on the 12-member panel, according to Dave Miller, Posse Election Committee chairman.

"The other board seats will be filled by appointment once the new board

takes office in January," he explained. "The commander and board make those appointments, and those for the lieutenants."

The Posse's Election Committee worked for more than one month to recruit candidates before the nominations were closed during the Nov. 1 monthly general membership meeting.

Posse members can get absentee ballots from members Annie Larson or Ginger Klein, or make a written request to the commander. Absentee ballot requests must be made no later than Wednesday, Nov. 16, according to Mr. Miller.

In-person balloting will be taken at the Posse's general membership meeting 9 a.m. Tuesday, Dec. 6 at Posse headquarters, 10862 W. Sunland Drive.

Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com. Continue the discussion at www.yourwestvalley.com.

TAKE BACK



Members of the Sun City Posse and the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department assist a Sun City resident who chose to participate in the Take Back Drugs Initiative Oct. 22. Residents were able to safely dispose of unwanted and unused medications. [Submitted photo/Diana Graettinger]

Posse, MCSO gather unwanted medications

Residents' drugs to be safely destroyed

By Diana Graettinger
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Sun City residents dropped off hundreds of bottles of unused drugs Oct. 22 during the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office's and Sun City Posse's "National Take-Back Initiative."

The program was also sponsored by the Arizona Drug Enforcement Agency.

In only one hour, more than five boxes of unused drugs had been collected, and by the end of the day nine boxes had been filled. The collected medicines are sealed and

then incinerated.

Too often prescription drugs are left in medicine cabinets and cupboards, but over the Take Back Initiative allowed Sun City residents to clean out unwanted and unused medicines and deposit them in a safe place. Medications in the home are a leading cause of accidental poisoning and flushing or trashed medicines can end up polluting Arizona waters.

Posse member Sarah Davis was one of the officials who donated her time to be there Saturday.

"We are taking back drugs that people want to donate, this is a community service, but it is also good for the environment," she said.

Rates of prescription drug abuse are alarmingly high, with more than half of abusing medicines gotten from a family member or friend, including the home medicine cabinet.

"It was a great day," Danny Moore, Sun City Posse commander, said. "We were very pleased with the number of unused medications we were able to collect."

Experts agree the Take-Back programs are a first choice. Law enforcement, public health and environmental professionals are united in support of Take Back programs as the safest and most responsible way to dispose of unwanted and expired medicines.

Nov



Seven new recruits and two people who rejoined the Sun City Posse were sworn in at the September general meeting conducted at the Posse's headquarters in Sun City. [Submitted photo/Sun City Posse]

Sun City Posse gets new members

By Diane Graettinger
SPECIAL TO INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

They may be new to the Sun City Posse, but they are not new to the idea that to live the "Arizona good life" it is important to give back to their community.

The Sun City Posse welcomed seven new members to its patrol team. They are Toni Ashby, Jean Schmitt, Paul Smith, Fred McMeekin, John Soltis, Rich Nonini and Stephen Miller. Two other members, who rejoined the posse, also were sworn in. They are Courtney Galura and Marge Acosta.

Although the new posse members come from a variety of states and diverse professional backgrounds, they all agreed that it was important to them to contribute to the quality of life in Sun City, also known as the "City of Volunteers."

To become a member of

the Sun City Posse, the commitment begins with training. The new members train for 160 hours, which includes everything from textbook learning to patrol car training.

Their training is under the auspices of Posse Executive Officer Mary Heiser. New members attended the September general meeting wearing their well-pressed Sheriff's brown uniforms. They raised their hands and were sworn in by Maricopa County Sheriff Office's Captain David Toporek on an oath of allegiance to the Posse and the laws of Arizona.

Ms. Ashby, most recently of Yardley, Pa., was in Sun City for about three years. Several years ago the Posse helped her family when a problem arose.

"So I just wanted to give back," she said about joining the Posse.

Ms. Schmitt, formerly of Derby, Kan., said she joined the Posse because she wanted to "pay it forward." She said it was volunteers who, many years ago, helped her 100-year-old mother who lived in Kansas and she wanted to help people now that she is retired to Sun City.

Mr. Smith, who arrived in Sun City from Wyoming, spent 21 years in the U.S. Army and 15 years in the Department of Corrections in Alaska.

He chuckled when he said he joined the Posse because he liked the uniforms.

"This is a nice safe community and I would like to keep it that way," he added more seriously.

Back a second time, Ms. Galura said she rejoined because of the wonderful sense of helping.

"It gives you a good feeling when someone looks so sad

and you do something so minor and they look so relieved. To you it wasn't anything but to them it meant the world. Everything from changing a battery in a smoke detector, to helping them jumpstart their car," she said.

Posse Commander Danny Moore said new recruits were important to the future of the agency.

"The more members we have, the more we can provide better services for the residents of Sun City," he added.

Captain Ken Booker, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office District 3 commander, also congratulated the new recruits during the September general meeting.

"You are joining a family. This is not just about community service, this is about family," he said.

Visit www.suncityposse.org.

VF SE: Sheri's Posse

SE Independent

Sept. 28, 2016

Potentially life saving service offered to Sun City residents

By Diana Greattinger
Special to the Independent

A simply designed yellow card can mean the difference between getting immediate emergency help or delays for Sun City residents.

The program that was instituted by the Sun City Posse nearly a decade ago is known as the Residence Emergency Information Card. It has been a success for the more than 40,000 area residents ever since it was first introduced.

"It is something that has been around a lot of years," Posse Cmdr. Danny Moore said.

The service is free to Sun City residents.

New homeowners receive their cards along with their welcome packet when they arrive. The card asks for the homeowners name and address, along with contact information in the event of an emergency. Mr. Moore said a lot of people list their children as their emergency contact, others list siblings or long-time friends.

Once the card is filled out, information is entered into the Posse data bank.

"This information can save valuable time and could perhaps mean the difference in saving a life," the accompanying



Submitted photo/Sun City Posse
Sun City Posse Vacation Watch associates Mary Ann Rispoli, left, and Barbara Craft review the Residence Emergency Information Card. The card is used to help expedite law and fire personnel in the event of an emergency.

information sheet states.

It has been used for everything from a broken water pipe inside a house to a med-

ical emergency involving the homeowner.

"If somebody calls us and indicates they are worried about their neighbor, we can check our database and see if there is a telephone number to call in the event of said emergency," Mr. Moore said.

He recalled an event involving a man reported wandering the streets. When questioned, he could remember his name, but not where he lived. Mr. Moore happened to be on duty that day.

"I called our dispatch and had them check the database and see if they had a phone number and address for him. They did. That homeowner had filled out the emergency contact card. We reached his wife who was relieved when she learned we had found her husband. That is a situation that ended well because we were able to make use of the contact information," Mr. Moore said.

Information provided on the cards is all confidential.

In these days of heightened concerns about privacy and stolen identities, this is one safe place. The information is not shared with anyone other than the Sun City Fire and Medical Department or the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, and that is only in the event of an emergency.

Homeowner and renters who need to fill out a card can pick one up at the Sun City Visitors Center, 16820 N. 99th Ave., or at Posse headquarters, 10861 W. Sunland Drive.

"A lot of residents have submitted their yellow cards, but others have not. We are hoping that people will read this article and realize the benefit of this program and pick one up. It can mean the difference between life and death," Mr. Moore said.

‘Ears of Sun City’ always alert

'Ears of S always

They are the ears of the Sun City Posse and they stand ready to assist in the event of an emergency, or for something as simple as notifying you of an open garage door.

Sun City Posse dispatchers are volunteers who daily operate the unit's dispatch center. The dispatch command center is located in the heart of the posse's headquarters at 10861 Sunland Drive.

Dispatchers sit at a state-of-the-art desk outfitted with a dispatch radio system that keeps them in constant contact with posse patrol cars and the county sheriff's department; telephones to keep them connected to the public and a large television screen that monitors activities in and around the headquarters.

Jackie Reyes is the Master Sergeant of scheduling and it is her job to make sure that all three shifts are covered.

In addition to her scheduling duties, Ms. Reyes also works her shift at the command center. She has been a posse dispatcher for about two years and comes to the job with experience most recently as a dispatcher for an Arizona trucking company. "There is a lot of difference," she said.

Although Ms. Reyes has experience, prior experience is not required because the posse will train volunteers.

"Many of our Sun City dispatchers

come from different backgrounds," she said.

Becoming a dispatcher is not difficult. The first requirement, you have to be a Sun City resident for at least nine months of the year. Recruits fill out an application and take classes.

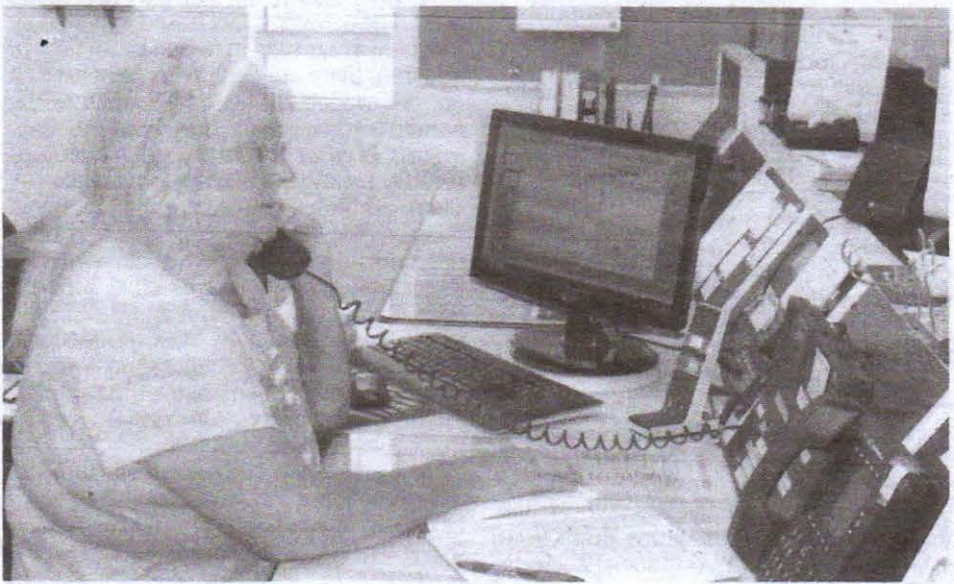
"You have to take a class called Introduction to the posse. That class is followed by one called Maps and Codes. It helps familiarize you with the area and the codes used to connect with officers. After that there are some more training sessions. And if we think you are going to make it, we'll keep you," Ms. Reyes said with a laugh.

There are three shifts per day, starting at 6:30 a.m. and ending at 9:30 p.m. A volunteer is asked to commit to one five-hour shift per week, but a number of dispatchers cover more than one shift. Some of the posse's patrol deputies volunteer for double duty also serving as dispatchers.

"Although you don't have to be a patrol officer to be a dispatcher," Ms. Reyes said. "If you don't want to patrol, you can come in as an associate and serve as a dispatcher, or answer the telephone in the reception area or do office work. Volunteers are always needed," she added.

Although the job seems daunting, Ms. Reyes said learning the codes is not complicated. Unlike the Maricopa





Jackie Reyes, a Sun City Posse dispatcher, recently assisted a Sun City resident in locating her neighbor who had not answered her cellphone in several days. Ms. Reyes was able to locate the woman at an area hospital and report that information to the concerned neighbor. This is just one of the daily problems that is handled by the Sun City Posse dispatchers.

County Sheriff's Department which has hundreds of codes, there are only about a dozen codes in Sun City. Codes cover everything from resident assist to a report of an accident.

Having local dispatchers can mean peace of mind for a caller. On one particular day last week, Ms. Reyes received a telephone call from a woman who was concerned because her neighbor was not answering her telephone. Ms. Reyes looked up the woman's name and because she had turned in a yellow emergency contact card, Ms. Reyes was able to call the woman's daughter who also was unaware that her family

member was missing. But she did not stop there. She called an area hospital and learned that the woman was a patient. Reyes then contacted the neighbor and family member and reported the whereabouts of their missing friend and family member.

Being a dispatcher can be very satisfying, Ms. Reyes said.

Asked why she volunteered, Ms. Reyes had a ready answer: "It is giving back to your community?" she said. "Being a dispatcher is fun and helpful to the public. It keeps you busy, keeps your mind going and keeps you active in the community," she added.

Although 911 is the familiar number for emergencies, that number connects to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. A call to the non-emergency number, 623-972-2555 will get you a Sun City Posse dispatcher. Ms. Reyes said that the posse has refrigerator magnets available for residents. The magnet has both the 911 number and the Posse's contact number. The magnets are available free of charge at the posse headquarters.

Posse Commander Danny Moore acknowledged the importance of the dispatch service.

"Our dispatchers serve a very important function because they are the first step in our chain-of-action to help Sun City residents," he said.



Posse provides services, need more members



very proud of your Sun City Posse!

Call the Sun City Posse at 623-972-2555.

Editor's Note: Ms. Billings is Sun City Posse information officer.

Del Webb Museum to host spring meeting

The Youngtown Public Library and Historical Museum will host the Sun Cities Area Historical Society spring meeting 1 p.m. Tuesday, March 15 at the Youngtown Clubhouse, 12030 N. Clubhouse Square.

A presentation and tour of the Youngtown Historical Museum are on the agenda. The public is welcome to attend.

Youngtown history

Gilbert and Frances Greer in 1942 purchased a long, narrow strip of land from the old "Vulture Road" (now Grand Avenue) to what is now Peoria Avenue, and they leased additional land south to Olive Avenue.

After Gilbert's 1949 death, Elmer Johns moved to Marinette, the tiny farming community east of where Youngtown came to be, to help Frances manage the ranch.

Benjamin "Big Ben" Schleifer, a Phoenix real estate developer, was eager to fulfill his long-time dream of building a community designed solely for older, retired, but active people.

Youngtown was founded Nov. 4, 1954, and became the nation's first retirement community. By 1959, the community included 700 homes and 1,400 people.

Posse fighting back against declining numbers

By Diane Billings

As Sun City transitions from the hot summer weather to cooler winter weather we, at your Sun City Posse, change gears and prepare for a whole new set of responsibilities.



Diane Billings

Our vacation watches start to dwindle down as our winter residents begin returning. We will start to focus more on traffic control at various venues. Very few requests come in to Posse headquarters during the summer months but that has suddenly changed and the traffic control board is already full to overflowing.

Your Sun City Posse has lost a number of members due to normal attrition and we have not been able to replace these people due to changes that are occurring with

Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. We are truly hopeful that, at least, some of these issues will be resolved by the beginning of 2016 and we will be able to welcome several new Posse members that have been waiting for more than a year for a chance to volunteer with us.

Please be assured that during this period your dedicated team of Posse members are doing their very best to fulfill the mission we have required of ourselves. That mission is to be the eyes and ears of the people of Sun City and, hopefully, to help deter crime.

A big "welcome back" to all of our winter residents. We shall all enjoy the cooler weather that we are blessed with here in Sun City (without the snow) as well as all of the recreational facilities, golf and entertainment that is available to us. Take advantage, be safe and enjoy it all.



Independent Newspapers/Rusty Bradshaw
Sun City Posse members are working toward the day when they can swear in new members, like this crew from a few years ago, to enhance the patrol ranks and to help with other duties.

Posses ride again

By Tina Gamez
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City, Sun City West and Westbrook Village posses returned to the road this morning.

"We're back in action," Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio said Thursday afternoon during a press conference in Sun City with Maricopa County Supervisor Clint Hickman.

Arpaio said the vehicle-insurance policy issue, which had kept posse members from patrolling, has been resolved, and he thanked Hickman for being instrumental in helping resolve the "very serious problem," giving him credit for making it happen quickly.

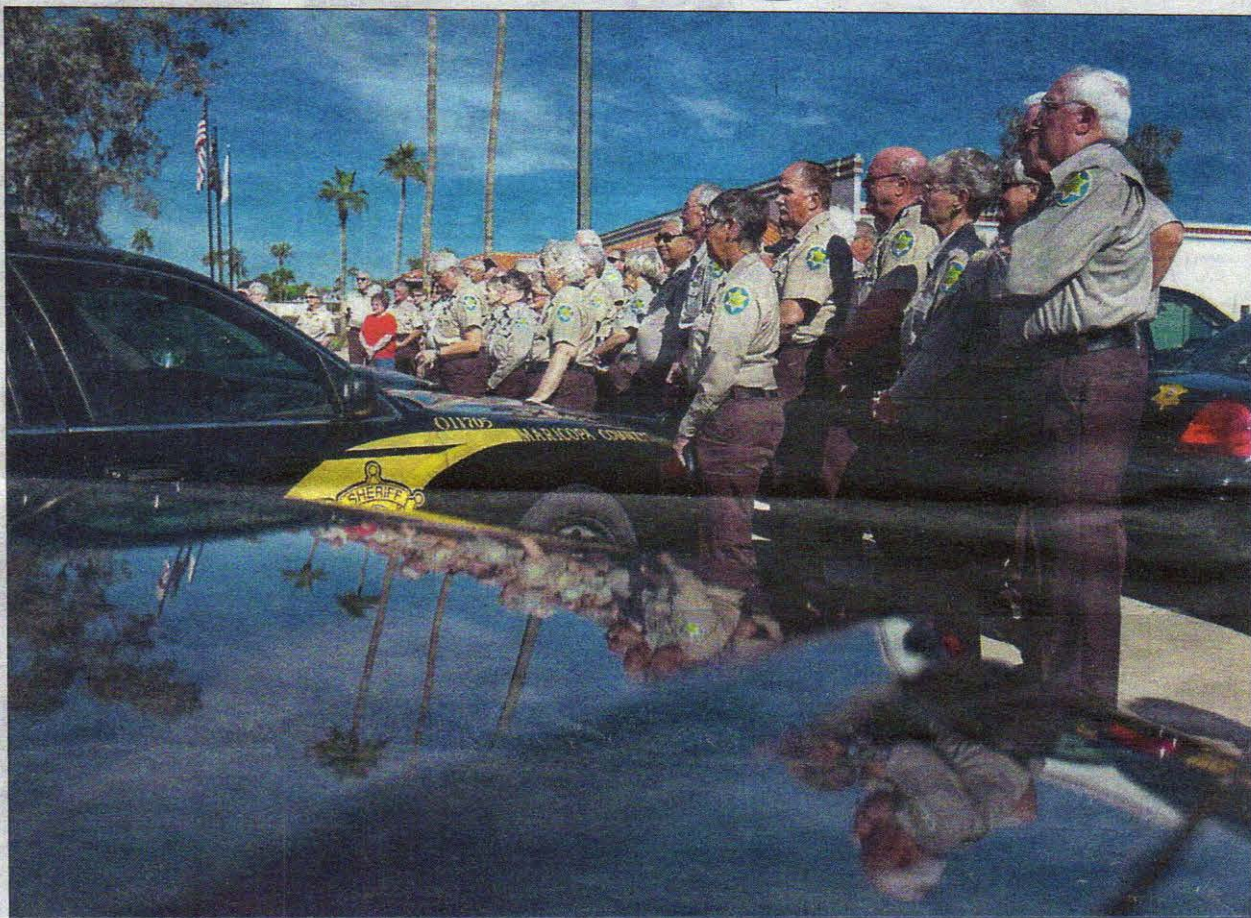
He said there was an agreement before 2012 by former Risk Management officials that said the Posse must pay for their vehicle insurance. The Sheriff's Office distributed the policy change to the Posses, but apparently no one noticed. They found out about the policy after an accident when a car was driven outside the Sun Cities area for servicing.

Hickman said "the county cars are covered as long as" they are being used in official Posse operations, adding insurance creates a "buffer on risk, and sometimes accidents do happen." Hickman also noted that everyone is at risk if they use the vehicles in an unofficial capacity.

"We didn't want to take the chance," added Arpaio, "so the Posse made a decision to park their cars" until the issue was resolved, even though the posses had been given a grace period until the end of April.

Arpaio said he couldn't blame Posse members for doing so. He also accepted responsibility for what transpired with the policy, saying it was something the sher-

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Sun City Sheriff's Posse members listen as Sheriff Joe Arpaio addresses the media and the community Thursday about putting the posse back on the streets after an insurance issue kept them from patrolling. [Nick Cote/Daily News-Sun]

Relieved Posse members see upside in brief sidelining of vehicles

By Jeff Grant
DAILY NEWS-SUN

One line.

In the end, all it took to resolve the question of insurance for Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Posse vehicles was reworking a single sentence.

In the beginning it was that one line that kept those vehicles — 115 across the Valley — off the road for five days and residents of the Sun Cities without the familiar patrols that provide services on a much broader level than MCSO's sworn deputies have the time for.

"We're back in business, and the people of Sun City are glad to have us back,"

proclaimed Jim Goodman, 80, a 15-year Posse veteran.

"We're really excited this has come to closure and get back on the road and do what we do for our residents," Sun City Posse Commander Roberta Lambin told a gathering of reporters and posse members from the Sun Cities gathered Thursday outside her agency's headquarters on Sunland Lane to hear Sheriff Joe Arpaio and Maricopa County Supervisor Clint Hickman announce a resolution to the Posse vehicle-coverage issue.

Posses are 501 © 3 organizations, nongovernmental entities whose members pur-

chase everything from their own uniforms to training. Vehicles are bought through private contributions and fundraising done by the all-volunteer agencies.

Under the most recent Posse policy, written in 2012, it was the responsibility of each Posse branch to "maintain primary insurance coverage on all such vehicles and equipment."

That line was rewritten to reflect that the vehicles would be covered through the county, "as long as they are being used in official Posse operations," said Hickman.

Left unanswered was whether the vehicles were

insured for the nearly two years since the policy was written. Arpaio said he believed the vehicles would have been covered had an incident occurred.

The vehicle coverage provision is but one line in seven-page policy — Policy GJ-27 from MCSO — that covers every aspect of Posse operations, including command structure; requirements for forming a posse; standards and application training; personal vehicle and equipment; disciplinary procedures; uniforms, badges and equipment; firearm fundraising, and more.

Lt. Brandon Jones,

» See Line on page A

Sun April 4, 2014
Daily News-Sun
Posse
Sheriff's Office

Line

» **From page A1**
spokesman for Arpaio, said MCSO should have followed up with the posses to ensure each branch was following the vehicle provision.

"We believe it was a lack of communication. It kind of went by the wayside until we got into an accident," he said, referring to the November 2013 incident involving a Posse member who was taking a vehicle to be serviced when it was in a crash.

Jones said MCSO's enforcement support division will do a better job of monitoring compliance.

"The cars belong to the Posse. They have to be checked in and checked out. They're parked in a back lot not at somebody's house. The idea of them just

being able to get in (the vehicle) in their driveway and drive it out to the golf course or whatever is very minimal," he said.

Meanwhile, Posse members believe the vehicle experience, though trying for the agency, has had a silver lining.

"If there's anything positive that came out of this it is the awareness of residents and citizens of the Sun Cities as to what the Posse does and

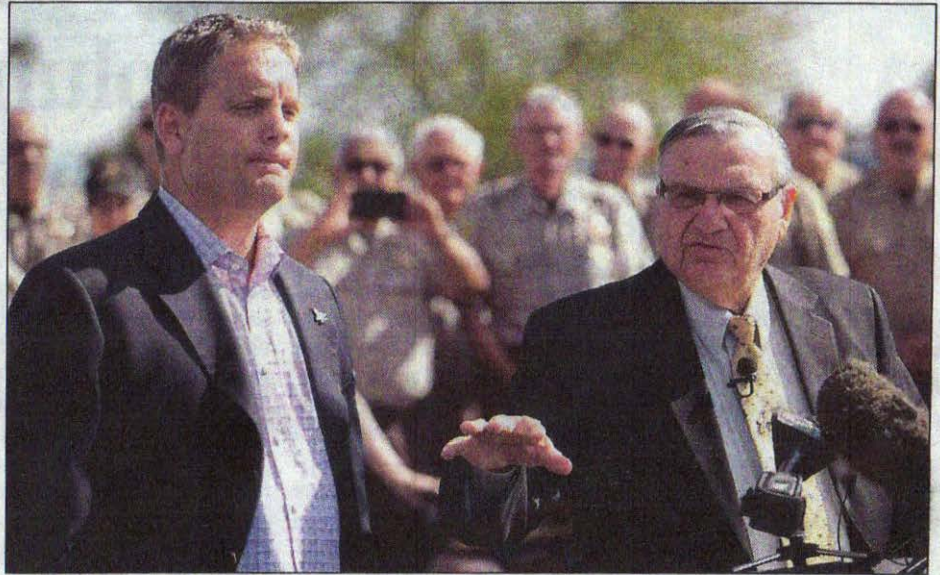
how needed it is and how needed residents are to support and even join," said Frank A. Adelman, Sun City West Posse member and former commander.

Art Jenkins, former commander of the Sun City Posse, agreed.

"This whole situation has raised the visibility of the Posse," said Jenkins, who wrote newspaper columns and spoke to numer-

"This whole situation has raised the visibility of the Posse"

Art Jenkins
former commander
Sun City Posse



Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, right, and county supervisor Clint Hickman address members of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse, the media and the community Thursday about putting the posse back on the streets after an insurance issue kept them from patrolling. [Nick Cote/Daily News-Sun]

ous groups last year while heading the agency in an effort to promote it.

"If you are concerned enough to call us, we are concerned enough to send a car and help you in any way we can. We'll jump-start your car. We'll put batter-

ies in your smoke detector. We'll check out the noise in your attic. We get to the stuff that cops don't get to. They

just don't have the time," he said.

"We believe in paying it forward," he said.

Court order requires more Posse training

By **Rusty Bradshaw**

Independent Newspapers

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office has a long list of measures to follow to comply with a federal court order, and they will likely have an impact on the Sun Cities, especially the Posse units.

MCSO personnel were in Sun City Dec. 21, as part of countywide community meetings in each MCSO patrol division, explaining the court order and the measures it will put into place. The 59-page order was signed by U.S. District Court Judge G. Murray Snow in October. The court order, available in its entirety on the MCSO website, www.mcsso.org, outlines a long list of restrictions on MCSO in performing its duties and a lengthy list of measures to ensure compliance with the order.

"While MCSO and Sheriff Arpaio have appealed the judge's decisions, we must concurrently honor and comply with the judge's orders until and unless the decisions may be altered by an appellate court at some point in the future," Capt. Bill Van Ausdal, MCSO District 3 commander, said. "This stems from an ACLU lawsuit in 2007 that claims MCSO was racial profiling Latinos."

Specifically, the lawsuit alleged MCSO personnel targeted Latinos in traffic stops, crime suppression raids and saturation pa-

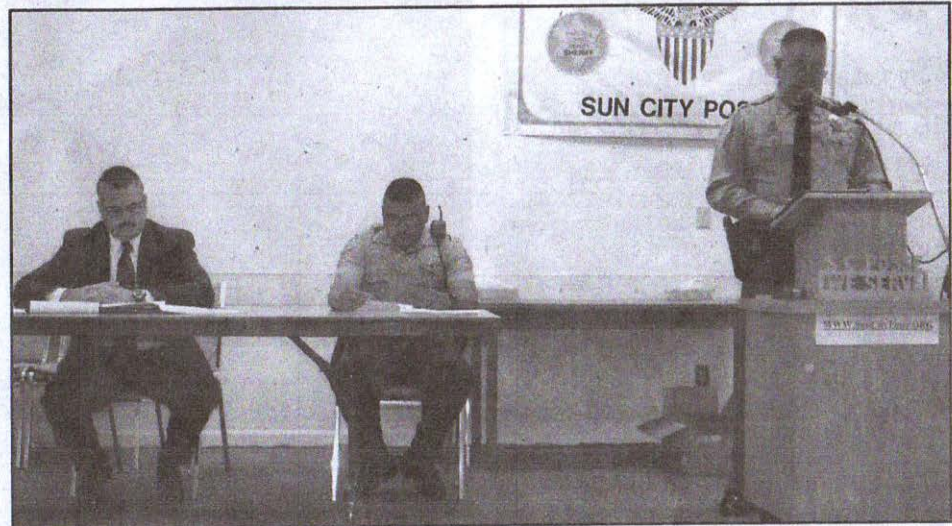
trols. It also alleged deputies deliberately prolonged traffic stops when Latinos were involved to determine if they were in the United States legally.

In addition to Sun City, meetings were conducted in Sun Lakes, Avondale, Cave

Creek, Queen Creek, Fountain Hills and Mesa.

The order includes 12 hours of compre-

See **Order** — Page 7



Independent Newspapers/Rusty Bradshaw
 Maricopa County Sheriff's Office District 3 commander Capt. Bill Van Ausdal, right, explains MCSO's measure to comply with a federal court order while Sgt. Chris Dowell and Deputy Gonzalez wait to answer questions from the sparse crowd in Sun City.

Order

Continued From Page 2

hensive and interdisciplinary training on bias-free policing within 240 days of the order's effective date and six hours annually thereafter. The order specifically states volunteer Posse members must also complete the training.

"All active Posse members will be required to attend the same 12-hour comprehensive and interdisciplinary training on bias-free policing training as deputy Sheriffs," Lt. Brandon Jones, MCSO spokesman, confirmed in an e-mail.

Sun City Posse Commander Art Jenkins is concerned that requirement could have a negative effect on the all-volunteer organization that has no authority to make traffic stops or arrests.

"I would hope that someone can make the distinction between MCSO and the Posse, because we are not the same," he said.

Mr. Jenkins believes the bias-free training for Posse would be a waste of time and contrary to the organization's mission.

"We do the good things," he said. "We don't do anything that even comes close to a racial profiling situation."

While there are specialized Posse units within the county, community organizations like those in the Sun Cities conduct traffic control at vehicle accidents, crime scenes and other community activities; provide public safety programs, such as Block Watch and RUOK; vacation watches; funeral escorts; and other non-law enforcement activities.

Al Bedenk, Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West, said he would not comment on the issue at this time because he believes the whole story is unknown.

Mr. Jenkins is concerned the training requirement could negatively effect recruiting for new members and revenue generation. The Sun Cities posses receive no funding from MCSO, relying entirely on community donations.

Fewer than 25 people attended the Dec. 21 community meeting in Sun City. Those attendees were most concerned about the financial and enforcement impact on MCSO of the order.

"When will you find time for patrol and enforcement when you are spending so much time and finances on what is essentially a political agenda?" resident Jim Stark asked.

Mr. Van Ausdal said specific personnel are assigned to specific tasks, and patrol time will not be affected. He also believes some of the measures, such as e-ticketing, will speed up traffic stops, allowing depu-

ties more time to spend on patrol and other duties.

"We don't tolerate delays at this time," Mr. Van Ausdal said. "But sometimes the radio is busy and traffic stops now can be anywhere between three and 20 minutes."

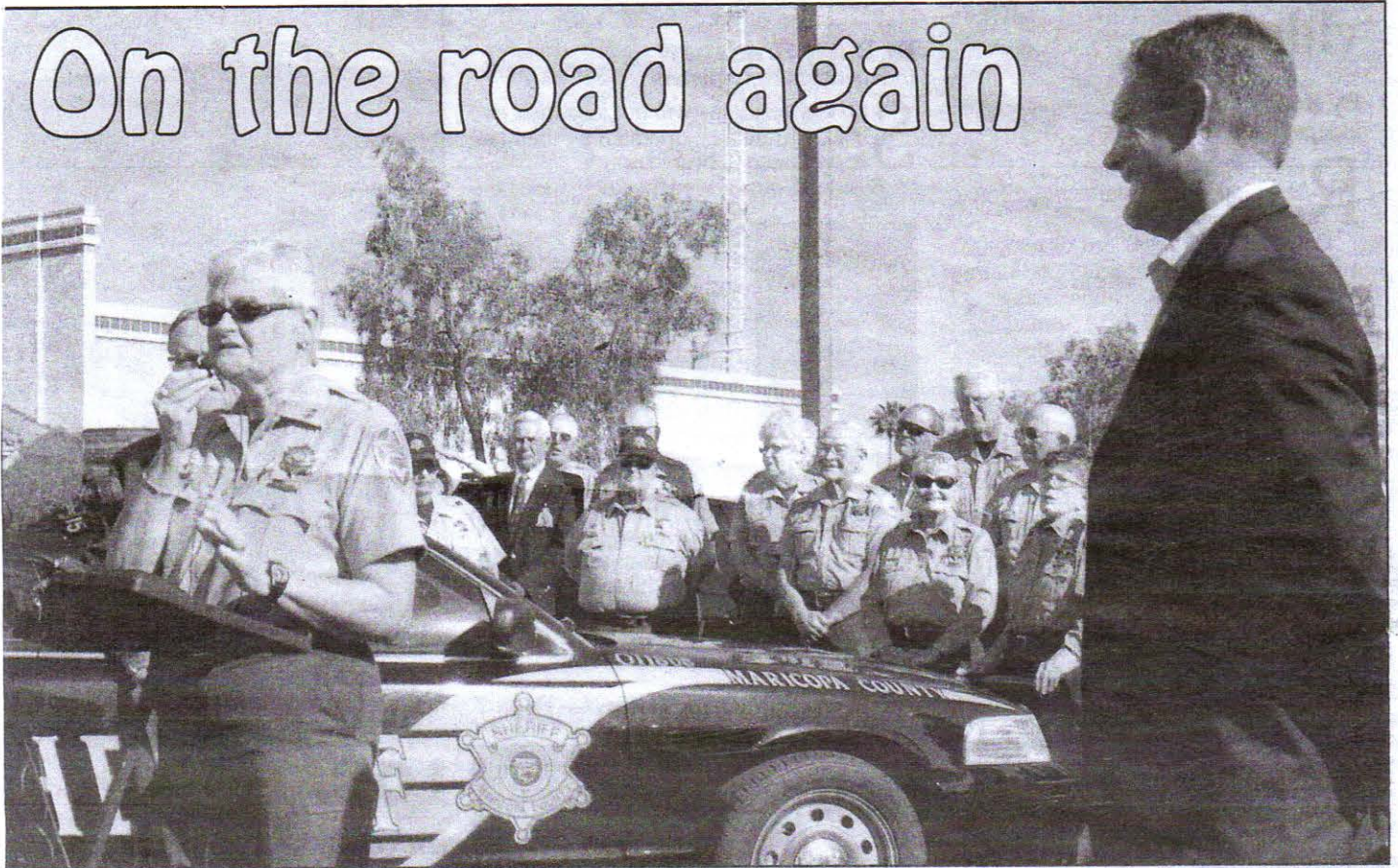
Multiple residents asked where funds would come from to pay for extra equipment required by the order, including video cameras in all patrol vehicles that could be involved in traffic stops. Mr. Van Ausdal explained the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors would have to allocate funds to the MCSO budget.

However, patrols in District 3 will not be altered because of the order, although it is unclear at this time how the order will affect the MCSO budget, according to Mr. Jones.

"Patrols will continue the same as they have in the past," he stated in an e-mail. "There are no anticipated changes in patrol due to the requirement to spend money on the patrol vehicle cameras."

News Editor Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.

On the road again



Independent Newspapers/Rusty Bradshaw

Roberta Lambin, left, Sun City Posse commander, explains the decision to suspend patrols until the insurance issue was resolved. She joined Clint Hickman, right, Dist. 4 county supervisor, and Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, behind her, during an April 3 press conference to announce the posses were back on the road.

Arpaio, Hickman rewrite policy to get Posse back in action in Sun Cities, Peoria

By Rusty Bradshaw
and Cecilia Chan

Independent Newspapers

Maricopa County Sheriff's Posse cars in Sun City, Sun City West and Westbrook Village were parked and patrols suspended for a week due to a misinterpreted policy, according to county officials.

However, all posses were back in business in late afternoon April 3 after Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio and Dist. 4 Supervisor Clint Hickman had an MCSO policy rewritten.

All posse patrol vehicles, while performing official duty, were covered by the county, which is self-insured. But in 2012, a former official at county risk management recommended to the Sheriff's Office that the posses pick up the tab for their insurance, according to Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

"The point is, without throwing darts at anybody, someone in risk management in the past recommended to our guys that the cars will be not insured," he said at an April 3 press conference at Sun City Posse headquarters, 10861 W. Sunland Drive. "Being very careful, our guys changed the sheriff's policy and added what they heard from the county."

The Sheriff's Department forwarded the change in policy to all the posses. Apparently none of the posses took note.

The sheriff deflected blame from the posses for the oversight.

"We probably should have monitored that one line in the policy to make sure they were conforming to it," Mr. Arpaio said.

Commanders in all three communities decided to suspend patrols when word filtered down that the vehicles may not be insured. Sun City West Posse members learned of the news during a March 29 celebration of the group's 35th anniversary.

"Our operations are suspended right now," Posse spokeswoman Jan Vejraska told the Independent March 31. "There are no comments we can make right now."

Sun City members got the word shortly after the Sun City West group and Roberta Lambin, Sun City commander, explained the problem to members during the month-

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Posse

Continued From Page 1

ly meeting April 1.

"For the last couple of years we've heard in commanders' meetings that the Posse would have to get its own insurance, but we never heard it was official," she said. "In the March meeting there was a PowerPoint and one slide said the posses had to get their own insurance."

This was confirmed by MCSO command and a March 26 memo instructed commanders to remove all government issue license plates from the patrol vehicles and have them re-registered, Ms. Lambin explained.

"Can you assure us this has nothing to do with this being April 1st?" Posse member Art Jenkins asked during the meeting.

Mr. Hickman believes changing out the license plates will not be necessary.

"These plates are issued with the cars and they will stay with the cars," he said.

MCSO officials confirmed the policy change, but said it originated with county management.

"The county passed a policy, saying they will no longer cover posse vehicles because they are owned by the posse," said Joaquin Enriquez, MCSO spokesman.

He said the policy has been in effect for a while and that the Sheriff's Office had issued a reminder to the all-volunteer groups. Ms. Lambin said the policy was in place in July 2012.

claimed the policy came from MCSO.

However, Mr. Arpaio and Mr. Hickman described the situation as a "glitch" in the county's risk management self-insurance system. They said the glitch was triggered by a November 2013 incident in an undisclosed posse in which a member was taking a car to a business for service and filed a claim. That caused risk management officials to revert to the 2012 policy, saying posse vehicles would not be insured.

The posses are staffed by volunteers and receive all funds from community donations. Posses do not receive financial support from MCSO. The Northwest Valley posses are 501(c) (3) nonprofit organizations.

Neither Mr. Arpaio or Mr. Hickman would elaborate on the specifics of the policy as written in 2012.

"It was something decided by risk management officials at that time," Mr. Arpaio said.

However, to get the posses back on the road, county, MCSO and risk management officials added one sentence to the policy making it clear posse vehicles would be covered under the county's risk management insurance.

"All posse vehicles will be insured as long as they are being used for posse business," Mr. Hickman said.

He added the incident that triggered last week's events resulted from confusion about the use of the vehicle.

"These cars have to be taken somewhere for service, they don't do that here (at posse facilities)," he explained.

County spokeswoman Cari Gerchick said

New Posse policy

The following guidelines apply to any Posse Branch vehicles used by a posse member during official office business:

*The Posse Branch vehicles will be covered under the county's self-insured liability program while performing duties at the direction of the sheriff, or his designee. The driver shall have a valid Arizona driver's license or certification.

The policy took effect April 4, 2014.

Source: Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

private vehicles, such as those owned by the Posse. That is not the case, according to Art Jenkins, Sun City Posse commander in 2013. He recalled two accidents involving Sun City Posse vehicles that had damages paid for by the county.

"It came through their risk management system," he said.

Mr. Jenkins added there has not been an accident with a Sun City Posse vehicle since 2012, the year he served as operations officer.

However, Ms. Gerchick referenced the Sheriff's Office policy that states no posse vehicle shall have a government-issued plate and that branches must maintain their own insurance for vehicles and equipment. She was baffled by media reports that the county had changed its policy on insuring the posses' vehicles when it never insured them in the first place.

she said. "I don't know how this started."

While their patrols were suspended, Sun City Posse members conducted traffic control at the Recreation Centers of Sun City March 30 Sun Bowl show, traveling to the site in their own personal vehicles., according to Ms. Lambin.

"RCSC helped by sending a truck to get our barricades and cones and took them to the Sun Bowl," she added.

MCSO officials support the posses because they perform duties such as traffic control at accidents and other investigative scenes, vacation watches, Block Watch programs and other non-law enforcement duties, freeing deputies to concentrate on other tasks.

"In the next couple of weeks, I will get a real clear idea what you all do," Capt. Bill VanAusdal, District 3 MCSO commander said April 1 when it appeared the Sun City Posse would not patrol for some time.

Posse commanders researched the possibility of getting their own insurance, but it was too cost prohibitive. The cost was as high as \$50,000 per vehicle per year, according to Mr. Hickman.

He added he remembers seeing the posse cars on patrol as a youngster, and promised to keep the organizations operating.

"I promise to keep the posse going for another 35 years," he said. "I may not be around by then, but I promise."

According to Mr. Arpaio, the trained Posse groups provided 183,467 manhours and saved taxpayers more than \$7 million in 2013, equivalent to 88 full-time deputies.

News Editor Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at

MCSO

Suspension of Posse services surprises Sun Citians

By Tina Gamez,
Diana Weners
and Jeff Grant
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A time of celebration turned into a weekend of confusion and concern among Sun Citians who learned that the services of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Posse had been suspended.

At an open house celebrating the 35th anniversary of the Sun City West Posse Saturday, members of the posse and others in attendance told the Daily News-Sun they had learned about the suspension but did not know or declined to give specifics.

Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, who was at the event, told the Daily News-Sun that he plans to talk with county officials early this week to resolve the matter and doesn't consider it "a story yet." But, if nothing is resolved, then it will be "a big story," the sheriff said.

Members of the posse told ABC15 that Sun City, Sun City West and Westbrook Village posse members were sent home indefinitely. They said it could have something to do with posse members not being covered under the county's insurance, although they contend they were covered



Sun City West Sheriff's Posse members salute Sheriff Joe Arpaio during Saturday's Sheriff's Posse Open House celebrating 35 years of service. [Jarod Opperman/Daily News-Sun]

since the posse program started.

MCSO public information officer Christopher Hegstrom said: "This is a preliminary posse decision relating to a

county policy. The Sheriff's Office is looking into the situation and reviewing the issues with county administrators."

Recreations of Sun City

West board member and Sun City West Fire District board chairman David Wilson said the posse provides a "really good service to the community" and that the Mari-

copa County Sheriff's Office "doesn't have that many officers patrolling around here."

Wilson noted that even
» See Officers on page A5

Officers

» From page A1

though the posse can't issue citations, having an officer present is a plus, adding they do a good job of protecting equipment and diverting traffic when there's an accident. The retirement communities also rely on posse members for vacation watches and other services.

If the sheriff's office has to "designate a regular officer to come for that, it's really going to impact their coverage," Wilson said.

Wilson said he believes "Sun City West is undermanned with the sheriff. That's why they still need the posse." They are "eyes and ears" of sheriff's department.

Some residents of Sun City West said they received this email attributed to Sun City West Posse Commander Don Sampson:

"Effective immediately, on March 29, 2014 at 10:00 hours all activities of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West were suspended.

The suspension will be in effect until such time as the command staff resolve open issues. The command staff will be sending out periodic emails to keep you apprised of the situation.

We would like to thank everyone for their patience and support during this difficult time.

Thank you,
Commander Don Sampson

Betty Kirtley, 77, has lived in Sun City West 13 years and is concerned about the posse not patrolling. "I like the feeling that they go through the streets at nighttime. You feel more secure, especially when you're alone."

Waddell is patrolled by the Sun City West Posse, and

Penny Reeve-Griffith, 66, who lives in the area of Cotton Lane and Olive Avenue, said she understands why county officials would be worried about an insurance coverage issue.

"We're talking about a monetary expenditure," she said.

"County taxpayers should bear the cost of insuring the posse." She added that the posse is already volunteering their time "and that's no cost to the county."

With the "service they're providing, someone's going to have to figure that out," Reeve-Griffith said.

A 15-year resident of Sun City, Steven Pelletier said it's nice to have the posse check in on people's homes when they're gone. "Without them, there'd be less protection. I'm sure things would be broken into a lot more."

He said as volunteers, pos-

se members should be protected to some degree with insurance coverage and as a county taxpayer, he would be OK with paying it.

On the other hand, Di-one Karo, owner of Monty's Furniture and Consignment Store in Sun City, would like to know what the cost would be before she would support paying more taxes.

"They do the little things that you don't want to trouble a 911 operator for," she said.

Karo would like to see a resolution. "I hope they can find some kind of happy medium."



Pelletier



Karo



Sheriff's posse sports eyes and ears for community

By Art Jenkins
Commander
Sheriff's Posse of Sun City

The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City is frequently referred to as the "Eyes and Ears" of the Maricopa County Sheriff. What does this phrase mean? What do our eyes see and our ears hear?



As we navigate the streets of Sun City in our black patrol cars, we see the things that the sworn deputies don't have the time to observe. We are watching for anything that looks suspicious or out of place. The purpose of our vacation watch program is to check your home to make sure that it is safe and secure while you are on vacation.

We look for traffic signals that might be malfunctioning, street signs that are damaged or obscured, or street lights that are burned out. We report these to the proper department for repair. We see the graffiti that defaces our community,

and we work closely with the Sun City prides to make sure that it is removed or painted over.

We hear people who stop us on the street or phone our dispatch office asking for our assistance. We are dispatched by radio to help people with virtually any situation they may encounter, from a stuck garage door to house or car lockouts, or suspicious vehicles in the area. We hear calls from out of state relatives or concerned neighbors worried about the well being of a Sun City resident. We follow up on these calls, checking every resource, including hospitals, other neighbors, even law enforcement, until we have determined that person's status.

We also hear the calls to the Sun City Fire Department, and we respond with them to medical, fire, and traffic accident calls to assist with traffic control or any other service we can provide.

This is our community. We all live here and we volunteer our time and effort to make it

as safe and secure as it can possibly be. Our efforts on your behalf are fully supported by the Maricopa county Sheriff's Office, whose deputies are always available to respond to any situation in which we feel they are needed. The Sun City Posse receives no funding from any government source. We are financially supported by contributions from the people of Sun City, and all funds are used to benefit Sun City. All members of the Sun City Posse are volunteers. No member receives any financial compensation.

If this sounds like an organization with which you would like to be associated, contact our recruiting office at 623-972-2555 to arrange a tour of our headquarters and an orientation ride in a patrol car. If you decide to join us, you will receive extensive classroom and practical training. If you are over the age of 50, live in Sun City and have a valid Arizona driver's license, please consider becoming part of our family.

At a glance

Posse Headquarters
10861 W Sunland Drive
Sun City, AZ 85351
623-972-2555
www.suncityposse.org

About

Established in 1973, the Sun City Posse was located at the Department of Public Safety Building on Peoria and 111th avenues.

The posse's mission is to be the eyes and ears of Sun City by patrolling the community with radio-equipped cars — day and night.

Suspicious

circumstances are reported to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office or the Sun City Fire District.

Donate

The Sun City Posse is a 501c3 nonprofit and operates on generous donations. Please call the office or visit the website to donate.



Peter Schwepker, *The Phoenix Gazette*

The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City have a new headquarters.

Sheriff's Posse to show off new office

By Betty Latty
Gazette correspondent

An open house and formal dedication ceremonies are planned from 1 to 5 p.m. Oct. 22 for the new headquarters building of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City, 10861 Sunland Drive.

The official dedication in which local dignitaries will participate is scheduled for 2 p.m., according to Posse commander Eldon Page.

The posse moved in September to the new quarters from the building they outgrew at 111th and Peoria avenues. The new building, with 12,400 square feet of space and about nine years in the planning, was designed to the Posse's specifications. Each of the posse's dozen departments now has its own office space and special accommodation has been given to the communications, briefing and training departments.

The new facility, on five acres, also provides room for vehicle service and maintenance and has extensive covered parking. The posse's fleet consists of 12 patrol cars, two trucks and a motor home. A golf car, given the posse by an anonymous donor last week, is serving utility duty for on-site transportation.

Cost of the new headquarters will be approximately \$1.4 million, Page said. The expense has been defrayed through donations and public support, in addition to proceeds from the posse's investment of surplus money in the past several years which was earmarked for the building fund.

Page is commander of the posse for the second time. Bert Brosius is executive officer, services; Jess Reed is executive officer, operations.

'Old Tyme' music

"The Old Tyme Music Hall," scheduled for Feb. 2-4 in Sun City West, has been cast and is in rehearsal, according to producer Anne Games.

Auditions and call-backs were made in mid-September, said Games, who said that the musical, a fund-raiser for additions to the Westers' new Stardust Theatre, will be formatted as entertainment from the 1890s

Scenics

and early 1900s. The theater is located in the Fred Kuentz Recreation Center at R.H. Johnson and Stardust boulevards.

The production will include skits, performances by can-can girls, and an old-fashioned "meller-drammer," called "No, No, a Million Times, No!"

Games, whose frequent visits to her native England always included a stop at a favorite old theater, recently brought scripts and material home with her in the hopes of making a similar presentation here. Actress Jan Ryder, also a Wester, contributed material, and is serving as co-producer of the February show.

Christopher Brown, a professional dancer and choreographer, is directing the "Old Tyme Music Hall," and musical director is Polly Harbert of Sun City West.

All seats are reserved, and tickets are \$5 per person, Games said.

Funds raised from this event, and from others scheduled there by the five performing arts groups of Sun City West, will be used to provide extensions to Stardust Theatre, including a green room and rehearsal room.

The groups are Musicians Club of Sun City West, which is presenting the "Old Tyme Music Hall," Theater West; Westernaires; Sun City West Organ and Keyboard Club, and Rhythm Tappers.

More information on the February production is available from Games, at 584-2132.

60 years together

Today George and Ruth Pattison, who were high school sweethearts in Illinois, are observing their 60th wedding anniversary. They were married Oct. 4, 1929, in Chicago.

The Sun Citians — they have lived here 15 years — were honored Sunday with a reception at The Salvation Army corps headquarters, 107th Avenue and Union Hills Drive, after church services.

A wedding cake and refreshments were served the guests, who included Reba Seymour of Sun City, Ruth Pattison's twin sister.

The Pattisons have been active volunteers in Salvation Army activities in Arizona, Illinois and Ohio for many years. George Pattison serves on the local corps advisory board; Ruth is a member of the corps auxiliary and is an active participant in its many programs.

The couple met when each taught at a vacation Bible school in Illinois. George, who had a class of unruly children, called on Ruth for help. "He walked me home that day, and we've been walking together ever since," Ruth said.

The Pattisons retired from Shaker Heights, Ohio, where George was a district sales manager for a pharmaceutical company; they later lived in Springfield, Ill., before settling in Sun City.

In addition to his Salvation Army volunteer duties, George Pattison also is active in Sun-Sky Kiwanis Club.

His wife, a member also of the Sun Cities Symphony Guild and the Sun Cities Art Museum League, is known in the community for her talks, "Volunteer Vignettes," in which she tells of her experiences over the years in volunteerism, working particularly with children's hospitals and child-oriented agencies.

Ruth Pattison, in her spare time, writes poetry, usually of nature-related subjects.

Tough course

It was a tough, tough course, said Sun City West golfer Gene Nelson of the Lochinvar Country Club course in Houston, site of the U.S. Senior Amateur Golf Championship Sept. 19-24.

Nelson, one of three Arizonans to represent the state in the Texas tourney, missed the qualifying cut by five strokes, and reported he "gave it his all." There were 160 golfers in the event.

The Wester was joined by Dick Riley, representing Arizona Country Club and Bill Bradford, Mesa Country Club, in the competition at the exclusive Lochinvar course. Riley, a well-known senior champion, was defeated in Sept. 21 play; Bradford and Nelson did not make the cut.

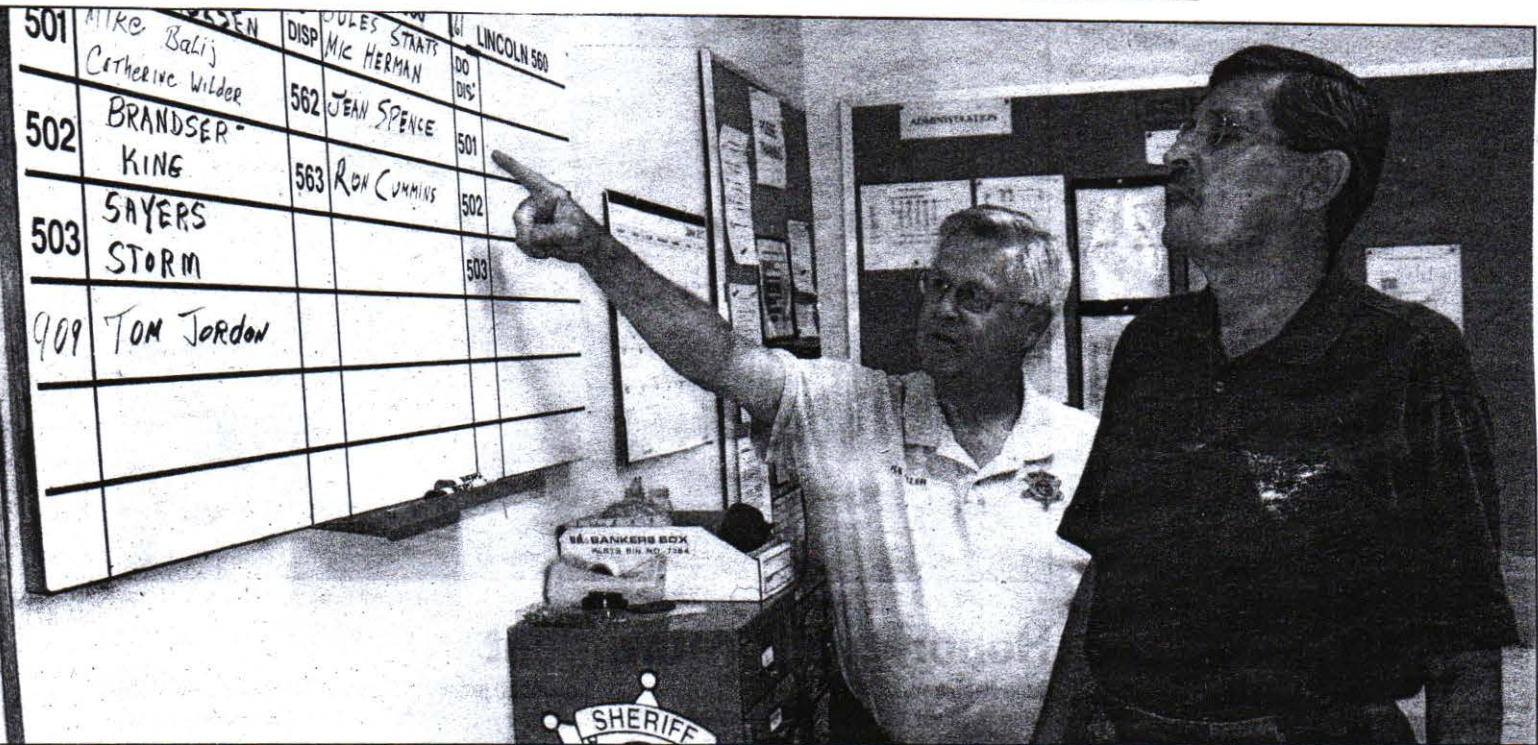
SUN CITY INDEPENDENT

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VF SC SHERIFFS POSSE INDEPENDENT JUNE 20, 2012



Independent Newspapers/Rusty Bradshaw

Sun City Posse Commander Ritchie Miller, left, and Recruiting Officer Bill Wrentmore look over the duty roster as they discuss the need for more recruits, especially during the summer when winter visitors are away from the community.

To patrol and serve

Sun City Posse new options to enhance ranks

By Rusty Bradshaw
Independent Newspapers

They patrol the community daily, are available to help Maricopa County Sheriff's Office with traffic control and other light duties, and Sun City Posse members provide a wide variety of programs.

Those tasks may become harder for the Posse as it experiences a slow but steady decline in membership over the years. In 1994, the Posse had 185 members available for patrol duties. Eighteen years later, there are less than 100, according to Ritchie Miller, Sun City Posse commander.

Like many organizations, the Posse loses members annually to relocation, ill health or death. While the organization is recruiting new members, it is not enough to keep pace with the losses. Mr. Miller said Posse leadership is looking at other options to get people interested in joining the Posse.

"If we don't get enough people — or funding — the Posse may not survive, or we'll have to reduce services," Mr. Miller said.

Sun City residents do not want to organiza-

Related Links

www.suncityposse.org

www.mcsso.org

tion to disappear.

"As a Sun City resident who spends five months in Wisconsin every year, I am very happy with the Posse service," Carol Engberg stated in an e-mail. "I know they weekly check our home by walking around the outside to see if windows and doors have been compromised."

She would feel unprotected if the group was not able to patrol.

"I don't think the county and state police have the time to give our citizens the service I mentioned above," she added.

Sylvia Holmes believes the Posse offers essential services to the community, including security through information provided and being available in emergency situations.

"It is essential and important that outsiders or nonresidents are aware, by instilling in them to be more cautious about crime, vandalism or vicious mischief in knowing that we have a Posse overlooking our city streets," she stated in an e-mail.

Posse members have no arrest or citation authority. But they do help MCSO by providing

traffic and crowd control, and other light duties, that frees sworn deputies to take care of more serious matters, according to Mr. Miller.

While resident Kenneth Gegg, a former law enforcement officer, found when he took some of the training the Posse had too many restrictions on what members can do in the field, he believes the organization does offer some good points.

"It gives people who chose to be a part of the Posse a chance to at least do something to help our community," he stated in an e-mail. "The people who are willing to donate their time and other resources are to be commended."

The Posse has 151 members, according to Mr. Miller. Those who are unable to patrol conduct other duties within the organization.

Neither Mr. Miller nor Bill Wrentmore, Posse recruiting officer, could pinpoint the reason they are unable to get enough recruits to keep up with losses. But they dismiss the opinion held by some that younger people moving in to the community are reluctant or unable due to work schedules to offer volunteer time.

"Our latest new members are all younger people, so that does not support the theory young people don't volunteer," Mr. Wrentmore said.

Posse

Continued From Page 1

Mr. Miller believes the Posse itself must take part of the responsibility for low recruitment because it is not getting its message across the to community well enough. To address that, Posse officials are putting together a new marketing campaign and looking at other options.

"We want to sit them down and talk with them face-to-face," Mr. Wrentmore said.

Mr. Miller said face-to-face meetings allow Posse members the opportunity to explain all the services the organization provides, and shatter some myths. Mr. Miller said when he does give visitors a tour of the facilities, they believe the vehicles, building and equipment is provided by MCSO.

"Not true," Mr. Miller said. "All that is paid for with Posse funds. And where does that money come from? People in the community."

MCSO provides no funding to the 50-plus Possees it has across the county, including one in Westbrook Village within the city of Peoria.

"We have to keep telling the Posse story," Mr. Miller said.

The Posse hosts one open house annually, but Posse leaders are considering additional open houses or events during the year. They are also researching the possibility of hosting other events.

Posse members are required to perform

three patrol rides per month, according to Mr. Wrentmore. With declining numbers, that puts a strain on those available for patrol, especially in the summer months when many Sun City residents go to summer homes in cooler climates. The Posse has two members per car during patrols that are conducted in three shifts during the day.

Mr. Wrentmore said there is no dues to be a Posse member, although there is some expense for the initial uniform. Some of that cost is reimbursed based on volunteer hours served. Members are also required to attend the monthly general membership meetings, Mr. Wrentmore added. Posse members must have a valid Arizona driver's license, live in Sun City and be in the community at least nine months a year, Mr. Miller explained.

Posse recruits also must complete 150 hours of training, including classroom and patrol experience. More than half the training hours are on patrol, giving recruits first-hand experience with qualified trainers. All training is conducted in Sun City by Posse members designated as trainers, according to Mr. Wrentmore.

"The training is pretty intense simply because we have to make sure they are ready to handle any situation," Mr. Miller said.

For information on Posse membership, call 623-972-2555, visit Posse headquarters at 10861 Sunland Drive, or visit the organization's Web site at www.suncityposse.org.

News Editor Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.



Independent Newspapers/Rusty Bradshaw

Top posseman

Tom Jordan, left, receives a plaque from Art Jenkins, operations officer, after being named Sun City Posse Member of the Year. Mr. Jenkins noted that among his other duties, Mr. Jordan conducted more than 3,000 vacation watches last year.

Posse members urge block watch programs

Organization doubles patrols

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

In light of the recent crime wave, some Sun City area residents fear they'll be the next victim of a home invasion, robbery, or worse, homicide. Perhaps now, more than ever, seniors want to prevent another tragedy by protecting their neighborhoods.

"The robberies seem to be more and more brazen," said Sun Citian Karen Scheuerman at Monday's Recreation Centers of Sun City member/director exchange, when residents and the board discussed the home invasion/robbery in Sun City early Saturday that left a 51-year-old man visiting from

South Dakota dead. The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office is on the hunt for at least two armed suspects.

"I'd like to know if there's anything we could do as a community," Scheuerman said.

Carl Recker of Sun City also expressed his concern at Monday's meeting. He's currently shopping for a surveillance system to catch suspicious activity on tape after a neighbor recently spotted two unknown men attempting to break into his truck.

"The sheriff's department can't be all over," Recker said. "Crime is going to continue to increase in years to come. We may as well face the facts."

The communities are on high alert with suspects on the loose and MCSO deputies and posse patrols canvassing the area. There have been seven reported home

invasions in the last six months — five in Sun City, one in Peoria and one in Sun City West. Two men were arrested in February in connection with two of the incidents in Sun City and one in Peoria, and authorities have searched for additional suspects.

But residents don't have to cower — the Sun City and Sun City West Posses are advising them to become active with a neighborhood Block Watch or create the program where there isn't one.

There are several hundred Block Watch programs active in Sun City and Sun City West, but participation has tapered off over the years, Posse officials said. Now, there is renewed motivation to promote the programs in every neighborhood.

"There is a new push for Block Watches, very

definitely. The biggest thing with enforcement anywhere is the eyes and the ears," said Jim Demel, commander of the Sun City Posse. "Block watches are very important — they're a method of disseminating information and they get people working together and watching for each other."

Upon request, Posse members from Sun City and Sun

City West will make Block Watch presentations to groups hoping to start one or revamp their old one.

"We're trying to create more where there aren't any, this is the biggest task here. We have a very active group on it right now," Demel said.

Posse members in both communities have doubled their evening and night shifts.

"Our volunteers have been coming in and volunteering to work those late shifts," said Harry Wells, commander of the Sun City West Posse. "They're all concerned."

To schedule a Block Watch presentation with a Posse member, call 972-2555 for Sun City or 584-5808 for Sun City West.

The Posse is the "eyes and ears" for the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, and abide by their rules and authority.

The most renowned Posse member is President Ronald Reagan, who was made an honorary member of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City in 1993, while in Sun City to visit the organization after hearing about their work.

Sun City West organized a Posse in 1979.

Memories
of the
Sun Cities



SUN CITY SHERIFF'S POSSE

One of a series on the history of
Sun City and Sun City West, Arizona

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

10801 Oakmont Dr., Sun City AZ 85351

(623) 974-2568

www.scazhistory.org

SUN CITY SHERIFF'S POSSE

On October 30, 1973, the Sun City Posse held its first election of officers. It was held in Social Hall No. 1 of the Lakeview Recreation Center in Sun City, with 40 members present. A Commander, Executive Officer, and two Lieutenants were elected.

The members are those "who came to play but lived to work another day." They work for others—no tasks too great, no tasks too small.

The early years found members patrolling neighborhoods in their private cars, golf carts, and on foot, with a roll of dimes in their pockets to call for assistance from the Sheriff's Office if necessary.

By 1974, the membership had grown to 250 people who cared enough about their fellow man to share their time. Their first uniforms were a white helmet with a Sheriff's emblem and a gold chain with whistle. Later, they wore yellow jumpsuits, and eventually graduated to the regular Sheriff's uniform, which is still worn today.

In 1977, the Posse purchased its own station wagons equipped as emergency vehicles. The Posse was housed in the building at 111th and Peoria, now the home of the Department of Public Safety. In 1989, the Posse moved to their present location at 10861 Sunland Drive. This building has state-of-the-art radio and computer equipment, a garage, training room, briefing room, auditorium, kitchen, reception area, and other offices. All of this is owned by the Posse, and supported through the generosity of the residents and businesses in Sun City, receiving no county, state, or federal funds.

There is an extensive training program of about 150 hours, with no distinction between men and women, as all are trained and work equally. They patrol, train, keep vacation watch records, dispatch, and conduct traffic control, search and rescue, and many clerical duties.

Members who have trained and passed the qualifications as set forth by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, carry guns.

Each member is required to reside in Sun City for at least 10 months a year, and perform at least 23 hours of duty each month. This consists of three seven-hour patrols and a two-hour meeting which is held the first Tuesday of each month.

The Board of Governors consists of 12 elected and 4 appointed members. The Commander is elected, after serving at least one year on the Board, and serves a one-year term. To date, there have been five women Commanders.



To date, the Sun City Posse has received recognition in such publications as The Arizona Republic, Arizona Magazine, National Enquirer, Life Magazine, the F.B.I. Law Enforcement Bulletin, The Phoenix Gazette, The Congressional Record, Daily News-Sun, and The Sun Cities Independent.

In addition to the regular duties, they provide traffic control at various events, including those at the Sun Bowl, a visit from President William Clinton, search-and-rescue missions, assistance to citizens in need of help, and motorists' assistance. In addition, "back-up" is provided for the Sheriff's deputies in circumstances ranging from car accidents to bank robberies.

Community Civic Organizations: The Sun City Posse



The Posse Headquarters on Sunland Drive.

"The Posse serves as the eyes and ears of the Maricopa County Sheriff within Sun City in crime prevention and quick response to criminal activities"

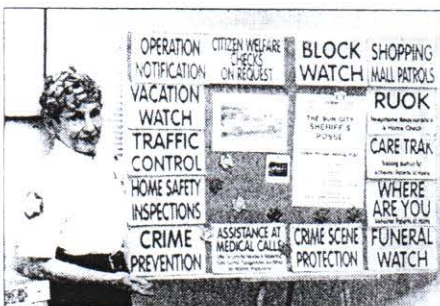
Residents can be justly proud of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse, one of this community's many voluntary civic organizations, which help make Sun City the "City of Volunteers". Originally formed by a group of 35 Sun City residents in 1973, the Sun City Posse was incorporated as a non-profit volunteer organization under the authority of the Sheriff of Maricopa County in 1979. It is one of 47 Sheriff Posse groups within

requirements. This volunteer organization uses 175 to 185 Sun City residents (no paid employees) to provide essential services for the community, including neighborhood protection patrols, 911 responses, accident, traffic and special event control, resident vacation watches (34,456 home checks in 2004), block watch education & supervision, as well as various community services, such as funeral watches, assistance in searches for missing or lost persons, monitoring the elderly living alone, providing fire truck security and resident assistance in emergencies.

Funding for the Sun City Posse comes entirely from volunteer contributions by residents and local business organizations. It

organizations. The Posse's headquarters at 10861 Sunland Drive is locally owned (mortgage free), as are the unit's patrol cars and other essential service equipment. The Posse provided approximately 81,000 hours and 210,000 vehicle miles in local patrol service for the community during the year 2004.

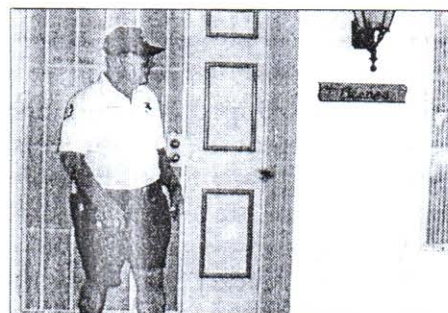
Residents interested in volunteering for service with the Sun City Posse, those wishing to make a financial contribution to the organization or those desiring to learn more about the individual services provided within the community are encouraged to contact Mr. Ron Smith, Commander, Sun City Posse at 972-2555.



Sun City Posse's board of services.

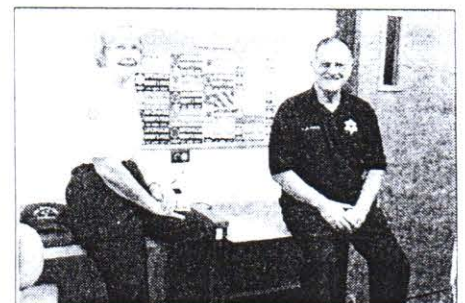
Maricopa County and one of only five such groups based entirely within a specific community.

The Posse serves as the eyes and ears of the Maricopa County Sheriff within Sun City in crime prevention and quick response to criminal activities. It generally operates exclusively within Sun City, but is available on a volunteer basis to assist the Sheriff Department on emergencies elsewhere. Each Posse officer receives over 100 hours of personal training in such matters as CPR, first responder care, traffic control, communications, law & legal training and OSHA safety



Officer checking a home while the owners are away.

conducts one annual fund drive, usually in September of each year. The fund drive is locally conducted and entirely by mail. The Posse does no phone or personal call solicitations. It receives no financial support from Federal, State or County



Posse members in front of the sponsor board.

Civil defense group grew up into Posse

By **KAREN S. LEONARD**
Staff Writer

Eleven years ago a Civil Defense Unit headed by retired Col. Paul Morrill was started in Sun City.

Members met and trained in area homes assisted by Sheriff Paul Blubaum's civilian aide, Andy Wagner, and as the number of interested people grew the organization changed.

Today it is better known as the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City and is going strong with 250 members.

BUT BACK THEN it was a small group of people interested in serving the community in an emergency or disaster situation.

They would patrol neighborhoods in their personal vehicles identified by magnetic signs on the sides and used public or private telephones to call in reports of crimes to the Sheriff's Office.

Later, as the group contin-

ued to grow, it became apparent to members they should have some official guidance and support so they became the Posse under the Maricopa County sheriff.

SHERIFF BLUBAUM designated Posse members as peace officers and Marvin VanDera was elected as the Posse's first commander in 1973.

VanDera served four terms as commander and under his guidance the Posse was given a "permanent call to duty" from Sheriff Jerry Hill.

This meant the Posse members didn't have to be called to duty every day by the Sheriff and whether they were on active duty or not and in a uniform or not had the right to act as a Posse member in situations they came upon that required their attention, VanDera said.

VOLUNTEERS, NOW 141 including one woman, were

* Posse, C18

*Posse continues to serve

—From C16

given white helmets called "bubble hats" with the sheriff's emblem on them and whistles for added identification.

VanDera said he felt the hats were necessary to identify Posse members and ensure their safety while they patrolled in the dark.

These were later replaced with the yellow jump suit with the Sheriff's Office insignia that is still worn by some Posse members.

CITIZEN BAND radios, regulation uniforms, a base station and eight mobile units came into the hands of the Posse due to donations from several local organizations and citizens.

Before then VanDera said they had two radios that worked up to three blocks away and every member carried 15 cents to make telephone calls to the Sheriff's Office from the booths in the newly built Greenway Shopping Center.

First aid, communications and traffic control training courses were instituted in 1975 and the next year new commander Charles Haas oversaw the instillation of a remote antenna on top of Boswell Memorial Hospital which helped

the Posse's radios transmit longer distances.

IN 1981 THE Posse's permanent headquarters was built at 111th and Peoria avenues and members donated folding chairs for the meeting room.

Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll earned distinction in 1983 as the Posse's first woman commander and national acclaim befell the Posse when President Ronald Reagan visited on May 6.

Made an honorary member, the president commanded the troops for the day and signed the proclamation for Older Americans Month.

THE POSSE HAS continued to serve the community with programs such as Operation Identification, Operation Notification and Operation Child Identification.

Throughout the year Posse members check windows and doors of houses during vacation watches, conduct traffic control and assist paramedics or medical alert teams and the fire department.

Those willing to join the Posse must get approval from an oral board made up of four or five Posse members and submit a formal application to the county Sheriff's Office for approval.

Sun City Posse stumps for safety

ANNIE BOON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse wants to make sure new and existing residents know about safety programs available in the community.

The Posse's Residential Emergency Cards are essential to keeping the Posse connected to the community. Residents fill in the cards with pertinent information and return them to the Posse where they are kept in a confidential database.

In case of an emergency, Posse personnel, the fire department or the Maricopa County Sheriff's office will be able to access a resident's vital information via their emergency card.

"These cards are made available as a way to help to protect the citizens and their property," said Leta McCormick, Posse spokeswoman. "Although it has been widely publicized, it is possible that new occupants have not been made aware of the Posse's Residential Emergency Cards."

The cards may be picked up at

Sun City recreation centers, library, the Visitors Center, the Sun City Fire Department and at the Posse headquarters.

Additionally, the Posse is in the process of updating its Block Watch information. The Block Watch department is planning a fall meeting with all Block Watch captains in order to share information and plans.

"Block Watch has been active in Sun City for several years and has been an important factor in encouraging the need for neighbors to be watching out for those living nearby and their property," McCormick said.

The Posse continues to accept cell phones for recycling, however, due to liability issues, cell phones are no longer distributed. Old ink jet and toner cartridges are also accepted for recycling at the Posse headquarters.

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse is at 10861 Sunland Drive.

For information about the Posse, Residential Emergency Cards or Block Watch, call 972-2555.

New Sheriff's Posse chief follows his dad

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

Ronald Smith, a member of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse, has done more than follow in his father's footsteps.

His dad, the late John Smith, not only held the rank of a posse lieutenant but also inspired his son to join the volunteer group.

Ronald Smith, 71, signed up seven years ago and, like his father, has served as a lieutenant. On Tuesday, he was elected as the posse's commander for 2005, taking the helm Jan. 1.

"I hope Dad would be proud," Smith said. "He was such an important part of my life."



Ronald
Smith

Smith said records are scanty, but he is believed to be the first child to follow a father or mother on the Sun City posse since the service organization was formed in 1974.

"Dad just loved the posse," Smith said. "So it was an obvious evolution that I join."

John Smith served with the group from 1980 to 1991. He is decked out in uniform in the photo that now hangs from a wall in his son's posse office.

Smith said that during yearly trips to Sun City to visit with his father, he made the decision to join the posse if he ever were to retire there.

Smith said that when his mother died, it was posse service that gave strength to his father to cope with the loss.

The father died in January 1998, at age 88, just a month after Ronald Smith, a former purchasing manager, left California with his wife, Barbara, and retired in Sun City.

"Dad was a stubborn man," Smith said. "I think he didn't want to die alone, so he waited until we moved here."

Leta McCormick, the current posse commander, said Smith has a love of the posse and will do well in leading the 176-member group.

"He's an honest, fair and dedicated posse person," she said. "He's always searching for the best things we can do for the people of Sun City."

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse is based at 10861 W. Sunland Drive. Its members wear uniforms and cruise the community in marked cars.

They conduct neighborhood patrols and other prevention programs, such as Block Watch, acting as eyes and ears for the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

The posse also performs other functions, including traffic control at accident scenes and crowd and traffic control at community events.

Posse people are a plus

Members serve as eyes and ears for sheriff's deputies

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

Capt. Ron Stoner, a commander for the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, minces no words when he is asked about the volunteer posses in Sun City and Sun City West.

"They're wonderful," he says. "They have great people. They do so much for us."

Stoner, who directs the sheriff's Surprise substation,

13063 W. Bell Road, just across from Sun City West, says the two posses make his northwest Valley job a plum assignment.

He says the nearly 350 posse volunteers in both retirement communities are a wonderful complement to the 50 deputies under his command.

Posse members serve as eyes and ears for deputies in Stoner's substation. If trouble arises, full-time deputies are called to take control.

Jesse Locksa, a sheriff's deputy chief who oversees nearly 60 groups throughout the Valley, says the Sun Cities posses are important.

"These two are the largest," he says. "We involve them in every phase of law enforcement."

Locksa says the Westbrook Village Sheriff's Posse, a nearly 40-member group that has served in Peoria since 1999, is another asset.

Here are profiles of people

who serve in all three posses:

Sun City Sheriff's Posse Tom Bruner

Posse executive officer

Bruner, 68, a retired Federal Reserve analyst from Cleveland, has been with the posse for seven years and now serves in the No. 2 post.

Bruner says that when he moved to Sun City, he wanted to stay busy and meet people.

See POSSE Page 4

POSSE + Service important

From Page 1

He has achieved those aims through posse service.

"Service, to me, is the camaraderie that goes with the posse," he says. "And then there is the chance to work with the citizens of Sun City. I really enjoy that, too, when I'm on patrol."

John Evans *Posse member*

Evans, 76, a retired utility worker from Sturtevant, Wis., has lived in Sun City for 22 years. He has been on the posse for 12 years and served as the 1997 commander.

"I spent 38 years on the village board in Sturtevant, so it was natural to gravitate to something in my new community," Evans says. "I don't golf, and I needed someplace to put my energy and do things."

Evans says that when he ends a patrol shift, he goes home knowing that he has "made somebody's life better."

Leta McCormick *Posse commander*

McCormick, 74, a former publisher in Danville, Ill., has been with the posse for six of her 10 years in Sun City. She is the current commander.

She says that when her husband died in 1997, two posse members came to her door, along with paramedics, and offered compassionate help.

"I was so impressed that I started looking at the possibility of posse service," McCormick says. "This gives me the chance to give something back for all the good things that have happened in my life."



Chuck Denton



John Evans



Dorothy Martin



Leta McCormick



Don Taske



Hugh Templeton



Ken Wilson



Tom Bruner

looking for volunteer work 15 years ago. He no longer goes out on patrol but pulls weekly duty as a posse dispatcher, filling a void in his life now that he's no longer able to play golf.

"It's something to keep my mind sharp, especially the dispatching," Templeton says.

Dorothy Martin

Posse member and historian
Martin, 77, and her husband, Art, marked a milestone last year, becoming the first posse couple to serve 25 years.

Her husband now is in failing health, but she remains active. The former homemaker says her quarter-century with the posse lends perspective to a current task as historian.

"You get so much gratitude from the people you help," Martin says. "I just wish I could turn back the clock and serve another 25 years. That's how much I believe in the posse."

Don Taske

Posse treasurer
Taske, 79, a former savings and loan manager from Kenosha, Wis., volunteered for the posse 16 years ago, soon after arriving in Sun City. He has been the treasurer since 1990.

"I just thought it would be a great thing to be able to help the citizens of Sun City," he says. "And I've thoroughly enjoyed my tenure here."

Taske says he likes the feeling when you offer service and people say thanks.

"That's it," he says. "That's the paycheck."

Sun City West Sheriff's Posse Hugh Templeton

Posse member
Templeton, 90, one of the two active nonagenarians, is a retired Army lieutenant colonel and was a petrochemical engineer in Hong Kong.

He says his military background made the posse an interesting choice when he went

Ken Wilson

Posse member

Wilson, 75, a retired test-system engineer from Willow Grove, Pa., says he has never regretted his decision to join the posse when he arrived in the community 14 years ago.

Wilson serves as a training officer. He also keeps posse bicycles in working order and builds rocking horses and other toys that are used by the posse as Christmas offerings to needy area families.

"I've always believed in giving something back to the community," Wilson says. "You get to meet a lot of fine folks through posse service. I feel the posse is doing a good job for the community."

Westbrook Village Sheriff's Posse Chuck Denton

Posse commander

Denton, 77, a native of Des Moines, Iowa, had a varied military and business background before moving to Westbrook Village, a Peoria retirement community, six years ago.

Denton was one of a handful of charter members when the posse was formed in 1999. He now serves as the 2004 commander for a group that has grown to 38 members.

"We work awfully hard," Denton says. "Our main priority is Westbrook Village, but we help with service assignments outside the community. This can become a challenge."

He says he's glad to enjoy the health to be able to help out.

Reach the reporter at
brent.whiting@arizonarepublic.com or
(602) 444-6937.

Posses help save Valley lives, funds

Sheriff's aides volunteer for key service

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

It was time for four posse members in Sun City West to "saddle up."

The four, decked out in uniforms, gathered at posse headquarters, where one of them, the duty officer, offered a 30-minute patrol briefing.

Lt. Frank Adelman, 71, a retired aerospace engineer from Pennsylvania, urged the others to remain alert, especially when approaching strangers.

"Let's be careful," Adelman said. "Let's always use caution."

Adelman, unlike the others, carried a holstered handgun on his Sam Browne belt.

That's because he's one of about a dozen active volunteers on the nearly 180-member Sun City West Sheriff's Posse who have completed the rigorous training that is required to bear firearms.

Adelman and the three others, Ed Clark, Gerry Niedzwiecki and Tom Simard, then headed for their patrol cars and hit the road for a six-hour tour of duty.

They cruised streets and shopping malls,

establishing a law enforcement presence and serving as eyes and ears for the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, which responds when heavy lifting is needed.

They looked for suspicious activity, illegally parked cars and signs of possible trouble, including broken windows, open garage doors and newspapers piled up on driveways.

It was part of a routine that posse members in Sun City and Sun City West practice throughout the year, four times a day, seven days a week.

Nothing much happened for the people on Adelman's shift, except for a successful search for a lost dog and traffic control at an auto-crash scene.

"Everybody in Sun City West managed to behave themselves," Adelman said.

And that's just fine, he added, explaining that the uneventful patrol was part of an ongoing effort that has helped make Sun City West one of the Valley's safest communities.

Volunteers are preparing for festivities Saturday marking the group's 25th anniversary.

See **POSSES** Page B2

From Page B1

The posse began in 1979 with a handful of members meeting in homes and patrolling the community in private cars, using citizens band radios.

Now, the posse has a modern headquarters, state-of-the-art communications and a fleet of patrol cars, said Dick Flora, the posse commander.

"We get a lot of thanks and a lot of recognition for the service we give," he said.

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse, which operates largely the same way, celebrated its 25th anniversary in 1998.

It's a milestone still two decades away for a posse that serves a Peoria retirement community. The Westbrook Village Sheriff's Posse wasn't organized until 1999.

Members of all three posses wear uniforms and drive marked cars that look virtually the same as those used by full-time sheriff's deputies.

That's by design, said County Sheriff Joe Arpaio, whose office sponsors nearly 60 organized posses.

"I don't want people to tell the difference," Arpaio said. "This way, they'll think there are more deputies out there than what we put on the road."

Arpaio said the various posses total nearly 3,000 volunteers, about 400 of whom are certified to carry firearms. They perform vital services that save taxpayers "millions of dollars a year," he said.

There are posses throughout Maricopa County, but Arpaio said he considers the ones in Sun City and Sun City West "jewels."

Not only are they the largest posses, but they are "jewels in

Sun City West Sheriff's Posse open house

What: Visit by Sheriff Joe Arpaio, equipment displays, public tour and refreshments.

Where: 20450 Stardust Blvd.

When: 1-4 p.m. Saturday.

Admission: Free.

Details: (623) 584-5808.

the sense that they have laid the foundation" for the modern posse concept, the sheriff said.

The two Sun City posses are self-supporting, are staffed by dedicated volunteers and operate efficiently and effectively, devoid of scandal, Arpaio added.

With few exceptions, posse members say they join to establish friendships or offer meaningful service to their communities.

Residents and merchants in Sun City and Sun City West offer support by opening their checkbooks during the posses' annual contribution drives.

Residents also express thanks for the many services offered by the posses.

Shirley Watterson, a Sun City resident, said posse members showed up at her home last year for a medical emergency in which her husband died.

Posse members not only offered immediate assistance but watched her home during the funeral, Watterson said.

Beth Malmgren of Sun City said that during another emergency, posse members helped out in several ways, including giving a ride to the hospital.

Don Taske, 79, a 16-year posse member in Sun City, said the gratitude expressed by residents is the best part of the job: "That's the paycheck, really."

Last year, the nearly 180 posse members in Sun City West logged 74,793 hours of service. That's an average of about 415 hours apiece, or about eight hours a week.

In Sun City, the nearly 170 volunteers put more time on the job, logging 83,541 hours. That's about 491 hours apiece, or about 9½ hours a week.

Leaders of both posses say it's impossible to put a dollar value on the services provided but that the amount easily totals millions.

Yet posse members don't get paid and don't receive a dime in taxpayer funding. Instead, they rely upon financial support from their communities, an annual offering that can amount to \$250,000 or more.

The posses operate out of modern buildings equipped with state-of-the-art communications equipment. Volunteers wear uniforms and drive marked patrol cars that are almost indistinguishable from those used by Maricopa County sheriff's deputies. Some even carry guns. All receive the same liability coverage that applies to deputies.

A brief list of things that posse members do:

- Patrol neighborhoods in the Sun Cities, serving as eyes and ears for the Sheriff's Office.
- Check on the homes of residents who are out of town for a brief period or gone for the summer.
- Provide traffic and crowd control at events or accident scenes.
- Respond to medical and other emergencies, keeping an eye on equipment and assisting victims or their relatives.
- Offer home-security checks, organize neighborhood-watch programs and watch homes during funerals or memorial services.

— Brent Whiting

OVER

POSSE PROFILES

A look at six people who serve on the Sun City West Sheriff's Posse. They are typical of many posse volunteers who retired elsewhere then moved to the retirement enclaves with a desire to offer community service and forge new friendships.

Neal Coffman

Posse member

Coffman, 90, a former procurement officer from Sacramento, is one of two nonagenarians on active duty with the posse. Coffman served as the 1983 commander and still goes out on weekly patrols. Nearly two dozen people formed the posse in 1978, and he is the only remaining original volunteer.



"It's the greatest organization in the community," he said. "We have a very dedicated group of people who serve and protect Sun City West."

Dick Flora

Posse commander

Flora, 76, a retired aerospace worker from Bellevue, Wash., has been with the posse for 10 years. He is serving as the commander this year. Flora has spent five years as a posse recruiter. Death, old age and illness take a toll, so new blood is always needed to keep the posse going, he said.



"We get a lot of thanks for what we do," Flora said. "I had some spare time when I joined, so I decided to give something back to the community."

Emmet Rutherford

Firearms instructor

Rutherford, 75, a former field supervisor for an underground electric firm in Long Island, N.Y., joined the posse 14 years ago, a year after arriving in Sun City West. During this time, he has worked a once-a-weeknight patrol, earning him the moniker "Captain Midnight." "They tagged me with that name a few years ago and it



stuck," Rutherford said. "I'm not one for sitting around and doing nothing, so I like going out on the graveyard shift."

Zoe Schreibman

Public information officer

Schreibman, 67, a retired paralegal from Trumbull, Conn., has been with the group for seven years and promotes news of posse activities.



"This is an exciting place to be," she said. "We serve as eyes and ears of the community, helping to make this one of the safest places in the country." Schreibman described the posse as "a conglomeration of interesting, fascinating senior citizens, people who truly enjoy being around each other."

Linda Valdiserri

Posse member

Valdiserri, 55, a six-year posse member, also works as a courtesy clerk at a supermarket. She did volunteer work in North Belle Vernon, Pa., before moving to Sun City West nine years ago.



Valdiserri is easy to spot, not only by her relatively youthful age but the handgun she carries. She's one of 17 current posse members in Sun City West, and the only active female, who have completed the extensive training that allows them to bear firearms.

"I like the posse camaraderie," she said. "It also feels great when people appreciate what you've done for them."

Jan Vejraska

Duty officer

Vejraska, 63, a former human resources worker in Columbus, Neb., joined the posse five years ago, along with her husband, Jim, 65, after they retired in Sun City West. They wanted something they could do together, but their current assignment as posse lieutenants puts them on different supervisory shifts.



This also ties them to a desk, but Jan said she also goes out on patrol for the enjoyment of helping people. "This is my way of giving," she said.

"Most of us don't have a family here, so the posse becomes a family in many ways. It's such a family feeling."

POSSE QUALIFICATIONS

Posses are formed under a provision of Arizona law (ARS 11.441.D) that allows the sheriff to "request the aid of volunteer posse and reserve organizations located in the county." Under Maricopa County Sheriff's Office guidelines, these are some of the requirements for posse service:

- U.S. citizenship, a background check, valid Arizona driver's license, good driving record, good health, good moral character and no felony convictions.

- Several weeks of training in many areas, including traffic control, defensive driving, CPR and radio dispatching. To carry firearms, volunteers must complete the same training as full-time deputies.

Source: Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

Posses elect new leadership

STAFF REPORT

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse elected Leta McCormick as commander for 2004, while its Sun City West counterpart unanimously elected Richard "Dick" Flora for its top post.

McCormick's administrative assistants will be Tom Bruner, elected as executive officer, and Ron Smith, elected as administrative officer. The new posts become effective Jan. 1.

McCormick served as executive officer under Cmdr. Bill Waits this year, and said she is relying on that experience for her new position.

McCormick and her husband retired to Sun City in 1994. She worked as a switchboard operator and cashier for Commonwealth Edison, and as a clerk for Northern Illinois Gas Co.

She has three children and volunteered at her children's school, her local church and a local hospital. McCormick

also has experience as a clerk and a manager in a small meat packing plant in addition to joining her husband in the publishing business.

McCormick was widowed in 1997 and joined the posse in 1998. She worked in the recruiting office and has represented the posse at fun fairs and the organization's open house and has helped with fund-raising.

Flora became a Sun City West Posse member in January 1994 after living in the community six months. Since then, in addition to his regular posse patrols, he has been a recruiting officer, executive officer of administration and served on the board of directors.

Dick's wife of more than 50 years, Wanda, also is a posse member.

Flora served in the U.S. Coast Guard from 1945 to 1947, and also in the California National Guard while attending the University of

California. His unit was activated during the Korean War and he served as a master sergeant in the second battalion of the 160th Infantry Regiment.

After his discharge, Flora began working with Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.'s aviation products division. His career included managerial and operational positions that prepared him for the varied demands of the posse.

McCormick reminds Sun City residents that the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City is always looking for new recruits. To be eligible, a person must be at least 50 years old, be a Sun City resident for 10 months of the year or more, and have a valid Arizona driver's license. No previous experience is necessary. For information, call 972-2555.

For information about joining the Sun City West Sheriff's Posse, call 584-5808.

MONDAY, NOV. 17, 2003

Sun City Posse offers crime tips

STAFF REPORT

Do you want to learn more about scams, fraud, identity theft and senior abuse? Have you ever wondered how you could protect yourself from these crimes?

The Sheriff's Posse of Sun City invites all residents to attend a free Crime Prevention Seminar, from 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday, in the Sun City Posse building, 10861 W. Sunland Drive, Sun City.

Those who attend will learn more about how to avoid becoming victims of a variety of crimes preying on seniors — including information about mail theft, telemarketing, check washing and other fraudulent activity.

The event provides an opportunity for local seniors to express their views and concerns and ask questions. Posse officials invite all residents to attend, and want to have all residents' input at this event.

Invitational fliers were sent to Sun City and Youngtown residents, said Bill Ellsworth, the Sun City Posse's crime prevention officer.

"It's for anybody in Sun City," he said, adding that the seminar is open to seniors from other area communities as well. "Anybody is welcome."

Speakers at the event include Capt. Ron Stoner from Maricopa County Sheriff's office District 3; Ellsworth, who will speak on the Block Watch program; and other experts in identity theft and senior abuse.

Attendees are asked to enter the building from the west parking lot. For information, call the Sun City Posse at 972-2555.

Sun City Posse preps emergency card campaign

STAFF REPORT

Sun City Sheriff's Posse volunteers stuffed thousands of pre-addressed envelopes Thursday in an effort to better serve residents in an emergency.

The envelopes contained a message from the posse about its Emergency Information Card project, and a post-card for residents to fill out and return to the posse. The information on the card will provide the posse or the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office with information that can help them provide faster

service during emergencies, said 1st Lt. Leta McCormick with the posse.

Information requested includes the person's name, address and phone number, as well as the name, address and phone number of a local person who has a set of the person's keys in case emergency personnel need to enter.

Residents can also indicate on the card whether or not they have a fire department lock box.

All the information will be compiled into a residents database. The information is

confidential and will not be shared with anyone other than the posse, fire department and sheriff's office.

Residents are not required to fill out the cards, but according to the posse, voluntary participation in the program "can save valuable time and could perhaps mean the difference in saving a life."

The database will be used if there is an emergency and posse or sheriff's officials need to know who to contact to enter the home.

The posse is making the cards available at all the Sun



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Betty Jane Peters, Geraldine Recla, Irma Frederick and Jean Spence, all with the Sun City Sheriff's posse stuff envelopes with information that will be distributed throughout the community.

City recreation centers, libraries, bowling alleys, golf courses, fire stations, visitors centers, posse headquarters

and Boswell Memorial Hospital.

For information, call posse headquarters at 972-2555.

Sheriff's posse delivers slate of programs to Sun Citians

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse outlined a plethora of programs during the Recreation Centers of Sun City's board of directors meeting Thursday.

Lt. Alan Oppenheimer said the posse operates under the direction of the sheriff's office, but receives no funding or equipment from anyone other than residents.

"We operate totally and solely on the basis of contributions from you folks," he said.

Still, the posse manages to offer a host of programs for residents, including:

- **Patrols:** Morning, afternoon, evening and some mid-night shifts.

- **Vacation Watch:** Residents fill out cards and the posse checks their houses while they're out of town. If break-ins or indications of a crime are found, posse members call the sheriff's office to respond.

"We are not law enforcement," Oppenheimer said. "If we see any sign of problems, we send for a deputy and we get out of the way."

The posse performed 36,000 checks on homes last

year.

- **RUOK:** A computerized, automated telephone system in which clients are called each morning at a designated time. If they do not answer the call, a posse member is dispatched to make sure they're OK.

"More often than not, he or she has gone to Laughlin on the bus for the day or just left for the day and forgot to notify the posse," Oppenheimer said.

- **Care Track:** Gives wristbands to clients with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia. If the person wanders from home, they can be tracked through individualized radio frequencies embedded in their wristbands.

- **Funeral Watch:** Posse members will wait outside a client's home in a marked patrol vehicle while the person attends their spouse's or significant other's funeral.

Oppenheimer said some people read obituaries and burglarize the homes while the owners are at funerals.

- **Citizen assists:** These include several forms of assistance including battery jumps and car lockouts.

Oppenheimer recalled one woman who called the posse saying she was having dinner

company and there was a dead mallard duck on her porch she wanted removed.

"I said, 'Ma'am, we don't do ducks,'" Oppenheimer said.

Because the woman didn't know what else to do, the posse sent out a member to pick up the duck in a trash bag. But when the posse member tried to put the bagged duck in the woman's trash can, she said she didn't want it there.

"She said, 'Put it in my neighbor's garbage can,'" Oppenheimer recalled.

On another call where the posse was assisting the fire department, Oppenheimer said he noticed a posse member was chatting outside with firefighters, which was unusual because the firefighters usually are inside helping the victim. He asked one of the firefighters if he was going to transport the victim to the hospital.

"He said, 'The lady has already changed outfits four times, and as soon as she decides what she wants to wear to the hospital, we're going to take her,'" Oppenheimer said.

For information about the Sun City Posse's services and programs, call 972-2555.

Posses brace for busy season

ANNUAL MIGRATION:

Residents heading north encouraged to sign up for Vacation Watch

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

It's that time of year again: the annual migration to cooler climes.

Which means it's also the time of year Sun City and Sun City West residents flood their respective posses with Vacation Watch requests. But phone calls alone won't ensure the posses will keep watch while residents are away.

"The people who are leaving for vacation and want us to check their houses, they've gotten the impression that all they need to do is call," said 1st Lt. Leta McCormick with the Sun City Sheriff's Posse.

Signing up for the free Vacation Watch service in Sun City or Sun City West isn't difficult by any means, but it does require filling out a request card. "A telephone call just doesn't do it," McCormick said.

"It's a five-minute thing," she said. The cards call for the residents' name, address, phone number and where they can be reached.

Gerry Niedzwiecki, who heads the Sun City West Posse's Vacation Watch, said it's also important people turn the forms in early to give the posse time to make sure the information is complete and entered into a computer before the homeowners leave town.

"If we have any questions afterwards, the people are still there and we can get a hold of them," Niedzwiecki said.

The posses also ask residents to choose a nearby neighbor or friend to hold a copy of their house keys in case there is a problem in the home. "If we see water coming out of the house, we want to be able to go in, and we don't go in ourselves because we don't want to intrude on the privacy of the home," McCormick said.

Niedzwiecki said the keyholder is called upon to lock windows or secure the home in other ways if the posse patrollers notice something isn't locked. In the rare event an intruder is in the home, keyholders won't be called upon.

"At that time we kind of back away. We call our duty officer and he determines we probably need to call a deputy at that time," Niedzwiecki said.

"The next big thing is, when they come back, please call us," she said. "We watch the house until they either call us or we go to their house and ring their doorbell at 5:30 in the morning" when rounds begin.

Not calling can lead to scary misunderstandings. Niedzwiecki experienced that firsthand.

"I went to check the door and the door opened and there was this person. I just about had a heart attack because no one's supposed to be there," she said. "If they come back even for a few days, call us. We don't want any surprises."

While homeowners are out of town, the posses need to know how to contact them in case there is a break-in, storm damage or any other kind of problem at the home.

"We want to know where you're going to be," Niedzwiecki said. Although the keyholders can access the home, the owners may need to make decisions on how to proceed if a problem is discovered.

Niedzwiecki said the Sun City West Posse tries to check homes once a week, but that's not always possible. Still, they are thorough, using golf cars so they can get out easily for inspections.

It helps if homeowners make sure their house numbers aren't obscured by bushes or trees; and that any tripping hazards such as tree-bracing wires or small

steps are marked with colored flags or tape.

"We need to be able to get around the house," Niedzwiecki said. "We don't want to trip and have an accident."

Niedzwiecki said some residences are more susceptible to break-ins than others. These include homes or condominiums with high walls where intruders can't easily be seen, as well as residences with alley access or those on corners or busy streets.

The posses collect newspapers or unsolicited material that are thrown on driveways of homes signed up for Vacation Watch in order to deter break-ins.

"You'd be amazed at the stuff that can accumulate in front of a person's home," Niedzwiecki said.

Randy Koeppen, circulation director for the Daily News-Sun, said subscribers

can call the newspaper to have their subscriptions placed on hold while they are away.

"From the standpoint of safety, having newspapers sitting in driveways is a tip-off that people aren't home," Koeppen said.

Another option, Koeppen said, is Daily News-Sun subscribers can now stop their driveway delivery and sign up for online delivery so they can view the newspaper on a computer exactly as it appears in print no matter where they are in the world.

"What folks can do is if they want to take the paper with them, they can call that 977-8347 and switch their delivery to online delivery," he said.

The greatest volume of Vacation Watch requests occurs from early April through October, Niedzwiecki said.

Tuesday alone, the Sun City West Posse received more than 60 requests.

Neither posse gives out exact numbers because of security concerns, but each encourages residents to get their cards filled out and turned in as early as possible.

"We're happy to do it, but without the proper information we can't," McCormick said.

OVER

VACATION WATCH

SUN CITY

Drop off cards at the Sun City Sheriff's Posse, 10861 Sunland Drive. Cards are available at the posse, as well as the following locations:

- Sun City Fire Station No. 131, 17017 N. 99th Ave.
- Sun City Fire Station No. 132, 11401 N. 99th Ave.
- Sun City Fire Station No. 133, 13013 N. 111th Ave.
- Bell Recreation Center, 16820 N. 99th Ave.
- Fairway Recreation Center, 10600 W. Peoria Ave.
- Lakeview Recreation Center, 10626 W. Thunderbird Blvd.
- Marinette Recreation Center, 9860 W. Union Hills Drive.
- Mountain View Recreation Center, 9749 N. 107th Ave.
- Oakmont Recreation Center, 10725 W. Oakmont Ave.
- Sundial Recreation Center, 14801 N. 103rd Ave.
- Sun City Bell Library, 16828 99th Ave.
- Sun City Fairway Library, 10620 Peoria Ave.

For information, call the posse at 972-2555.

SUN CITY WEST

Drop off cards at the Sun City West Posse, 20450 Stardust Blvd. Cards are available at the posse and the following locations:

- Board offices in the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center, 19803 R.H. Johnson Blvd.
- Sun City West Library at the R.H. Johnson Recreation Center.
- Property Owners and Residents Association Office, 13815 Camino del Sol.
- Sun City West Fire Station 101, 19001 N. Camino del Sol.
- Sun City West Fire Station 102, 20622 N. Stardust Blvd.
- Sun City West Fire Station 103, 13431 W. Deer Valley Road.

For information, call the posse at 584-5808.

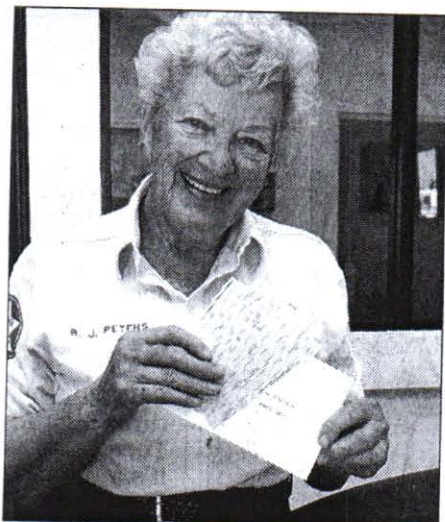
DAILY NEWS-SUN

To start or stop delivery of your Daily News-Sun newspaper, or to sign up for online delivery, call the circulation department at 977-8347.



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Gerry Niedzwiecki of the Sun City West Posse uses a golf car for Vacation Watch patrols the community.



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Betty Jane Peters of the Sun City Posse shows the Vacation Watch forms residents need to fill out before the service kicks in.

Posse members watch vacant Sun Cities homes

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

It's an unsettling sight that Bill Waits, commander of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse, has seen more than once.

While checking the homes of residents while they are out of town, he's spotted water flowing under the front door or out of the garage.

It's the sign of a leak that has sprung inside because of failed

washing-machine hoses, old pipes or other causes, Waits said.

"Unfortunately, we often discover water leaks," he said. "It's kind of a sickening feeling to see something like this."

Because of leaks and other kinds of problems, posse members in Sun City and Sun City West do periodic home checks, a year-round service known as Vacation Watch.

Waits, a five-year posse vet-

eran, said that for residents planning to leave town for cooler climates, it's time to sign up for the program.

Lt. Zoe Schreibman, a spokeswoman for the Sun City West posse, said posse volunteers check several things.

They make sure doors and windows are secure, she said.

"They look for anything out of the ordinary, such as broken water pipes or burst bubblers, downed trees or tree limbs,

roof damage or signs of intruders," Schreibman said.

Both posses offer these Vacation Watch tips:

■ Fill out Vacation Watch cards at least two weeks before leaving town. The cards are available at posse headquarters, recreation centers, fire stations and other locations.

■ Leave a house key with a responsible friend or neighbor so that posse members, if necessary, can gain access to a

home if problems are seen.

■ Make sure the posse is advised of planned dates for departure and return.

■ Don't allow trees or bushes to block views of windows or house numbers.

■ Double-check doors and windows before driving away.

For Vacation Watch information, the Sun City posse can be reached at (623) 972-2555. For the Sun City West posse, phone (623) 584-5808.

Posses patrol for recruits

FILLING VOID:

Sun City boosts ranks because of deployed safety personnel

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The war's impact has trickled down to Sun City, where the Sheriff's Posse is seeking recruits to help fill the void left by deployed emergency personnel.

"Part of the reason we're in such need of people is, so many of the firefighters and police have been called up for duty, so that leaves a lot of gaps," said Betty Wood, recruiting lieutenant for the Sun City Sheriff's Posse. "They call us for any extra help or anything they can't do."

The posse is seeking to fill those gaps by bringing new members into the fold.

In Sun City West, new members also are needed, although for different reasons, said Zoe Schreiber, public-information officer for the posse.

"We need many more people because, just as with any organization, our members age and we lose them to attrition," Schreiber said.

In Sun City, posse members must be at least 50, spend at least 10 months of the year in Sun City and hold a valid Arizona driver's license. They are asked to commit to working at least three patrols a month, with various shifts available.

"It's really a very minimal requirement," said Wood. "But most of the people, by the time they do their training and get in, they want to do a lot of things."

Duties Sun City Posse members can help with include Block Watch, Vacation Watch, mall security patrols during holidays and other special occasions,

To VOLUNTEER

■ **SUN CITY:** Call Betty Wood at 972-2555.

■ **SUN CITY WEST:** Call the recruiting office at 584-5808.

checks on businesses, and various other activities as needed including helping with traffic during ballgames, golf tournaments and other special events.

"Whatever comes up, the posse is there to do it," Wood said.

Earlier this year, the posse contributed 112 hours to the Fiesta Bowl parade. Last summer, 25 posse deputies contributed 905 hours and drove a combined 4,080 miles to help with the Rodeo-Chediski fire in the White Mountains.

In 2002, the Sun City Posse logged 86,310 hours of duty; of those, more than 39,000 were on daily patrols on Sun City's streets.

The posse has more than 100 members, but given the shift in other departments' resources, more volunteers are needed.

"It's just with some of the sheriff's deputies and firefighters having been called up for active duty, it leaves gaps," Wood said.

Volunteers can work various shifts. Training in traffic and other aspects of duties is provided, and new classes are forming.

The Sun City West Posse patrols more than 1,000 miles a day, 365 days a year, Schreiber said.

"The posse is always looking for men and women to serve in the posse. We are the eyes and ears and heart of Sun City West," she said. "The personnel and the equipment that are out on the road taking care of most emergencies with the help of the police and fire

From A1

department make this one of the safest communities in the country."

Sun City West's posse has fewer than 200 members but would like between 200 and 250 to help cover shifts when people are ill or on vacation, Schreiber said. "It's a good crowd of people because they're well trained," she said.

New recruits take more than 100 hours of training in law and legal issues, CPR, defensive driving, dispatching and vacation watch, she said.

"It's not something that's taught lightly. We have trained instructors who also train other posses such as Westbrook Village. We are a training facility," Schreiber said.

Katy O'Grady can be reached at 876-2514 or kogrady@aztrib.com.

SUN CITY SHERIFF'S POSSE

10861 Sunland Drive

Individuals interested in becoming Sun City Posse members must:

- Be at least 50 years old.
- Live in Sun City 10 months out of each year.
- Have a valid Arizona driver's license.
- Be willing to work three shifts per month and attend the monthly general membership meeting.
- Be in reasonably good health.

For information about joining the Sun City Posse, call 972-2555.

SUN CITY WEST SHERIFF'S POSSE

20450 Stardust Blvd.

Individuals interested in becoming Sun City West Posse members must:

- Be full-time residents.
- Have an Arizona license.
- Volunteer 20 hours a month, including three shifts and one general membership meeting per month.

For information about joining the Sun City West Posse, call the recruiting officer at 584-5808.

See POSSE, A5

OVER



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Jean Spence returns to the Sun City Sheriff's Posse headquarters after a special assignment delivering Operation Notification signs to businesses Tuesday. The posse is recruiting to buoy its ranks because of the deployment of fire and police personnel to the war in Iraq.

Posse cell phone home

SUN CITY: Sheriff group will give out emergency lines starting Monday

KATY O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Art Lulay and Robert Payne have seen what happens when seniors fall ill and can't call for help.

"Lots of times we'll enter a home and see someone on the floor, and if they'd had a cell phone ...," said Lulay, leaving the thought unfinished.

Lulay recalled one woman who had a medical alert necklace she could press to call for help — but she didn't have it with her when she needed it most.

"She was in the bathroom all night. Her necklace was in the bedroom," said Lulay, who last month was named Sun City Sheriff's Posse's 2002 Man of the Year. "It didn't do her any good."

Lulay, Payne and other posse members want to make sure other Sun Citians don't find themselves helpless with a lifeline just out of reach. So on March 3, the Sun City Posse will begin distributing hundreds of cellular phones free to residents who want them.

Payne said the posse often finds residents in need of help who have suffered for hours because they couldn't get to a telephone. Former Cmdr. Lois Goetz said these cases frequently involve someone who has broken a hip.

Posse patrolmen will inform people of the phone program after responding to scenes where these individuals are injured and can't call for help.

"It's usually for someone who lives alone," said Goetz. "We tell them to wear an apron so they can just put it in the pocket.

"Cell phones aren't going to do them any good if they fall down in the kitchen and the cell phone is in the bedroom," Goetz said.

Caregivers often come in requesting the phones for people, she added.

The phones can be used only to dial 9-1-1; any other number will simply give the



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Lois Goetz of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse office shows donated cell phones Wednesday. The office will begin distributing the phones Monday to any Sun City resident who would like to have them for emergency use. The phones can only be used to dial 9-1-1.

caller a message saying the number is not in service. The phones will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis while supplies last. The posse headquarters, 10861 Sunland Drive, are open from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. weekdays.

"I imagine we'll get a large rush when it first starts," said 1st Lt. Leta McCormick of the posse. "Basically, it's just a service we want to perform."

The posse has had the program for a couple of years.

The number of phones on hand has climbed to about 300, so members are again looking to unload some.

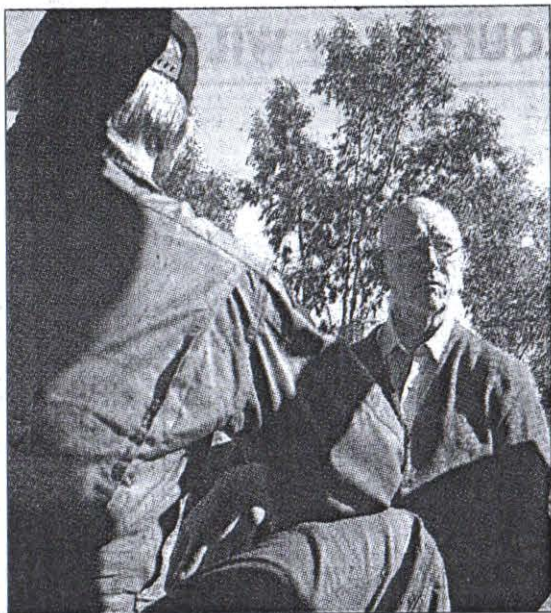
Phone donors can get a receipt valuing the donation at \$30 for tax purposes, but there are no requirements for recipients other than replacing batteries if they go dead. All batteries are fully charged when the posse gives them out, and all phones come with chargers.

"We show them how to

turn it on, show them how to dial," Goetz said. "We don't let them try them out because if they do, they'll call 9-1-1."

The posse also offers an RUOK program where volunteers call clients to check on them. If the clients don't respond, the posse is dispatched to check on them.

For information about RUOK, the free cell phones or any other posse program, call 972-2555.



PHOTOS BY JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Mit Thompson of Sun City checks out the Maricopa County Sheriff's helicopter at the Sun City Posse's 30th-anniversary open house Sunday. MCO deputy Mike Arend, a pilot, left, was on hand to answer questions. Below, Sheriff Joe Arpaio speaks to a standing-room-only audience.



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Mary Kay Hill greets Chuck Fisher, both of Sun City, at the Sun City Posse's 30th anniversary open house Sunday. This is Fischer's 26th year of volunteering for the group.

Posse riding into 4th decade serving Sun City

OPEN HOUSE: Volunteers reflect on banner moments in 30-year history

BRIAN POWELL
DAILY NEWS-SUN

When Chuck Fisher joined the Sun City Posse more than 25 years ago, he patrolled in his own car and relied on a phone call to direct him to his next assignment.

As the Sun City Posse celebrates its 30th anniversary this year, the 91-year-old active member looks back fondly on the early days.

"I was contemplating looking for work, but spent all these years and haven't made a penny," Fisher said. "I think it's a great idea rather than going out and making a buck."

Although the Posse now has its own headquarters, cars and dispatch service, the purpose of the group — to serve the residents of Sun City — remains the same. On Sunday, residents of Sun City were given the opportunity to experience it firsthand during

the Posse's annual open house.

"We have an open house every year and this just happens to be our 30th anniversary so it makes it more special," said Posse member Muriel Talcott, who co-chaired the event.

"It's a time to let the community come in, see the facilities — the briefing room, dispatcher room, vacation-watch room — and our fleet of cars in the garage," Talcott said. "To let people see what their money is paying for, and the community is wonderful to support it."

Cmdr. Bill Waits said before residents accepted as members, they must undergo screening and extensive training.

Waits said all posse members will go through an eight-week training program. To be accepted, residents must live in Sun City for 10 of 12 months. FBI background checks are also required.

The Sun City Posse was founded in 1973 by retired Navy Capt. Marvin Van Dera and soon established a relationship with the Maricopa

See POSSE, A5

OVER



JOY LAMBERT-SLAGOWSKI/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Residents applaud Sheriff Joe Arpaio at the Sun City Posse's 30th-anniversary open house Sunday when the sheriff tells about bringing inmate-meal costs down to 19 cents each and eliminating salt, ketchup and mayonnaise from the menu.

POSSE: Volunteers recall walkie-talkies, Reagan visit

From A1

County Sheriff's Office that continues to this day.

"They had the impression this being unincorporated with no police department, and the sheriff encompassing all of Maricopa County, that it was a good idea to have a more-or-less vigilante group," said Arthur Martin, who along with his wife, Dorothy, have been Posse members since 1979. The Martins also serve as the Posse historians.

In the early days, the Posse met wherever it could find space, from bank conference rooms to recreation centers. The members wore white, bubble hats and carried whistles, Arthur Martin said.

There were no radios but eventually money was raised to purchase walkie-talkies. In 1979, the Posse purchased four Ford Escort hatchbacks and operated them out of the Daily News-Sun parking lot, Martin said.

The Posse moved into its first building in 1983 at Peoria and 111th avenues. This

was the location where then-President Ronald Reagan visited — and became an official Posse member.

"That created more excitement for Sun City than anything that had happened before," Martin said.

In 1989, the Posse moved to its current headquarters at 10861 Sunland Drive. Since then, the Posse has added block watch, the "RUOK" and "Where Are You?" programs. Vacation watches continue to be one of the Posse's more demanding services.

Bill Ellsworth, the crime prevention officer who oversees Sun City's 672 block watches, is in his 19th year with the Posse.

"I've been a patrolman, executive officer, duty officer and commander, but there's something about going out and talking to these people on the block watch," Ellsworth said. "You feel that you are informing them of something they don't know about."

Jo Yeley, a Posse member and open house co-chair, said the Posse is about

helping people.

"We do vacation watches, help people who have fallen, unlock cars, take people to the hospital if a loved one is taken by ambulance ... and even take calls for lost dogs," Yeley said.

The "RUOK" program entails a Posse member calling a homebound senior every morning at a designated time. If no one answers, a patrol car is sent. The "Where are You?" program locates Alzheimer's disease patients who may have wandered away from their home. A bracelet is put on the patient, which the Posse can track using its radio system.

All Posse personnel volunteer their time, but the organization asks for donations once a year to buy cars and gasoline and pay for building maintenance and utilities. Last year, 160 Posse volunteers donated 87,056 hours.

The call to voluntarism has been affecting Sun City residents since the Posse's inception.

Fisher remembers his first

trip to Sun City 27 years ago when he saw a car with a metal decal on the side, which was the Posse identification before the group purchased its own vehicles.

"They said they're the Sheriff Posse of Sun City. I said this sounds great," Fisher said. "I came down the next year, moved in, and went over there the next day it sounded so good."

Martin remembers a few years back when seven or eight widows who all lived on the same cul-de-sac approached him.

"One day they asked if we could patrol the area because no men were living there," Martin said. "We would make it a point to go to that cul-de-sac and they were so appreciative."

"It makes you feel good as a person knowing you're doing something that's beneficial to people," Martin said.

Residents wanting to join the Sun City Posse are asked to call 972-2555.

Brian Powell may be reached at 876-2531 or bpowell@aztrib.com.

THURSDAY, FEB. 6, 2003

Sun City Posse celebrates 30th

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse is planning its 30th anniversary open house from 2 to 4 p.m. Sunday in the posse headquarters, 10861 Sunland Drive.

The posse originated in 1973 and has grown to include 160 volunteer members who donated a total of 87,056 hours in 2002.

The open house will include tours of the headquarters, demonstrations of their equipment, blood-pressure checks, refreshments and more. The special guest will be Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

All Sun City residents and their guests are invited. For information, call 972-2555.

Sun City posse vet elected commander

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

Bill Waits, a retired civil servant, has been elected as the 2003 commander for the Sun City Sheriff's Posse.

"I do enjoy the posse and the people I work with," Waits said.

Recruiting and updating posse records will be top priorities next year, he said.

Waits, 73, a five-year posse volunteer, was a narrow choice for the job, according to election results announced earlier this month.

Lois Goetz, the current commander, said nearly 160 posse members cast ballots



Bill Waits

and only a dozen votes separated Waits and Leta McCormick, the only other commander candidate. Waits said he has since selected McCormick, a retiree from Danville, Ill., to be his executive officer, making her the second in command.

McCormick said she jumped in the race so that Waits would have an opponent.

"My candidacy legitimized

his win," she said. "He's a great guy and he'll do a good job."

Waits, a nine-year Sun City resident, will take control Jan. 2. He now serves as the operations officer to Goetz, another top administrative position.

He said there's lots of satisfaction to be found in posse service, especially when volunteers perform welfare checks and find residents in need of medical help.

This often happens when worried relatives call, saying they have been unable to establish phone contact, Waits said.

Posse members may stop by a home and find that some-

one has fallen and needs assistance, Waits explained.

"We've found people who have been down for a couple of days," he said. "It's got to be painful and heartbreaking."

Sometimes, posse members stop by a home and find that somebody has died, he said.

Waits and his wife, Carolyn, moved to Sun City from California after he retired as an equipment supervisor for the Sacramento County Department of Public Works.

The posse, which serves under the auspices of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, relies solely on contributions for its annual budget, which is usually set at about \$300,000.

Volunteers conduct neighborhood patrols and other crime-prevention programs, including a watch of homes when residents are away.

The posse also performs other functions, including traffic control at accident scenes or crowd and traffic control at other kinds of events.

This year, posse members, including Waits, offered traffic assistance and other support roles as firefighters battled the "Rodeo-Chediski" wildfire that ravaged Arizona.

Waits said he made a trip to Show Low during the effort.

Posse leadership changes in Sun Cities

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Cmdr. Lois Goetz looks back proudly on her year leading the Sun City Posse.

"It's been a good year," the 13-year-posse veteran said Tuesday morning. "I enjoyed it, and I will miss it."

As commander, she mobilized posse members to serve at the Rodeo Fire near Show Low and even had some members search for dead bodies of illegal border crossers in the desert.

Tuesday morning, Goetz learned who will replace her.

Because the commander's position carries a one-year term — running from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, each December, Sun City and Sun City West posse members elect a new commander.

With mixed emotions, Goetz said she will continue to serve in the posse now that her term is up. Having volunteered more than 23,000 hours with the organization, come Jan. 1, Goetz will once again be a patrolwoman.

Replacing Goetz will be Bill Waits, a five-year posse veteran who came to Sun City nine years ago.

"I retired from public works in California before going on the road for 10 years RVing," he said. "Then my wife and I discovered Sun City."

The Sun City Posse, along with

its counterpart in Sun City West, provides an adjunct to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, which is the sole policing agency in the Sun Cities.

Mostly, the posse provides MCSO with many additional eyes and ears in the community. A big part of the posses' duties include vacation watch programs and traffic control. Posse members do not have policing authority and therefore cannot issue tickets or make arrests.

The Sun City Posse has approximately 160 members, all volunteers. Sun City West has about 178.

Although Sun City West has more members than Sun City, which is a bigger and more populous community, incoming SCW Posse Cmdr. Edwin Clark said recruitment is one of his top priorities. Clark was elected to the Sun City West Posse's top spot in October and takes the reins Jan. 1. He replaces outgoing commander Dick Cherry.

"When I joined the posse eight years ago, we had 225 members," Clark said. "Now, as fast as we get members, we have other members leaving. It's like a turnstile.

"We are helping out MCSO a lot more, and they are putting a lot of demands on us, so the focus this year will be on recruitment."

Clark moved to Sun City West in 1991 and joined the posse four years later.

RUOK is OK

Reports of demise are untrue

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

A recent caller to the Sun City Speak Out line was dismayed over the demise of the RUOK program in the community. However, there was no need for her to be distraught, RUOK is very much alive and healthier than ever, according to Emma Kochevar, one of the two members of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City who head the program for the community.

For more than a dozen years the Posse has been checking on the welfare of homebound individuals living on their own through the RUOK program.

The program is offered by the Sun City Posse in conjunction with the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. There is no charge for the service.

Those enrolled in the program are telephoned each day, about the same time, to check on their welfare, explained Ms. Kochevar. A computer at the Maricopa County Sheriff's office generates the daily phone call.

Since enrollees are expecting the call, if no one answers on the first call, a second call is placed a few minutes later. "If there is no response on the second call, the Posse is dispatched immediately," she

said.

"We are very conscious that the person may be down," she continued.

The program requires two people living outside the registrant's home to have keys, so someone is available to let the Posse members into the house. Neighbors usually fill that role.

"It is a very worthwhile program," Ms. Kochevar said. "It has saved quite a few lives.

"We have found people who have fallen in their homes and were unable to get up to answer their phone," Ms. Kochevar said.

"This is an important function of the Posse," she added. "MCSO works well with us."

Ms. Kochevar said the program "is going strong" and the Posse serves more than 60 people daily.

Citizens may register for the program by calling the Posse at 972-2555.

Ms. Kochevar said the Posse has given no thought to discontinuing the valuable community service. "Participation is greater than ever," she said.

If a person is enrolled in the RUOK program and does not receive a call, they are given a telephone number to call at

RUOK

Continued From Page 1

MCSO or they can call the Posse, Ms. Kochevar noted.

The RUOK program is also offered in Sun City West, but the Posse is not involved. It is instead operated by Del Webb Memorial Hospital.

"We discontinued the RUOK program at the time the Youngtown Police Department changed its dispatching to El Mirage," explained Dick Cherry, Posse past commander. That occurred in September 1999. "Youngtown used to do the dispatching for the program," Mr. Cherry added.

Under the auspices of Del Webb Hospital, the program is now known as the Telephone Reassurance Program.

It operates slightly different from the RUOK program in that the person enrolled must place the daily call rather than receive it, according to Julie Mudric, who oversees the program.

The program also differs from RUOK because participants receive a telephone call from a person rather than a computer.

"Having people staff the phones is a real plus," said Jane Harker, Sun Health director of volunteers. "Sun Health volunteers answer the phone with a cheery good morning

"We track the birthday of recipients and they are wished happy birthday on their special day," she continued. "We provide a really caring, personal touch."

Sun Health actually offers the Telephone Reassurance Program in both Sun City and Sun City West. "We have done the program in both communities for many years; more than 25 years in Sun City," she said.

There are about 300 people enrolled in the Boswell program in Sun City and 140 in the Webb program, Ms. Harker noted.

While the Sun City West Posse does not offer the RUOK program, it does have Where are You. "It is for people who tend to wander," said Posse Lt. Betty Clester.

"Participants wear an identification band," she continued. "We have a picture on file of the person.

"People come to the Posse headquarters to enroll some-

one," said Mr. Cherry, who is in charge of the program.

"We take down the description of the individual who wanders," Mr. Cherry added. "We ask if they drive? If so, what type of vehicle? We inquire as to what are their habits. Where do they like to go? That information, along with a picture, is put into the Way book."

About 50 Sun City West residents are currently enrolled, according to Mr. Cherry.



Photo by Mike Russo/Independent Newspapers

Bob Luger, a four-year veteran of the Sun City Posse, patrols Sun Shadows Square. The posses from Sun City and Sun City West will again perform holiday patrols of local shopping centers, as well as assisting at Arrowhead Towne Center.

PARKING LOT PATROLS

Annual duty for posses begins Nov. 29

By **Mike Russo**
Independent Newspapers

Holiday shopping season officially kicks off the day after Thanksgiving. This also signals the start of the season in which miscreants prowl shopping center parking lots preying upon unwary shoppers, helping themselves to items to line the bottom of their own Christmas tree.

It is not just merchants who anxiously await the annual shopping season. People scurrying about, trying to locate the perfect Christmas present, are fairly easily victimized by unscrupulous bargain seekers who are prepared to steal a prized package.

In an effort to make the holiday shopping season as safe and enjoyable as possible for local residents, the Sheriff's posses of Sun City, Sun City West and Westbrook Village will again lend their support to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and municipal law enforcement agencies in patrolling major shopping centers in the northwest Valley.

The Westbrook Village Posse is coordinating this year's effort at the regional

mall, the largest shopping center in the area.

Arrowhead Towne Center patrols will commence on Nov. 29, the traditional start of the holiday shopping season, with Sun City West's Posse handling the duties.

The posse will patrol the parking lot with two vehicles, each containing two posse members, according to Zoe Schreibman, Sun City West Posse spokeswoman.

"We will patrol Arrowhead Towne Center in two shifts on Nov. 29, from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.," Mrs. Schreibman said.

The Sun City West Posse will continue to assist with mall parking lot patrols through Christmas. "We will be patrolling during the busy parts of the day," Mrs. Schreibman said.

The Sun City Posse takes over the next day, patrolling the lot from 5 to 10 p.m., according to Ron Smith, posse spokesman.

Sun City's Posse will patrol each Saturday, Tuesday and Thursday through Christmas Eve.

"We will patrol on Saturday from 5 to p.m., except Dec. 21, when we will patrol from 6 to 11 p.m.," Mr.

Brown said.

The posse will cruise the mall's parking lot from 5 to 10 p.m. on Dec. 3 and 10 and will increase the patrol to 5 to 11 p.m. Dec. 17 and noon to 7 p.m. on Dec. 24.

On Thursday, patrol hours will be 5 to 10 p.m., except Dec. 19, when the hours will be 5 to 11 p.m., and Dec. 26 the posse will provide two shifts — 9 a.m.-4 p.m. and 4-11 p.m. "That is the busiest shopping day of the year, so we will work two shifts," Mr. Brown said.

The Sun City Posse will begin patrols of the Sun City's 12 shopping centers on Dec. 9 and will continue through Dec. 23, according to Mr. Brown.

"We will have two shifts per day, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 12:30 to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday," Mr. Brown said. The posse will use three cars, each staffed with two posse members to patrol the shopping centers.

"We will do foot patrols in local shopping centers," he said. "Posse members will walk around for awhile and then drive to their next assigned shopping center."

Car No. 1 will be

See **Patrols** — Page 5

OVER

Patrols

Continued From Page 1

assigned to patrol Grand Center East, Grand Center West, Sun Bowl Plaza East, Sun Bowl Plaza West and Thunderbird Plaza.

The second unit will patrol LeRhone East and West, Greenway Terrace and Campana Square.

The Promenade, Bell Camino Center and Sun Shadows Square will be patrolled by the third unit.

Patrolling shopping centers is part of the everyday duty for the Sun City West Posse, according to Mrs. Schreiberman.

"We have 12 square miles of town in Sun City West," Mrs. Schreiberman said. "It can be covered two to four times per shift by normal posse patrols."

While there is little theft in Sun Cities' shopping center parking lots, the posses urge shoppers to be alert.

"Be aware of your surroundings. That is most important thing," Mr. Brown said.

"People should always be aware of anyone walking behind them," he continued.

Shoppers should be very careful when departing a store, Mr. Brown noted. "Women should have a firm grip on their purse," he said. "There are people out there looking to snatch purses that are not held tightly."

People who think they are

being followed are urged to return to the store and seek assistance, according to Mr. Brown.

"Shoppers need to be aware of the surroundings," he said. "If they see something strange, turn around and go back into one of the stores and report it."

Even if people are not followed to their vehicles, they should be cautious before entering the vehicle. They should check under the vehicle and inside to make sure no nefarious characters are ready to grab them.

If someone should be accosted, keys can be used as a weapon, Mr. Brown pointed out. If keys are placed between the fingers, they can be used to gouge a prospective criminal.

"The biggest weapon they have is screaming," Mr. Brown stressed. "Draw attention to yourself if you feel you are in trouble."

Mrs. Schreiberman also suggests shoppers be leery of people asking questions. "They may try to get close enough to snatch a purse," she said.

Another suggestion to prevent the heartbreak of theft is to lock your vehicle and keep packages out of site. "Packages should be placed in the trunk. Out of sight," Mr. Brown said.

"Never store packages in plain view and don't throw a blanket over them in the backseat," Mr. Brown continued. "That is too obvious."

In addition to helping

Parking lot safety tips

Sun City and Sun City West posses suggest 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.

- Hold your vehicle keys between your fingers. They can be used as a weapon in repelling a mugger's advance.

- Do not hide a spare set of keys anywhere in your vehicle.

- At night, always park in a well-lit area. Also, do not shop alone. If possible go shopping accompanied by someone.

- Avoid parking spaces where the view may be obstructed by buildings or shrubbery.

- Always lock your vehicle doors.

- Keep your purse with you at all times. Do not place it in a shopping cart, where it might be forgotten.

- Store packages in the trunk, out of sight of wandering eyes.

- Check under the vehicle before entering. Some thieves like to hide under vehicles and grab victims by the ankles and pull them to the ground where they are not as readily able to defend themselves.

- Peer into the vehicle's back seat before entering to be sure no one is waiting to ambush you.

ensure the safety of shoppers, the posse members also assist folks with other problems, such as jump-starting dead batteries, assisting people locked out of their vehicle and helping people locate vehicles.

"We cruise around and help people find their cars,"

Mr. Brown said. "We make ourselves visible," in an effort to deter criminals.

"If we see a person with a lot of bundles, we will keep an eye on them until they reach their car," Mrs. Schreiberman said. "We will assist when someone needs help in locating their car."

Posse women are multi-talented



Recognized as Posse Person of the Year-1998 Gerry Niedzwiecki (r.) shared the honor with her husband Dick (l.) and receives an embrace from former Posse Cmdr. Dick Cherry at an award ceremony in January, 1999. Photo, Bill Flocks

By Randy Altenhoff

Continuing our background series on Sheriff's Posse women in Sun City West, it seems the smaller number of women volunteers have excelled statistically beyond their male counterparts in receiving recognition—not because they are women, but because they come into the organization with prior training in administration.

Many worked as secretaries yet some have joined with only advanced skills in running a family or child-rearing. Patience seems to be the thread that binds their abilities to excel, as none expressed a desire to be a chief or supervisor, only to be useful and serve the community as needed.

An outstanding example is Lt. Gerry Niedzwiecki (say it fast and it sounds like Needswick) from Utica, Mich., a suburb of Detroit, who came to Sun City West in 1986 with her husband Dick. Together, they joined the Posse in 1987. The Niedzwiecki's now have been married 47 years and have two sons, two daugh-

ters and eight grandchildren.

Before moving to SCW, Gerry attended Macomb College in Michigan and majored in Accounting & Computer Science besides working in the registrar's office.

When joining the Posse, Gerry chose to work in the data processing department and the Vacation Watch department a few months later. Dick, with a background in automobile repair and maintenance, eventually became the Posse Vehicle Maintenance Officer.

When asked about her Posse experience, she related: "While in the Posse, I have served as a dispatcher, still do car patrol, and, of course, do Vacation Watch Patrol. I also have worked with the recruiters and have done Search & Rescue. I served a three-year term on the Board of Directors and, while a member of the Board, served on various committees. I was voted "Co-Posse Person of the Year" (with hus-

band Dick) for the year 1998.

"I really enjoy the nearly 15 years that I have been a Posse person! I especially like doing what I do on Vacation Watch. In the office each day our dedicated staff works as a team, but going out in the community and checking houses is an individual effort. I get to do both! Posse people are like family, when we need help checking houses during the summer months, those who usually do other things always come through for us with additional duties. That's what family does! We sure could use some more Posse people, especially more ladies!

"Other things too, are important to me. I am a member of the Computer Club and play a rare game of golf. Dick and I are in a Bocce league, a neighborhood card group and we travel a lot around the country to see family and friends. We also enjoy travel to far-off places.

"It's great to be retired and live in Sun City West!"

Nancy Cherry, a resident serving her community

By Randy Altenhoff

Nancy Cherry is the first and, to date, only female to be elected as a Sun City West Posse commander. Her work experience as a human resource and facilities manager prior to retirement, provided good training for her as commander in 1998.

Between working at the Posse and playing golf two or three times a week, Nancy also serves as secretary and a director for the Sun City West Community Fund. She says that her job is very rewarding when the Community Fund is able to provide financial assistance to residents that are less fortunate than she and her husband.

"The Posse has been rewarding, education and fun," she said. "The reward comes about when

friends and other residents comment about how safe it is here in our community. To deter crime, assist motorists, perform traffic direction and control, help a wife or husband that has a spouse being taken to the hospital, assist in locating a wandering resident and being a part of the many other services that are provided by the Posse to the community, gives you a very good feeling."

"The seven years I have been a Posse member has provided numerous opportunities to learn about many different risks that we face on a daily basis and to learn about scams that are never-ending. I have learned how to handle myself in a shopping center parking lot and on a detail to search for a missing person.



SCW Posse Past Cmdr. Nancy Cherry

"I learned how to administer first aid and perform CPR. I have been trained to direct traffic around an accident and have attended a training class on railroad disasters. Understanding how credit card fraud and telephone scams are other training sessions I have attended.

"Fun for me is dispatching, managing the communications

between the Posse base and the cars on patrol, or being on patrol throughout the community; the things you see and hear are sometimes funny, but always interesting. It is also enjoyable because of being on the Posse, to know so many Sun City West residents and be greeted on the street or in the store. It makes you feel that you are really at home.

"Sun City West, what a great place to call home," she concluded.

OVER

SCW Posse is determined to add more women

By Randy Altenhoff

A study of the personnel files at the Sun City West Sheriff's Posse revealed a glaring imbalance of women to men ratio. Investigation shows the women who are Posse members have done very well in their jobs and they admit to great job satisfaction and "few regrets." Each year, The Wester encourages residents to consider joining the all-volunteer Posse, an elite group of residents who serve the community's police and traffic safety department, saving the community at least a million dollars annually.

This year, The Wester will change its approach, if women represent less than 15% of the Posse organization, then the goal is to help the Posse achieve parity.

Originally, leaders of the Posse were looking for a 35% increase in volunteers to help maintain sufficient manpower to provide citizens adequate protection. Throughout the country, women have joined various law enforcement organizations and excelled at every turn.

Just as "Rosie the Riveter," proved capable of replacing men on the production line, women have succeeded in areas never

before considered: the military, the space program, the FBI to name a few.

At the local level, one has only to look at our own Posse and Nancy Cherry, the first woman commander, appointed in 1998. Audrey Clampitt, a lieutenant in less than five years, Gerry Niedzwiecki, on the force since 1987 and a lieutenant in charge of the Vacation Watch section.

Each had their own reasons to join, each chose their own path, not to climb any ladder but, to contribute to the community and achieve a sense of personal satisfaction that they have given back to society after all the years of receiving.

Lonely? Ask any of the women and men who serve on the Posse whether or not they have ever been lonely. Friendless? I doubt any one person would feel they haven't gained several true friends among their classmates and associates.

To provide readers with a better prospective of the kind of women who have found adventure, excitement, mental stimulation and a new perspective on life, The Wester will publish a biographical sketch of 10 women

who serve on the Posse.

The series will show one is never too old, never too heavy, never too thin, the untrained become trained, the sickly become better and those who eventually become ill found themselves with local friends who called upon them and checked to see how they could help.

If the reader is beginning to feel oversell on the benefits and self respect gained by being a member of our community's finest, know that this reporter joined the Posse two years ago and can personally relate or attest to the satisfaction expressed by each of the biographical sketches in this series.

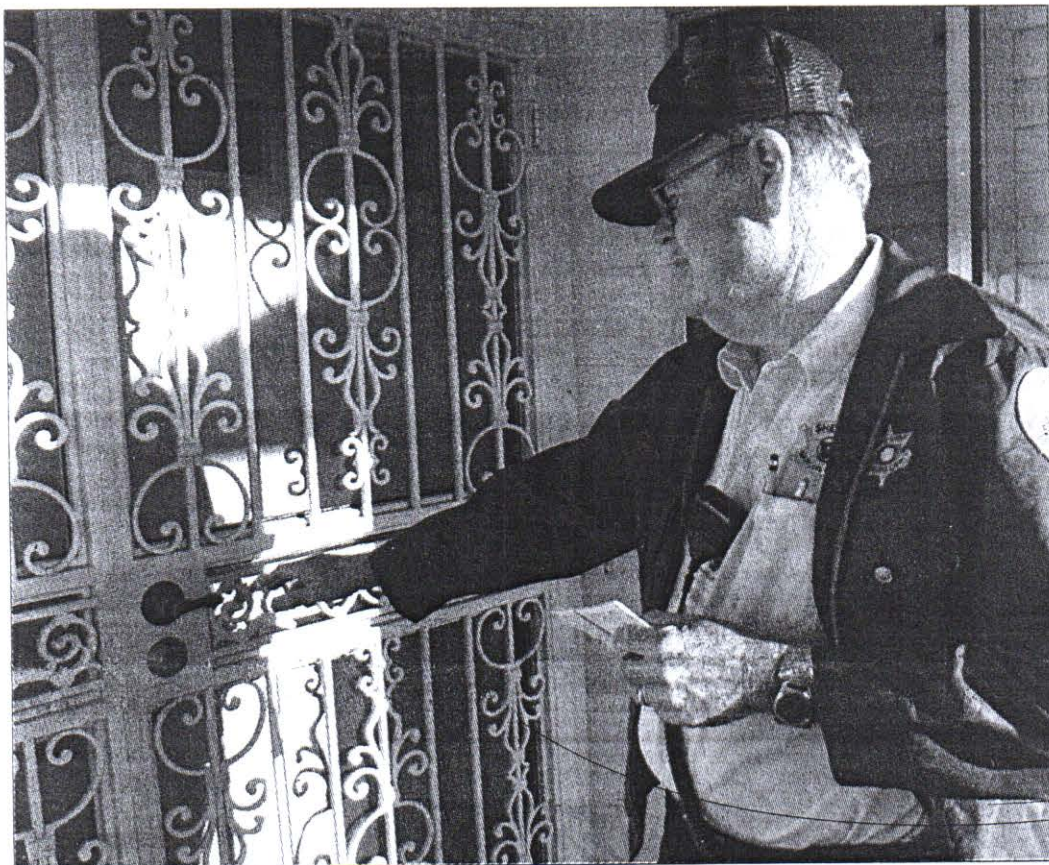


Photo by Jeremy Pearlman/Independent Newspapers

Harold Rucker, of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West, checks on a home as part of the vacation watch program. The Posses from both Sun City and Sun City West check on the residences of citizens in their communities who have registered with the program.

A SENSE OF SECURITY

Posse provides watchful eye for vacationers

By **Jeremy Pearlman**
Independent Newspapers

As summer's heat approaches, so does the migration of Sun Cities' winter resident population to cooler climates in the north.

In preparing for the journey away from the winter's nest, "snowbirds" should consider signing up for the vacation watch program, provided separately by the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City and Sun City West for residents of those communities.

The vacation watch program is designed to provide some peace of mind for those residents who are departing from the community for a length of time.

While citizens are away, members of the Posse periodically check on residences which have been registered in the program looking for anything out of the ordinary.

Posse members in both communities check homes in uniform. In Sun City, Posse members perform vacation watch check in patrol cars, while in Sun City West, Posse members perform vacation watch checks in Posse golf cars and occasionally in patrol cars.

"I think it gives (residents who have left) a bit of comfort that somebody is doing something to watch their house," said Nick Bader, an associate member of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West who's worked in that organization's

vacation watch program for nearly a decade. "The bad guys know we're looking at the houses and that they might be conceivably caught."

If a theft does occur while a registered resident is away, action can start much sooner than when the resident returns from their trip.

"If there was a break-in, the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office would be notified much sooner than when they (the residents) get back in October," said Master Sgt. Jean Spence, who is in charge of the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City's vacation watch program.

Both vacation watch pro-

See ■ WATCH, Page 3

gram are not just for theft prevention.

"We've also found running water, packages by the door but not newspapers, they are usually canceled," Master Sgt. Spence said.

When a resident signs up for the vacation watch program, the Posses ask for a slew of pertinent information, such as length of departure and return date, telephone number where the

resident can be reached and the name and contact information of a local key holder with whom the Posse can get in touch in case of a problem.

"The most important thing is to have a local contact here," said Zoe Schreiberman, public information officer for the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City West. "You should have a key holder close enough to help."

It is also suggested that resi-

dents not allow shrubbery to obscure house numbers or block windows, that all newspapers be stopped.

Those remaining in the community over the summer months can also provide assistance.

"It's very important for people to help neighbors," Mr. Bader said. "Pick up newspapers and phone books."

To sign up for the program in Sun City, registration cards are

available at Posse headquarters, 10861 Sunland Drive, as well as all recreation centers and fire stations.

In Sun City West, registration cards are available at Posse headquarters, 20450 Stardust Blvd.; at the Property Owners and Residents Association building, 13815 Camino del Sol Blvd.; the R.H. Johnson Library, 13801 Meeker Blvd.; all of the fire stations.

KEEPING CLOSE WATCH

Device provides protection for Alzheimer's victims

By **Jeremy Pearlman**
Independent Newspapers

Individuals suffering from Alzheimer's disease have a penchant for wandering off, causing worry and concern for family, friends and caregivers.

In Sun City where temperatures can go from stifling highs to chilling lows, those wandering in the elements can be in tremendous danger if lost for a long period of time.

While it may be impossible to prevent an Alzheimer's sufferer from wandering, a free program offered by the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City may help in the swift recovery of those lost in the community.

Using equipment initially designed to track animals released into the wild, the Posse is able to locate participants who are wandering from up to 1 1/2 miles away.

Participants are furnished with a special transmitting wristband that broadcasts a unique frequency the Posse can track using a hand-held antenna. The wristbands can only be removed by cutting them off.

"You can shower in it and everything," said Sgt. Emma Kochevar of the Posse. "The wristbands are completely waterproof."

Sunshine Services places the wristbands on the individual, schedules routine battery replacement and provides service to the devices. The monthly \$8 battery replacement cost is funded by the Posse Memorial Fund.

When an individual is signed up for the program, the Posse collects the individual's physical description, a list of physical impairments and emergency contact information.

Currently only seven individuals are enrolled in the program. The Posse has the capability to outfit many more Alzheimer's patients.

Master Sgt. Anna Albert



Photo by Jeremy Pearlman/Independent Newspapers

Training to find a wandering Alzheimer's disease sufferer, Sheriff's Posse of Sun City members Bill Hart, left, and Joe Orlando scan the back areas of Posse grounds using an antenna which can track specialized transmitters up to a 1 1/2 miles away. The Posse is registering Sun City residents with the disease to receive a transmitter at no cost to the individual.

believes the program provides reassurance for family members, friends and caregivers that their loved one can be located quickly.

"I think it's going to be especially important when it's hot," Sgt. Albert said. "We hope to find people within 15 minutes."

The Posse recently began training some of its staff on how to use the antenna to track wandering individuals. It is planned to have every member trained to use the equipment.

Posse picks female commander

3rd such head in 27 years of SC volunteers

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

Lois Goetz, a retired educator from Michigan, has been elected by her colleagues as the 2002 commander of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse.

"I'm looking forward to the challenge," Goetz said.

Goetz is only the third woman in the posse's 27 years to direct the group.

One of her predecessors, Eileen Weber, who guided the volunteer organization in 1996, calls Goetz an excellent pick.

"She's a hard worker," Weber said. "She's very capable. She'll do a good job."

The only other female commander, Maurine "Babe" Barkdoll, who led the posse in 1983, died two years ago.

Goetz, a 12-year posse volunteer, assumes command Jan. 2, taking the place of Wylie Haukland, this year's commander. She now serves as Haukland's executive officer,

the No. 2 posse job.

She was the runaway choice for the top post, according to election results released Tuesday during a posse meeting.

Goetz captured 83 votes, while posse board members Bill Waits and Don Smith received 30 votes and 18 votes, respectively, officials said.

There were 137 posse members eligible to vote, and all but four cast ballots, said Jack Daly, a posse spokesman.

Goetz and her husband, Leo, a posse volunteer, have lived in Sun City since 1987. Both retired as educators in Allen Park, Mich., a Detroit suburb.

The posse, which operates

under the auspices of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, relies solely on contributions for its annual operating budget, now set at about \$300,000.

It conducts neighborhood patrols and other crime-prevention programs, including 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 events.



Brent Whiting/The Arizona Republic

Lois Goetz will head the Sun City Sheriff's Posse.

Reach the reporter at brent.whiting@arizonarepublic.com or (602) 444-6925.

Vacation watch slows

SUN CITY POSSE: 6 dedicated volunteers coordinate program

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The prime time for vacation watch is coming to an end for the Sun City Posse — some 25,000 door checks later.

Vacation watch consists of posse members making periodic stops at vacationers' homes, checking doors, yards and windows to make sure there is nothing suspicious happening while the homeowners are out of town.

"It's a lot of work for the posse guys, getting in and out of their cars to do the checks in the heat," said Jack Daly, Sun City Posse spokesman. "But the whole thing is performed because of the work of six very dedicated ladies who organize all the watches."

Those volunteers are Maryellen Daly, Marguerite Norris; Anne Paull,

Edna Rolle, Jean Spence and Beverly Weinmann. The primary duties of the six coordinators are to sort out the details of each vacation watch and schedule posse members to make the necessary rounds to homes each day.

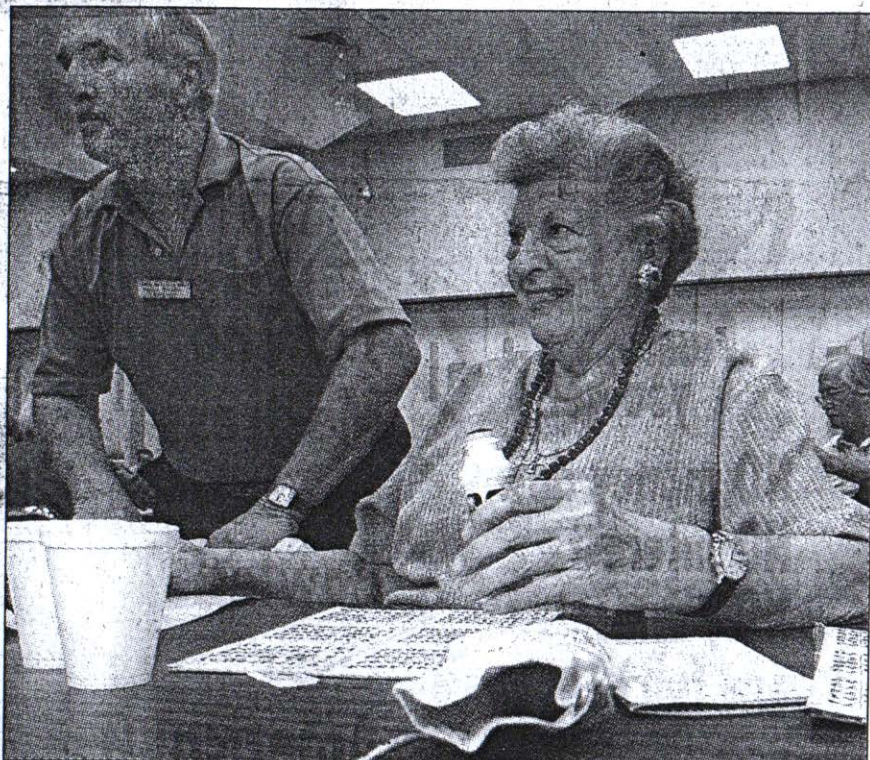
For the most part, the ladies are pulling vacation-watch cards out of a large filing cabinet, figuring out which houses need to be checked and divvying out the cards to officers.

Each house that is signed up for a vacation-watch patrol gets checked a number of times, depending on the length of the owners' vacation, Daly said. In the summer, people are gone anywhere from a three-day weekend to several months.

"I enjoy doing it," Norris said. "It keeps me busy and there's a lot of detail to it. During the summer it gets really busy."

And although summer is winding down and winter residents are returning to Sun City, vacation

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MOLLIE J. HOPPE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Dick Crapo and Evelyn Allegrezza enjoy bingo at Sundial Recreation Center Thursday evening. He returned from Michigan and she came back from Massachusetts last month.

From A1

watch will remain busy. As of last week, 1,300 vacationers came back to Sun City for the winter, but there are hundreds more yet to come, according to Daly.

"At any one time, there are 3,500 people gone," Daly said. "This year we had about 2,900 people leave during the summer, but this month is when most of them will be coming back."

For each person going out of town and signing up for a

vacation-watch patrol, an index card with vital information must be filled out at the posse building. The cards are then entered into a computer program.

All the work is done by the six coordinators.

"During the summer, the longest I was here is seven hours one day," Norris said. "On average, we have a couple of people putting in four to five hours a day for vacation watch."

The vacation-watch program is becoming more

popular — meaning more work for the volunteer coordinators — largely due to its effectiveness in keeping vacant homes secure.

"We will make several patrols throughout the weeks someone is gone," Daly said. "And we make it a point to go to a home the day after someone leaves to make sure all the doors and windows are locked."

Daly said there have been times when he checks on homes the day after someone goes on vacation and finds

garage doors open and front doors unlocked.

"When people leave on vacation, they are sometimes in a hurry and excited and they forget to lock up," he said. "So we check them right away and do the necessary things to secure the home."

For information about the vacation-watch program, call the Sun City Posse at 972-2555 or the Sun City West Posse at 584-5808.

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or 876-2526.

Sun City Posse tracks down new recruits

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A letter from the Sun City Posse a few years ago convinced Jack Daly to join the organization.

The letter was part fund-raiser and part recruitment, and it did its job. Posse members are now trying to snag more recruits like Daly through their mailing this year.

On Wednesday, about 100 members of the Sun City Posse spent most of the day stuffing envelopes for their annual mailing.

"We are expecting to get anywhere between \$200,000 and \$250,000 to come in with this year's mailing," Daly said. "With our recruitment, we will probably get about 15 people who will be qualified to become new members."

Each year, the Sun City Posse sends out about 26,000 letters to residents asking for money to keep the organization running, and for potential new recruits. The letters will be sent out Saturday with

residents receiving them by Oct. 1.

"This is our only form of getting income," said Leo Goetz of the posse. "We don't ask for a certain amount of money, just whatever people want to give in support of what we do."

The posse has conducted the mass mailing fund-raiser for the last 29 years. Residents' contributions make it possible for the posse to continue serving the community. In the past year, posse members accounted for 91,574 hours of volunteer service to the community, including 36,254 vacation watch inspections.

"The mailing is our only source of income," Daly said. "The money will be used to run the posse. Nobody here gets one nickel of salary, but there are expenses that need to be paid."

The Sun City Posse has 15 patrol cars, two vans, one pickup, uniforms and building expenses. Without the money, the posse wouldn't be able to conduct many of the

services residents have come to expect, Daly said.

"Being high profile is the name of our game," Daly said. "We do many patrols and help out in all medical responses. We are there as a community service to the people."

In addition to vacation watch programs, the posse also keeps an eye on homes during funerals to ensure they aren't burglarized during their owners' time of mourning.

"We have a good bunch of people here," said Con Callaway of the posse. "They are very dedicated people and do a good job serving the community."

There are 160 members of the Sun City Posse, but more are needed. Posse officials are hoping that enclosing a recruitment card with the fund-raising mailing will get a few candidates for the job.

"It worked for me," Daly said. "And there are a lot of people who really want to help us, but who cannot. We usually get a lot of response for volunteers, but only about 15

pan out."

Citing the job as a continuum, Daly said there are members who come and go at the posse at a regular basis. Because the recruitment is made up of seniors, Daly said it is important to keep recruiting people to fill the positions that are vacated on a yearly basis.

"Like the rest of the community, we are having trouble finding volunteers as well," he said.

Posse officials expect to start hearing back from the community mailing by the end of October. If all goes as planned, new recruits will be signed up and money will start coming in more steadily by the end of the year.

Traditionally, about 40 percent of the letters sent out get returned with some sort of donation, Daly said.

The Sun City West Posse is starting its annual fund drive in mid-October.

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or at 876-2526.

Sun City Posse gets SMART

By JULI NESSETT
Independent Newspapers

The Sun City Sheriff's Posse recently acquired a new piece of equipment to help educate the people of the City of Volunteers — the Speed Monitoring Awareness Radar Trailer.

SMART was purchased by the posse through a donation from a resident's estate. The resident stipulated the money be used for the betterment of Sun City.

"It was very generous on their part," said Posse Lt. Bill Waits.

The new device looks similar to other radar units but has several upgraded features. SMART contains a small computer which collects numerous useful items, such as number of vehicles that pass by the device, speed of each vehicle, highest concentration of speed violators in a specified period of time and 15-minute traffic flows. The unit also tracks cars going both ways on the road which it is situated on.

SMART will also make it much easier for the posse, which prior to receiving the unit had to stand near radar units and physically log each car driving 10 miles per hour over the speed limit.

The information that SMART accumulates is then attached to a PC, printed out and forwarded to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

MCSO then uses the information to decide where to place its officers in order to catch and ticket speeders.

SMART may also be placed at targeted intersections where high concentrations of accidents are occurring.

SMART clocks and displays the miles per hour of a vehicle passing by and if the car is going over eight miles an hour above the speed limit, the number will flash.

"So you understand you are jeopardizing the people of Sun City," said Posse Volunteer Jack Daly.

Mr. Daly said this new device will be very beneficial to the people of Sun City.

"There are many of us whose reflexes aren't so good. Some of us are on medication and some of us don't see or hear as well as we used



Photo by JULI NESSETT/Independent Newspapers

The Sun City Posse recently received a new radar unit — SMART. From left, Lt. Ken Colbert, MCSO; Captain Ron Stoner, captain of MCSO District 3; Lt. Bill Waits and Con Callaway observe its operation.

to," Mr. Daly explained.

"We also have a lot of people who use the street rather than the sidewalk when they are exercising. Plus, we have a lot of golf cars out here," said Lt. Waits.

SMART operates on two car bat-

teries and solar panels. It can be left out for up to eight days, without recharging the batteries.

Cost of SMART was approximately \$13,000.

The posse will begin using SMART some time in August.

Posse dismissal leads to unrest

Former commander dies in Nebraska

SUN CITY:
Volunteers claim morale is low, want to discuss issues with MCSO

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Five Sun City Posse members upset at their commander's dismissal are demanding answers from the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

Two Sun City Posse members have resigned in the past two weeks because of the situation, and unrest among a handful of members is rising. The local posse has about 290 members, but numbers have been dropping since Box's termination.

"All in all our morale is low, we're losing people and we don't have any rights,"

posse member Ed Olberding said. "Morale is rock bottom, and I don't like what's going on. I hate to say too much, but they didn't like Wil (Box, the former commander). It's us against them, and I'm about fed up with it."

Box, a five-year veteran and former commander of the Sun City Posse, was terminated from his position in late January for insubordination, according to Maricopa County Sheriff's Office officials. His termination did not need to be justified, MCSO officials said, because posse members serve at "the pride and pleasure of the sheriff." The action, though, has spawned an outcry from Box's former colleagues.

"What we want is to have a sit-down meeting with (MCSO officials) and be able to address each of the issues they gave for his

termination," posse member Bryan Foley said. "We will be able to counter all of their claims."

Box, who had been in a coma in the intensive care unit of a Nebraska hospital from an unrelated accident, passed away Tuesday afternoon. He was in the midst of preparing a civil lawsuit against the Sheriff's Office, the posse's parent organization, when he was hospitalized and claimed sheriff's officials had not given him a reason for his termination.

Through Freedom of Information Act requests, the Daily News-Sun received a copy of Box's personnel records. One of the documents dated June 5, 1996, was signed by Box, and included a sentence that reads, "Your commission card

See Box's family. A5

STAFF REPORT

On the same day as Maricopa County Sheriff's Office officials gave a reason for Wil Box's termination, he died in a Nebraska Hospital.

Box, 73, a five-year veteran and former commander of the Sun City Posse, was hospitalized a month ago while attending a wedding in Omaha. He slipped on some ice getting out of a car, hit his head and had to undergo emergency surgery to remove a blood clot from his brain. Following the surgery, he fell into a drug-induced coma from anesthesia during the surgery, and he remained on life support until his death.

Long-time friend Bryan Foley said funeral arrangements are being made through his family in Oakland, Calif.



DAILY NEWS-SUN FILE PHOTO

Wil Box, who was dismissed as commander of the Sun City Sheriff's Posse, died Tuesday in Omaha, Neb.

(over)

is a privilege extended by the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office and may be revoked at any time at the discretion of this office."

In addition, MCSO Deputy Chief Frank Munnell said Tuesday that Box was informed of the reasons behind his termination, and they included insubordination and a couple of harassment complaints.

"The fact that he kept on telling everyone that I never gave him a reason was absolutely false," Munnell said. "But the thing about it is I didn't want to throw any rocks, but I am just tired of biting my tongue about this."

Foley, however, said the claim of insubordination was contrived by MCSO officials bent on bringing closure to the issue.

"I was told that I was to keep my mouth shut about the situation," Foley said. "Now that I am talking about it, I know that I will be getting one of those letters from Munnell, but I just don't care anymore. What are they going to do? Take my badge? It's just not worth it to me because I think what happened to Box is totally out of line."

Until Tuesday, MCSO officials were tight-lipped about Box's termination, and said there didn't need to be justification for a posse member's

dismissal.

"There really doesn't have to be a justification for getting rid of somebody in a volunteer position," said Detective Bill Knight, MCSO spokesman. "Posse members work at the pride and the pleasure of the sheriff, and in the end, it is he who has final say on who stays or doesn't."

That reasoning, combined with Box's termination, led to the resignations and unrest among posse members. Olberding said he predicts up to five more people will resign as a result, and he might be one of them.

"I've had two heart attacks, and I don't need another one dealing with those people downtown," he said. "People in the sheriff's office look down on us like we are nothing. It's getting to the point where I'm not even happy to go in there now."

According to Foley, many posse members are unwilling to speak out against the sheriff's office in fear of retribution, but they have expressed their discontent internally within the organization.

Floyd Ruhnke, who officially retired from the posse last week, cited the Box incident as his reason for leaving.

"It has everything to do with Wil Box," he said. "My retirement was due to the manner in which the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office

and the local administration of the posse handled the Wil Box situation."

Bernard Groenewold, who resigned from the posse this week for the same reason, said Box's termination serves as a grim reminder of MCSO's policies.

"We serve as volunteers at the pleasure of the sheriff, and it now appears we have no rights if a complaint or wrongdoing occurs," he said. "I am not willing to be subjected to the unreasonable treatment as afforded to Cmdr. Box, and I no longer wish to be part of the organization."

Because of Box's death, the threatened lawsuit is on hold, but his family reports they are not above taking the case to court posthumously.

Box's son, William, said the matter can be closed permanently if the meeting between posse members and MCSO officials takes place. He said he thinks the meeting would clear Box's name and reputation, in which case any pending lawsuits would be dropped.

One specific incident that Foley said should be discussed at the meeting is a personnel matter involving a posse member who was in an accident with a posse vehicle. Following the accident, the posse's board of governors revoked the individual's driving privileges, and that, Foley said, led to Box's dismissal.

Shortly thereafter, Box was

contacted by Munnell and asked to reinstate the individual's driving privileges. Box refused and said if a direct order was given to that effect, he would resign.

In a letter written by Box after his termination, he cites that instance as a reason for his termination.

Foley said Munnell knew the posse's 12-member governing board unanimously voted to revoke the individual's driving privileges, and that Box had no control over that vote.

"If you listen to Munnell, he makes it out that Box and the posse didn't try to help this individual," Foley said. "But in fact, the individual was given a vehicle allowance to use his own car."

Munnell denied that the conversation led to Box's dismissal.

But no matter the reason behind Box's termination, Olberding said, MCSO officials have practiced ill-will toward the Sun City Posse, and that will begin hurting residents soon.

"People tell me that I shouldn't quit the posse because it will hurt the community," he said. "But what about us? We live in Sun City too and we are being hurt every day we show up for work."

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or at 876-2526.

MCSO divulges reasons for firing

SUN CITY POSSE: Deputy chief cites insubordination in commander's dismissal

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Angry with what they call misinformation, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office officials gave their reasons this morning for terminating Wil Box.

Box, a former Sun City Posse commander who was relieved of his duties in late January, contended he was never given a reason for his abrupt dismissal, but MCSO Deputy Chief Frank Munnell said otherwise.

"I've been having to bite my tongue when I see what Mr. Box had been telling everyone," he said. "But I think it's now time to cut to the chase. He was told why he was terminated, and we are still investigating other complaints made against Mr. Box."

Munnell said there was not one specific instance attributed to Box's termination, but rather a culmination of various infractions of insubordination.

"There was more than one issue," he said. "And when it comes down to it, no man is above the posse, and Box's mission was not the sheriff's mission."

On Jan. 27, Box wrote a letter to his former colleagues telling them that he was dismissed from the organization because he earlier threatened to resign over a personnel issue.

In the letter to members, Box said his abrupt

termination came in retaliation from his actions concerning a posse member who has been "a constant source of problems and dissension for the past six years."

Box said the member alleged to cause these problems was relieved of his normal patrol duties for performance and health reasons. But last September, according to Box, Munnell asked that the individual be put back on active patrol. Box refused, and said if a direct order was issued, then he would resign.

"That is totally false," Munnell said. "Mr. Box did receive a phone call from me, but it was asking him to provide transportation to this individual. There was never any order issued, and there was never anything said about putting him back on active patrol. But beyond that, there

are other issues besides that individual that contributed to his termination."

Through his letter, though, Box said it was that conversation that led to his dismissal.

"On Monday, January 22, 2001, at approximately 1330 hours," he wrote in his letter, "Deputy Chief Munnell told me that he instituted this action in retaliation for my challenging his authority with the perceived threat of resignation as posse commander over the problem."

Munnell said Box's insistence of placing blame for his termination on the performance of the individual is denying the facts.

"A week after I asked him as a favor to provide transportation to the individual," Munnell said, "Box suspended the individual for three months for breaking the chain-of-command. That was unnecessary, and it came

after I told Box the importance of (this individual) to the sheriff's office."

In addition to the personnel issues, Munnell said there was a general attitude of Box to go above the sheriff's office head and several complaints from current posse members of harassment by Box.

"I am not trying to throw rocks, but what Mr. Box was telling the media and the public was wrong," Munnell said. "I am very saddened by what happened with him, and I still consider the Sun City Posse as our flagship organization."

Box, who suffered a head injury from an unrelated incident is currently in a coma in the Intensive Care Unit of a Nebraska hospital.

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Personnel records reveal no evidence of dismissal

SHERIFF'S POSSE: Reason for firing volunteer isn't documented

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Recently obtained personnel records of former Sun City Posse Cmdr. Wil Box shed no new light on the reasons for his dismissal from the organization a month ago.

Box, who is on life support in a Nebraska hospital from an unrelated accident, was

abruptly dismissed from his volunteer position with the posse in late January. Because he was never given a reason for his dismissal, Box threatened a lawsuit against the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, the posse's parent organization.

"There really doesn't have to be a justification for getting rid of somebody in a volunteer position," MCSO Detective Bill Knight said Wednesday. "Posse members work at the convenience and pleasure of the sheriff, and in the end, it is he who has final

say on who stays or doesn't."

Sheriff's officials have declined comment on Box's termination, saying the implied lawsuit quashes any statement about his performance record or his dismissal.

The sheriff's office originally denied the Daily News-Sun access to Box's personnel records. But following Freedom of Information Act requests and a letter from First Amendment Coalition of Arizona attorney Daniel Barr, sheriff's officials opened the personnel records for review

but failed to release copies of them until Wednesday.

The records obtained by the Daily News-Sun are Box's application papers; they list neither accomplishments nor blemishes during his five years in the posse.

"Any records kept on posse volunteers are basic forms such as background information and application forms," Knight said. "The records are unlike those kept for hired personnel."

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From A1

MCSO Sgt. Don Rosenberger agreed with Knight, saying the sheriff's office is under no obligation to give specific reasons for termination of posse members.

"You are not going to find anything in his personnel records that will give an indication of why he was terminated," Rosenberger said. "The ultimate reason for a dismissal is not necessarily anything that can be found in those records."

Although sheriff's spokesmen have said Box's termination was not something done in secrecy, they contend comment on the matter cannot be made until any pending or threatened lawsuits are

resolved.

"He indicated to this office that he was going to bring a lawsuit against us," Knight said. "Although his unfortunate condition is putting that threat on hold for now, it would be wrong of us to sign him off at this point."

As of Wednesday afternoon, Box still was listed in critical condition in the intensive-care unit in St. Joseph's Hospital in Omaha.

He was admitted the Feb. 8 for emergency surgery following an accidental fall, and he remains on life support, according to hospital spokeswoman Mary Tomford.

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or at 876-2526.

Posse veteran suing Sheriff

WAKE OF DISMISSAL: Volunteer with Sun City unit claims he was fired without cause

JOHN SOKOLICH
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A fired Sun City Posse commander is suing the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, but the organization is remaining tight-lipped about its action.

Five-year posse veteran Wil Box was fired without warning two weeks ago, and, he claims, sheriff's officials have yet to give him a reason for his termination.

Box, who was let go from his volunteer position Jan. 26, is in the midst of preparing a civil lawsuit against the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, the

posse's parent organization.

Box was not available for comment Thursday, but in a letter circulating in the sheriff's posse, he states he is filing the lawsuit because of a lack of reasoning behind his abrupt termination.

MCSO officials refused numerous requests for Box's personnel records, citing the information cannot be released because of the pending lawsuit.

According to MCSO officials, Box has not sent his letter of intent to sue directly to the Sheriff's Office, but has circulated a non-official letter to members of the Sun City Posse. MCSO officials, however, report they obtained a



Box

copy of the letter elsewhere.

"We are not allowed to comment very much about the situation around (Box's) termination because of the lawsuit," MCSO Deputy Chief Jesse Locksa said. "We are very limited on what we can say, and we cannot release any personnel records on him at all. He said in his letter that he had no other choice than to take legal recourse for his termination, but he has not sent the letter directly to us yet."

Withholding the personnel records is illegal, regardless of the pending lawsuit, said Phil Higdon, an attorney with Brown & Bain, a law firm that handles open records concerns.

"That's nonsense," Higdon said. "A pending lawsuit is not an adequate reason to cite for not releasing personnel

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From A1

records. Those records are public information even during a lawsuit."

In a letter to MCSO from Brown & Bain Thursday afternoon, the firm stated the department must release the records unless it can show the release would cause specific, material harm.

"The department has failed to even articulate, let alone show, any probability that a specific, material harm will result from the disclosure of these records," the letter stated. "Accordingly, the department's response is inadequate and contrary to law."

Earlier this week, sheriff's officials met with posse members and told them not to

discuss Box's termination, according to Wylie Haukland, current posse commander.

"They came in here to give us a run down on what happened, and basically told us there would no longer be any questions or answers on the issue," Haukland said. "They told us that there was the possibility of Box filing a civil suit, and there would be no further information."

Haukland said he couldn't comment further on the termination other than to say, "The posse has nothing to do with this. We don't know a thing about it either."

John Sokolich can be reached at jsokolich@aztrib.com or at 876-2526.

Ex-chief ousted from posse

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

There's trouble brewing in the Sun City Sheriff's Posse because of the ouster of last year's commander.

Posse leaders said this week that they are outraged over the way that Will Box, 74, a retired meatcutter, was dumped from the group.

Box said that during a Jan. 19 phone call, he was advised by Tom Tyo, a Maricopa

County Sheriff's Office lieutenant, that he had been immediately terminated from the 170-member posse.

Box said he received a letter the next day from Frank Munnell, a deputy chief to Sheriff Joe Arpaio, confirming the action but failing to explain why. Box suspects Munnell axed him because of an earlier run in between the two.

Dave Kaemmerer, the 1999 posse commander, said that

he would hate to see harm come to the posse because of the flap but that Box deserves to know why he was shoved out the door.

"He should at least get the chance to present his position," Kaemmerer said.

Box, a five-year posse veteran, was described by 1997's commander, John Evans, and Kaemmerer as a capable and hard-working commander. Box has volunteered more than 6,000 hours with the

group, including 1,700 hours as last year's posse head.

Box said that he sought a face-to-face meeting with Arpaio and Munnell to discuss the matter but that he has been ignored by both. Box said he intends to pursue his termination because he feels that his reputation has been damaged and that his hours of volunteer service have been invalidated.

See POSSE | Page 14

Munnell refused to discuss the matter in detail except to say that Box is the subject of an internal investigation because of "his performance as the posse commander."

Munnell said all posse members serve at Arpaio's pleasure and that the sheriff no longer has a need for Box's services.

It's not the first time such action has been taken by Arpaio and his supervisors.

In 1996, Don Schorg, the 1995 commander of the Sun City West Sheriff's Posse, was terminated after a public disagreement with Arpaio.

Box said he may have been bounced when he refused Munnell's order to reinstate privileges that the posse board had taken away from a posse member.

"I told him I wouldn't do that unless he gave me a direct written order," Box said. "I was merely the messenger for the board."

No written order came. Instead, Box said, he was kicked off the posse after the November election, in which Arpaio was handily re-elected.

Wylie Haukland, the current posse commander, would not comment on the matter.

Reach the reporter at
brent.whiting@arizonarepublic.com
or (602) 444-6925.



Brent Whiting/The Arizona Republic

Will Box says he will contest his removal from the Sun City Sheriff's Posse.

Former Posse commander dismissed

By MIKE RUSSO

Independent Newspapers

Will Box, immediate past commander of the Sun City Posse, was recently unceremoniously dismissed from the posse with no reason given for the action.

The termination has angered Mr. Box and some posse members.

"I wasn't given due process," Mr. Box said.

Mr. Box, who served nearly five years with the posse, including three years in a command position, received a telephone message Jan. 19 from Maricopa County Sheriff's Office Lt. Tom Tyo informing him of his termination. No reason was given, Mr. Box said.

The following day Mr. Box phoned Lt. Tyo inquiring about the reason for the dismissal. He said he was told it is department policy not to discuss reasons for termination.

A follow-up letter from Deputy Chief Frank D. Munnell also lacked any reasons for the termination.

In the letter, Mr. Box was instructed "to return all Sheriff's Office identification and badges, including all posse property, to Sun City Posse Commander Wylie Haukland."

A Jan. 22 conversation with

Deputy Chief Munnell yielded no reason.

Mr. Box then sent a letter to Sheriff Joe Arpaio requesting a face-to-face meeting to discuss the termination.

The letter was received by Sheriff Arpaio and forwarded to Deputy Chief Munnell, according to Dave Trombi, MCSO public information officer.

"He (Deputy Chief Munnell) did not feel a meeting was warranted," Mr. Trombi said.

"The sheriff has left the decision with his commander, Frank Munnell," Mr. Trombi continued. "The sheriff has been briefed with what happened and he concurs.

"This is a personnel matter that is not over yet," he added. "This decision was in the best interest of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. All the posse volunteers serve at the pleasure of the sheriff."

Mr. Box speculates his dismissal resulted from a dispute he had several months ago with a former posse member. The individual has since



Will Box

transferred to another posse.

The disagreement involved a unanimous board decision that displeased the former posse member.

"Since the board voted unanimously to disallow something the disgruntled party wanted, why wasn't the entire board dismissed?" Mr. Box queried.

"I am concerned that it is sending a bad message to the volunteers that at anytime if someone takes a disliking to you, you can be dismissed and there is no due process," Mr. Box said.

"I would like a fair hearing," he continued.

The Sun City Posse board is scheduled to meet Tuesday and a discussion of the termination is expected.

"We have a number of very unhappy posse members," Mr. Box said. "There are a lot of disgruntled members threatening to quit."

Mr. Box would like to be reinstated with the posse even after this action. Mr. Trombi was not sure if that was a possibility.

He did say, that people who have called the Sheriff's Office complaining about Mr. Box's termination "are not aware of both sides of the story."

Sun City Posse elects chief

1/3/01
By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

He has averaged 1,000 volunteer hours a year during the nearly 10 years he has served with the Sun City Sheriff's Posse.



Wylie
Haukland

For Wylie Haukland, there will be no lack of opportunities next year to rack up some more service time.

Haukland, 76, has been elected by colleagues as the 2001 commander for the nearly 180-member group.

He will take the place of Will Box, 74, the 2000 commander. Haukland lost to Box in last year's election.

"Wylie will do a good job as commander," Box said. "He's well-schooled for the job."

Ed Olberding, another posse veteran, unsuccessfully challenged Haukland in this year's commander race.

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

"Both men are very good," said Eileen Weber, the posse commander in 1996. "It was a tough decision, but I think Ed has got a chance next year.

"And I hope he makes it."

Haukland, a retired school maintenance supervisor from North St. Paul, Minn., has guided the posse's fund-raising

From Page 1

ing efforts for six years. He said he looks forward to next year's challenges and opportunities.

"We have a good organization and will continue with our excellent training programs," Haukland said.

Recruitment will be another top priority, he said.

Haukland joined the posse in March 1991 after his Lions Club chapter disbanded. He wanted to be part of another service group, and a friend suggested the posse.

"So I signed up," he said.

The posse, which operates under the auspices of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office, doesn't receive a dime in taxpayer funds and relies solely on contributions for its

operating budget.

It conducts neighborhood patrols and other crime-prevention programs, including 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.

Daily News-Sun • Club news • Monday, Sept. 18, 2000

Sun City Sheriff's Posse educates about identity theft

PATRICK O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

People who lose their driver's license may end up losing themselves.

Identity theft, one of the fastest growing crimes in the nation, can occur to anyone at any time, and is as simple as losing your Social Security number, which is the key to a person's identity, officials say.

"We're a border state, which means there's a huge hunger for identities for people who have sullied their own and are looking for a new one," said Gail Thackeray, special counsel on tech crime for the Arizona Attorney General's Office.

A person's Social Security number is the key to getting many things, including credit cards. With those, thieves can run up credit bills and default on them, and when collectors come calling it is the person, not the thief, who is sought, Thackeray said.

Ways that people get caught by identity thieves include:

- Failing to shred bills and other documents before throwing them out.
- Using their Social Security number on driver's licenses and checks.
- Giving out credit card numbers.

'We're a border state, which means there's a huge hunger for identities for people who have sullied their own and are looking for a new one.'

**Gail Thackeray
Attorney General's Office**

Credit report sources

To obtain a copy of a credit report contact one or all of the following agencies.

- Equifax, P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, Ga. 30374-0241. To order a credit report, call 1-800-685-1111. To report a credit fraud, call 1-800-525-6285
- Experian, P.O. Box 949, Allen, Texas 75013-0949. To order a credit report or report a credit fraud, call 1-888-397-3742.
- Trans Union, 760 Sproul Road, P.O. Box 390, Springfield, Penn. 19064-0390. To order a credit report, call 1-800-916-8800. To report a credit fraud, call 1-800-680-7289.

Most credit reporting agencies charge a nominal fee, about \$8, for a copy of a report. If a person has been denied credit because of what is in their report, they may receive a free copy of the report within 60 days with proof of the denial.

The Sun Cities are not immune to the problem, which remains an easy target area, according to officials.

"So many of the people are reluctant to mention it, and that's the problem," said Master Sgt. Bill Ellsworth with the Sheriff's Posse of Sun City.

The Posse attempts to educate people about identity theft as a part of its Neighborhood Watch program, and give them the latest information so they may protect themselves, Ellsworth said.

That is not the only place people may be susceptible to identity theft. In recent years, computer hackers and company employees have been stealing credit information from a variety of companies. In recent weeks, Western Union and a Boston-area hospital had two incidents where more than 30,000 people's information were stolen, Thackeray said.

And getting your identity back can be confounded by banks that will continually report frauds as they occur to credit reporting agencies, Thackeray said.

"It can be a very frustrating, time-consuming process.

According to the Better Business Bureau of Central and

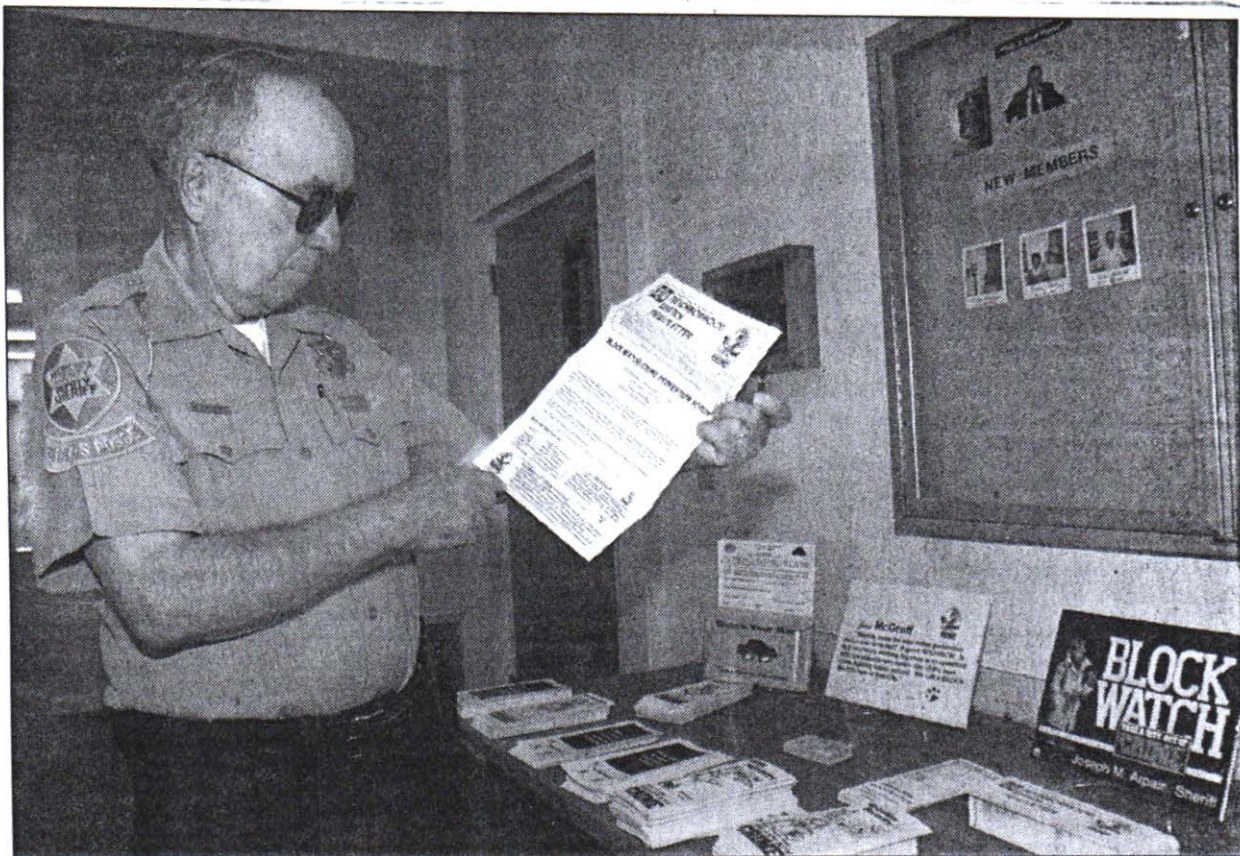
Northern Arizona, victims of identity theft have several options, including:

- Contacting fraud departments of major credit bureaus and report the identity theft.
- Filing a police report and getting a copy of the report.
- Contacting banks and financial institutions where the fraudulent accounts are based.
- Filing a complaint with the Better Business Bureau and the Attorney General's Office.

To determine if you are the victim of identity theft, officials recommend obtaining a copy of your credit report at least once a year to see if any accounts have been opened in your name. People also may apply for credit protection through a variety of sources that will alert a person if fraudulent activity is occurring, Thackeray said.

The Sun City posse is bringing out several people, including experts in identity theft to the Block Watch/Crime Prevention Forum 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Nov. 15 at the Posse building, 10861 Sunland Drive. The program is set in two-hour blocks and will be repeated four times during the day.

OVER



MOLLIE J. HOPPE/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Bill Ellsworth and the Sun City Posse will host Block Watch/Crime Prevention Forum 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Nov. 15 at the Posse building, 10861 Sunland Drive. One of the programs will be on identity theft. The program is set in two-hour blocks and will be repeated four times during the day.

Posse audits help make homes safer

PATRICK O'GRADY
DAILY NEWS-SUN

The Sheriff's posses of the Sun Cities have a few tips for people with overgrown bushes or poor lighting in their front yard.

Both posses offer free tips and home audits to residents to keep their homes safer and their property from being stolen.

"Most of them thank us and are really appreciative," said Lt. Jack Wilcox, who heads the Sun City West Posse's home and personal security department.

Wilcox said when he and about

five others who are part of the department go out, they often first go to several areas that most residents do not think about when it comes to safety. One of those is landscaping. They advise residents to make sure bushes are clear of windows. The other is lighting. The house should be properly lighted so emergency personnel can find it at night, Wilcox said.

The safety auditors check the house's doors, locks and smoke detectors, but any changes are up to the homeowner. The posse will only make suggestions on the changes. Wilcox said.

Among the tips Wilcox recommends are:

- Use long screws to secure a door.

- Check a door's deadbolt lock.

Homeowners who are unsure if

For information about the home audit programs, call the Sun City West Posse at 584-5808 or the Sun City Posse at 972-2555.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Homeowner Tom Appelhans, left, talks with Sun City West Posse member Jack Wilcox about home safety. The posse suggests a track lock for garage doors, motion lighting for outside and a security screen door for the front and arcadia doors.

they have a deadbolt are advised to call a locksmith or the posse.

- Use light timers, particularly when you're on vacation.

- Keep valuables out of sight.

In most cases, the home audit extends to helping keep people safe outside the home, said Master Sgt. Bill Ellsworth, who heads the Sun City Posse's block watch and home audit programs.

"We do point out while we're there information about identity theft and mail-box safety, as well as check-washing scams," he said. "We tell people to take any outgoing mail to the post office."

Both posses will do a home audit free of charge whenever a resident requests it. For information about the home audit programs and how to make a home safer, call the Sun City West Posse at 584-5808 or the Sun City Posse at 972-2555.

SAFETY TIPS

The posses of Sun City West and Sun City offer the following tips to thwart crimes:

- Do not leave a garage door open for even a short time.

- Do not leave valuables in plain sight.

- Do not leave golf clubs unattended.

- Do not leave cars unlocked.

- Do not leave a purse in a shopping cart, on a car's roof or carry it loosely.



JOY LAMBERT/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Roxanne Hernandez, left, and Dianne Rudnick, with volunteer Elizabeth Lattin, seated. Hernandez is the outgoing coordinator for the guardianship program, Rudnick is her replacement and Lattin is a volunteer in the program.

OVER

Watching over needy seniors

SAFETY: Guardian program provides vulnerable adults with a second pair of eyes, ears

BRUCE ELLISON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Members of the Sheriff's Posse in Sun City or Sun City West say they are the eyes and ears of law enforcement.

Betty Lattin and a handful of others like her are the eyes and ears of the Probate Court.

They keep an eye on vulnerable adults in court-supervised guardianships.

Littan is a volunteer in the guardianship review program in the probate division of Superior Court.

She's one of a dozen or so people in the Sun Cities who visit vulnerable adults, talk with their guardians and review court documents to be sure the wards are receiving proper care and that their assets are being properly managed.

The program dates back to 1991. Monitoring serves as deterrent to would-be problems, said Debroah Primock, program director in Phoenix.

"Volunteers make sure the placement is appropriate and that the ward's needs are being met," she said.

"It really is interesting," said Littan, who lives in Sun City and is "considerably past 65."

"I think I'm doing some good with this, and certainly you do meet interesting people."

Her volunteer work, for which a car is needed, takes her to visit adults in care centers and nursing homes, and their guardians. She sometimes needs to talk with folks with Alzheimer's who may not be too clear about what's being discussed.

"Many of these people need a lot of care," Littan said. "Some of them can't walk and some can hardly communicate."

But using forms devised by the Probate Court, Littan and other volunteers can coax information out, at least enough to ensure that the wards have adequate care.

Littan said the physical care offered by most centers in the Sun Cities area is good to outstanding. There are few problems, she said.

Her supervisor, Roxanne Hernandez, says "We don't find a lot of physical abuse in this area. What problems there are tend to be more financial."

In other areas in the Valley, where care is provided in private homes by family members, care may deteriorate over time, the workers said.

Hernandez recalled one local guardianship case in which an institutionalized ward who had some \$2 million in a trust fund had no clothes. The guardian, she said, didn't want to spend the money.

That's the sort of situation a volunteer can easily spot and help remedy, she said.

Hernandez, who's worked with

the Sun Cities area volunteers for some time, is transferring to the court's East Valley operations. Her successor as Northwest Valley supervisor is Diane Rudnick.

She and the volunteers work out of a room at the Northwest Valley Regional Community Council in the Surprise City Hall complex on Bell Road.

"We could use another five volunteers," Hernandez said.

"It's a job that takes two to four hours for one case," Rudnick added. "Volunteers have one or two cases each month to four or five, with each case reviewed once a year."

Having a base at the Community Council office puts the staff in close contact with other resources, should they be needed to help the wards. Everything from respite for an overextended care-giver to referrals to other agencies, is close at hand, she said.

Most of the volunteers are

'We don't find a lot of physical abuse in this area. What problems there are tend to be more financial.'

**Roxanne Hernandez
guardian program supervisor**

long-term helpers, but the summer is always a low time. Lattin, for instance, has been working seven years, "and if she has a doctor's appointment or anything, she always calls to let us know, and comes a few days later," Hernandez said.

Volunteers undergo a background check, since they're dealing with confidential financial and medical information, but no special skills are required.

Some have been lawyers or accountants, but blue collar workers also are successful at

the job.

"Generally, they have to have a desire to help others, are able to communicate, and aren't uncomfortable working with people with mental or physical problems," Rudnick said.

Primock, manager of the probate court operations division, said the court supervises about 1,400 cases a year with volunteers.

In the Sun Cities area, most wards are elderly and institutionalized, but in other areas, wards may be young people with developmental disabilities, even living with parents (who become legal guardians of adult children) or in the cities, accident victims with trauma, possibly paralyzed or with brain or nerve damage.

Training is provided for volunteers.

To learn more, call the guardianship volunteer program at 602-506-3669.

Ellison

Peoria posse members now cruise in donated squad car

By Brent Whiting
The Arizona Republic

PEORIA — Don't worry about the sheriff's patrol car that can be seen cruising through the Westbrook Village retirement community.

No, it's not necessarily the car of Maricopa County sheriff's deputies who have wandered off the beat.

Instead, it may be the vehicle for Westbrook Village residents who, with the blessing of Peoria police, have organized a posse to fight crime in their neighborhood.

Unlike the posses in Sun City and Sun City West, the Westbrook Village Sheriff's Posse has been set up within an established city.

"We support the idea," said Sgt. Shawn Gormley, a spokesman for the Peoria Police Department. "We appre-

ciate having citizen support out there in the community."

The posse, which now counts close to 30 volunteers, is the brainchild of the current commander, Barry Goodman, 65, a retiree who has served on the sheriff's executive posse.

"We work under the auspices of the Sheriff's Office, but we're here in Westbrook Village as extra eyes and ears for the Peoria police and fire departments," Goodman said.

The posse, one of more than 50 in Maricopa County, operates out of donated office space in the Vistas Recreation Center, 18825 N. Country Club Parkway.

It patrols about 4,000 homes and businesses in Westbrook Village, an upscale community that runs from Union Hills Drive to Beardsley Road

between 83rd Avenue, on the east and Sun City on the west.

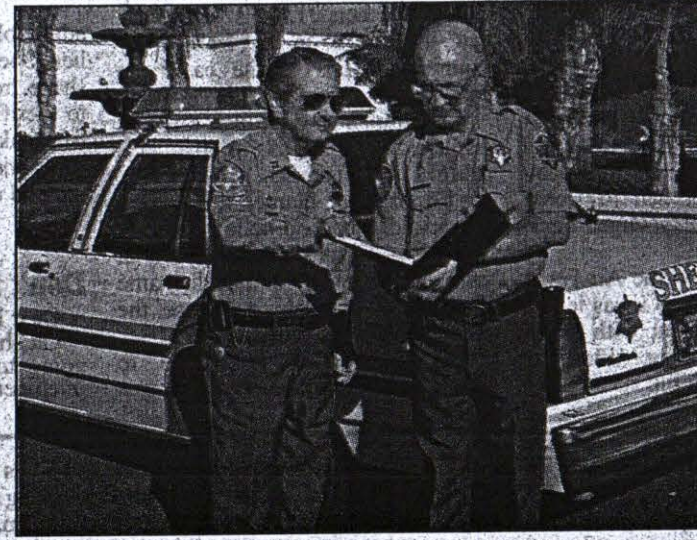
The posse was organized in April but got a big shot in the arm shortly before Thanksgiving when the Sheriff's Office donated an aging patrol car for posse operations.

Until then, volunteers had been driving their own cars with magnetic signs on the side of the vehicles, said Bill Sandvig, who becomes the commander Jan. 1.

"The patrol car makes a lot of difference," said Sandvig, 72, a retired accountant. "Now people really take notice of us, not to mention the drivers who will hit their brakes and slow down."

The patrol car is a 1990 Ford

— Please see **DONATED**, Page 9



Barry Goodman (left) and Bill Sandvig are among the 30 or so volunteers who staff the Westbrook Village Sheriff's Posse in north Peoria. The group recently was given an old patrol car from the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office.

Brent Whiting/The Arizona Republic

Donated squad car gives boost to posse

DONATED, from Page 1

Crown Victoria that was used by the state Department of Public Safety before the Sheriff's Office acquired it. The odometer, which is believed to be faulty, shows less than 50,000 miles, but Sandvig estimates it has been driven more than 240,000.

Sgt. Dave Letourneau, a sheriff's supervisor, said the car is one of several that have been donated to the Sheriff's Office by the DPS specifically for use by posse groups. He said his office, in turn, decided to donate the vehicle to the Westbrook Village posse.

"We consider it a positive thing for law enforcement to foster and support posse groups," he said.

In addition to neighborhood patrols, posses engage in other crime-preven-

tion programs, such as Block Watch and periodic checks of homes when residents are away.

Posses perform other functions, including traffic control at accident scenes or crowd and traffic control at events.

The car was a one-time donation from the Sheriff's Office, meaning that the posse is on its own as far as operating and maintaining the car.

The moment of truth will come later this month, when letters will be mailed to Westbrook Village residents asking for donations to support the group in the coming year. The posse also will ask for more volunteers, hoping to boost the membership to at least 45.

Brent Whiting can be reached at (602) 444-7119 or at brent.whiting@arizonarepublic.com.

Sun City Posse gears up for vacation watch program

By **JULIE RIDDLE**
Independent Newspapers

Packing up RV's, cars and trailers, they are leaving Arizona in droves, and leaving their homes prey to both criminals and catastrophes. Unsecured screen doors, forgotten trash or running electricity can spell disaster come September.

With that in mind, Sun City Posse members offer tips and advice to departing residents.

"We talk to them about information and keeping their papers picked up," Block Watch President Bill Ellsworth said. "Block Watch urges people to talk with their neighbors."

Block Watch is also distributing circulars with tips for the departing.

"It talks about repairing doors, especially sliding glass doors and improving locks and hinges," Mr. Ells-

worth said. "Things to do to make themselves and the property safe."

Above all, making the house look occupied is key, Mr. Ellsworth noted.

"The lived-in look is important—the neighbors need to work together to make homes look like they are lived in," he said. "If they sign up for the vacation watch and pay attention to what we have told them, we just cannot miss. Make the house secure, above all, and lock the darn thing before you go. Mainly, it is common sense."

Sun City Posse Sgt. Bryan Foley emphasized the importance of not leaving home in a hurry.

"When a lot of people leave they secure their homes, but they leave the garage door open or window open, usually in haste while packing up a car," he said.

Mr. Foley said keeping the destination a secret is not a good idea

either, especially if a fire or water main break was to occur inside the vacant home.

"Two big things to do are leaving a house key and a phone number where they can be reached or where you are going for summer," he said. "Stop the papers and mail delivery and make sure a neighbor or year-round resident is easily contactable. You should leave a key with a relative or a good friend, making that person accessible to us in case of emergency."

Mr. Foley said the Posse is doing everything in its power to deter both crime and disaster at empty houses, and that the already-low crime rate has dropped significantly.

"We have been fortunate. Crime is way down in our particular district, about 30-40 percent because of our vacation watches — 90 percent of deterrence is presence," Foley said. "When they see the cruisers, the bad guys do not spend a lot of time. That is why it (crime) is down so much."

To get enrolled in the Posse's vacation watch program, pick up blue cards at any recreation center or library, or at the Posse office, 13063 West Bell Road.

Keeping the peace

Posse serves as MCSO eyes and ears

By **JULIE RIDDLE**
Independent Newspapers

Guiding his patrol car to the center of 103rd and Grand avenues, Bob Warren, deputy officer for the Sun City Posse, pulls up behind a truck stalled alongside the railroad tracks.

Exiting his vehicle, Mr. Warren quickly dons an orange vest and faces oncoming traffic on the busy thoroughfare, raising his hand to halt the flow. Once back in his car, Deputy Warren gently nudges the truck with his bumper, helping the stranded motorist to steer it off the road.

One of about 200 members in this division of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Posse, Deputy Warren serves as a helping hand to residents. Last year, he and fellow officers put in 90,128 hours worth of volunteer patrol and duty, logging more than 200,000 miles driven.

"One of the main things we do is directing traffic for the MCSO so they can finish their paperwork," Mr. Warren said. "We are basically the eyes and ears of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office. We do vacation watches, funeral watches, welfare checks, alarm calls, you name it." Helping to locate missing citizens is also part of the job. The RUOK (Are You O.K.) program

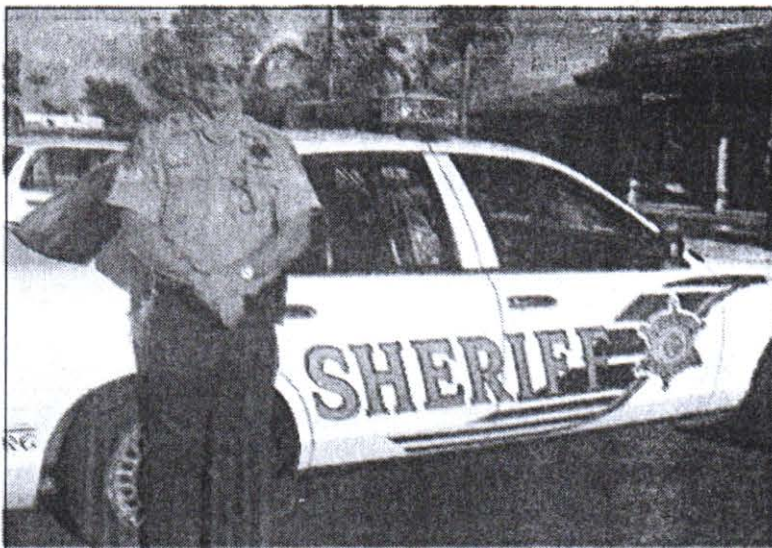


Photo by JULIE RIDDLE/Independent Newspapers

Deputy Bob Warren is one of more than two hundred posse members who helps to keep things running smoothly in Sun City.

assists in the detection of residents who may be suffering from dementia.

Between calls, Deputy Warren drives past banks, streets and busy parking lots, places where criminal activity is most likely to happen, looking for anything suspicious.

Finally, a second call comes in, and Deputy Warren is on his way to investigate a possible tripped alarm. A cat is determined to be the likely culprit.

Deputy Warren, like most retirees, said he wanted to get

involved after moving from Colorado to Sun City three years ago.

"I was looking for something to do," he said. "I have a brother-in-law who is a narcotics officer in Denver — I did a couple of ride-alongs with him."

Save for paid uniforms, personal mileage to and from the Posse office and an annual dinner party at the Lakes Club, Deputy

See ■ POSSE, Page 9

Warren, and the rest of the members go without reimbursement for their work.

"It's like a 40-hour a week job," Deputy Warren said. "We normally work seven, eight hours a day." At least one citizen, however, has shown her generosity toward the

Posse's work, allocating a large sum of money to the group in her will.

Though Sun City has general working boundaries, need could take Posse members anywhere.

"If they told us to go to Wickenburg, we would go to

Wickenburg," he said. "Whatever the MCSO dictates, that is where we go."

Few of the posse members are qualified armed personnel (Q.A.P.s) Mr. Warren said, though it is possible.

"Most of us, you know, could not make it through the (police) academy at our age," he said. "There are not many of us who are armed."

Deputy Warren said the obvious goal of the Posse is to be of assistance to the community.

"We are trying to help our neighbors," he said.

Seniors safer than others at night

Daily News-Sun • Friday, Jan. 14, 2000

Day lifestyle keeps elderly out of violent crime statistics

GINGER SCOTT-EIDEN
DAILY NEWS-SUN

A recent study by the United States Justice Department that reports seniors are more likely to avoid violent crime rings true in the Sun Cities, local authorities said.

The five-year study, based on Census Bureau interviews of 85,000 Americans 12 and older every six months from 1992 to 1997, found that seniors were far less likely to be attacked by violent criminals. Justice Department statistician Patsy Klaus said the differences in lifestyle play a major role in incidents of violent crime.

Lt. Ken Colbert of the Maricopa County Sheriff's Office District 3, which serves the Sun Cities, said the hours Sun Citians choose to be active certainly impact their personal safety.

"If you look around, the Sun Cities pretty much roll up their streets at 8 p.m.," Colbert said. "Your limiting the hours that people are available to the criminals. Criminals are far less likely to make that attack during the daylight."

Colbert said there is the occasional violent crime, such as an attack or assault, in the Sun Cities. He said it's impossible for any community to avoid violent crime completely.

"It's just something you really can't get away from," he said.

As a precaution, the Sheriff's posses of Sun City and Sun City West patrol the streets until midnight to keep an eye out for suspicious activity.

Posse officials also offer the following



E.B. McGOVERN/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Sheriff's Posse members patrol the streets of Sun City at night. A recent study reveals that seniors are more likely to avoid violent crime at night.

safety tips to night owls:

- Stay alert and be aware of what is going on around you.

- Park close to light, close the windows and be sure to lock the car when out at night.

- Hide any shopping bags or gifts in the trunk or under the seats. You should also hide any other valuables

such as cellular telephones and music CDs out of sight.

- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

- Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages and be extra careful when guarding your purse or wallet. Carry a purse close to your body, not

dangling by straps. Put a wallet in an inside coat or front pant pocket or wear a fanny pack.

- Try to go out with a group or another person during the evening hours.

Ginger Scott-Eiden can be reached by e-mail at gscott@aztrib.com or by calling 876-2522.