



**CELEBRATING  
40 YEARS  
OF SWANS IN SUN CITY AZ  
1975 to 2015  
81 Viewpoint Lake Homeowners**



Swan Ebony



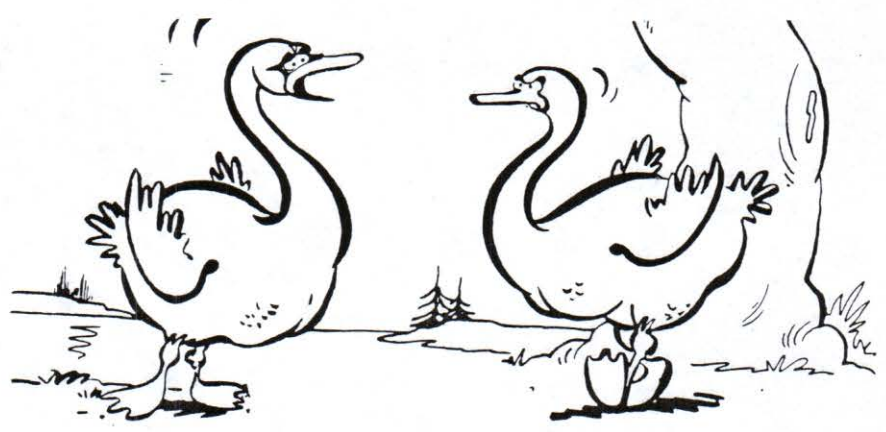
Royal and Thunderbird



HOW ARE WE GOING TO APPLY  
FOR SOCIAL SECURITY WHEN WE KEEP  
HATCHING ALL THESE CYGNETS ?"

**CELEBRATING**  
**40 YEARS**  
**OF SWANS IN SUN CITY AZ**  
**1975 TO 2015**

**VIEWPOINT LAKE HOMEOWNERS**



It's about time you got home George! I suppose you've  
been hanging out at the Salad Bar with the guys again?

**CELEBRATING  
40 YEARS  
SWAN HISTORY 1975 – 2015  
VIEWPOINT LAKE HOMEOWNERS  
SUN CITY ARIZONA**

By: "Swan Mom" Nadine Meis  
10625 W. Emerald Point  
Sun City AZ 9-30-15

Thank you to the Recreation Centers of Sun City (RCSC) for allowing our swans to swim in your lakes and to nest on your property for 40 years. RCSC has not supported the swans financially, but we appreciate the use of the facilities.

**What do we feed swans?** Dry whole corn mixed with Purina Layena pellets are available to them in special feeding boxes twenty four hours a day. And three times a day they like their fresh head lettuce, romaine, green leaf or red leaf lettuce. Nothing else.

They will eat anything you throw out to them, including fish hooks. They can't digest bread, cereal, popcorn, and most people foods. These foods also have preservatives. Mold can kill a swan. Dead birds, dead fish or excess food left in the water causes carcass-maggot avian botulism which is very deadly to all birds.

We must start with a tribute to our "SWAN LADY", Pat Cropley and her husband Beryl. They lived at 10541 Bayside Road, Sun City AZ. Pat & Beryl started tending the Swans in 1990. Pat passed away on 8-23-11 and Beryl passed away on 8-9-2013. For 23 years they did 95 % of the work. All done with a love and devotion to each and every swan. And we, the Viewpoint Lake Homeowners, all have loved and enjoyed our swans for 40 years.

Countless hours of Pat & Beryl's retirement were spent on tending to the swans, collecting lettuce, feeding, buying and mixing corn and pellets, building and installing ramps, pens and feeders. Supplying and cleaning up straw for the nests. Doing annual reports and fund raising. Caring for and clipping the wings of the one day old babies. Giving shots to the sick swans in their garage. Buying new swans for a new blood line. Selling and shipping swans, some as far away as Denver, Colorado. Placing and transporting swans to other bodies of water in the valley. And of course dealing with all the "swan tragedies" listed below, including getting the deceased swan to the proper facility for the autopsy and getting the reports.

In the early years of the "Swan Archives" the care persons are too numerous to mention here but here are a few: 1975 Swan Club Chairman was Paul Bodwell, Vice Chairman & Treasurer, Mrs. Jessie R, Crawford. 1977 Bob and Kay Mac Clinchie. 1978 Jack Driver, Bill Yardy, Louis Leventon, 1979 Kathleen Yardy, Edwin & Leona Yeager. 1989 Ethel Pohlman. Pat Cropley's name appears for the first time in 1990.

In the early years the entire 81 Viewpoint Lake Homeowner's population was helping in many ways, assigned as feeders, and collectors of outdated throw-away lettuce from local grocery stores. (free in those days). In 2013, the stores, for fear of law suits, free throw-away lettuce was no longer available. We now have to buy the lettuce, grain and pellets. Viewpoint Lake Homeowners were then and still are very generous in their financial support of the swans.

December 18, 2012, Beryl Cropley turned over the remaining swan funds, records and equipment to the newly named "Swan Club of Viewpoint Lake Homeowners", President Jerry Klaus. Living swans were: Ebony, our black swan, White swans Cameo and Gina swimming in Viewpoint Lake and Rosie and J. D. at Willowcreek, Palmeras. J. D. passed away after being hit by a golf ball 4-14-15. Rosie passed away last night, 9-25-15. Both were 17 years old.

One of the assistants to our "Swan Lady", Pat Cropley, since 1995 is Nadine Meis who became the "Swan Mom" on 12-18-12 along with helper Don Meis. All records and equipment are currently at the home of Don and Nadine Meis, 10625 W. Emerald Point. The Swan checking account is at BMO Bank.

**Parts of the following six paragraphs are taken from "Dawn Lake Swan News, January 2002", by Maki Hunt.**

In 1975, several people on Viewpoint Lake were looking for a way to celebrate the coming bi-centennial year. They thought Swans swimming about their lake would be a great idea. They organized themselves into the Sun City Swan Club. They researched information about swans, took up a collection and ordered three pair of two year old Mute Swans from Michigan State University Wild Life Sanctuary in Augusta, Michigan. The price was \$290.00 a pair. Male swans are called cobs, female swans are pens, babies are cygnets.

Keeping in mind the bi-centennial, they took names from historical figures. Swan George and Swan Martha Washington, Swan John and Swan Abigail Adams and for some obscure reason, they figured Swan Betsy Ross could handle Swan Ben Franklin. All six were placed in Viewpoint Lake. Swans are very territorial and have a mind of their own, so the fun and problems begin.

Shortly after, Swan Abigail caught Swan George's wandering eye. He decided that arranged marriages were not for him and dumped Martha for Abigail. Martha then settled for the deserted John.

The other two swan couples, Betsy and Ben, along with Martha and John, lasted for a number of years, neither couple leaving any progeny. Swan Betsy Ross laid the first egg. She and mate John Adams abandoned the nest. The egg was decorated by Anne Schultz and sold for \$297.00 and the money was used to support the club.

The "love team" of George and Abigail produced 4 cygnets in 1978, 7 in 1979, 5 in 1980. So the swan population grew each year. In 1983 there were 12 total surviving swans. Most were hatched on the Robert and Kay Mac Clinchie's property 10626 Emerald Point. Swan Abigail died in 1990 leaving George the sole survivor of the six Michigan imports.

Old George, as he is now known, was thought to be 26 years old and still has the reputation of being the best nest builder in Sun City, topping all the younger males.

Our "Swan Lady", Pat Cropley, became involved in the swans in 1990 with 10 swans in Sun City. To find a new blood line for George, he was introduced to Swan Bertha. No information can be found in the records about what happened to Bertha. However, it is recorded that "She was telling him that she preferred a younger man". Then another search for a non-related wife for George was begun. "A zoo in Rochester New York sold 2 two female white swans who were shipped to Sun City, one for Viewpoint Lake and one for Dawn Lake." Swan George's new bride (wife # 3) was named Swan Ethel Elizabeth.

Friends of the swans that were now swimming in Dawn Lake were very helpful in the early years. Around 2003 Pat & Beryl Cropley donated all equipment and swans that were already at Dawn Lake, to Dawn Lake and remained on as consultants.

By nature swans are very territorial. We can tell you many stories about Swan George. He was a survivor, aggressive, protective, mean, and in charge of HIS lake and all upon it. (including boats). So, doing his job, he would KILL last year's babies and try to kill any water bird that did not suit him.

So very early in "swan management" the homeowners learned about the need to find other bodies of water for all the cygnets that George and by now his children, were producing. Swans were sold, placed or transported to all lakes in Sun City and the valley. Records show some went as far away as Denver Colorado. In 1994 swans were sold to, Wildlife World Zoo, Sierra Springs Ranch, Pinetop, Sunland Village, Holy Cross Cemetery and Sun City West. In 1997 Swans Dick & Tracy were sold to a private bird farm near South Mountain.

In 1999, 22 Swans were swimming in Sun City. In December 2001, there were 26 swans. In 2002, there were 28 swans. This was no longer manageable because of the available new lakes to put them on and enough money to support them. So Swan Lady Pat started to "thin out" the swan population. She put in place her "birth control" method by having girls swimming with girls to avoid having new cygnets each year. Some males were sold to Mesa and Scottsdale.

In December of 2003 the Sun City Swan Club offered to gift to the Recreation Centers of Sun City (RCSC) Golf Operations, the current nineteen swans swimming on Sun City's golf course lakes. (not including the swans on Viewpoint Lake or Dawn Lake). This included all the equipment necessary for those swans. RCSC Golf Operations declined the generous offer.

Swans George and Ethel were together for eight years and hatched 19 cygnets in that time. Old George Washington's third wife Swan Ethel Elizabeth died in 2004. For several years prior to her death, she was the care person for old George. He was now blind and could not find the water, home or food. Ethel would lead him home and to the food. Home was a ramp, a pen with straw and shade in the landscape at Eldorado. (Thank you Eldorado). After Ethel's death George needed to stay in the pen. "Swan Saint" Pat hand fed him until he died in 2006. He was believed to be 30 years old.

In December 2003 Pat Cropley announced her retirement from the Swan Club. However a replacement was not found. So she continued until her declining health and passing on 8-23-11, then Beryl Cropley continued with the caring duties. In 2007 Don & Nadine Meis took over the fund raising. As mentioned earlier, December 18, 2012, Beryl Cropley turned over everything to the Viewpoint Lake Homeowner then President, Jerry Klaus.

### **SWANS CHARCOAL AND EBONY ON VIEWPOINT LAKE AUSTRALIAN BLACK SWAN HISTORY**

Viewpoint Lake black Swan Charcoal and black Swan Ebony came to us free from the East Valley Wildlife Association in December 1996. They had been abandoned. They were believed to be one year old. (These facts are not to be confused with the "Dawn Lake Swans News 2002" black swan records).

Black swans are native to Australia, and were a principle source of food for the Aborigines. They were first seen by Captain Cook in 1770 and reached Europe in 1791. The swans were bred in England, and before long these exotic birds were seen in other parts of Europe and finally in the US as ornamental birds. Black swans live at least 20 years in captivity and have been known to live as long as 33 years.

Black swans are on Australian time clock and lay their eggs in the fall while white swans lay eggs in the spring.

In the fall of 1997, black Swans Charcoal and Ebony laid 3 eggs on a secure nest at 10625 W. Emerald Point. Being very young, they did not "mother" the eggs so none of them hatched. Charcoal was very nervous and protective. Ebony was sick with a high temperature caused by pneumonia and was on antibiotics for 10 days during this time. In 1998, Ebony laid 4 eggs, three were broken after a coyote visit. They sat upon the last one but they had no cygnets.

In the summer of 1998 black Swan Charcoal died. White Swan George chased him trying to kill him. After pulling him from the lake and a trip to the Veterinarian, it was determined he had a severe bacterial infection. He was found dead the next morning. The autopsy found that he was a very sick swan with an enlarged liver and black intestines. So wise old Swan George knew Charcoal was sick. Nature!

This is September of 2015. Black Swan Ebony, 23 years old, is still swimming alone and I call her my sweet, non-aggressive, survivor. She will honk with her high pitch musical honking fog horn and talk to you with a chirp. We did get a black female swan named Lacy for her to swim with on 4-25-09. Swan Lacy, died 15 days later, 5-10-09, after being chased without mercy by the white swans. *Ebony died 12-16-15,*

### **THE END OF BLACK SWAN HISTORY on Viewpoint Lake**

In 2008 White Swan Royal and Swan Thunderbird hatched 4 cygnets in a locked and secure pen on Don & Nadine Meis property at 10625 W. Emerald Point, Viewpoint Lake, Sun City AZ. As they hatched it was noted that one was gray and three a pale yellow. The reason for this is Swan Royal was of a royal blood line and his male off-springs are gray coming out of the egg. The adult feathers came in white. We called them Eeny, Meeny; Miney & Moe. Pat re-named them all but the little gray male Swan Moe. They lived to adulthood. Two of the girls were sold to Mesa AZ. Moe remained in Viewpoint Lake with bride Swan Pinky 52. (Pinky had a band on her leg with the numbers 52 on the band. So her correct name was Pinky 52.)

In 2009 Swans Royal and Thunderbird hatched one cygnet that lived three months. From 2009 to 2015 no cygnets or new swans came to Sun City. (this does not include Dawn Lake)

### **SWAN TRAGEDIES**

The 1975 to 1990 Archives are currently stored in the attic at 10625 W. Emerald Point. The archives show numerous tragedies in the swan population. The same tragedies could still be a problem to our swans today. They are delicate birds.

Some causes of tragedies are: botulism, infected sores on their feet, fish hooks and unattended fishing lines, boating accidents, people stealing eggs and cygnets, and a lot of swans have been killed by Coyotes. Other recorded tragedies: 1994 abdominal blockage, 1995 egg yolk peritonitis, 1996 cygnet "Fine" 3 months old, drowned entwined in a floating fishing line. 1996 Swan Ripple died from ingesting too much oil from a spill when an irrigation plump broke on North golf course. 2001, E-Coli Bacteria. 2001 Bronchial pneumonia. 2007 Swan Winter Breeze was shot in the head on South Golf course. And in 2015, Swan J.D. was hit in the head by a golf ball. But some Swans just plain get sick and die.

Quoting from The Daily News-Sun, March 24, 2006. "Oil spill endangers swans in Sun City... Arizona American Water Company tanks overflowed after an electrical switch malfunctioned... the well feeds water into a canal-like system that connects all six Lakes West Golf Course ponds and Viewpoint Lake... Just before dusk Wednesday Beryl and Pat, 'The Swan Lady', Cropley, pulled a family of three swans out of Lakes West ponds ...Swan Royal, and his 'wife' Mama Mia and their 1-year-old daughter, Princess. The swans were covered in a dark brown oil that clung to their feathers". The Cropley's housed the swans in their garage for weeks to bath them and remove the oil.

Swan Royal was of royal blood and was moved to Viewpoint Lake and placed with Swan Thunderbird. Swan Mama Mia remained at Lakes West (Cameo) until she was killed by a coyote 2-24-12, she was 19 years old.

The winter of 2005 -2006, three Viewpoint Lake Swans had to be put in "dry-dock" for a month when RCSC applied the chemical ESS-13 to Viewpoint Lake for seepage reduction. All three survived.

**Our biggest loss happened July 28, 2010.** In 8 hours we lost 8 big beautiful white swans, dead from avian botulism in Viewpoint Lake. (many ducks were also lost) Only our black swan Ebony lived. Deceased were: Swan Royal, male age 8, his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife Swan Thunderbird, age 6, and their 1 ½ year old son Moe and his new bride Pinkey 52. This took our last two white male swans. Since then we have had girls swimming with girls.

After determining that the lake was healthy again, Girl Swans Cameo and Gina were moved to Viewpoint Lake from Riverview Agua Fria. They lay eggs each year but they will not hatch without a daddy. We continue to enjoy them.

At Willowbrook (Palmeras) we have female Swan Rosie age 17, her swimming partner JD age 17 was lost to a coyote 4-14-15. Care persons at Willowbrook are Bill & Pat Painter. Thank you Bill and Pat and your neighbor helpers. Another tragedy hit us last night, 9-25-15, Swan Rosie died. She was a very sick swan. We planned to bring her to the Vet. in the morning but a coyote got her during the night.

Currently, September 30, 2015, the Viewpoint Lake Homeowners will continue to lovingly care for the three remaining swans until the last one passes on to "Swan Heaven". Our female black swan Ebony age 23, female mute white swans, Cameo, age 7, and Gina, age 12.

The possibility of having additional swans in Sun City depends of a lot of facts:  
Swans live a long time, it would be a 20 to 30 year commitment, and cost money.  
Swans need to have someone to take care of them 365 days a year.  
We need new volunteer people to take over the responsibility.  
The Recreation Centers of Sun City could hire a person and finance a swan program.

Written on behalf of the 81 Viewpoint Lake Homeowners  
By: Nadine Meis "Swan Mom" September 30, 2015





**EBONY**



**CAMEO AND GINA**

**VIEWPOINT LAKE HOME OWNERS (VLHO)  
ARE THE OWNERS OF 5 SWANS IN SUN CITY.**

The 3 swans above on Viewpoint Lake have a 24 hour feeder offering them whole kernel corn and pellets with their vitamins. They are fed lettuce 3 times a day.

**DO NOT FEED THEM ANYTHING BUT FRESH LETTUCE.**

Head lettuce, romaine, green or red leaf lettuce.

**ONLY IN THE AMOUNT THEY WILL EAT AT THE TIME.**

They will eat anything you put out there including: fish hooks.

**DO NOT FEED THE SWANS, DUCKS OR FISH BREAD, CERIAL, POPCORN OR ANY HUMAN FOOD. FRESH LETTUCE IS OK**

Mold will kill a swan.

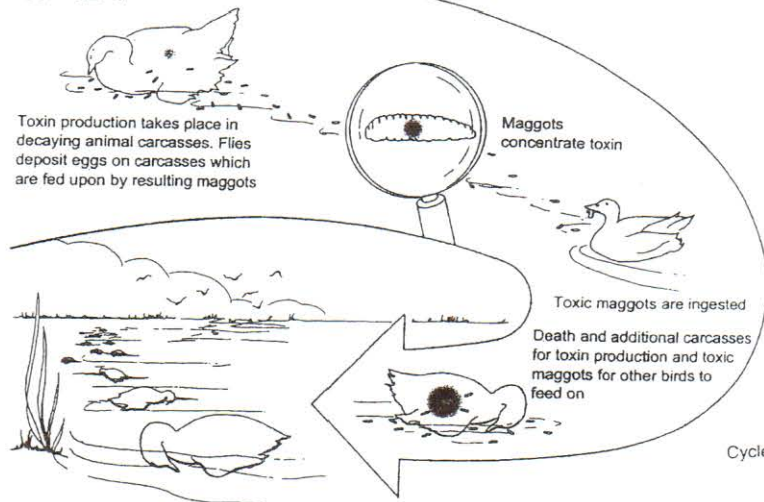
**PEOPLE FOOD ,DEAD WILD LIFE, AND DEAD FISH ETC. CAN CAUSE  
AVIAN BOTULISM**

If you see any and can not remove them please call:

Jim Wise 975-2895 or Nadine Meis 876-0211

*Carcass-maggot cycle of avian botulism*

60 – 92 °F



Cycle accelerates — major die-off occurs