

SUN CITY WEST CONCERNED

Bell Rd. Crossing Expected Ready Within A Week

By **DON WARNE**
Gazette Reporter

A temporary four-lane Agua Fria riverbed crossing at Bell Road should be completed within a week, Sun City West residents have been told.

Maricopa County Engineer R.C. Esterbrooks said the Del Webb Corp. "is paying half the costs and furnishing equipment" to expedite the project. Work on approaches was scheduled to begin today, he added.

Maricopa Irrigation District officials have informed the county "they will make every attempt . . . to cut off water under the (Bell Road) bridge," Esterbrooks said.

A CONTINGENT of Sun City West residents appeared at the Maricopa County administration building Monday and presented a thick sheaf of letters asking the Board of Supervisors to relieve "a presently inconvenient and potentially dangerous situation."

Loise Copes, chairman of the (CAPS) Property Owners Residents Association, gave Supervisor Chairman Fred Koory a copy of a resolution urging prompt action in providing both a temporary crossing and replacement of the Bell Road bridge.

Sun City West residents are concerned about "the possibility of fatal delays in ambulance and fire calls," the resolution said.

Tues., Feb. 26, 1980 A-9

The Phoenix Gazette

ESTERBROOKS SAID the bridge "was completely demolished" and may take six months to replace. Koory noted that the county, among other jurisdictions, has proclaimed an "emergency" to permit "bypassing red tape" in reconstruction.

Esterbrooks said the existing Bell Road bridge was designed to accommodate 30,000 cubic feet per second of water. "That was good for more than 20 years, but last year the release was 65,000 cfs and this year more than 60,000 on a continued basis," he said.

A REPLACEMENT span will be designed based on new information obtained in the recent floods, he said.

The official assured the group that the Grand Avenue bridge, described by one Sun City West spokesman as "our last link to civilization," apparently has been deemed safe enough by state Department of Transportation standards to remain open despite unconfirmed reports of sagging.

NEWS - SUN MAY 9, 1980

Bell bridge planning begins

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors has given the green light for a Phoenix consulting firm to begin field studies to rebuild the Bell Road bridge.

Supervisor Fred Koory said Thursday Benson & Gerdin Consulting Co. began hydrological and geotechnical studies of the Agua Fria riverbed on Wednesday.

"After they (the consulting firm) complete their studies, we can begin drawing up the designs," said Francis Lathrop, Maricopa County deputy engineer.

THE STUDIES are expected to be completed by October. Lathrop estimates it will take about 30 days to

decide the design of the bridge.

"After the county highway dept. has decided what type of bridge we can build, the Board of Supervisors will begin accepting contract bids to do the job," Koory said.

The cost to rebuild the bridge is expected to run as high as \$3 million—half of which will come from federal disaster relief monies. Those funds were released after the February flood when President Carter declared parts of the state a disaster area.

"CONSTRUCTION of the bridge itself should begin no later than January and will take about eight months to complete," Lathrop said.

"In the meantime, the county highway dept. will proceed with plans to widen the temporary two-lane riverbed crossing now linking Sun City West with Sun City," Koory added.

The two-lane road was built by the Del E. Webb Development Co. and the county three weeks after the February flood destroyed the former temporary road.

THE ORIGINAL Bell Road bridge, built 15 years ago, was washed out during the flood in March 1979.

During both floods, residents in Sun City West were forced to drive 10 additional miles to cross the river.

It's open! Traffic flows on Bell Road

The temporary road crossing the Agua Fria River at Bell Road opened today after construction crews working around the clock since Wednesday finished the job in the morning hours.

Rick Kempton, vice president of Sanner Contracting Co., said his crews worked straight through in efforts to provide access to Sun City West during the Ladies Professional Golf Association tournament being held there.

FLOOD WATERS released from Lake Pleasant destroyed the bridge at Bell Road, cutting off access to Sun City West from Bell. That left the Grand Avenue bridge over the Agua Fria as the only route.

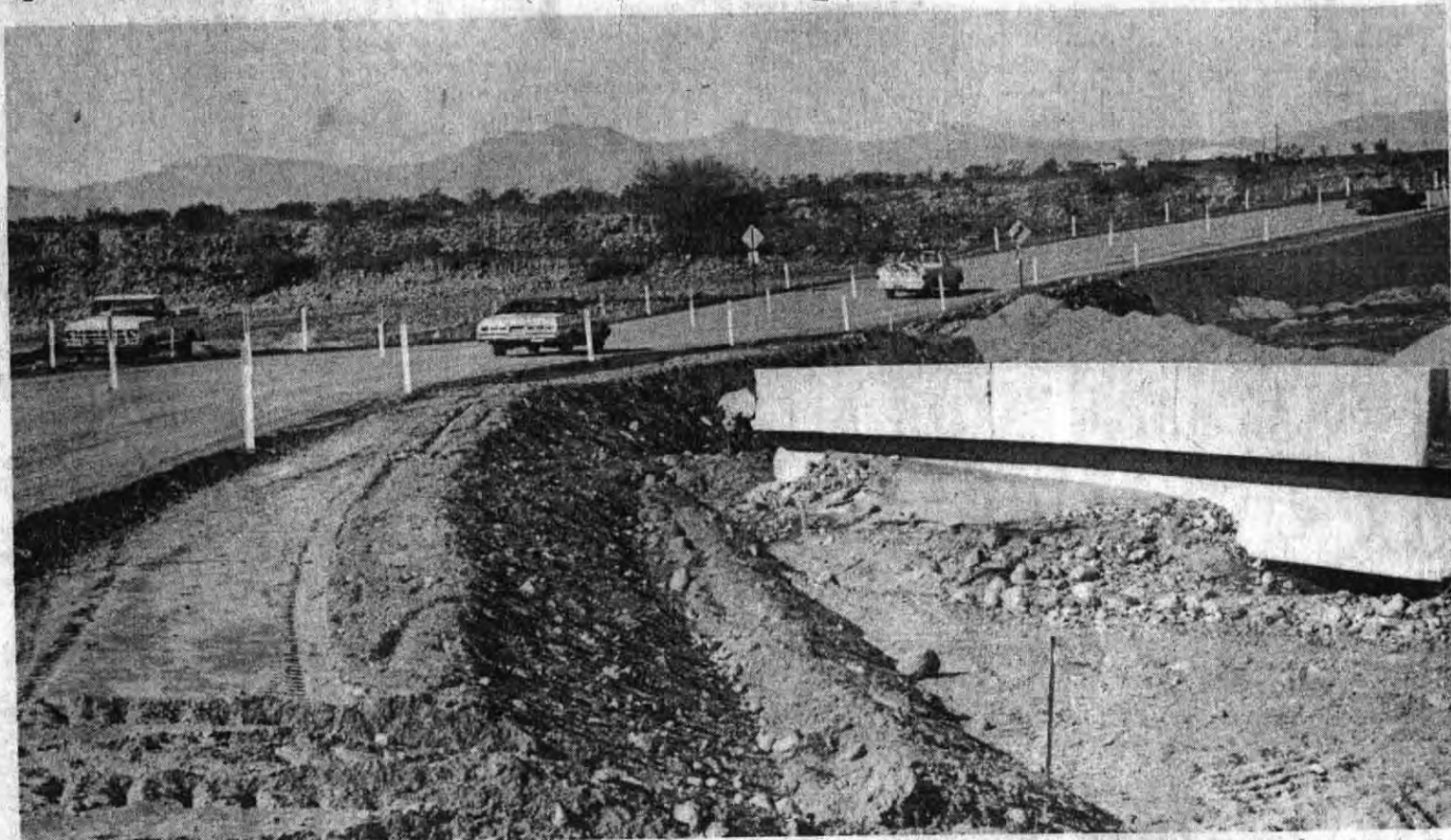
Water from Lake Pleasant was shut off to allow the Sanner work crews to construct a small dam, lay pipe to divert the water, and build a road bed a few feet higher than the expected water level when more water is released from the lake later.

ASSISTANT Maricopa County engineer Larry Waggoner said the construction was in partnership with the Del E. Webb Development Co. and the cost will be split between the two. Sanner is the Webb subcontractor.

Bill Fish, of the Arizona Land Department, said the crossing at the Agua Fria River on the north side of Bell Road is definitely state-owned land but he was unable to say if the road was built legally. He said Webb may have used an old right-of-way granted to it years ago as the legal grounds for the temporary road but he said he didn't know if the grant was still valid.

"You need a right-of-entry to be legal unless Webb has an old one on the books," Fish said.

He said his office hadn't granted a right-of-entry recently.



Traffic flows over temporary detour around washed-out bridge on Bell Road at Agua Fria River. Around-the-clock construction finished early this morning. Sun City West had

been inaccessible from the east since storm damage to the bridge.

(News-Sun Photo by Charley Ritter)

NEWS-SUN 2/26/80

Work begins on Bell Road crossing

By RICHARD MOORE
Staff Writer

Construction of a temporary roadway across the Agua Fria at Bell Road began Monday in an attempt to link Sun City West to Sun City before the LPGA tournament ends.

However, Maricopa County Highway Department officials are skeptical about whether the temporary road, being built just south of the washed out Bell Road bridge, will be finished by Sunday.

"The Maricopa County Municipal Water Conservation District has agreed to assist us by reducing the water release flow at Waddell Dam from Lake Pleasant," said Francis Lathrop, deputy county engineer. "The current flow is at 1,800 cfs, and water conservation district officials have indicated they will attempt to divert what water

they can through canals north of Bear-dsley Road."

LATHROP SAID the county highway department is considering adding a pipeline under the newly constructed road to allow water to pass underneath.

"However, I'm not sure we can install enough pipeline to control the water flow," he said.

Richard Yancy, engineer for the water conservation district, said they will shut off all water releases for a 12-24 hour period so that the repairs can be made.

"OUR CURRENT inflow (into Lake Pleasant) is down, and we hope that we can maintain the reductions so that repairs can be made," he said.

About a dozen officials from the Property Owners and Residents Association of Sun City West met Monday with Fred Koory, county supervisor chairman, to offer suggestions and

alternatives to the dilemma.

Koory assured them that an agreement had been worked out between the county highway department and Del E. Webb Co. to bring an immediate solution to the problem.

"CONSTRUCTION on the approaches to the river has already begun," Koory said. "The temporary roadway, about 48 feet wide and three to four feet above the stream, will have culverts installed underneath to let the water pass through."

Webb construction equipment is being utilized to help speed the project along.

Although there is controversy over who is paying for the immediate repairs, county officials say the tab eventually will be picked up by the federal government.

"SINCE MARICOPA County has

been declared a disaster area, it will eventually be paid for through federal subsidies," Koory said.

PORA officials were not permitted to give their presentation to Koory Monday.

An ad hoc committee recently formed to help solve the bridge problem, reportedly spent hours compiling information which has gone virtually unnoticed, said one PORA officer.

"The people of Sun City West who responded so beautifully to our request for telephone calls and letters to officials should not go unnoticed," said Mrs. Loise Copes, PORA first vice-president. "Everyone may not be so cooperative to build the road if the community hadn't been so up in arms."

Agua Fria flow reduced, officials await new storms

Water continues to flow from Waddell Dam on Lake Pleasant today as Maricopa County Conservation District officials prepare for additional rain tonight and a heavy storm expected to hit the area Tuesday night.

The water flow into the Agua Fria River was reduced to 7,200 cubic feet per second Sunday as the area saw some relief following four days of rain.

"We anticipate the flow to continue to drop off," said Royce Pettit of the Maricopa County Civil Defense bureau. "The information we have so far indicates that the current run off is less than what's being released at Waddell Dam."

WATER RELEASES from Lake Pleasant reached 44,000 cfs Thursday night and caused considerable damage to residential areas along the Agua Fria.

All but three river crossings have been washed out; those that remain open are at Grand and Glendale avenues and at Indian School.

The Bell Road bridge was closed Friday after it began to sink into the river. Damaged by last year's flood, it had recently been repaired.

"IT PROBABLY will be a long time before the bridge (at Bell Road) is repaired," said Tim Avent, systems manager for the Maricopa County highway department. "Our immediate concern is how the new storm moving in ... is going to affect us."

Residents in Sun City West say they are aren't too concerned over the Bell

Road bridge being out so long as the Grand Avenue river crossing remains open. Sun City Westers have not taken any special precautions in the wake of the flooding and officials do not believe the community is in any danger.

"WE'RE HIGH and dry," said Paul Taylor of Sun City West.

The only real complaint Westers have is the lack of shopping facilities on the west side of the river. With nothing available, Westers must come into Sun City to do their shopping.

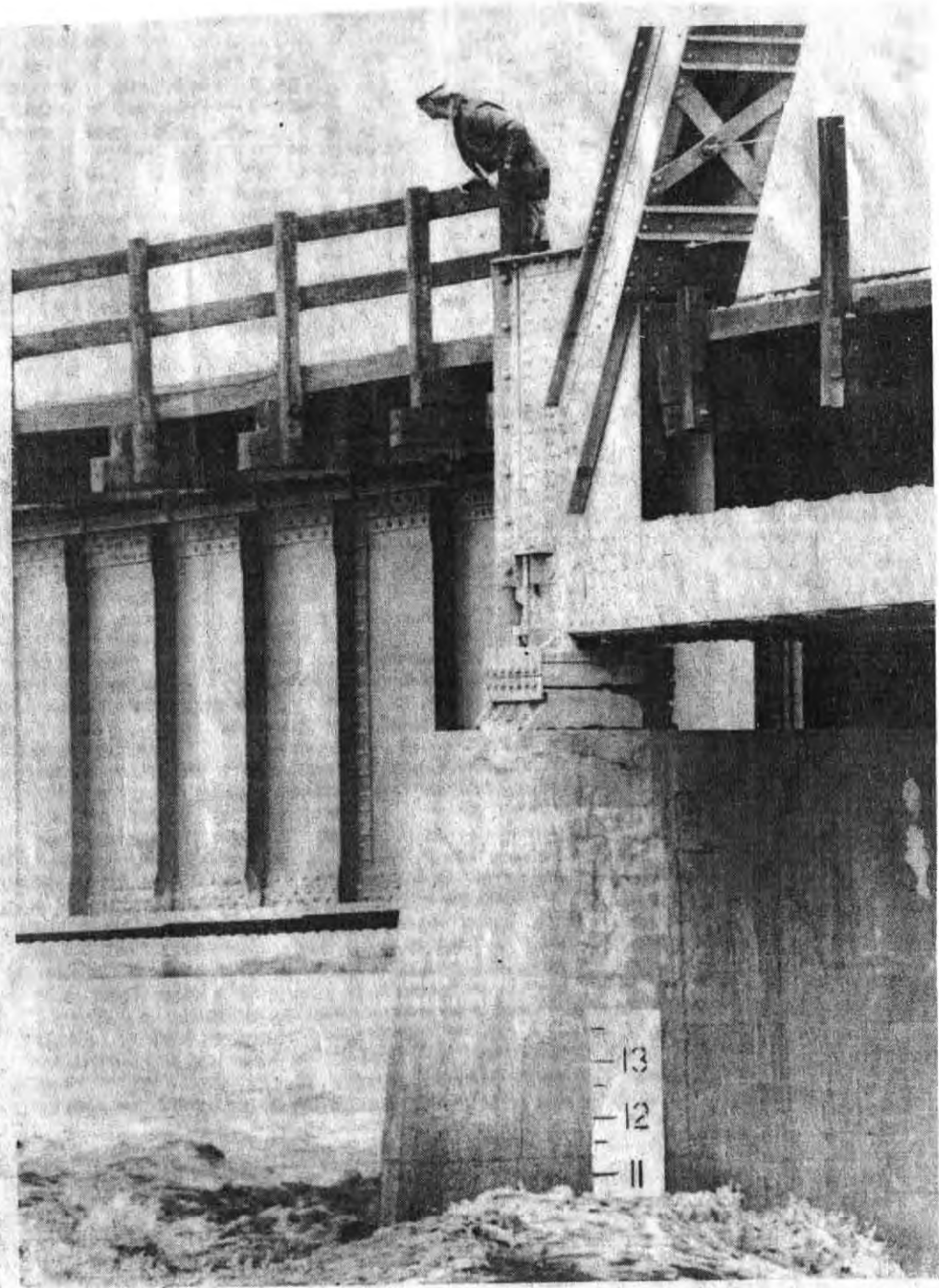
The National Weather Service forecasts continued showers on Monday with an 80 percent chance of heavy thunderstorms Tuesday.

"IT ALL DEPENDS on how much rain we get tomorrow," Pettit said. "At this time, the watersheds are not filled to capacity. All we can do is hope that Tuesday's storm doesn't dump more than an inch on us."

El Mirage officials said everyone evacuated last week has returned home and there was little damage to homes.

"We are in contact with the Red Cross and are prepared to evacuate again should it become necessary," said Gary Layton of the El Mirage Police Department.

Marinette Center, used as an evacuation center for residents of Hound Dog Acres and Rose Garden, will be open for centers activities Tuesday, said Jane Freeman, Centers publicist. However, if heavy rains Tuesday night cause further problems, Marinette again will be available for evacuees.



Santa Fe Railway employee leans over to check the Agua Fria at the Grand Avenue crossing Friday afternoon. The mark of 10½ feet was later eclipsed when the water went beyond 14 feet to brush the bottom of the bridge.

(News-Sun Photo)



The bridge at Grand Avenue over the Agua Fria River was the only way to cross today. Bell Road was cut by the river and river crossings downstream were flooded. The Grand Avenue bridge had been closed late Friday afternoon as flood waters topped

the 14-foot mark and water lapped at the roadway. El Mirage police said the span reopened at 3 a.m. today. The river appeared to be on the rise again as floodwaters carried trees and other debris downstream from rain-swollen Lake Pleasant.

(News-Sun Photos by Charley Ritter)

Bell bridge out as river rages; more rain due

By STEVE HAWLEY
Staff Writer

The rain-swollen Agua Fria River forced the evacuation of several El Mirage families Friday afternoon as residents of two communities north of Sun City spent their second day in a Red Cross shelter in Sun City.

Families in El Mirage evacuated their homes along the normally dry river as water being released from Waddell Dam on Lake Pleasant at a rate of 44,000 cubic feet per second began reaching the community.

Maggie Reese, El Mirage town manager, said this morning that the water level in the Agua Fria was dropping and that no homes in the community had been damaged.

"I DON'T KNOW what's going to happen," she said. "If it rains we might have problems, but it looks OK right now."

The water's force heavily damaged the bridge on Bell Road near R.H. Johnson Boulevard in Sun City West and forced the closure of the heavily traveled route that links the community with Sun City.

Capt. Jim Sebert of the Sun City Metropolitan Fire Department said the bridge was closed to traffic about 3 p.m. Friday when it began to sag. By early today the bridge had sagged to the point that it could not be seen.

"IT NEVER REALLY fell," explained Sebert. "It gradually sank."

Local posse members began ordering spectators from the area about 9 a.m. for fear someone would be swept away by the river.

"That bridge is just devastated," one onlooker said.

THE BRIDGE SPANNING the river on Grand Avenue near Youngtown was closed late Friday afternoon as officials became concerned that it was weakening. At one point, water was flowing near the top of the bridge as it crested at 14 feet.

The bridge was reopened about 3 a.m. today as the water level subsided to three feet.

Roy Bluhm of Civil Defense reported this morning that the water release from Waddell Dam had been decreased to 5,000 cfs.

"OBVIOUSLY THEY'RE going to continue releasing," Bluhm said. "They'll try to maintain a space behind the dam. The weather forecasts are calling for more rain."

The National Weather Service is forecasting moderate to heavy rain with a few thunderstorms for the Valley through tonight.

Sun City weatherman Mark Worthington reported the storms had dumped 1.58 inches of rain on the community since Wednesday. The heaviest rainfall was yesterday, he said, when .61 inches fell.

RED CROSS volunteer Bark Doll of Sun City said 27 evacuees spent the night in the shelter in El Mirage Elementary School and six remained this morning. The shelter can accommodate 100 persons, she said.

Many of those that spent the night ate breakfast and then returned home, Mrs. Doll said.

"SO MANY GO back to their homes because they have livestock and other things," she explained.

At the Sun City shelter in Marinette Center, Red Cross volunteer Helen Cann said 35 persons from Hound Dog Acres and Rose Garden ate meals Friday. Six adults and five children spent the night there, she said.

Mrs. Cann said that anyone who wishes to help can bring prepared, hot food to the shelter because there are no facilities for cooking.

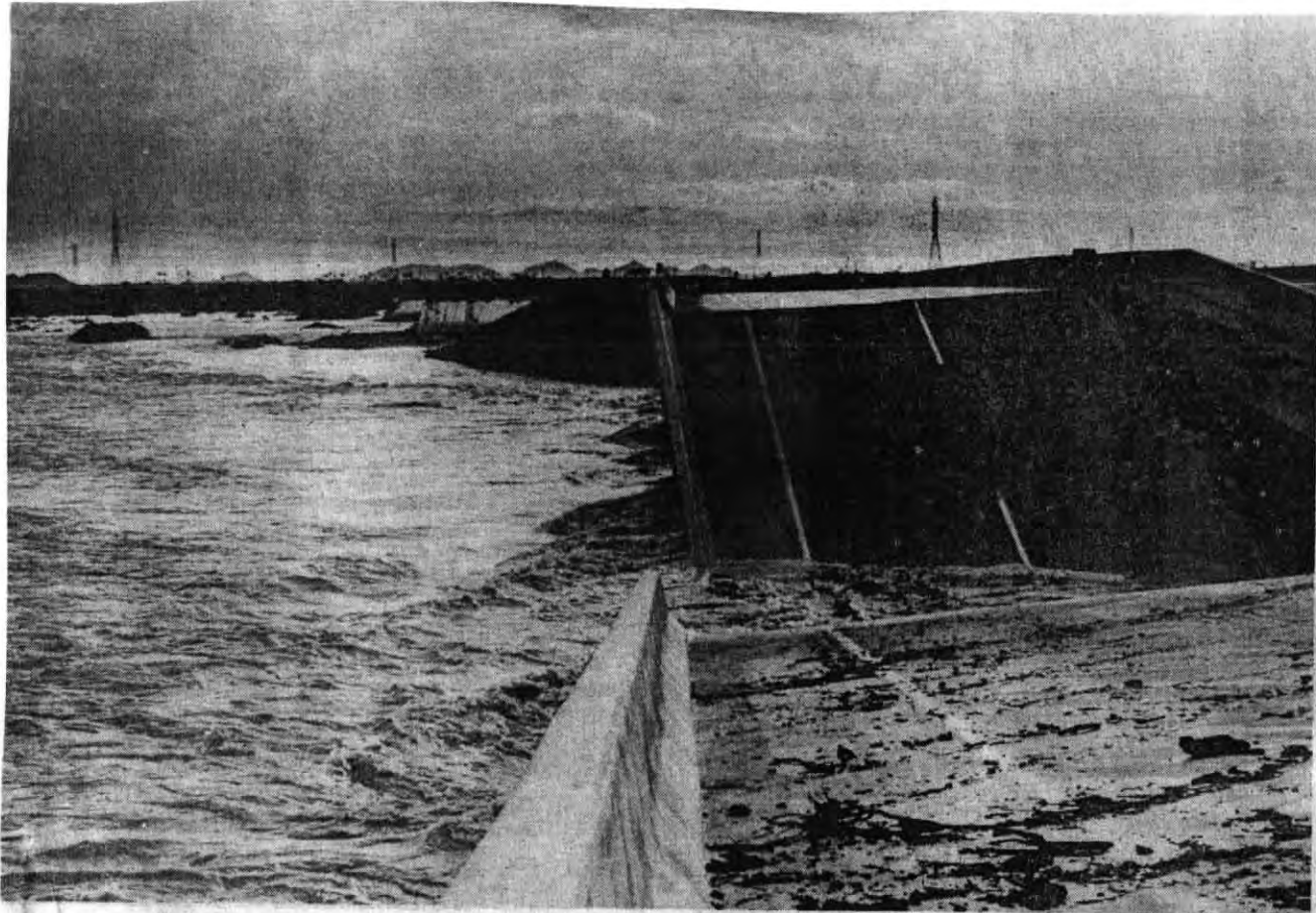
SHE ALSO SAID persons wanting to assist at Valley shelters could call 977-7281 for information.

Melvin Woods, who along with his wife, Arlene, and their three children have spent two days in Marinette Center, returned to his home at Hound Dog Acres at about 3 p.m. Friday and found it still above water.

But he said some of the homes in the area about four miles northwest of Sun City had about 3 feet of water around them.

"The last we saw they were still standing," Woods said.

"When we get back," his wife explained, "we're going to call it goldfish acres."



A raging Agua Fria River tore the Bell Road bridge roadway 50 feet from the water's edge today. Repairs apart late Friday as flood waters crested to nearly 14 feet to the bridge were completed a few months ago after debris from the torrent was piled up on the last year's flood waters damaged the span.

EMERGENCY SERVICES LIMITED

The Phoenix Gazette (Wed., Feb. 27, 1980, NW, 3)

Sun City West Upset About Bridge

By MARK FLEMING

Phoenix Reporter

Sun City West residents have expressed concern to county, state and federal officials that the collapse of the bridge over the Agua Fria River on Bell Road west of 99th Avenue could pose problems in case of emergency.

The bridge is the main route to the retirement community and residents must now use Grand Avenue.

The bridge collapsed under the force of river currents rushing over it Feb. 15.

Residents say the inconvenience of having to go by way of Grand Avenue is also a primary consideration since there are no grocery stores, gasoline stations and health and fire prevention services in Sun City West.

Property Owners and Residents Association members were reassured last week the Sun City West Police will provide emergency helicopter service for transporting persons needing hospitalization.

Sun City Fire Chief Geary Roberts said in an interview the bridge being out will not pose any problems in case of fire because the department has transferred an engine from the 99th Avenue-Bell Road station to the station just south of Grand Avenue on 111th Avenue.

He said the response time to any call in Sun City West would be the

same from the 111th Avenue station as it was from the 99th Avenue station, and that the route was "a straight shot up Grand Avenue."

AN AD-HOC committee of 12 PORA members met Monday with several supervisors from the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors.

They were assured the bridge situation will receive attention as soon as possible, according to committee chairman Loise Copes.

PORA members also have initiated a letter drive to President Carter, Sens. Barry Goldwater and Dennis DeConcini, U.S. Representatives, and state legislators Peter Corpstein and Cal Holman to let them know of their displeasure over the bridge situation and desires for at least a temporary one, Mrs. Copes said.

PORA officials also contacted officials of the Del Webb Co., who pledged their cooperation, she added.

Both the committee and the letter-writing campaign were started as a result of resolutions passed at the PORA meeting last week.

In related action, resolutions were passed seeking action from the Webb Co. on the development of a grocery store, full service gasoline station equipped with vehicle accessories, and fully equipped and staffed emergency vehicle in Sun City West.

THE GROCERY store motion

asked that Webb officials begin negotiations with a supermarket chain by March 1, unless Safeway has set a "firm and reasonable" date for opening their proposed store in the retirement community.

Flooding paralyzes area traffic

Daily News-Sun staff

Torrential rains pelted the Northwest Valley Wednesday afternoon, turning streets into raging rivers, golf courses into lakes and forcing some motorists to wade to safety in nearly waist-deep water.

Dozens of intersections were closed by a 30-minute storm that dropped between 1 and 3 inches of rain.

New River and Skunk Creek crossings in Sun City and Peoria remained closed this morning.

Area hospitals, police and fire departments reported no injuries or property damage during the storm.

"If you like rain it was a good day, said Dick Jarsensky, a Sun City weather watcher. "The yards were just standing like ponds."

Jarsensky, who lives north of Bell Road, said the rain gauge in his yard measured 1.9 inches between noon and 12:30 p.m. "I've never seen it rain that hard," he said.

Norm Shrenk measures precipitation in Youngtown. He said 1.09 inches fell in the retirement community between 11:50 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Peoria's emergency operations center was activated briefly as a precaution, said Fire Chief Mike Fusco. The center is activated to coordinate public services, police and fire responses to emergencies.

The heavy rains brought out the curious.

"I've been here 21 years and I've

See Golf course, A5



Golf course passes flood test

—From A1

never seen anything like it," said Fred Henriksen as he sat in his golf car watching flood waters recede along 99th Avenue south of Thunderbird Road.

Henriksen was shuttling neighbors to and from a shopping center parking lot to watch the spectacle.

"We don't want to miss anything," said Helen Dowling, a neighbor of Henriksen who left home in her curlers to witness the flooding.

Runoff from north Sun City and Peoria turned 99th and other north-south routes into rivers. Stranded motorists watched for about 30 minutes as 99th turned into one giant drainage channel — the water spilling over the sidewalks and lapping onto a shopping center parking lot.

Sun City Fire Department personnel helped 10 people who became trapped along 99th when the 8-foot drainage channel separating north and south traffic overflowed, said battalion chief Ron Gilbert.

Antonia Olszewski was just a block from home when she became stranded in the rushing water at 99th and Santa Fe Drive.

"I was just trying to get home for lunch," Olszewski said as she watched the water run across the hood of her white sedan.

"After the engine died the car started to

float," Olszewski said. "A man helped me from my car."

Off-duty Sun City Posse members Chuck Fisher and Joseph DeNardo waited out the 99th Avenue flooding together, joking that they needed a pair of oars.

Fisher is a retired merchant marine and DeNardo is retired from the U.S. Coast Guard. "We're a couple of water boys watching the water go down," Fisher said.

Sun City's area golf courses were open today, but only to golf-car path play.

Wednesday's storm provided a drainage test for the Deer Valley Golf Course in Sun City West's northern expansion area.

When the rain stopped, the course was under 2 to 3 feet of water but undamaged, according to Del Webb Corp. officials.

"It's (the golf course) designed to take all the runoff from the nearby neighborhoods and hold the water up to 36 hours while there is slow drainage off the course," said Martha Moyer, Webb spokeswoman.

That water eventually ends up in the Agua Fria River, Moyer said.

Agua Fria and New River runoff flows into the Salt River in south Phoenix.

No rain was in the forecast today or tomorrow.

Stephen Cherek, Daily News-Sun

The new Deer Valley Golf Course in Sun City West gets its first test as a flood retention basin.

Pioneer Recalls Flood of 1980

Story & Photo,
Mildred Baker

When you look at Bell Road, it's hard to picture the bridge of sorts that crossed the Agua Fria River in 1980.

Frieda Schwartz, who moved here with her husband Allan in 1979, recalls the plight of Sun City West when a series of torrents dubbed "One Hundred Year Flood" washed the bridge out the night of Friday, Feb. 15, 1980.

"We had to drive all the way to Wickenburg for groceries," Frieda remembers, "because the bridge on Grand Avenue



A headline in last week's edition indicated the flood that destroyed the Bell Rd bridge over the Agua Fria occurred in 1979. The winter rains didn't take it out until the night of Fri, Feb 15, 1980

was covered with three feet of water so people were restricted from using it. Gradually one car at a time was permitted to cross into Sun City".

"Del Webb was sponsoring the PGA golf tournament at Hillcrest Golf Course, so how were people to get

here? The Webb Company constructed an asphalt road on the ground where the bridge over the Agua Fria fell...making a temporary access for golf visitors". (The flood story was carried in last week's Wester.)

Frieda says when she

and her husband got off the plane from Skokie, Illinois in 1979, their first most lasting impression "was the beautiful smell of orange groves...miles and miles of them".

"Grand Avenue was our access," states Frieda, "because Bell Road was hardly a road in April 1979 when we arrived. There were cotton fields all around. But the Webb Company told us our new community would be like Sun City, and we took their word".

"In those early days it was really nice," adds Schwartz Recalls Flood
Continued Section B

Frieda Schwartz Recalls 1980 Flood

Continued from Page 1

Frieda. "We would congregate at night around the swimming pool like one big family and tell where we came from. Everyone was so friendly".

Frieda has been secretary of the Pioneers Club since it was organized March 6, 1984.

Although 1200 residents qualified for membership, and 638 signed up to be charter members, the total membership now is 392.

"The Webb Company continues to be very good to the Pioneers," Frieda explains. "They help us with our publicity, sponsoring coffees and socials, providing for our meeting room in the Community Building".

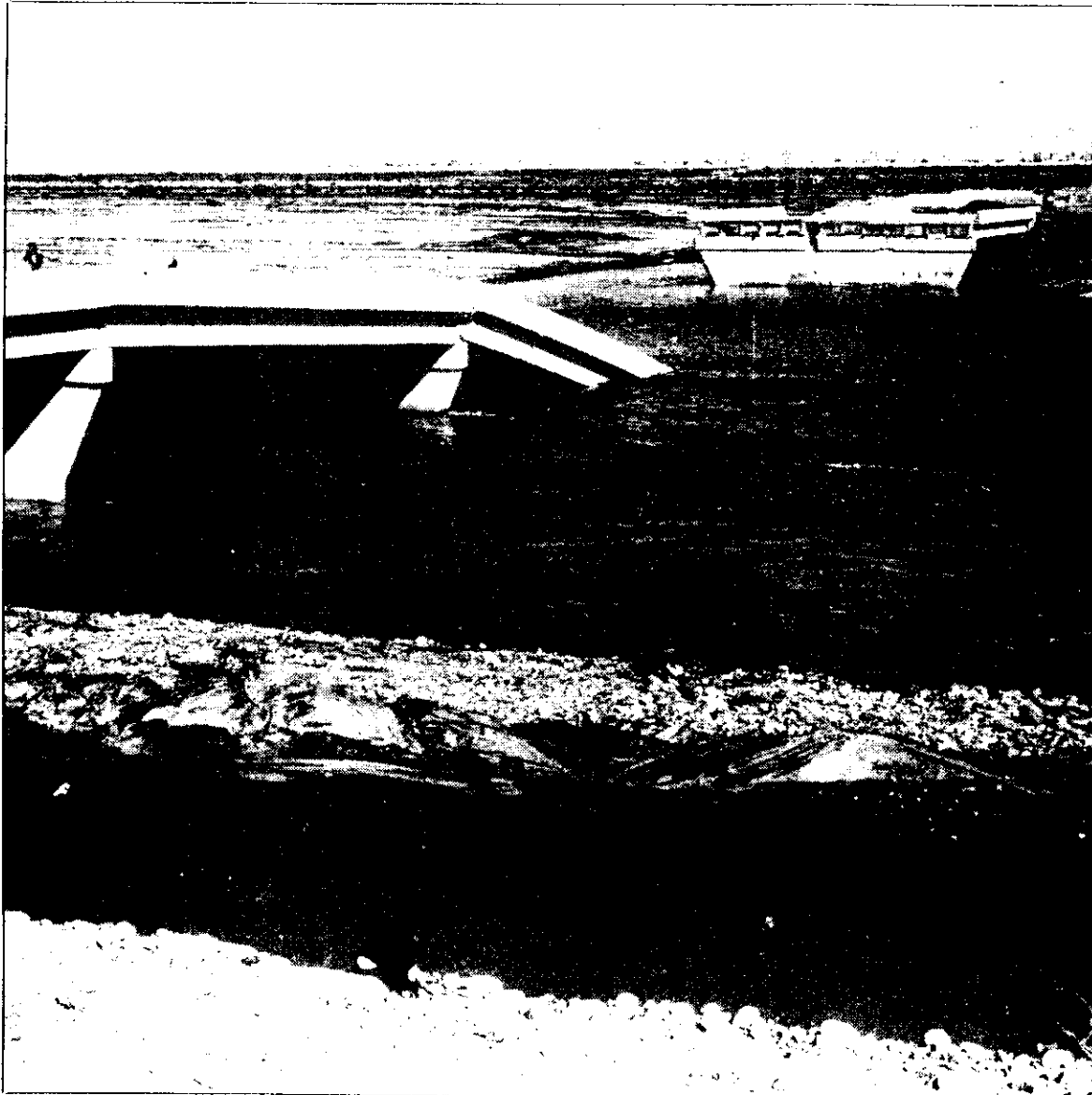
Both Frieda and her husband were career people. He in merchandising and she an engineering secretary to the chief engineer of United Conveyer Corporation, manufacturers of power plant machinery of Deerfield, Illinois.



Pioneers Sol Robinson and Frieda Schwartz with Del Webb's Director of Publicity, Ken Pionsky, at the Pioneers' organizing luncheon. And, Frieda today.

1979 Flood Destroys Bell Road Bridge

*July 9, 1979
Wester*



**Story & Photo,
Art Bender, President
Friends of the SCW Library**

During the 1979-80 monsoon season, floodwaters of the Agua Fria River destroyed the Bell Road bridge between the Sun Cities. Extensive rain storms in the Bradshaw Mountains drained into Lake Pleasant and water had to be released to save the Waddell Dam. That water flow and concurrent rain in Sun City West took our bridge away.

The Sun City West streets were flooded from sidewalk to sidewalk. During the next 18 months traffic on Bell was routed to a temporary road at the river bottom south of the bridge site. Of course, as of now, the river bottom was dry most of the time.

It was a great day when we got our new bridge. That same storm also destroyed a bridge over the Agua Fria River on I-17 at Black Canyon City.

Bridge to friendship

In February 1980, Sun City West found out what it means to be isolated. Heavy rains created a torrent of floodwater that swept down the Agua Fria River and slammed into the Bell Road bridge, causing the middle of the span to break and drop to the riverbed.

Although a detour road was built by the county soon, at the urging of Sun City West's residents, there was a period of extreme inconvenience.

Now, the county has completed and dedicated a replacement bridge, sturdily constructed to withstand 100-year floodwaters of 103,000 cubic feet per second (as compared to the 66,000 cfs peak in February 1980 that crashed into the old bridge), costing \$4 million and paid for by Maricopa County without federal, state or other contributions, a structure of permanence.

Two members of the Maricopa County Highway Commission, local residents Murray Karsten and Eldon Davidson, made the same, very special, point in their remarks during dedication ceremonies Tuesday.

This bridge, both stressed, can serve a greater purpose than simply as a more reliable connection between Sun City West and Sun City—and, of course, the rest of the Valley. It can become a symbol of a new relationship between the retirement communities.

Said Davidson: "It is my sincere hope that this beautiful

new bridge will not only solve some serious transportation problems but will be symbolic of the need for the residents of Sun City and Sun City West to tear down walls of misunderstanding and to emphasize the many things we have in common."

And Karsten: "Speaking as a Sun City resident, this span of concrete and steel can represent more than a bridge that crosses the riverbed at this point. It can also be used as a symbol in providing a bridge of friendship between Sun City, Sun City West and Youngtown, wherein these three communities will work together toward common goals and achieve higher objectives with their combined efforts."

These retirement tri-communities have much in common; the barriers that have been erected have been created in people's minds. What needs now to be created in people's minds is a new image of commonality, cooperation and sharing.

Karsten, borrowing from the Spanish, said he would like to refer to the bridge as "El Puente de Amestad" or "The Bridge of Friendship."

There, Sun Citians, Sun City Westers and Youngtowners, is a symbol to embrace, to demonstrate and to perpetuate. Let's start calling it Friendship Bridge—and make it truly that by building bridges of understanding.

OVER





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Bell bridge ceremony slated

Ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the Bell Road bridge across the Agua Fria River are scheduled for 10 a.m. Tuesday on the west side of the bridge.

It will be an uplifting experience for Supervisors Fred Koory Jr. and Hawley Atkinson. They will receive their first hot-air balloon rides and will cut the ribbon while in the balloon, Xanadu, owned by Jim and Vickie Peek of Phoenix.

12-3-81
Koory, supervisor of District 3, will be the keynote speaker and Atkinson, District 4, will serve as master of ceremonies.

Murray Karsten, a Sun City resident serving on the County Highway Commission, will be on the program. The Peoria High School Band will provide music for the occasion.

The \$4 million Bell Road bridge was constructed with Maricopa County funds. It is one of 14 bridges voters

approved for construction last November in a \$30 million bond issue.

The bridge, which is 1,100 feet long and four lanes wide, will be the main access route between Sun City West and Sun City, Phoenix, and I-17. It is capable of withstanding a water flow of 85,000 cubic-feet-per-second.

Engineering design was done by Benson and Gerdin Inc. The Tanner Companies was the construction contractor.

Supervisors dedicate Bell Road bridge

By HAWLEY ATKINSON
Supervisor, District 4

The Xanadu has landed. As Fred Koory and myself cut the ribbon to allow the flow of traffic across the Bell Road Bridge over the Agua Fria we slowly ascended in the magnificent Aerostat Xanadu to over 1500 feet elevation to float majestically to Sun City West. It was a fantastic experience but perhaps the Balloonist's Prayer says it all.

"May the winds welcome you with softness.

May the sun bless you with his warm hands.

MAY YOU fly so high and so well that God joins you in laughter and sets you gently back into the loving arms of Mother Earth."

The Bell Road bridge dedication was a terrific success but as usual there is always a crack for the best of intentions to fall through. I failed to introduce the President of the Sun City Prides, Larry Allen. Forgive me, Larry, forgive me.

A last reminder that the Del Webb Devco request for a zoning change for the proposed shopping center on the south side of Bell Road at 99th Avenue will be held at 9 a.m. Wednesday in the Supervisor's Auditorium. I have discussed the proposed change with Del Webb Devco, the community leaders, the condominium residents at Campana Drive and Boswell and the residents living on Amber Trail adjacent to 99th Avenue. Mr. and Mrs. Dave

Haralick were kind enough to gather neighbors for an exchange of views. I was unforgivably late but these lovely people did forgive me. Though we did not agree on all points I found the exchange most beneficial. Thanks, Yetta.

WHAT A wonderful time of year. The anticipation of the joyous Christmas holidays is as marvelous as the days themselves...in the contentment of giving and receiving. At this time

perhaps a reflection on the generosity of Del Webb Devco: land donated to the Recording for the Blind, to the Home Owners Association, Sun City Art Museum, original Boswell Hospital site, Sun Bowl, 16 acres to Maricopa County at Dysart and Bell Road—and on and on.

What a Christmas present! My boy, Hawley, Jr. and his lovely wife JoAnne have given us a beautiful grandchild—Ann Marie.

OVER



Bell bridge dedicated

Supervisors Hawley Atkinson, left, and Fred Koory Jr. prepare to cut ribbon dedicating Bell Road bridge over the Agua Fria River this morning. Opening of the vital link

between Sun City and Sun City West will restore all-weather traffic capability to the roadway which carries more than 12,000 vehicles per day. (News-Sun Photo by Jim Painter)



OVER

Broken by the terrible force of the water surging down the Agua Fria after release from Waddell Dam, the Bell Road bridge shows twisted steel reinforcement bars and crumbling concrete that could not hold against the river's power. As the river weakened the bridge supports, it sagged slowly until it broke.



Residents of Hound Dog Acres and Rose Garden settlements north of Sun City were evacuated to Marinette Recreation Center Thursday night. Virginia Sprau helps tend baby Timmy Woods Friday morning after their parents had gone to check on damage to their homes.

*News-Sun Photos
by Jim Painter, Charley Ritter*

It's open! Traffic flows on Bell Road

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FLOOD WATERS released from Lake Pleasant destroyed the bridge at Bell Road, cutting off access to Sun City West from Bell. That left the Grand Avenue bridge over the Agua Fria as the only route.

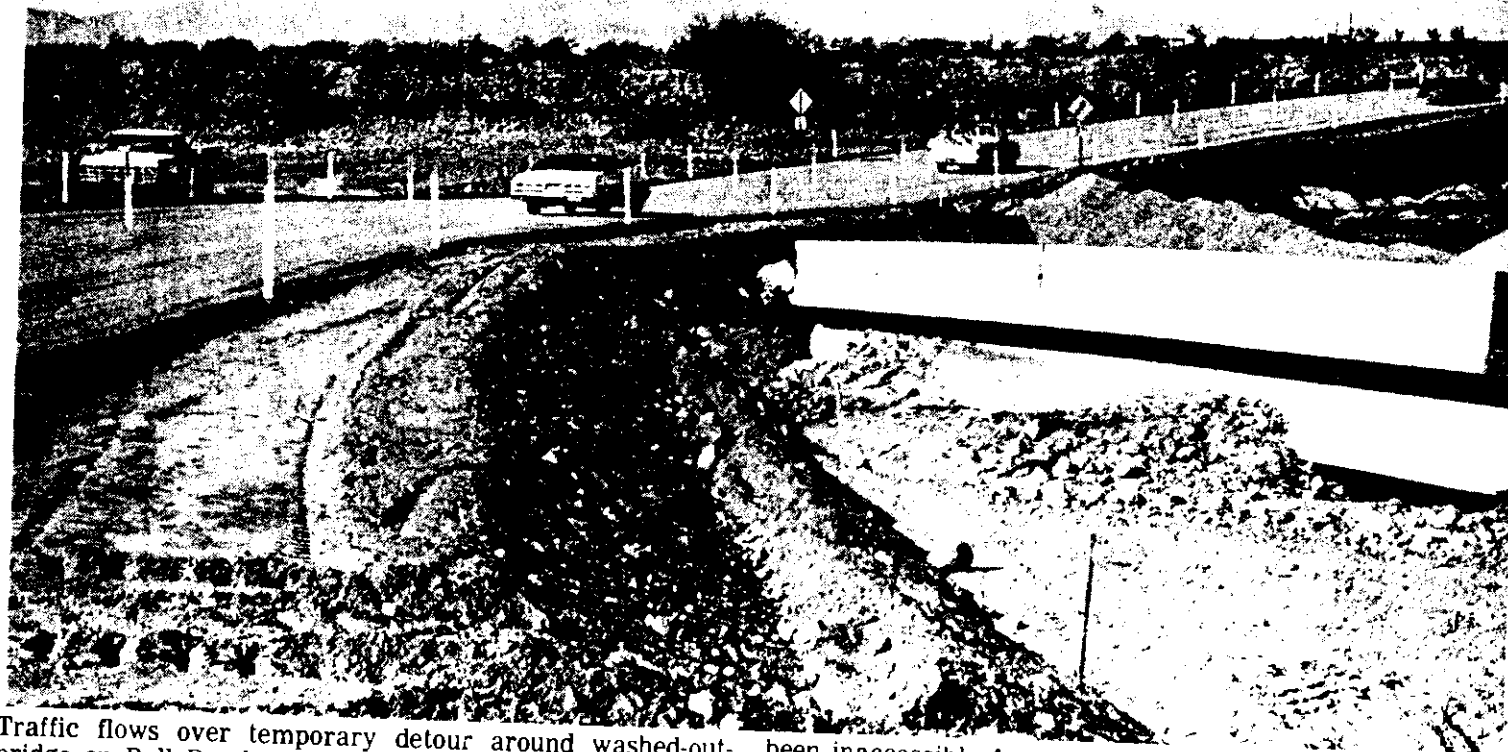
Water from Lake Pleasant was shut off to allow the Sanner work crews to construct a small dam, lay pipe to divert the water, and build a road bed a few feet higher than the expected water level when more water is released from the lake later.

ASSISTANT Maricopa County engineer Larry Waggoner said the construction was in partnership with the Del E. Webb Development Co. and the cost will be split between the two. Sanner is the Webb subcontractor.

Bill Fish, of the Arizona Land Department, said the crossing at the Agua Fria River on the north side of Bell Road is definitely state-owned land but he was unable to say if the road was built legally. He said Webb may have used an old right-of-way granted to it years ago as the legal grounds for the temporary road but he said he didn't know if the grant was still valid.

"You need a right-of-entry to be legal unless Webb has an old one on the books," Fish said.

He said his office hadn't granted a right-of-entry recently.



Traffic flows over temporary detour around washed-out bridge on Bell Road at Agua Fria River. Around-the-clock construction finished early this morning. Sun City West had

been inaccessible from the east since storm damage to the bridge.

(News-Sun Photo by Charley Ritter)

IN HOUND DOG ACRES

'Flood Orphans' Vow To Return

By EDMUND LAWLER
Gazette Reporter

An orphan of the storm, Karen Little watched stoically as an angry Agua Fria River ripped chunks of earth from the wall of a channel it just carved.

Over the roar of the surging brown water, Mrs. Little cursed the river that drove her from her home the night before.

Uprooted trees were swept downstream by the river about to turn its fury on a row of utility poles. The wires strung between the posts began to bow with tension as the posts bent under the force of the cascading water.

MRS. LITTLE has seen the river grow ugly before. Each time it has sent her scrambling for higher ground.

But each time she's returned. And she vowed to return again to her home at Hound Dog Acres.

"I have no where else to go," she explained. "I can't afford to live anywhere else."

She has lived in the home beneath the bluffs that line the river for seven years. "People out here like it," she said, "It's quiet and there's room to ride horses."

She first sensed what she and her neighbors

were in for when she watched a small stream form in the bed of the normally dry river. "We weren't sure what to expect, but by four o'clock authorities said it might get bad."

MRS. JANET Vitori and her husband stayed in their home the first night of the storm. She said her husband was awakened by the eerie sound of trees being cracked from their moorings.

"He woke me and said it's going to be as bad as two years ago," she said. "Whenever the river's strong enough to break the trees off you can expect a lot of water."

Water lapped at her feet as she stood at the intersection of 107th Avenue and Jomax Road. The water filled in as she spoke and counseled those around her to head to the bluffs because the flood control district was preparing to release 60,000 cubic feet of water per second into the channel.

The damage was extensive and some of the more than 200 evacuees from Hound Dog Acres and neighboring Rose Garden Estates were not willing to accept the latest in a series of floods as an act of God.

ONE MAN who sought shelter at the

Marinette Recreation in Sun City blamed the flood control district's policies. "They let that lake (Lake Pleasant) fill to the brim. We're going to keep having these floods until they start letting the water out gradually," he said.

A group of residents from the flood-prone area have filed a multimillion-dollar suit against the flood control district.

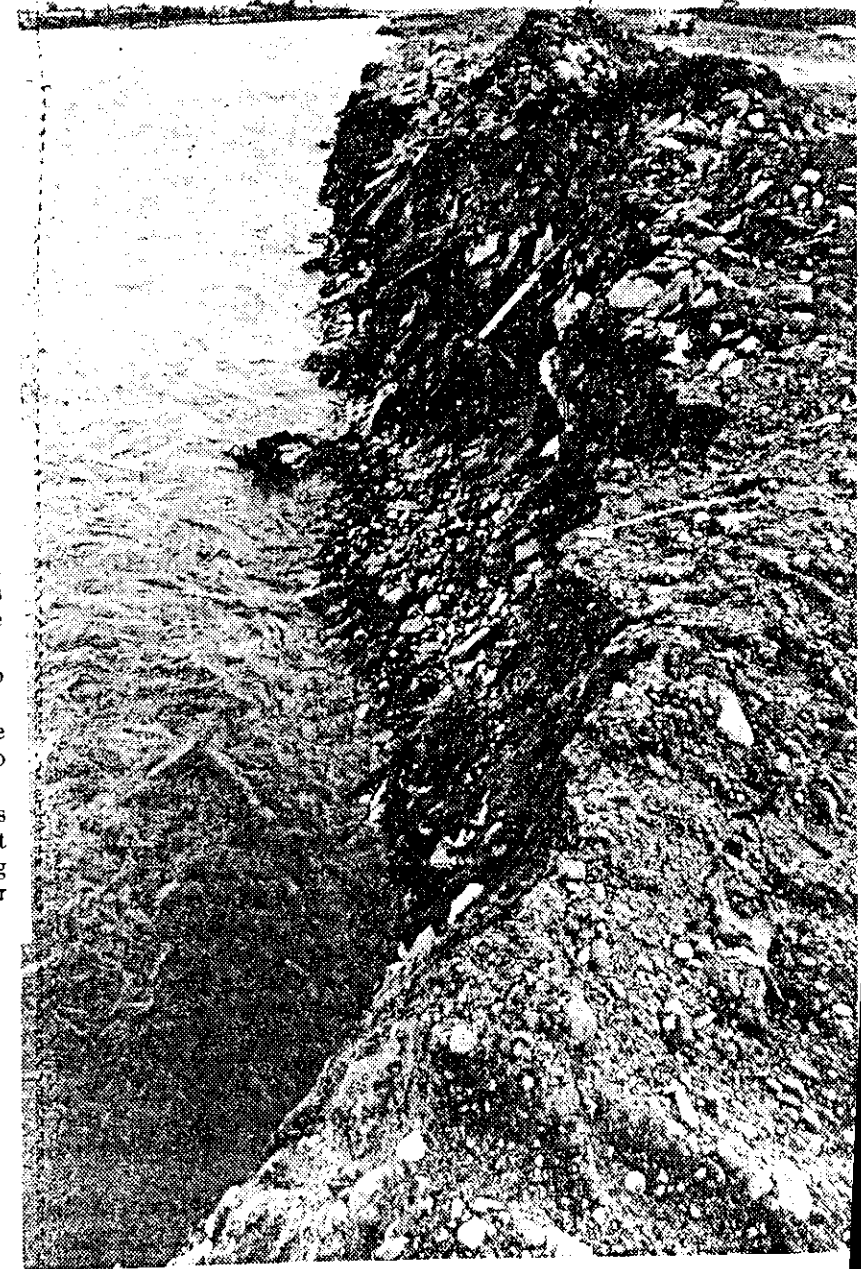
Downstream in El Mirage, the rising water rekindled nightmares of last year's devastating flood. Civil Defense authorities twice during the course of the storm evacuated families from low-lying areas along the river.

HUNDREDS OF El Mirage residents routed from their homes sought shelter at different times during the nine-day siege at the El Mirage Elementary School.

Joe Moreno was among the evacuees. Moreno and his family have been through it before.

Sadly, he was in the same situation as those upstream. "I can't afford to move. I'll have to go back," Moreno said.

El Mirage Mayor John Garza said this year's flood was not as devastating as the one that swept through the town in 1978. Garza said the charging waters remained in the channel more this year than during previous floods.



Gazette Staff Photo by Bud Leiby

Flood waters ripped the earth from a landfill near the Grand Avenue Bridge over the Agua Fria, strewing garbage around the controversial dump.

PICNIC AREA IN SHAMBLES

Heading Ranch Again Ravaged By Floods

By DOUG FRERICHS
Gazette Reporter

North of Sun City, a party of picnic tables has arrived in a drunken state after a heavy drinking bout with the Agua Fria River.

The scene is the Heading Ranch where Sun City picnic facilities, including tables, ramadas, buildings and a much-used trap and skeet range, have been thrown in disarray by destructive floods.

The washout is the second to occur since December 1978 when waters ravaged the ranch, owned by the Del E. Webb Development Co. and operated for the exclusive use of Sun City Sun City West residents.

UNDAUNTED BY news of the wreckage, leaders of the Sun City and Sun City West sportmen's clubs say they are optimistic that the site, already the subject of one legal suit, can be reopened to residents of the two retirement communities.

They also say their members, numbering nearly 500, would be willing to provide physical labor to help Webb reconstruct the ranch, located on Jomax Road about 20 miles north of Sun City.

Webb has announced plans to

available from the firm, the ranch was visited by *The Phoenix Gazette* shortly after peak floodwaters receded.

Approach by car was impossible because of destruction to the entry road, but by hiking over mud flats, crossed by meandering riverlets, it was found that much of the facility is still intact, though one ramada was toppled and two block buildings were collapsed.

AT THE PICNIC area, a dozen or more concrete tables appeared to have been on a binge - keeled topsy-turvy from strong waters which had flattened the property's chain-link fences and heaped the area with mud, gravel and debris.

Most of the fixed equipment remained upright, while the rifle-pistol range was virtually unscathed. The trap and skeet range also seemed in fair condition with towers intact, though the field was badly eroded by Thursday floods which peaked at 60,000 cubic feet per second.

In response to these reports, James Wormley, president of the Sun City sports group, said he hoped the ranch could be rebuilt. He added,

however, that the decision rests with Webb.

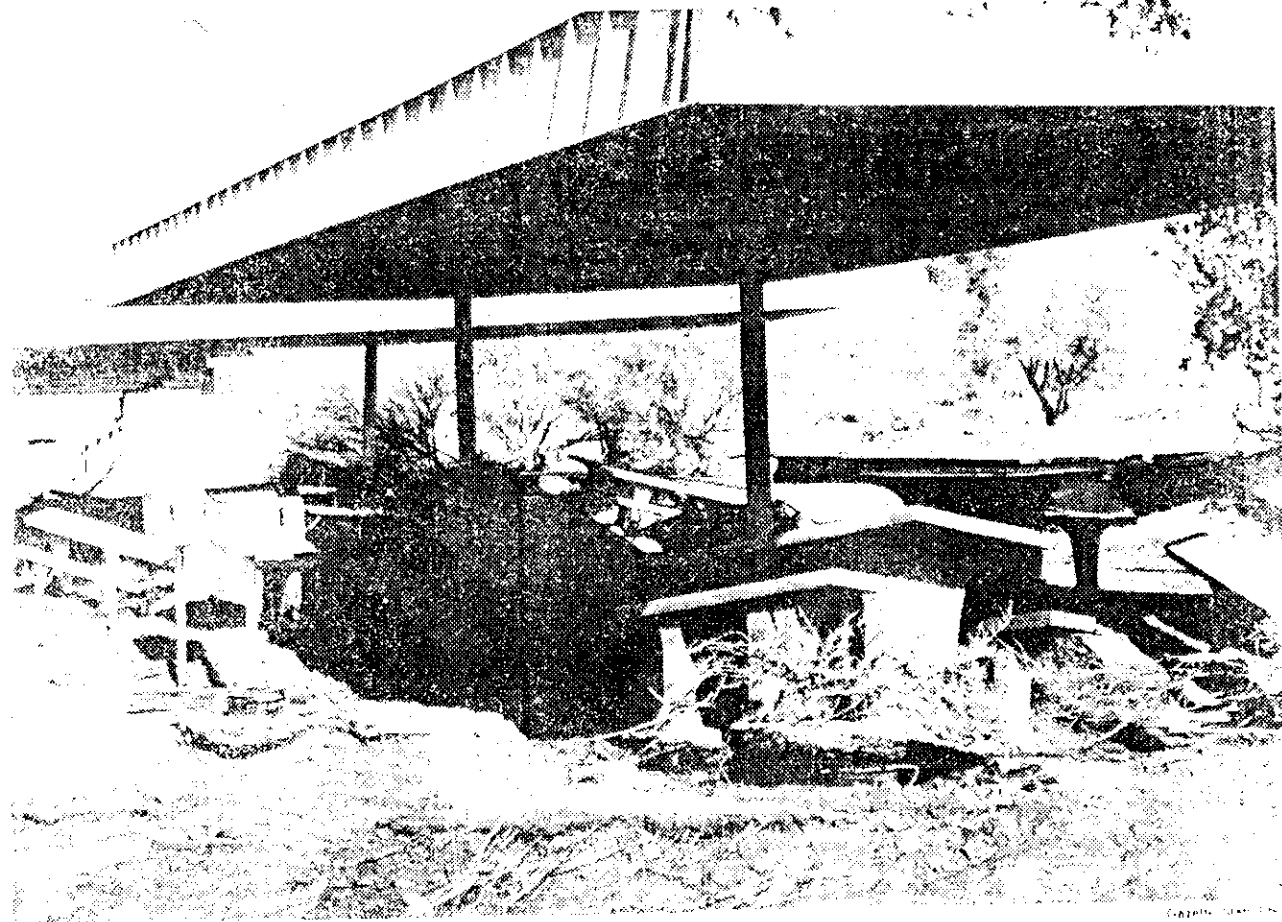
Karl Culler, acting president of the newly founded Sun City West sportmen's group, said he would be in favor of rebuilding ruined portions on higher ground. He also said he was confident members would assist Webb in cleanup work -- a view seconded by Wormley.

BOTH SAID members are continuing to shoot through arrangements with Phoenix Trap and Skeet.

Webb officials, meantime, refused to comment on the facility's future, pending damage assessments, but Lee Larson, a Sun City Sportmen's board member, said major losses probably were avoided this year because of removal of all portable fixtures before the river sliced through the area.

Rebuilt after last winter's flood, the ranch generated Sun City controversy after the Sun City Recreation Centers Inc., which had been offered deed to the facility, rescinded any involvement with Heading for fear of becoming involved in legal suits over the issue of whether the ranch constituted a deed hazard.

Such a suit, respondents maintain,



A jumble of picnic tables and the cracked and slumped walls of a shelter house stand as mute witness to the flood damage that wracked Heading Ranch.

ized when residents of Hound Dog Acres filed suit against Webb on grounds that ranch facilities had contributed to flooding of that community in 1978.

More recently, Webb and the two groups have been negotiating formation of a Heading Ranch corporation, but Wormley said changes at this point are possible, and that the an-

Bell Road span built for 60,000, falls at 44,600 cfs

By STEVE HAWLEY
Staff Writer

The Bell Road bridge, which sank into Agua Fria River floodwaters Friday, collapsed under pressure it was designed to withstand easily.

A county highway engineer confirmed Wednesday that the bridge was built to handle a water flow of up to 60,000 cubic feet per second.

Peak water flow on Friday from Lake Pleasant's Waddell Dam was 44,600 cfs, a Civil Defense official reported.

HIGHWAY ENGINEER Francis Lathrop said Thursday that he thought water released from Waddell Dam hit 60,000 cfs at one time Friday but Civil Defense reports that day and again Thursday showed the highest release at 44,600 cfs, a flow the bridge was designed to handle.

"Maybe it went down before that (60,000 cfs)," said Lathrop. "I don't know."

At only one time since the storm began last week has the water release into the Agua Fria reached 60,000 cfs or more.

THAT WAS Tuesday night as 66,000 cfs roared down the normally dry river when locally heavy showers plagued the area.

The bridge was closed to traffic about 3 p.m. Friday when it began sagging under the water's force.

"I don't know what caused it to fall,"

Lathrop said. It's still coming apart little by little.

"**WHEN THE** water stops flowing we'll have to take a look at it. We don't know right now what happened."

A temporary road allowing travel across the river will be constructed just south and parallel to Bell Road when the waters dry up, Lathrop said.

Sun City West motorists have been forced to travel Dysart Road south to Grand Avenue to reach Sun City and other communities to the east.

AL FRANCE of the Arizona Department of Transportation said all state bridges, including those spanning the New River and Agua Fria on Grand Avenue near here, are being checked regularly and in some cases a constant watch is being maintained.

"We only have a few bridges left and we'd like to keep them open. But our main concern," France said, "is the public's safety."

Geary Roberts, chief of Sun City Metropolitan Fire Department, said today that response time to fire and first-aid calls has been unaffected by the damage to the Bell Road bridge.

CALLS TO Sun City West will be handled from the fire station at 111th Avenue just south of Grand Avenue rather than the station at 99th Avenue and Bell Road.

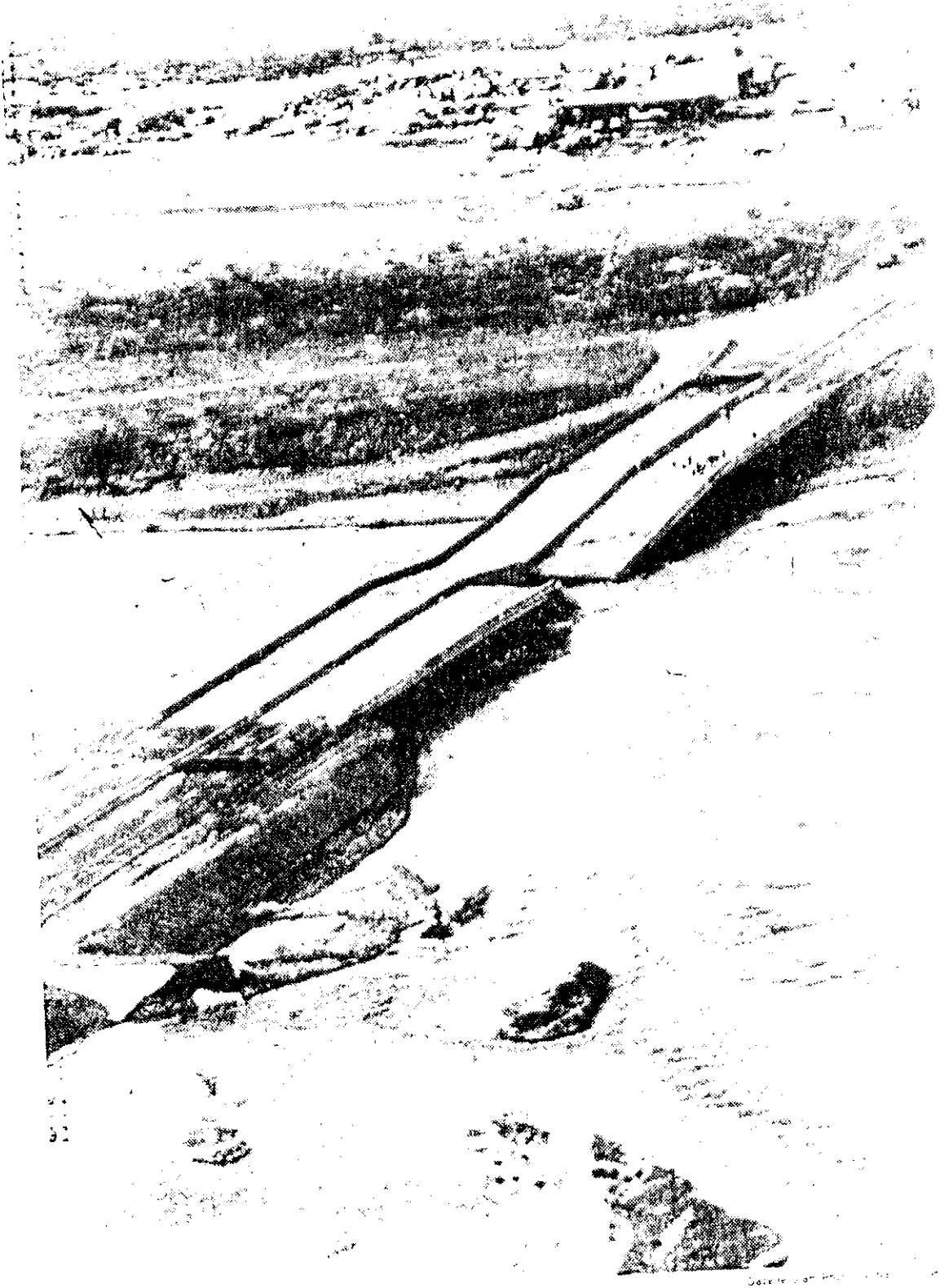
Both stations are about the same distance from Sun City West.

"We're completely covered," Roberts explained.



Bell Road bridge, which collapsed Friday, may not be repaired for some time, but as soon as the riverbed stops running floodwater and dries out, a temporary road will be built south and parallel to Bell Road, a county engineer says.

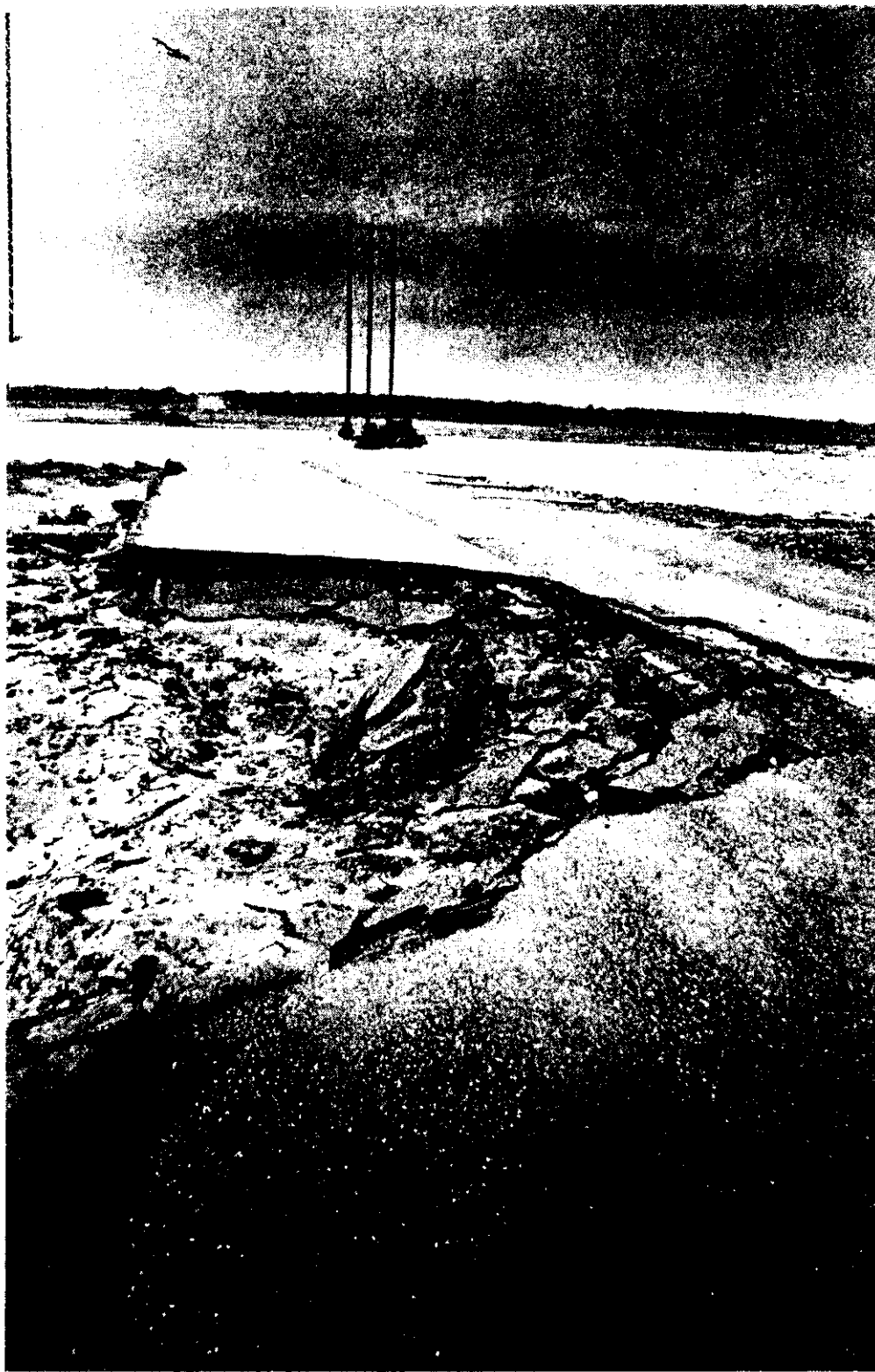
OVER



BRIDGE UNDER TROUBLED WATERS

This aerial view of the Agua Fria River, looking southwest, was photographed

just after the Bell Avenue Bridge slumped below the surface.



Pavement damage was extensive at Olive Avenue and the Agua Fria as the river tore out chunks of roadbed and carried it downstream. Repairs to the road have been expensive in the last two years—floods during that time have closed the crossing to traffic often.

OVER

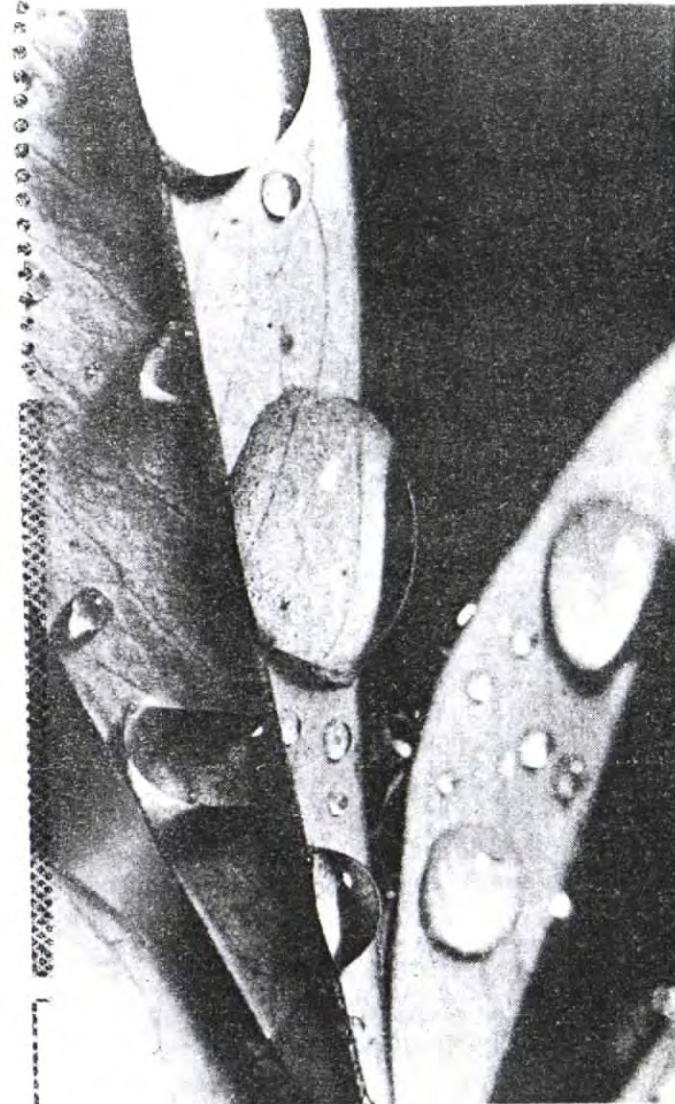


Gazette Staff Photo by Bud Leiby

Flood waters ripped the earth from a landfill near the Grand Avenue Bridge over the Agua Fria, strewing garbage around the controversial dump.



Kathy and Buddy Woods find a game to pass the time Friday morning as they wait for their parents to return from checking damage to their home north of Sun City. Marinette Center was open to flood evacuees Thursday night. Normal activities have been resumed, but if needed, Marinette can become a Red Cross center on short notice.

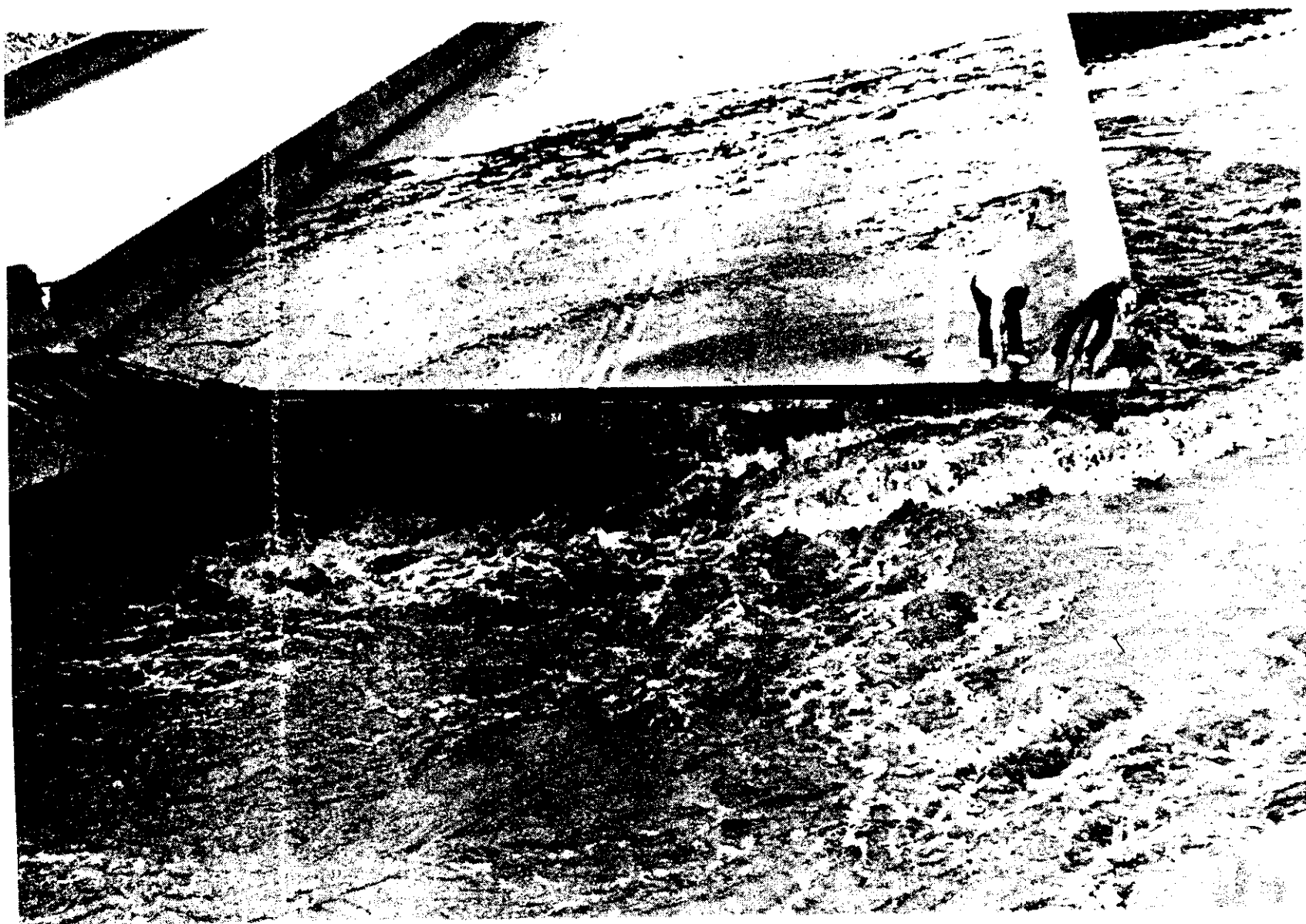


Beaded with moisture, the plants of earth show the beneficial effects of rain in their growth and beauty. But...

RAIN

**Nature's
blessing
until
it turns
rivers
to fury**

OVER



When rain and runoff combine to fill the normally dry Agua Fria riverbed and turn it into an angry, rushing turbulence, structures and creatures are destroyed or swallowed up. Two adventuresome

lads play at the very edge of the west section of the Bell Road bridge which fell before the water monster Saturday.

Bell bridge out as river rages; more rain due

By STEVE HAWLEY
Staff Writer

The rain-swollen Agua Fria River forced the evacuation of several El Mirage families Friday afternoon as residents of two communities north of Sun City spent their second day in a Red Cross shelter in Sun City.

Families in El Mirage evacuated their homes along the normally dry river as water being released from Waddell Dam on Lake Pleasant at a rate of 44,000 cubic feet per second began reaching the community.

Maggie Reese, El Mirage town manager, said this morning that the water level in the Agua Fria was dropping and that no homes in the community had been damaged.

"I DON'T KNOW what's going to happen," she said. "If it rains we might have problems, but it looks OK right now."

The water's force heavily damaged the bridge on Bell Road near R.H. Johnson Boulevard in Sun City West and forced the closure of the heavily traveled route that links the community with Sun City.

Capt. Jim Sebert of the Sun City Metropolitan Fire Department said the bridge was closed to traffic about 3 p.m. Friday when it began to sag. By early today the bridge had sagged to the point that it could not be seen.

"IT NEVER REALLY fell," explained Sebert. "It gradually sank."

Local posse members began ordering spectators from the area about 9 a.m. for fear someone would be swept away by the river.

"That bridge is just devastated," one onlooker said.

THE BRIDGE SPANNING the river on Grand Avenue near Youngtown was closed late Friday afternoon as officials became concerned that it was weakening. At one point, water was flowing near the top of the bridge as it crested at 14 feet.

The bridge was reopened about 3 a.m. today as the water level subsided to three feet.

Roy Bluhm of Civil Defense reported this morning that the water release from Waddell Dam had been decreased to 5,000 cfs.

"OBVIOUSLY THEY'RE going to continue releasing," Bluhm said. "They'll try to maintain a space behind the dam. The weather forecasts are calling for more rain."

The National Weather Service is forecasting moderate to heavy rain with a few thunderstorms for the Valley through tonight.

Sun City weatherman Mark Worthington reported the storms had dumped 1.58 inches of rain on the community since Wednesday. The heaviest rainfall was yesterday, he said, when .61 inches fell.

RED CROSS volunteer Bark Doll of Sun City said 27 evacuees spent the night in the shelter in El Mirage Elementary School and six remained this morning. The shelter can accommodate 100 persons, she said.

Many of those that spent the night ate breakfast and then returned home, Mrs. Doll said.

"SO MANY GO back to their homes because they have livestock and other things," she explained.

At the Sun City shelter in Marinette Center, Red Cross volunteer Helen Cann said 35 persons from Hound Dog Acres and Rose Garden ate meals Friday. Six adults and five children spent the night there, she said.

Mrs. Cann said that anyone who wishes to help can bring prepared, hot food to the shelter because there are no facilities for cooking.

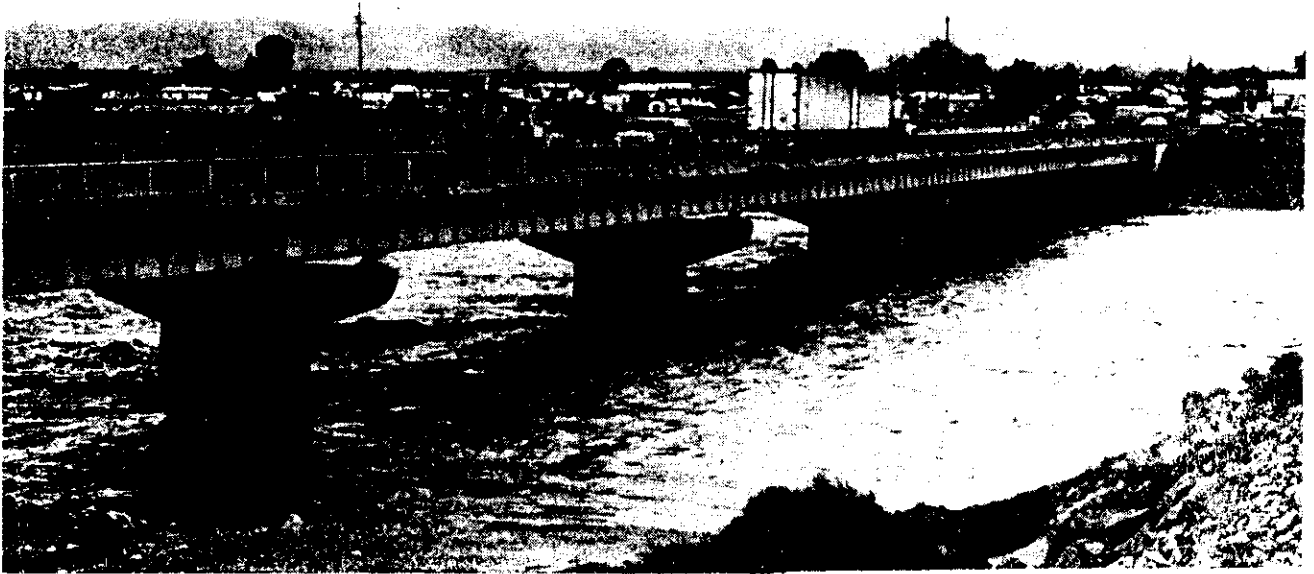
SHE ALSO SAID persons wanting to assist at Valley shelters could call 977-7281 for information.

Melvin Woods, who along with his wife, Arlene, and their three children have spent two days in Marinette Center, returned to his home at Hound Dog Acres at about 3 p.m. Friday and found it still above water.

But he said some of the homes in the area about four miles northwest of Sun City had about 3 feet of water around them.

"The last we saw they were still standing," Woods said.

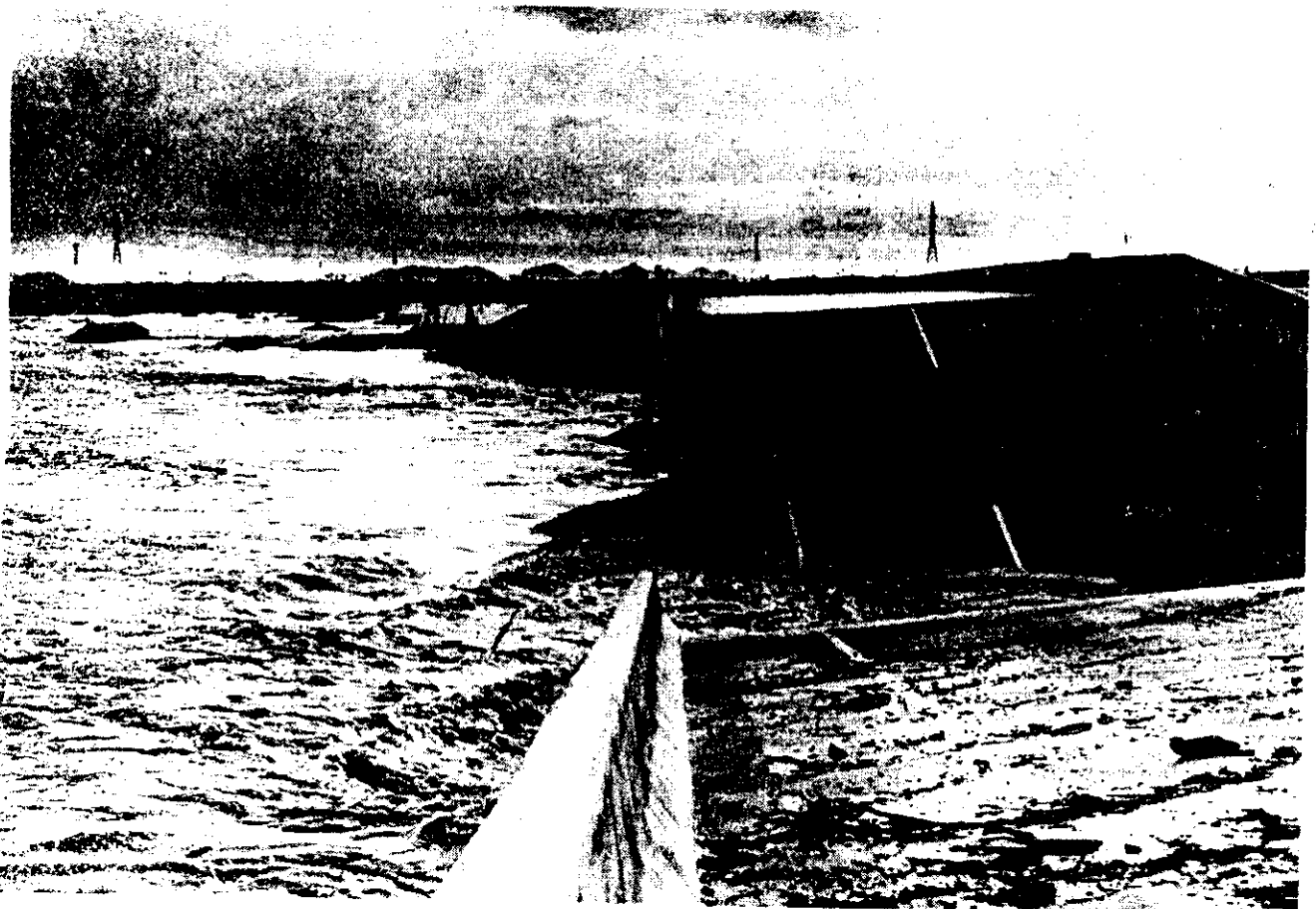
"When we get back," his wife explained, "we're going to call it goldfish acres."



The bridge at Grand Avenue over the Agua Fria River was the only way to cross today. Bell Road was cut by the river and river crossings downstream were flooded. The Grand Avenue bridge had been closed late Friday afternoon as flood waters topped

the 14-foot mark and water lapped at the roadway. El Mirage police said the span reopened at 3 a.m. today. The river appeared to be on the rise again as floodwaters carried trees and other debris downstream from rain-swollen Lake Pleasant.

(News-Sun Photos by Charley Ritter)



A raging Agua Fria River tore the Bell Road bridge roadway 50 feet from the water's edge today. Repairs apart late Friday as flood waters crested to nearly 14 feet. Debris from the torrent was piled up on the last year's flood waters damaged the span.