

VF SC Youngtown

Wednesday,
Sept. 27, 2017

Vol. 57 No. 40
1 Section 52 Pages

SUN CITY INDEPENDENT

Published by Independent Newsmedia Inc., USA

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Posse campaign

Sun City Posse member Jan Michaels works the radio in the organization's dispatch center. The Posse, which operates entirely on community donations, will begin the annual fundraising campaign in October. Officials not only need contributions, they are looking for volunteers to help with letter stuffing. See story on page 5. [Rusty Bradshaw/Independent Newsmedia file photo]

FIRE

Correcting access issues

Youngtown officials plan street, parking changes

By Rusty Bradshaw
INDEPENDENT NEWSMEDIA

Working with the Sun City Fire District, Youngtown officials are developing plans to improve access for emergency vehicles throughout the community, but particularly the Agua Fria Ranch subdivision.

The community, on the



Mike LeVault

southwest corner of Youngtown, was poorly designed, according to Mayor Mike LeVault. He said more

housing density was allowed and the developer made up the difference by creating streets too narrow to allow for parking on both sides.

This is especially a prob

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Fire

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lem at the north entrance to the community at Noffs and Fooks streets.

"When fire trucks can't get through there because of parked cars, they have to take another route, which increases response times," Mr. LeVault said.

Ron Deadman, Sun City fire chief, said there are other areas within the district — which services Sun City, Youngtown and Citrus Point — where narrow streets present an access challenges, but none as problematic as Agua Fria Ranch.

"Throughout the Sun City Fire District (includes Youngtown) there are some narrow winding streets that were never designed to permit parking on both sides of the road," he stated in an email. "For the most part, these are isolated issues, outside the Agua Fria Ranch area."

He added district officials continue to work with Youngtown officials to identify problem areas.

"The biggest (problem area) is Agua Fria Ranch," Mr. Deadman stated.

Dave Scott, Sun City fire district board president, was pleased efforts are be-

ing made to address access issues.

"This will really help us with response times into that community," he said.

Youngtown officials addressed one challenge last year when they straightened what Mr. LeVault called a dog leg on Peoria Avenue near 115th Avenue. Prior to that project, Mr. LeVault said access was difficult at that spot, especially when there was other traffic.

"We had one instance where a car was going east on Peoria and a ladder truck was trying to turn west onto Peoria," he said. "Because they couldn't make the turn, they had to turn around and go all the way to Olive Avenue to access the community from the south entrance."

Most responses to Youngtown, including Agua Fria Ranch, originate from SCFD's Station 133, 13013 N. 111th Ave. Sun City fire officials just began a project to build a new station on the east side of 111th Avenue two blocks north of the existing station. Jim Fox, Sun City fire marshal, said the new building will be a four-bay structure compared to the single bay on the existing station.

Breaking ground and starting construction was expect-

ed to start this week after some utility issues were resolved, Mr. Fox said.

Youngtown officials plan to make more improvements involving Peoria Avenue that are hoped to further enhance access to the community.

Mr. LeVault said plans are to extend Peoria Avenue south to connect with Agua Fria Parkway. The extension would run straight to a point between the community's north perimeter and a business located there, wrap-

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ping around the Agua Fria Ranch perimeter and connecting with the parkway on the west side.

Mr. LeVault said that project could take two years to come to fruition.

"We are looking for grant money now to fund this project," he said. "The town can't do it alone on our budget. We have been creative in funding our projects."

Youngtown officials have been creative in other ways. They decriminalized much of the town code to allow code

enforcement officers to write citations, including for parking. That has improved compliance, the mayor said.

"We still have to do something about parking in our streets," he said.

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

AARP's 'first lady'

By Betty Latty
Gazette correspondent

Youngtown's Marion Irvine always gets a crowd at her birthday parties.

That's because Irvine, tour director for Youngtown's Chapter No. 1 of the American Association of Retired Persons, usually is on the road at her birthday time, which rolls around every June 18. This year found the birthday girl celebrating the big Eight-O, at the Temple Square Hotel in Salt Lake City, as she led her tour group home from a two-week trek to the Pacific Northwest and the Portland, Ore., Rose Festival.

Irvine was feted in the hotels reception room by her charges and hotel staffers — she was surprised with two big sheet cakes, a card, fine wine and punch, and a few choruses of "Happy Birthday."

The tour director, who has been named the AARP chapter's "first lady," reported that everyone had a wonderful time, and that it had been a beautiful tour all the way.

The group spent two days in Salt Lake City, and some of the local genealogists took the opportunity to visit the library operated by the Mormon Church there.

Irvine will head out again Monday as she takes another group of travelers on a trip to the High Sierra and a stop at Mammoth Mountain Lodge. The return trip will be made through Riverside, Calif., and Las Vegas, arriving home July 15.

In August, from the first to the 18th, the Youngtown chapter plans a tour to the Rocky Mountains, with visits to Yellowstone and Grand Tetons national parks, Jackson Hole, Wyo., and a return through Salt Lake City.

marks big 8-oh

MEMORIES

OF THE

SUN CITIES



**NOT NATION'S FIRST
AGE-RESTRICTED CITY**

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, Arizona
(623) 974-2568

SUN CITY WASN'T NATION'S 1ST AGE-RESTRICTED COMMUNITY

"Sun City was the first retirement community to require residents to meet certain age restrictions before they could purchase homes." Not so, according to the record.

In 1954, six years before Del Webb Development Co. sold the first house in Sun City, Elmer Johns, developer of Youngtown, was restricting home buyers to those at least 60 years of age. Contrary to the prevailing idea that people would not accept a life style cut off from a cross-section of all ages, Johns built and sold 100 or more homes on his 300 acres surrounding a small water storage lake set among cottonwood trees.

Webb executives were well aware of the breakthrough Johns had achieved. A single short segment of Dave Garroway's NBC "Today Show" had described this newly organized retirement community sprouting from the desert sands of Arizona. More than 50,000 inquiries were elicited as a result of that one program. It was obvious that a potential market was there.

But the Webb people discovered a basic flaw in the Youngtown development, an error that would have to be corrected if their retirement community were to succeed. The theory that needed rethinking was that retired people lived on the edge of poverty and wanted only modest homes that could be built and maintained on incomes of \$300 to \$400 a month--just a place to "retire to" with porch and a rocking chair.

What this meant was the need to include in the cost of the homes the construction of a golf course and recreation center, plus a mechanism whereby the home owner paid to maintain these facilities indefinitely. Webb knew the company was going into uncharted waters. Responding to a reporter, he said, "We knew we were taking a calculated risk, but in the contracting business you have to do it. Building Sun City is a gamble, but I'm pretty damn sure it will work."

Sun City was the first retirement community to include both age restrictions and the cost of facilities for an active lifestyle in the title to a home.

DAILY NEWS-SUN, THE SUN CITY VOICE

FROM THE BEGINNING

VF SC VOICES FROM BEGINNING DAILY NEWS SUN JANUARY 2011

The Daily News-Sun newspapers' mission is entirely local. Published six days a week since 1977, the *Daily News-Sun* is full of news and features designed for retirees ranging from Baby Boomers through the Greatest Generation. *The Daily News-Sun* currently serves the communities of Sun City, Sun City West and Sun City Grand.

The newspaper emerged in 1956 from humble beginnings with two mimeographed pages of news published by Marshal Adams as the *Youngtown News*. Youngtown is the brainchild of Ben Schleifer, one of the first developers to see the possibilities of communities populated entirely by senior citizens. The Youngtown Historical Society keeps a few copies of these earliest issues at Clubhouse Square.

In 1957 *The Youngtown News* changed to a twice-monthly publication, typeset on a small tabloid size. That year the paper began publishing photographs. Adams took on partner Sydney Lambert, who in 1958 assumed ownership and operation of the *Youngtown News*.

The slogan at the time was "All the News That Residents Want to See and Read in Print."

Advertisers were mostly Glendale- and Phoenix-based businesses, as there were few businesses yet established in Youngtown in the late 1950s.

Among the visitors to the pioneering retirement community of Youngtown was Delbert Eugene Webb, owner of a Phoenix construction firm

and co-owner of the New York Yankees. When Webb's company applied to Maricopa County for zoning to build 1,000 houses in "the Youngtown area" – across Grand Avenue to the east on land that had long been used for farming – the Youngtown News rejoiced.

Six months after the Webb Company began selling houses in the then fledging Sun City in 1960, Lambert changed the newspaper's name to the *Youngtown News* and *Sun City Sun*. The paper also updated its slogan which became, "Youngtown's First Newspaper and Now Sun City's First."

Lambert decided to sell his tabloid to entrepreneurs Burt and Ursula Freireich. Burt had been a sports writer with the *Phoenix Gazette* but dreamed of owning his own paper.

With a \$1,500 down payment and lots of confidence – but with little experience in photography or crafting display advertising – Burt Freireich took control of the paper, which was renamed the *News-Sun* for the July 22, 1960, issue. The paper soon went to weekly publication.

Finally, in 1977 the *News-Sun* became the *Daily News-Sun*, published six days a week.



VI
youngtown



Photo by Mike Russo/Independent Newspapers

The last remaining 10 members of the Caliche Garden Club, which disbanded last week after 45 years, are, from left, Roberta Waldo, Sue Morgan, President Pat Druehl, Elsie Johnson, Daphne Green, Charlotte Johnson, Phyllis Johnson, Beverly Meers, Betty Silcox and Bonnie Weaver. They are standing in front of a pomegranate bush, the flower of which was the club's symbol.

FOND FAREWELL

Club ceases operation after 45 years

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

A Youngtown institution for nearly a half century is no more.

The Caliche Garden Club ceased operation last week after 45 years of service to the community.

Club members gathered May 8 for a luncheon to recall fond memories and bid the community farewell.

In its heyday, during the mid-1980s, the club had 100 members. But its ranks today have dwindled to 10 percent of that.

"With only 10 members, we cannot contribute to the town as we have in the past," said Pat Druehl, who is serving her fourth term as club president. "People have moved away or died or are no longer physically able to participate."

"It's sad to see the club shut down after all these years," Mrs. Druehl observed. "The club was always very active. It was focal point of the community."

"It's very sad," said Betty Silcox, the club member with

the longest standing, 27 years. "But it is just a symbol of our time. Voluntarism is on the decline."

"It's difficult to get people to commit to something so altruistic," Mrs. Silcox said. "It's not like feeding the hungry."

The club was organized in 1957 and was affiliated with the Arizona Federation of Garden Clubs

The town's original cactus garden was planted in 1959, under the leadership of Edith Keller, behind the Bayless shopping center.

In the early 1960s, the garden was moved to its present location at the corner of Alabama and 112th avenues.

Mrs. Silcox fondly recalled her affiliation with the club.

"I joined the club as soon as I moved to Youngtown," she said. "The women wore the finest clothes to attend the luncheons."

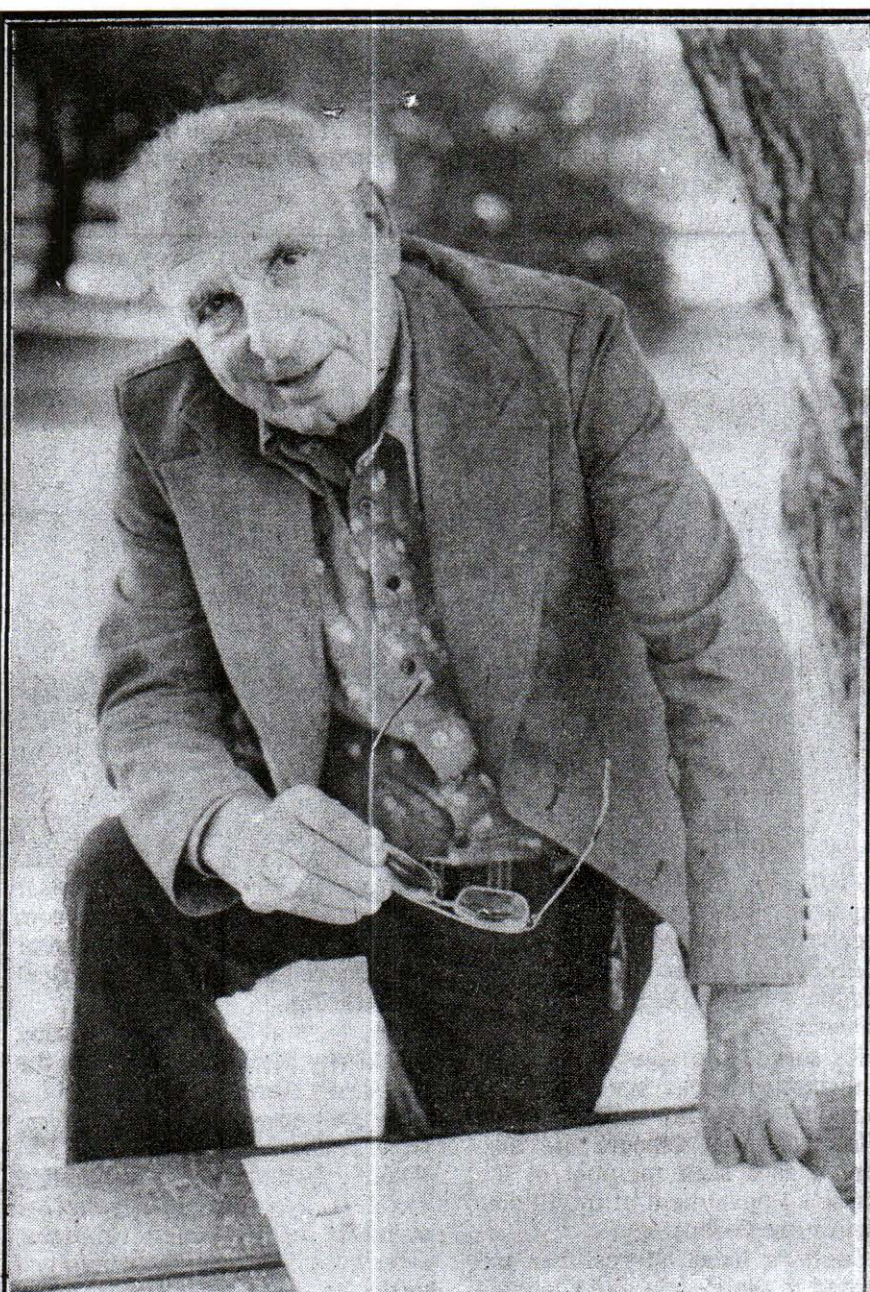
In recent years, the club has kept as active as possible with dwindling membership tending to the garden, which features cacti and succulents.

The club had been working in the garden about once a month, most of it cleaning up debris, according to Mrs. Druehl.

"Cactus are dirty," Ms. Silcox said with a laugh. "They drop stuff all the time. There is a lot of cleanup work."

With the club's dissolution, care of the garden has been taken over by the town's Public Works Department.

As for the funds remaining in the club's treasury, Mrs. Druehl explained, "We are going to take the rest of our funds and buy security lights for the garden."



Youngtown founder Ben Schleifer dies

*By Doug Morris
Editor*

Big Ben Schleifer is dead . . . and he lives in Youngtown. A Russian Jew, he had an American dream.

He saw retirement as a beginning, not an end. He called his dream "Youngtown," to explain and dramatize his understanding of the growing-older concept.

We can't know for sure, but there's a good chance there would have been no Del Webb's Sun City, if there hadn't been a Ben Schleifer's Youngtown.

Big Ben's vision was a simple attitude . . . a place where a few families could live together as

friends and neighbors, without social or economic competition, and with consequently minimum pressures, understanding each other and helping each other through their declining years.

It was a simple idea. It was an explosive idea. Nobody had ever had such an idea before. Society had never dared, or seen fit, to address the problem of the aging-retired as a singular problem.

With no formal training in sociology, Big Ben saw the inevitability of the issue. There had to be some place where societal "discards" — who weren't ready to accept being discarded — could

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Schliefer

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live out their years comfortably.

Ben Schleifer staked everything he had on his dream. It was touch-and-go. He didn't get rich; he got the wealth that comes only from knowing the that you've made others happier.

Del Webb was an apt student. He set his analysts to work on the message Ben Schleifer was sending. He added one word to Ben's philosophy . . . "active." Ben conceived and built "the first retirement community." Del conceived

and built "the active retirement community."

The son is often less exciting than the father. That's probably the way it ought to be. If the offspring isn't an improvement on the parent, then the parent hasn't done a very good job.

Big Ben did a good job. He invented a way of life. Others will improve on the basic idea, but they'll forever pay moral-obligation royalties to the man who first had the vision.

YOUNGTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER
October, 2008

On August 31, 2008, The Youngtown Historical Society completed its 20th year. The 20th year presented a lot of operational changes. Filing is being done in boxes - contents of file cabinets and shelving has been placed in boxes and are stored in the Youngtown Avenue Public Works building.

The annual November program has been planned. The speaker will be Chris Smith, PhD., Professor of History at ASU. His appearance will be sponsored by Arizona Humanities Council. The subject will be HISTORY OF AMERICAN HUMOR which includes the word of Will Rogers. Catered lunch will be sponsored by Youngtown Vice Mayor, Jack Duran. You should have received the invitation. Have you responded yet?

The Board of Directors has appealed many times for new officers and now the time has come when new leadership must come forward. Poor health and fatigue has forced this development. Lucille, Pauline and Daphne will no longer shoulder the responsibility of President, Vice President, and Secretary, respectively.

Please note that no notice has been given for payment of dues or election of officers to serve in 2008/09. The Society will become dormant in January, 2009, as recommended by the Board of Directors. The following operations will occur until January, 2009:

1. History items occurring in 2008 will continue to be collected.
2. The log building will be open 9:00 to 11:00 AM on Tuesday and Wednesday through December 17, 2008.

After year end, 2008 history material will be entered in the computer. Any requests for research will be handled by appointment.

Year 2009 will serve as a grace period, dependent on volunteers to come forward. If no new operational efforts are made, all history material and any assets will be taken to the ARIZONA HISTORY LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES at the Capitol Building,

This message should come as no surprise! Reporting this development is very hard for me because I started this organization and nourished it until 2007. Now, physical and visual handicaps force me to leave this labor of love that I thought was so important to youngtown.

I have enjoyed working with the talented hard working members of the Historical Society and those who have come from near and afar to learn about our beginning and how it triggered other communities seeking the senior lifestyle. I will continue to support and advise in any way I can. I sincerely pray for a continuing future success of history collection in Youngtown.

Respectfully,

Lucille A. Behrford

Youngtown starts committee

Town artifact preservation goal

By Rusty Bradshaw
Independent Newspapers

Youngtown Council will consider appointments to the newly formed Youngtown Historical Preservation Committee during its next regular meeting.

Council meets 7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5 in council chambers, 12030 Clubhouse Square. The committee's formation gained council approval during its Jan. 15 regular meeting.

The formation follows the announcement in December of the planned dissolution of the Youngtown Historical Soci-

If you go

Youngtown Council
7 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5
Council chamber, 12030 Clubhouse Square

ety. Council initially discussed forming a historical committee during its Dec. 4 regular session, according to Loyce Robinson, town manager. Council and public comments were positive and supportive to form an exploratory committee, she added.

Council unanimously approved the committee's formation at the Jan. 15 regular session for a period of one year. Council will then review the

group and determine whether to make it permanent, Ms. Robinson said.

"The town needs to step up and explore the future of this resource — moving into a different phase," she added.

While the historical society was dissolved, the group will have responsibility for maintenance of the town's artifacts and building through Aug. 3, 2009, according to Lucille Retherford, council member and the society's founder.

"After September, town care is critical," Ms. Retherford said.

The committee was formed to consist of five to seven members to serve for one year. in-

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Artifacts

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cluding one council liaison, one historical society board member, two town staff members and one or two town residents. Proposed members are Ms. Retherford, historical society representative; Susan MacKay, council liaison; residents Daphne Green and Jessie Mendez; Jacquelyn Hoffman, town finance officer; Nancy Lewis, library assistant; and a member of the Youngtown youth council.

"This facility is important to the town," said Margaret Chittenden, council member.

The historical society has been the custodian of town artifacts and the building in Clubhouse Square since its 1988 inception, according to Ms. Robinson.

"The town's rich history, from the 1954 development phase to the present, is a treasured asset for future generations and it is the responsibility of the town government to ensure its preservation to the best of its ability," Ms. Robinson stated in her report to council.

Among the artifacts under the historical society's care is the addressograph used to send bills from the old water company, ac-

ording to Ms. Retherford. The group also has obituaries, business directories and the dedication of the building.

Areas initially identified for the new committee's responsibilities are to research grants for funding the project, maintaining the building and remaining contents, integrating its efforts into town government by inclusion in the 2009-10 fiscal budget and achieving an understanding of state, library and archives management of artifacts and documents provided by the town and the historical society.

Proposed members have varied experience with the historical society and town history. Ms. Green is a long-time historical society member and Mr. Mendez long-time former employee of the town's public works department. Ms. Lewis is the town department head to oversee operations of a proposed Youngtown museum and Ms. MacKay has vast knowledge of the historical society after working with Mr. Retherford on a historical town project. Ms. Hoffman's finance experience will be an asset to the group, according to Ms. Robinson.

Post your opinion in the Public Issues Forum at www.newszap.com. Sun Cities News Editor Rusty Bradshaw can be reached at 623-445-2725 or rbradshaw@newszap.com.



Submitted Photo

Lucille Rethford receives recognition from Youngtown mayor Michael LeVault.

Lucille Rethford earns Y-town honor

The first Youngtown "Person of the Year" honor went to long-time resident and council member Lucille Rethford during a special ceremony held June 19 when town officials handed out the first in what is planned to be an annual award.

There was laughter, tears, a standing ovation and enough goodwill and congratulatory messages to fill the entire Youngtown Clubhouse when Mayor Michael LeVault announced during the regular council meeting that Ms. Rethford was the recipient of the initial "Person of the Year" award.

The look of surprise and amazement on Mrs. Rethford's face when she heard her name called spoke volumes to those attending the meeting. The applause and standing ovation appeared to overwhelm her as she shed tears of happiness and was at a total loss for words, something, as she pointed out later, rarely happens to her.

Mrs. Rethford and her late husband, Henry, moved to Youngtown in 1972, locating in the then new and expanding southern part of the community near Baptist Village. She began to get involved in town activities when she became the secretary of the Youngtown Bowling League.

"All of the mayors (present and past) were on one of the teams," she said.

During her 36 years in the com-

list of service, both as a member and often as an elected officer, includes the Youngtown Community Fund, Meals on Wheels, Youngtown Civic Association and Chapter 1 of the American Association of Retired Persons.

Mrs. Rethford, now in her 80s, was a founder of, and has presided over, the Youngtown Historical Society for more than 19 years, still appearing weekly to take her turn at keeping the doors of the nonprofit organization open to the public. She was elected to the Town Council in 2001 and re-elected in 2005 for a term of four years. She has not determined whether she will run again for council in 2009.

While part of the council, Mrs. Rethford served as the official Youngtown representative at the annual Arizona Town Hall and on the Arizona League of Cities and Towns Resolutions Committee. She was instrumental in gathering enough information from surrounding communities so Youngtown was able to forge its own ordinances regulating sexually oriented businesses and massage establishments. She was one of the leaders in the right to ban smoking in public buildings and private businesses.

Among those present for the ceremony was Superior Court Judge Peter Schwann and family. Mrs. Rethford's son, Hank and his wife Mary Lou, were on hand to witness the awarding of the plaque. A special bouquet of

Age-restrictive zoning takes 'young' out of Youngtown

By David Rossmiller
Gazette Northwest Bureau

YOUNGTOWN — New age-restrictive zoning might have taken the "young" out of Youngtown for good, town officials and community leaders say.

More than 99 percent of Youngtown residential areas are restricted to people 50 and older after the recent completion of a drive to keep the town a retirement haven.

The restrictions do not apply to current residents who are younger than 50 or have children under 18 because of a "grandfather" clause that exempts them as long as they keep their permanent address in Youngtown.

Mayor Alvin Green said the drive received widespread community support because the vast majority of Youngtown residents do not want young adults or children in the town.

Less than 2 percent of Youngtown residents fail to meet the new age restrictions, Green said.

About 80 percent of the town's 2,287 residents signed the age-restrictive petitions, said Richard Barron, president of the Youngtown Civic Association, which sponsored the petition drive.

Only weeks ago, the inclusion of several more residential lots to the age-restrictive category brought the total to 99.6 percent of all town housing areas,

Barron said.

"We had an increasing problem with children in town as well as young people whose lifestyle wasn't compatible with what Youngtown had been planned to be," he said.

Barron, who has lived in Youngtown since 1982, said the town "was getting run down from young people who were renting and could care less whether they took care of the houses or not."

Eileen Greiss, town clerk and treasurer, said a fatal traffic accident in May 1984 crystalized town opinion that the elderly and children do not mix.

In that accident, a 79-year-old Sun City woman struck and killed 7-year-old Holly Hudak of Youngtown as Holly and several other children were crossing 111th Avenue after they had gotten off a school bus.

The driver blamed poor eyesight for failing to see the flashing lights and stop sign on the bus.

"Let's face it, many elderly people do not have the alertness required to watch for children," Greiss said.

"We have no facilities for children, and it's not really fair to them to bring them into a community that is not designed to include them."

No one knows whether the age restrictions would hold up under a determined court challenge, Calvin Brice, town attorney, said.



SUN CITY HOSTESSES Mrs. J. B. O'Bryant (left) and Mrs. Robert Stine are explaining retirement community to visitors from Egypt. M. A. El-Beltagi, governor of Giza, and A. F. Ycunis, undersecretary of state. (News - Sun Staff Photo)

Egyptian Officials Probe Sun City For Guidelines To Retirement Housing

Seven Egyptian visitors in Sun City probably felt more at home here than some American tourists as they spoke of the many similarities here to their homeland.

The travellers consisted of five governors, the undersecretary of state of the ministry of local government, and the Egyptian consular representative now serving in San Francisco.

Since Egypt is in the process of developing special housing for retired folks and inexpensive housing in general, local accommodations were of specific interest. The men examined all facets of the homes, tapping against walls, for example, to see what different materials we utilize.

Similarities noted by the men included the tourist trade, water

projects, and raising of cotton. Tourism now represents the third largest form of income of foreign currency in Egypt. The visitors came to study Arizona's ways of attracting this kind of business. This income has doubled in the last two years.

"Do you need heating in your homes?" was one of the questions posed. Egyptian climate is much the same as in the Valley of the Sun, noted one guest, and there is not much need for heating.

Furniture came under scrutiny. The Egyptian government is planning to rebuild 4,400 villages and wants to provide its people with serviceable yet inexpensive items.

Regarding retirement in the Near Eastern land, one of the men explained that workers in his homeland retire at age 60 and then receive three-quarters of their previous monthly income.

HISTORY OF YOUNGTOWN

VF
SC - Youngtown

In August 1977, Frances Greer granted an enlightening interview to News-Sun Reporter, Doug Frerichs, in which she said simply "I feel the town's my baby"

What was "my baby"? It was Youngtown.

Frances Greer came to Arizona in 1918, married Gilbert Greer in 1930 and they moved to St. Johns, Arizona where they resided on a large cattle ranch. Shortly after World War II, the Greers bought a 320-acre property between the Aqua Fria and the present 111th Avenue, south of Grand Avenue. Along with leased acreage a cattle ranch was established. Mrs. Greer built the house which is now the expanded Clubhouse. In 1949, Mr. Greer died and Elmer Johns came to help manage the ranch. In 1947, "Big" Ben Schleifer came to Arizona and after dabbling in real estate returned to Rochester, N. Y. to visit a friend. The friend was comfortable but unhappy living a regimented life in a nursing home. Ben Schleifer's vision of an active retirement community began to form. He had a dream, Mrs. Greer had the ranch, and Elmer Johns advised that the dream and the ranch be put together.

And so Youngtown was born

The Youngtown Development Company was formed in 1954 the first home was built on Alabama Avenue. By Fall of 1955, 125 homes had been built, 85 lots had been sold and only 40 lots remained. National advertising in magazine supplements and television's Wide, Wide World with Dave Garroway assured the new development's success. Youngtown's residents organized their own recreation activities instead of having them provided by development ventures.

Until 1960, when Youngtown's commercial development began, residents had to shop in Peoria or Glendale and mail was sent from Marinette to the development office for pick-up. The first commercial venture was in a building which housed room for the Post Office, a market, a one-chair barber shop and a beauty shop. In 1959, there were 700 homes and 1,400 residents. The Youngtown Community Church and the First Baptist Church were holding services and congregations were active in choir, guilds and other activities.

In 1961, a bank, savings and loan, pharmacy, liquor store, attorney, grocery store, nursery, gas station and convenience store opened for business. In that year Youngtown was incorporated and the Development Company deeded the Clubhouse and its grounds, buildings of Clubhouse Square, Maricopa Lake, town parks, and other incidental holdings to the town.

In 1965, the town owned its own water and sewer systems and Mountain View Pioneer Hospital (later Valley View) was built to serve its residents.

As the town's third decade began in 1974, citizens voted themselves out of the school district and worked to preserve the integrity of the retirement community. Age restriction specifications were defined in Arizona Revised Statutes, establishing validity of Youngtown's deed restrictions. In 1977, Hines Baptist Retirement Center was started and custom home building began in previously undeveloped areas of Youngtown - Cook's Corners, River Heights, and parts of Suntown Estates.

The early 1980's marked a period which lacked orderly progress, brought on by administrative instability and a lack of citizen participation in public affairs.

The Town mourned the death of Frances Greer on December 25, 1984.

In 1985, the Youngtown Civic Association, Inc. was reactivated and citizens again became actively involved in maintaining their retirement community status, something that had eroded over the years. Leadership was stabilized and Age Restriction Overlay Zoning was applied to most residential properties. At this time, planning for the future and innovative financial methods launched a new era of orderly progress. Since then, extension of the Baptist Retirement Center included Cook's Retirement and Extended Care Facility; Maricopa Lake and Youngtown parks have been refurbished and beautified, The Hobby Shop has been reactivated; water and sewer systems have been upgraded; City streets and alleys have been improved and numerous government facilities have been enlarged and improved.

As 1996 begins for Youngtown's 42nd year as America's First Retirement Community, the town continues expansion and upgrading projects limited only by environmental and financial factors that face every community. The future is bright for the current 2,600 residents.

In 1998 Youngtown lost its Senior Status through ruling of Arizona State Attorney General Grant Woods. It was a sad time for the residents but mixed ages were welcomed.

In 2001 the Common Council voted to hire the first Youngtown Manager who began service in 2002. The voters mandated that the mayor be elected by the citizens in 2003. The Council continues to make policy for the health, safety and welfare of all residents.

Youngtown is growing, evidenced by new developments of Senior apartments, care centers and parks playgrounds. Agua Fria Ranch, a 160 acre housing development is designed for family occupancy and affordability.

Youngtown is a proud living tribute to Frances Greer, Ben Schleifer and Elmer Johns - and all who come after.

Submitted by:
Youngtown Historical Society
September, 2002

VF SC - Youngtown

Courtesy of:

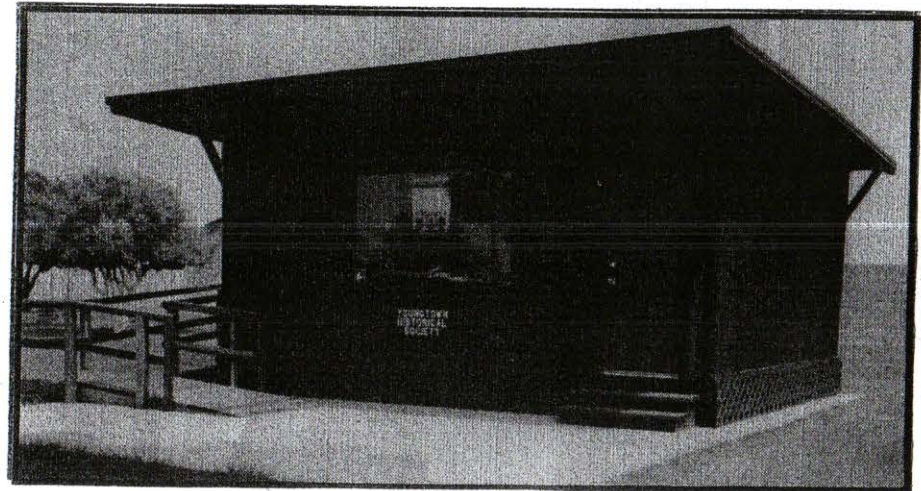
*The Youngtown
Historical Society*

Established 1988

Youngtown, Arizona

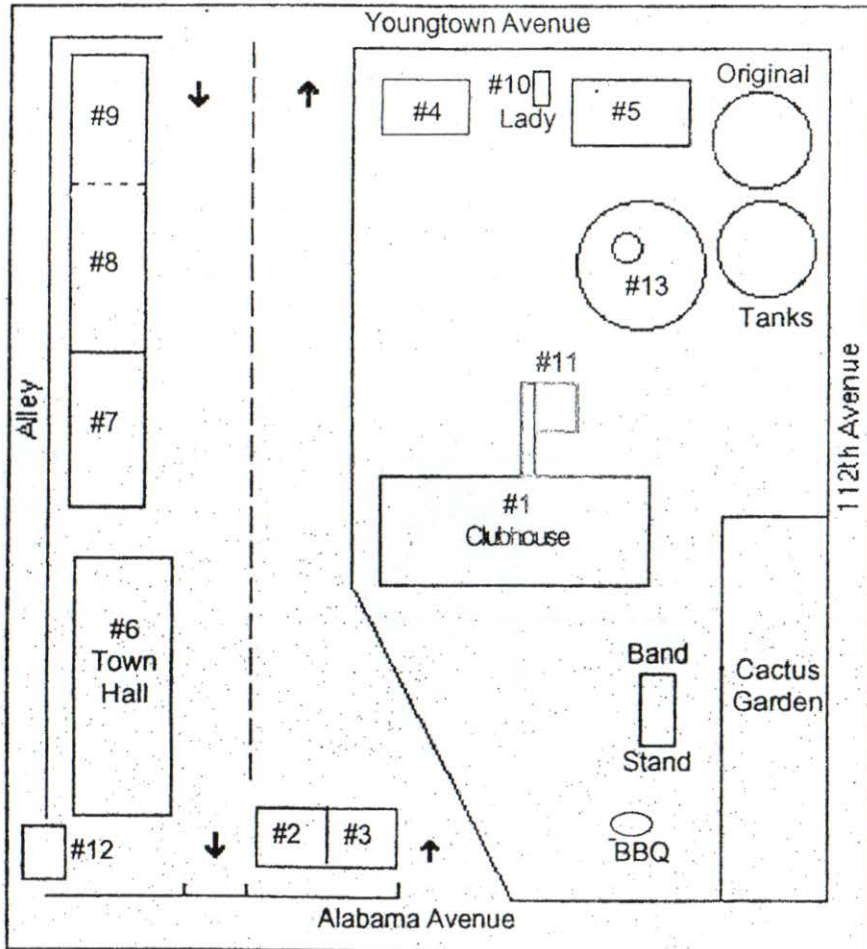
*America's First
Retirement Community*

Established 1954



Self-Guided Tour

Historic Clubhouse Square



HISTORIC CLUBHOUSE SQUARE

- #1 Youngtown Clubhouse - Original Ranch Home of Gilbert & Frances Greer. Notice chimney with Greer Ranch brand "T LAZY V" dating from an earlier operation in St. Johns, Arizona.
- #2&3 Youngtown Inspector/Secondary Administrative Office - Prior to 1954, served as duplex housing for ranch employees. In 1960's and 1970's, #2 was Police Headquarters and #3 was Town Hall.

- #4 New Library - Established 1994.
- #5 Youngtown Utilities Office - Designed & built by Frances Greer. Mrs. Greer deeded all ranch buildings to Youngtown after incorporation in 1961 and made her home until building on Duluth.
- #6 Town Hall - Original employee duplex constructed with adobe bricks, now expanded and modified.
- #7 Arts & Crafts - Originally ranch milk shed. In 2006 was again used for organizational and game useage.
- #8-9 Police & Emergency Operations Center - Originally ranch tack and equipment housing (#8) and garages (#9).
- #10 Grave Marker - Only resident buried in Youngtown, "Lady". beloved town mascot for 14 years.
- #11 Youngtown Historical Society Hdqtrs. - Ranch Building originally used by Y.T. Development craftsmen who built homes in 1954/55.
- #12 Location of log building in 1954/55.
- #13 570,000 Gallon Water Tank - Inner circle indicates location of original well. Now property of Arizona Water Company.

PIONEER YOUNGTOWN HOMES

- 11301 Alabama First lot sold.
- 11305 Alabama First house built.
- 11325 Alabama Shields Home - Top Sales Rep.
- 11325 Alabama Elmer Johns Home - First Town Manager.
- 11437 Lakeshore Dr. Story Home - Founder of Hobby Shop & Earliest pioneer.

Revised: January 15, 2007

Courtesy of:

THE YOUNGTOWN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

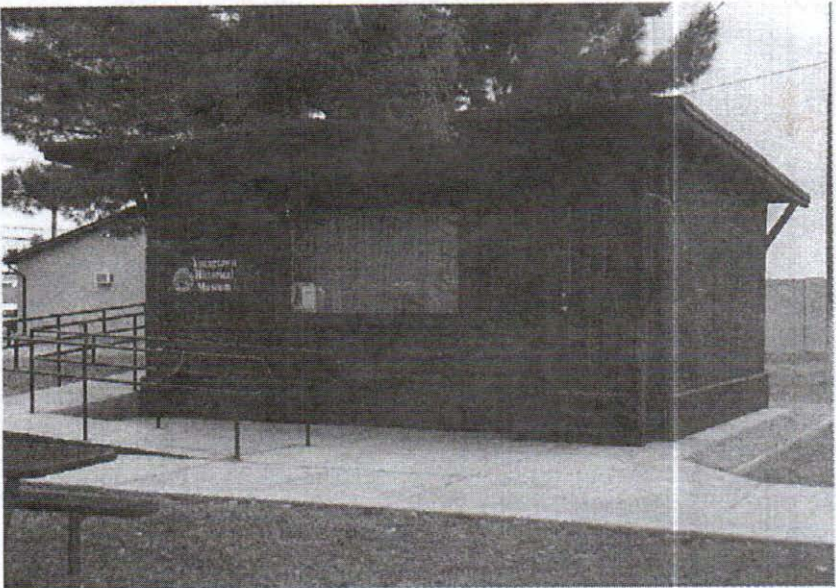
Est. 1988



Youngtown, Arizona

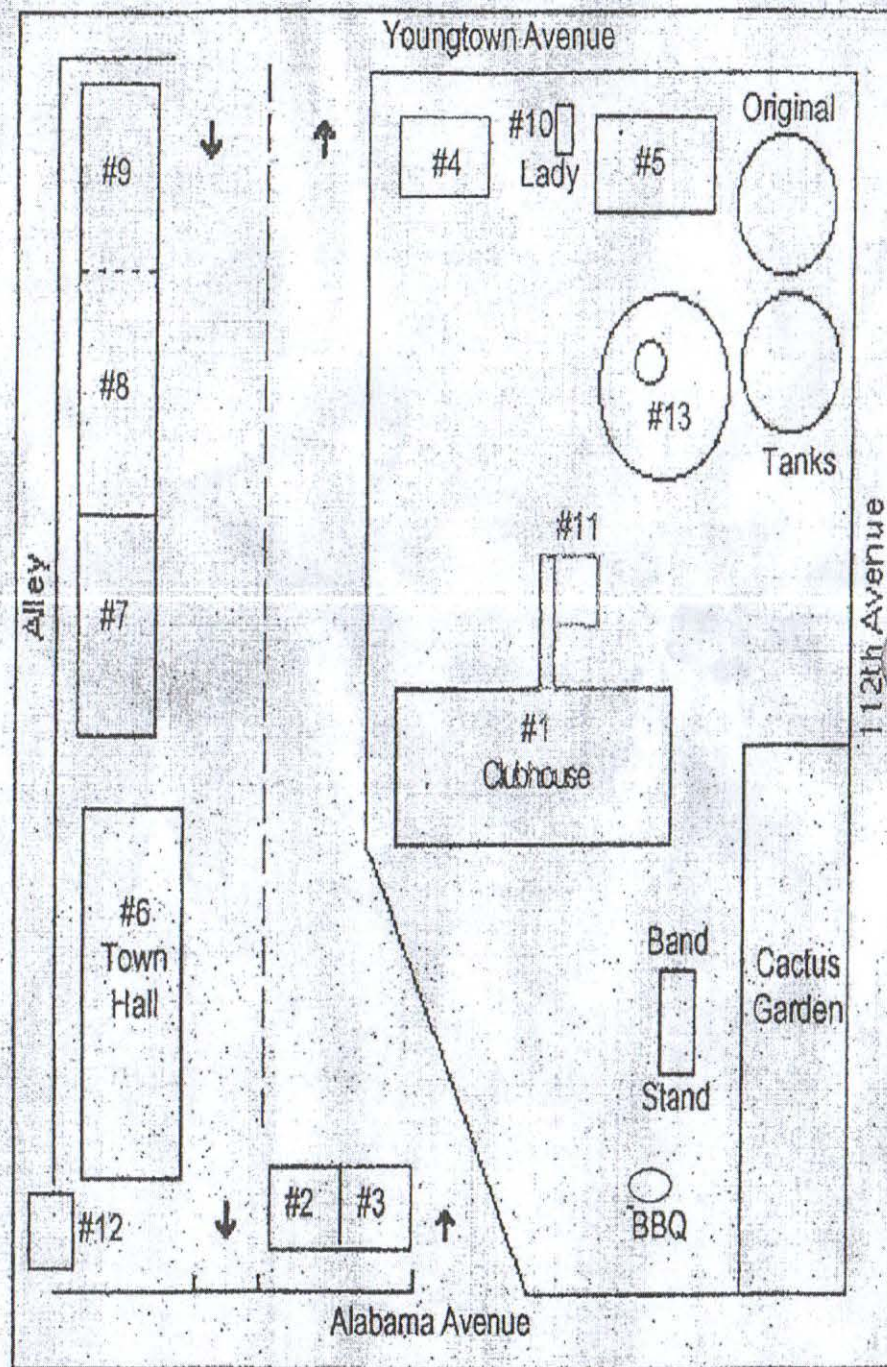
America's First Retirement Community

Established 1954



Self Guided Tour

Historic Clubhouse Square



- #1 **Youngtown Clubhouse:** Original Ranch Home of Gilbert and Frances Greer. Notice the chimney with the Greer Ranch brand "T Lazy V" that dates from an earlier operation in St. Johns, AZ.
- #2&3 **Youngtown Building Inspector Office:** Prior to 1954, served as duplex housing for ranch employees. In the 1960s and 1970s # 2 was the Police Headquarters and #3 was Town Hall.
- #4 **Library:** Opened in 1994.
- #5 **Youngtown Utilities Office:** Designed and built by Frances Greer. Mrs. Greer deeded all ranch buildings to Youngtown after incorporation in 1961 and made her home on Duluth.
- #6 **Town Hall:** Original ranch employee duplex constructed with adobe bricks. Now the building is expanded and modified.
- #7 **Arts & Crafts:** Original ranch milk shed. In 2006 was used for organizational, game, and storage usage.
- #8&9 **Police Headquarters and Emergency Operations Center:** #8 was original ranch tack and equipment housing and #9 was originally a garage.
- #10 **Grave Marker:** Designates the only resident buried in town. "Lady" was the beloved town mascot for 14 years.
- #11 **Youngtown Historical Museum:** Log cabin building that was the home of the Youngtown Historical Society until 2009 when the building became the current Historical Museum.
- #12 **Former location of log cabin building that is now located at #11.**
- #13 **570,000 gallon water tank:** The inner circle on map indicates the location of the original well. Now the tank is the property of Arizona American Water.

Pioneer Youngtown Homes:

11301 Alabama: First lot sold.

11305 Alabama: First house built.

11325 Alabama: Shields Home- Top Sales Representative.

11325 Alabama: Elmer Johns Home- First Town Manager.

11437 Lakeshore Drive: Story Home- Earliest Pioneer.

Brochure compliments of:



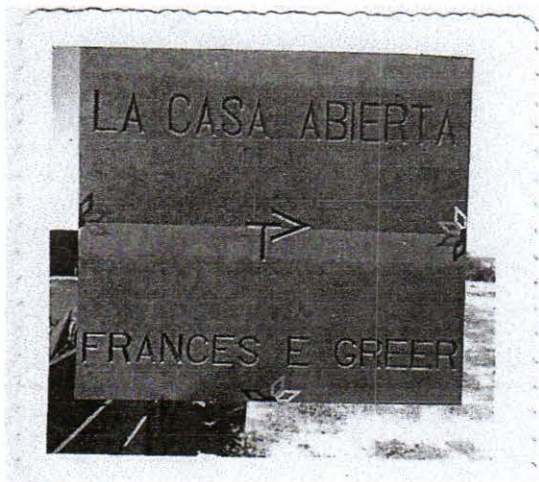
Youngtown Historical Museum- Revealing and Honoring Our Past

Youngtown History & Milestones

- Shortly after WWII, Gilbert & Frances Greer purchased a 320-acre property for a large cattle ranch.
- 1947: Ben Schleifer came to Arizona to visit a friend in a nursing home. "Big Ben" then had a vision of creating an active retirement community.
- 1949: Gilbert Greer passed away and Elmer Johns arrived to help manage the ranch.
- 1954: The Youngtown Development Company was formed, consisting of Ben Schleifer, Frances Greer, and Elmer Johns. Ben Schleifer had the idea of an active retirement community, Frances Greer had the ranch, and Elmer Johns thought that the idea and ranch could be brought together.
- 1955: 125 homes were built, 85 lots had been sold, and only 40 lots remained.
- 1957: Youngtown was featured on the national TV show Wide Wide World, by Dave Garroway. This led to national attention for the area, and the new retirement movement began.
- 1960: Youngtown incorporated.
- 1960: Sun City was also launched, which triggered economic development for Youngtown. The Post Office, bank, A J Bayless Grocery Store, gas station, and pharmacy in town meant that residents did not need to travel to other areas for their shopping.
- 1960: The nation's first AARP Chapter was established in Youngtown.
- 1966: Sheriff Nofs was shot and killed. Youngtown began to realize that the town was no longer isolated.

- Late 1970's: Margaret Chittenden becomes the town's first female Police Officer
- 1986: A preview of times ahead- the Senior Age Overlay was threatened.
- 1995: The Youngtown Water Company was sold.
- 1996: The new Library building was constructed.
- 1998: The Senior Age Overlay was overturned through the ruling of the Attorney State General. Younger people and families started to move in, and activities for children and playgrounds were discussed.
- 2001: Daphne Green becomes the town's first female Mayor.
- 2001: Youngtown joined the Sun City Fire District.
- 2001: Voters elected to directly vote for the Office of the Mayor.
- 2001: The Manager/Council form of government was established. The town's first Town Manager, Mark Fooks, was hired.
- 2002: Agua Fria Ranch subdivision was developed. The population of the town doubled, and even more families and children began moving to the town.
- 2006: The firing of the town's Town Manager sparks a Recall election of the Mayor and 2 councilmembers.
- 2007: Cisco became the town's first K-9 Officer and part of our police force.
- 2008: Chief Kimberly Johnson becomes the town's first female Chief of Police.
- 2008: Lucille Retheford becomes the town's first Person of the Year recipient for 2007.
- 2009: Youngtown Historical Society is dissolved and the Youngtown Historical Museum is established.
- 2010: Town Council places Primary Property Tax initiative on May, 2010 ballot.

Sign for Greer Ranch



Dave Garroway's Wide Wide World



Youngtown Summer 1955



Incorporation



Homes for Sale Then



"Big Ben" said Youngtown would not be a rocking chair community



Homes for Sale 2002



Lucille Retheford receives first Person of the Year Award



Mayor Michael LeVault presents Town Council member Lucille Retheford with the Youngtown 2007 Person of the Year Award.

For additional information, please see the Youngtown Historical Museum located in the log cabin adjacent to Town of Youngtown Library, 12035 Clubhouse Square, Youngtown, AZ 85363. (623) 974-3401 phone.

For more in depth research, please contact Arizona History Library and Archives, Dr. Melanie Sturgeon, 1901 W Madison Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85009. (602) 926-3720 phone, (602) 256-7982 fax, or email research@lib.az.us

