

Del Webb®



Sun Cities

MUSEUM

The Official Newsletter of the

Sun Cities Area Historical Society

Spring 2025 | Volume 32 | Number 1



Salute to Volunteers

The evolution of a local landmark

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Inside our spring newsletter ...



Ben Roloff remembered

Sun City's best-known historian's legacy can be found -- and felt -- at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

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SC West's first clubs

A look back at the community's early clubs & organizations

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History panel project

Museum partners with RCSC to create history panels.

See Page 5



Ben Roloff, the community's most popular historian and member of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum's Board of Trustee, passed away Feb. 2, 2025.



Community mourns passing of Historian Ben Roloff

By Bill Pearson

Benjamin J. Roloff, the well-loved family member, community activist, historian and Hometown HERO award-winner passed away on Feb. 2, 2025, at the age of 83.

Ben was a long-time supporter and volunteer with the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and a member of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum's Board of Trustees at the time of his passing.

Ben inspired others with his high standards, leadership, generosity, and optimistic nature. A well-read lifelong learner, teacher, storyteller, and volunteer, Ben was the go-to guy for advice on wide-ranging topics and could often be heard saying, "It's not even dark yet and look what I learned!"

Ben was enthusiastic, kind, funny, and interested in everyone. In everyday interactions he took time to con-

nect with others and made them laugh and feel good about themselves. He stayed in touch with former students who continued to send him thank-you notes.

A beloved family member, Ben shared his love with words and actions and was heavily involved in his grandchildren's lives. Family activities included card games, Packer games, hiking, golfing, museum outings and concerts.

A meticulous historian, it was only appropriate for Ben to document his own history. When asked for historical information about his life, Ben wrote the following:

"Retiring after a 33-year career as a high school educator in suburban Green Bay, WI., Roloff and his wife Mary Rose moved to Sun City in 1997. Soon after, Roloff became active in his condominium association, which continued for three decades of contin-

uous service as a board member. His interest in condominium leadership led to him being elected as a member of the Board of the Sun City Condominium Owners Association and to serving as its president.

"He followed that by being elected to the Board of the Sun City Home Owners Association and served as its president. Additionally, he served as a member of five different standing committees of the Recreation Centers of Sun City (RCSC) and twice was recognized by the RCSC as a "Volunteer of the Year" for both forming a new golf league and then managing it until it became established.

"Roloff joined the Sun City Elks in 1997 and after his first full year was named "Elk of the Year" at the 3,000-member club for his work as Youth Director. Roloff considered

Continued on next page



the new opportunity a continuation of his work in Wisconsin where he was awarded a Lifetime Membership by his Optimist Club for two decades of work and mentoring the largest Jr. Optimist Club in the Midwest.

"In addition to his high school teaching assignments and administering the school's programming for gifted/talented high school students, Roloff spent years as the Advisor to the Student Council, coaching 'Mock Trial' and 'Academic Bowl Teams' and teaching athletic and life skills to student athletes in football, basketball, cross country, and golf.

"Roloff's interests outside of school included government service as a Howard Village Board representative for eight years and as a Brown County Board member for 18 years. His best memories of government ser-

vice were his 13 years on the County Park Commission and his 10 years as commission chairman. Other interests included camping, extensive travel, and being a friend and mentor to three foreign exchange students his family hosted for a year of their high school studies."

During the last decade, Roloff's interest focused intensely on "The Sun City Story" as the "Community that Changed the Nation." He made countless trips to the Arizona State History Archives where he reviewed tens of thousands of pages of Sun City newspapers gathering stories of unknown or totally forgotten local history. His findings have been shared in classes he taught, talks he has presented and articles he wrote. His voluminous notebooks filled with historical treasures have been donated

to the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum for safekeeping and for sharing with future generations.

Ben is survived by his wife of 58 years, Mary Rose (Seidl) Roloff, daughter Rene' (Dale) Nussbaum of Kenmore, WA, son Ryan (Lisa) Roloff of Chandler, AZ, grandsons Ben and Jack Nussbaum (Seattle), granddaughters Jenna and Melanie Roloff (Chandler, AZ) and sisters-in-law Jane Seidl (Sun City, AZ) and Jo Roloff (Stoughton, WI), along with multiple nieces and nephews.

A Celebration of Life was held March 8 at Community Grace Lutheran Church. In lieu of flowers, online or in-person memorial contributions may be made to Feed My Starving Children through Community of Grace Lutheran Church or to Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

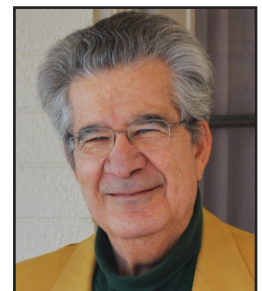
Former SCAHS President Ed Cirillo passes away

Edward J. Cirillo, former president of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Board of Trustees, passed away Feb. 2, 2025 on his 91st birthday.

A former Arizona State Senator, Ed was known for his strong love of country, family, faith and service. He was born in Troy, NY., and was a long-time member of The Rotary Club of Sun City West.

He is survived by Regina his beloved wife of 66 years, their three sons and four grandchildren, brother Eugene and niece.

Ed served on the Sun Cities Area Historical Society/Del Webb Sun Cities Museum for a number of years, including three years as president, 2012-2015.



Ed Cirillo

Final two 'History Maker' videos unveiled

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum in January released the final two videos in its five-video "History Makers" series.

The final two feature interviews with Jerry Svendsen, the public relations manager for the Del Webb Development Corporation in Sun City during the 1960s and early 1970s.

Thanks to a grant provided by the Del E. Webb Foundation, the Sun Cities Area Historical Society -- owners of the Del E. Webb Museum -- last year launched a project to record first-person recollections of local history makers in what they're calling a "living history" video presentation.

Each video is about 15-20 minutes in length and available to view in the Sundome Jr. Theater at the museum and the museum's YouTube channel.

In his first film, Jerry shares his memories of how popular Sun City was throughout its first decade and the innovative strategies his team adopted



to promote Sun City to the rest of the world.

It was "the residents" who made Sun City what it became, recalls Jerry. His fond memories of those early pioneers -- many of whom he says "adopted him" as a member of the family -- will bring smiles (and maybe even a few tears) to your face!

The final film features Jerry sharing recollections of the Sun Bowl, the outdoor amphitheater built in 1966. Jerry



Jerry Svendsen watching his "History Maker" video in the Sundome Jr. Theater (left), and in the 1960s with Rich Little in front of the Sun Bowl.

served as the emcee and he shares his stories of working with such entertainers as Lawrence Welk, Guy Lombardo, Bob Hope, Rich Little and more.

The first video was premiered at the museum's annual meeting, held in January at Palm Ridge Recreation Center in Sun City West.

The other three videos feature interviews with Don Tuffs, Ed Allen and the late Wally Britton.

AZ Secretary of State pays visit to Del Webb Museum

Arizona Secretary of State Adrian Fontes visited the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Feb. 26 to enlist the museum's help in the state's activities planned to commemorate the nation's 250th birthday in 2026.

The museum is working with the Recreation Centers of Sun City to celebrate the opening next year of a time capsule in the base of the community's Liberty Bell at Bell Recreation Center. The bell was dedicated in 1976 as part of the nation's bicentennial celebration.

Once opened, items in the time capsule will be permanently displayed at the museum.

Mr. Fontes and his team met with members of the museum's Board of Trustees, including President Andy Kindler, Treasurer Michael Marting and VP Alan Schlemmer. Museum Office Manager Linda Borton also assisted with the visit.

The Secretary of State has created a team to put together a comprehen-

Secretary of State Adrian Fontes with Museum Board members Andy Kindler and Alan Schlemmer.



sive list of activities planned over the next few years to commemorate the nation's 250th birthday. Mr. Fontes is looking for activities created and hosted by cities, organizations and citizens groups.

Mr. Fontes's office will provide assistance to those planning activities, especially in terms of promoting those events to the public.

The Sun City Liberty Bell was a true community-wide effort when it was initiated in 1975. Residents were encouraged to donate metal used to create the bell, and on Jan. 15, 1976, an estimated 1,500 residents gathered in the parking lot of Sun City Stadium

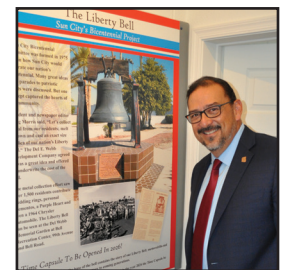
and contributed over 7,000 pounds of scrap metal -- family treasures, jewelry, bikes, appliances and more.

The metal was processed by a Philadelphia foundry and then sent to Arsten, Holland where the bell was cast in the same mold used to create Philadelphia's original Liberty Bell.

The bell arrived in Sun City on July 5, 1976, and was initially unveiled at the Sun Bowl on July 8.

It was officially dedicated at Bell Recreation Center and a time capsule placed in its base on Nov. 11, 1976.

A letter on file with the Recreation Centers of Sun City instructs them to open the capsule in 2026.



Del Webb Sun Cities Museum works with RCSC to share community history

History is important. It's informative – and it's fun! The past, as they say, is prologue to the future.

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum's mission is to preserve and promote the history of our communities, and we're pleased to report that the recreation center corporations in both Sun City and Sun City West also believe in this mission and are fully supportive of our efforts.

A few years ago, we partnered with the Recreation Centers of Sun City West to create historical panels that have been placed at each of the four



The historical panel at Oakmont is located at the community entrance.

recreation centers in that community. The panels at the Johnson, Kuentz and Beardsley centers provide information on who those centers were named after – while the panel at Palm Ridge explains the need for the center once the community expanded.

We are now partnering with the Recreation Centers of Sun City on a similar historical project: Installing history panels at each of the eight recreation centers in the community, as well as outdoor panels at the Sun Bowl and Viewpoint Lake.

Each of the panels will provide a glimpse of the history of each center – from its beginning to present state – as told through a brief narrative and,



Andrew Kindler, president of the museum Board of Trustees, and Vice President Alan Schlemmer admire the new history panel at Fairway Recreation Center.

of course, photos from the museum's archives.

The first two panels have already been installed -- one at the entrance to Oakmont Recreation Center, and the other at the entrance at Fairway.

We are so appreciative of the continued support we receive from both

the Sun City and Sun City recreation center corporations. The history panels allow us to share our community's history with those who visit our recreation centers and introduce our museum's efforts to those who might not otherwise be aware of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum!

Stay Connected!



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Museum website:
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*The Sun Cities Area
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The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to the preservation and presentation of the records and artifacts for Sun City, Arizona, (the world's first Active Adult Retirement Community), and its sister city, Sun City West. The Society's headquarters are located in the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, in one of the five original Sun City model homes.

Museum Hours:
noon-3 p.m. Sunday
10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Monday-Tuesday-Wednesday
(Or for groups of six or more
by appointment)
Admission: \$5 (18 and over)
Free to Museum Members
Museum open Thursdays January
through May. Hours reduced beginning
in June.

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Message from the President

Celebrating the lives of four who contributed to Sun Cities history

History provides a documented journey into the many paths and contributors who bring us into our current day existence. It is an honor for the Sun Cities Area Historical Society to play a small part in that by providing access to a view of the "experiment" that changed retirement in America.

To provide this journey into how Del Webb and his team created the active retirement lifestyle that today is being developed under many brands and different physical communities, it took dedicated employees who shared his vision and now equally dedicated volunteers to continue to share the vision forward to the current and future generations.

Over the past few weeks our SCAHS has lost both former employees of Del Webb and active dedicated volunteers. I believe each of these four individuals would wish for us not to be sad at their passing, yet to celebrate each of their contributions to the ongoing history of the Sun City story!

All in a 30-day period -- Wally Britton, Ed Cirillo, Ben Roloff and Jim Baker have passed.

■ **Wally Britton** was



the Vice President of Construction for Devco for 15-plus years and was responsible for the build-out of Phase I and most of Phase II in Sun City. He remained mentally alert and loved to share the stories



Andy Kindler
2025 President
Sun Cities Area
Historical Society

of his days working for the Webb organization.

Wally was as humble of an individual as you would ever meet and just this past summer agreed to share some of his memories in our Living Histories series. If you have not seen this set of videos please come by the Museum or go to our YouTube channel to listen to Wally tell his perspective of the building of Sun City. You will even learn why we have circular streets!

■ **Ed Cirillo** was a community leader whose impact was felt far beyond the museum.



He served as president of the SCAHS at a critical time in our own history -- as Sun City was preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary and the rebranding of the model home to what is now the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.

A long-time member of The Rotary Club of Sun City West, Ed was also involved in PORA and represented Sun City West in the Arizona House of Representatives.

Ben Roloff was a retired teacher from Wisconsin who moved to Sun City many years ago and "fell in love" with the lifestyle. Ben

was one of the thousands of volunteers who have made Sun City and Sun City West continue to work for all these years.

He served on the boards of many organizations and remained an active member of the SCAHS board at the



time of his passing. Ben shared with me in a conversation that to understand and appreciate where we are today, we must understand and appreciate the history that led to today.

To that end Ben took it upon himself to spend hours upon hours at the Arizona State History Archives researching and documenting everything he could find on Sun City. As part of his legacy, Ben compiled eight notebooks of this information so it can be digitalized for everyone to have access to. (This project is well underway and will be uploaded to our museum website in the next few months.)

In addition to his research Ben was a very active and sought-after speaker on any topic related to Del Webb or the Sun Cities. To fully appreciate Ben Roloff, I encourage you to search for The Optimist Creed and read through it. He was a long-time member of that organization and he truly "lived" the creed every day.

Jim Baker was a tireless volunteer for the SCAHS and if you ever visited our museum on a Tuesday morning, you likely had the

Continued on Page 11

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The statues in front of Lakeview Recreation Center were created in 2000 to mark the 40th anniversary of Sun City. The history and evolution behind the memorial to volunteers has been clarified thanks to the late Ben Roloff's inspection of the display's history found in a "Small Collections" box at the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum.



Salute to Volunteers

Museum collection unearths history of Lakeview statues

By Ben Roloff
Sun City Historian

What started as a quick look at a new "Small Collections" box of materials available at the museum ended in new revelations and an urge to share those discoveries.

Found in "Small Collections Box No. 1" was a file titled "Volunteer Statues Display at the Entrance to Lakeview Recreation Center." Tim Ericson, the museum's archivist, pulled together multiple pictures, programs, and newspaper clippings that help tell the story, and what a story it is.

The first two pieces of the prominent display were in place at the Thunderbird entrance to Lakeview on Dec. 17, 2000, when they were dedicated to honor "volunteerism" as a way of life in Sun City on the community's 40th Anniversary.

A life-size statue of a Posse member and a beautiful bench were both dedicated that day and were followed a month later by placement of a replica

of a "PRIDE" member with rake in hand, a "Smock Lady" paying tribute to the hundreds of volunteers at Boswell Hospital and the legion of volunteers at Sun City's libraries.

A young girl sat on the bench next to the smock lady and represented volunteers of the future and also the many children from neighboring schools tutored by Sun City residents.

Lovingly looking at both was "Sparky" the dog, who represented the more than 3,500 placements of pets in Sun City homes by the Sun Cities Animal Rescue Service. Finally, the bouquet of flowers on the bench was cast to honor the work of the Rose Society/Garden Club and the Agricultural Club.

There is more to the story.

When Sun City celebrated its 40th birthday in 2000, three ladies at one of Sun City's Clay Clubs volunteered to head a project to celebrate and memorialize volunteers. After submitting preview design concepts to their club along with an estimate of \$100,000 needed to complete the project, the club informed the three project initia-

tors they were on their own.

The Sun City Players and the Bell Metal Shop came to their rescue and signed on as the first "Major Sponsors." Their infusion of funds allowed the trio to engage a professional sculptor to construct the statutes at a studio in Scottsdale. Bell Metal Club members locally created the bench.

Sun Cities Historian Ed Allen recalls there was some discussion of placing the display under the breezeway to better protect it from the elements. Why that did not happen is lost to history.

Allen also recalled how the original "Sparky" was stolen about 2005 and was finally replaced in 2008 thanks to financial from the Sun City Men's Club. "Sparky No. 3" proudly guards the display and is better anchored than his predecessors to hopefully thwart future would-be thieves and reckless drivers.

What about "Sparky No. 2?"

Found in that same "small collections" box was a short newspaper article describing the embarrassment

Continued on next page

Early days of Sun City West saw fast start and quick growth of clubs, organizations

By Anne Levig

The pioneer Sun City West residents who arrived in 1978 and 1979 were soon eager to begin to organize a variety of groups and associations in their new community.

Some of these first residents longed to try out new activities and hobbies. Others wanted to organize service and civic groups with which they had been involved "back home."

Still others wanted to volunteer for meaningful causes and some wanted to be involved in making decisions for the community.

These early residents were encouraged by the Del E. Webb Development Company (DEVCO) to form groups and organize activities by offering them meeting spaces and equipment for their activities. Within that first year, three new clubs were organized.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City West (Association) soon took over the chartering of clubs and activities.

The first three clubs to be chartered in Sun City West included the Sun West Art Club that grew to a membership of more than 400; the Toy Ki Silvercraft West Club that expanded from an initial 35 members to more than 500; and the Westerners Square Dance Club with an early membership of more than 350.

In the last three months of 1979, 13 more clubs were chartered. By March of 1980, several craft groups were active.

The opening of the Village Store in the R.H. Johnson Recreation Com-

The Westerners Square Dance Club was one of the first three groups to organize in Sun City West.



plex offered Sun City West crafters the opportunity to sell the items they were creating. The Arts and Crafts Fair, begun in 1979, provided another opportunity for crafters and artists to market their handiworks.

Dance clubs expanded quickly. A very impressive increase in membership was illustrated by the Hillcrest Dance Club that welcomed its 1,000th and 1,001st members by June 1980 when the club was just a year old.

By the end of 1980, 31 clubs had been chartered by the Recreation Centers.

In January of 1981, the Garden Club (now the Agriculture Club) signed an agreement with the Recreation Centers for the use of 6.2 acres of land, donated by DEVCO. The land, located at Bell and Dysart roads, also provided the stimulus for an annual Garden Show during which members offered cuttings and plants for anyone who made a donation. Members also provided information and advice about plants. Proceeds from the show were

donated to the R.H. Johnson Library.

A variety of sporting activities developed and continued to expand. In 1981, local bowler Hogan Dunlevy received national recognition. That year, the Chess Club hosted a national championship tournament.

The Sun City West Bocce Club grew to 500 members. Seven new clubs were chartered in 1981, bringing the total to 38.

More than 70 women participated in Surf and Turf Club, a group that participated in a variety of water exercises including ballet lessons, hula lessons, jogging, and walking.

In 1982, the Mini-Golf Club had 70 members. Photography West enjoyed its new home that year with facilities that included a dark room and a variety of photographic equipment. Ceramics West raised money for several causes including the Posse, PRIDES, Lending Hands and the library.

By the end of Sun City West's first five years, the number of chartered clubs had grown to 43.

Statue

Continued from P. 8

of a resident who claims vehicle brake failure for his running over and demolishing "Sparky #2."

The driver's insurance company paid to have Arizona Bronze Company

recast Sparky's remains into a new display. Another article in the collection announces the addition of the wall behind the statutes which followed a year later, and yet another described how the value of the statues soared from \$85,000 to \$205,000 within six months after their dedication.

Each of the museum's "small collections" boxes has multiple folders dedicated to a specific subject. Our museum docents will help museum visitors do a bit of research of their own on subjects of their choosing from our files. Access to great history is available just for the asking.

Questers share museum quest to preserve, promote history

By Anne Levig

Many communities have one or more organizations that preserve and promote local history.

The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is certainly one of those organizations serving the Sun Cities.

In addition, the Sun Cities have been doubly blessed by having chapters of another organization - one that supports learning about people and events of the past and the preservation of significant historical sites.

That organization is The Questers.

The Questers was founded in 1944 by Jesse Elizabeth Bardens. Bess Bardens had grown curious about a blue syrup pitcher she had purchased in an antique shop, wondering where, when, why, and how it was made.

Her Red Cross co-workers became intrigued about the origins of their own antiques, and a discussion group was formed to learn more about their treasured items.

"Antiques are part of human history, a tangible record of the things of everyday living," noted Mrs. Bardens.

Since the first group organized in 1944, Quester groups have spread throughout the United States and into Canada. Arizona has seen the establishment of numerous Quester chapters, and 14 of those have been organized by residents of the Sun Cities.

Chapters are assigned a number that indicates the order of their establishment.



Questers in Ocotillo #582 in Sun City West celebrated the success of the suffrage movement by portraying the lives of suffrage leaders.

Members choose a name for their own group, often representative of their geographic location or heritage.

Sun Cities area chapter names have recognized the Arizona landscape:

Saguaro #537; Palo Verde #540; Marinette, #554; Ocotillo, #582; Cholla #616; Turquoise #623; Lysiloma #782; Yucca #826; Tumbleweed #914; Kiva #1008; Gambels Quail #1009; Agua Fria #1473; Kachinas #1502; and Road Runners #1512.

Over the years, the focus of The Questers has expanded beyond the initial study of antiques to include the restoration of historical buildings and landmarks and historical preservation and education. Chapter members hold meetings that focus on historic personalities and celebrate historic events.

Meetings often include guest speakers and field trips to historic sites and museums.

State meetings and an international convention also promote visits to historic sites at the host location. On the national level, Questers also sponsor scholarships for students pursuing preservation related graduate

degrees and a fellowship in art conservation.

In addition, The Questers is affiliated with the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Sun Cities area chapters have been especially devoted to the support of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum - the historic model home and its contents.

Area chapters have donated for new roofing on the original house, sound proofing of walls, custom built cabinets, digital and computer equipment and software, an entertainment kitchen, carpet restoration, and the acquisition of furnishings.

Chapters make annual monetary donations to the museum, and also serve as docents at the museum.

For more information, call 623-640-5226 or 307-760-1352.



The King's Inn Center at 107th and Grand Avenues in Sun City, was once home to a restaurant and hotel, but is now home to a Fry's grocery store and other businesses.

Yesterday ... and Today!

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum has introduced a new talk to its list of Speaker's Bureau programs: "Sun City: Yesterday and Today." The program tells the history of the community using archival photos from the past of buildings and locations -- and how they appear today. Visit the museum's website to see a list of topics and to arrange a program for your organization.

Join us May 17 as we celebrate Del E. Webb's 126th birthday!

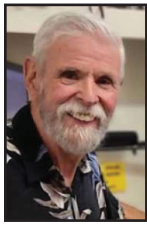
The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum will once again this year celebrate the birthday of the man whose company built both Sun City and Sun City West.

President's Message

Continued from P. 6

opportunity and pleasure to meet Jim. His enthusiasm, passion and love for Sun City and its history provided our guests with a rich and truly enjoyable visit.

He volunteered hundreds of hours to the museum



and was an ambassador for it in all his other activities, be it on the pickleball court, at a social club

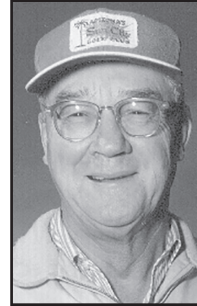
gathering or even the grocery store, Jim was always willing to take time to share pieces of our Sun Cities history.

As I reflect on each of these men, they shared some common traits. They were all humble, approachable, passionate, giving and excited about contributing to the Sun Cities.

Each will be sorely missed by their families, friends and all of us at the SCAHS who had the great fortune to get to know who they were as people.

So let me ask that we honor their contributions with a huge THANK YOU and celebrate their legacies they each left in the mosaic that is the history of the Sun Cities!

The
Tip Top
Dances
perform
May 17
at the
museum.



A special event marking the 126th birthday of Del E. Webb will take place 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturday May 17 at the museum, 10801 W. Oakmont Drive, Sun City.

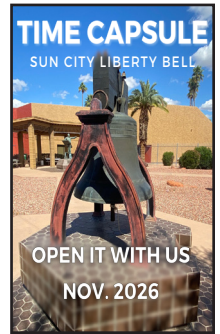
In addition to tours and refreshments, The Tip Top

Dancers will entertain. The Tip Top Dancers recently celebrated their 40th anniversary.

Admission is free to museum members; \$5 for all others.

Coming soon ...

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum has partnered with the Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc.



to host an exhibit in 2026 to showcase the items included in the time capsule located in the base of the Liberty Bell at Bell Recreation Center. The time capsule is set to be opened during a special ceremony in 2026, marking the 50th anniversary of the creation of the bell.

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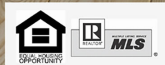
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Museum hosts special event to thank volunteer docents

The museum held a special appreciation event Jan. 22, 2025 to recognize and thank our volunteer docents for all their hard work and dedication.

The museum simply could not operate without them!

Volunteer coordinator Tammy Ruocco thanked Trustee Catherine DuBois for her work during the year scheduling tours of the museum -- and the two surprised each other by exchanging flower arrangements.

Docents Tom McGhee and Yasmina Snider were presented with special awards that light up in appreciation of their more than 10 years of service to the museum.

Thank you to all our volunteers!



Above left, Tammy Ruocco and Catherine DuBois. Above right, Tom McGhee and Yasmina Snider. Bottom row, from left, Gary Belarus, Santee Donahue, Tammy Ruocco and Deb Kloehn. Photo at left: Marlene Kozlowski with Tammy.

Fun & festivities mark holiday season at museum

December 10, 2024





Welcome to Sunshine Service

People, meeting needs of people is what Sunshine Service is all about. Sunshine Service lends medical and children's equipment to residents of Sun City and we have been doing so for over 52 years. We are a charitable non-profit Arizona corporation and are funded by voluntary contributions and memorial gifts.

While the equipment is available for the use of all residents or visitors staying with residents, the equipment must not be taken out of Sun City on a permanent basis. As a matter of control, equipment is loaned only to Sun City residents.

Records show that as the population of Sun City grew, so did use of our medical equipment. Savings for Sun City residents have been calculated periodically; in 2015, it was estimated that residents saved over two million dollars in cost of equipment for that year alone.

Sunshine Service, Inc has received local, state and national recognition. Awards received include the George Washington Honor Medal for services to the sick and handicapped from the Freedoms Foundation of Valley Forge in Pennsylvania.

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Some Of The Many Items We Carry:

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Out & About in the Community



A huge thank-you to the Sundial Men's Club for its continual support of the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum. The club once again donated \$2,500 to the museum. From left, Docent Jim Baker, past-President Bret McKeand, Men's Club Director Ernie Kafcas and Men's Club President Jerry Hafner.

Bob Dean, center, who lives in a Del Webb Community in Aurora, Ill., stopped by the museum to learn more about Del Webb. President Andy Kindler, left, and Bret McKeand provided Bob and his wife a tour of the museum.



Past President Bret McKeand is the only one in this photo not named Webb! Visiting the museum after our annual meeting in January was Judge Tommy Webb and his wife, Judy. Judge Webb was the guest speaker at the 2025 annual meeting held at Palm Ridge Recreation Center in Sun City West.



Bret McKeand, President of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, was the guest speaker at the Arizona Questers Fall Meeting.

Seeking a speaker to present the rich history of the Sun Cities and the Northwest Valley? Look no further than the Sun Cities Area Historical Society! For more information on the presentations - check out <https://delwebbsuncitiesmuseum.org/speaker-bureau/>. To arrange a speaker for your next event, simply give us a call at 623-974-2568.



Ed Allen, former president of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society and editor of "Sun City West Silver Celebration," at the premiere of his "History Maker" video at Banner Olive Branch Senior Center.



Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Historian and Trustee Ben Roloff, Office Manager Linda Borton and SCHOAs Grinch at SCHOA Lifestyle Senior Expo.



Bret McKeand, President of the Sun Cities Area Historical Society, and Kathy Knecht of the West Valley Arts Council of Surprise

ASU design students visit museum to examine senior living

A group of architecture students from Arizona State University have been given the task of designing a 21st-century senior living community – and what better way to begin their studies than by visiting Sun City, the birthplace of the modern-day active-adult retirement community.

Seventeen graduate students from the Design School at the ASU Herberger Institute for Design and The Arts visited the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Jan. 31 to get a first-hand look at the first model home ever constructed in Sun City.

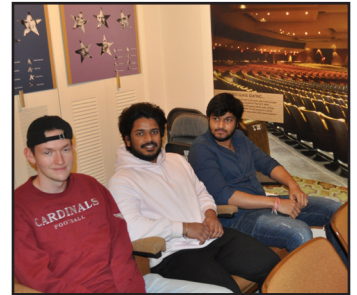
According to Darren Petrucci, Suncor professor of Architecture and Urbanism at the school, the students have been charged with creating a modern-day senior living community.

“They are conducting a deep dive into Sun City, the first significant senior living model, to understand how it started, how it has evolved, and what the future might hold,” said Mr. Petrucci.

Mr. Petrucci is a tenured professor at ASU who teaches graduate capstone design studio with Michelle



Seventeen graduate students from the Design School at the ASU Herberger Institute for Design and The Arts visited the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum Jan. 31 to get a first-hand look at the first model home ever constructed in Sun City. Visiting the Sundome Jr. Theater, from left, Ryan Thomas, Surya Elisetty and Utham Varma.



Fehler, a clinical associate professor of visual communication design. Michelle could not make the trip.

Museum docents Alan Schlemmer and Catherine DuBois guided students through the museum, explaining the story of Sun City and Sun City West and how things have changed over the years – recreational amenities, health care facilities and the design and construction of homes.

After their tour of the museum, the students broke

into small groups, got into their cars and traveled throughout the two communities.

“They drove throughout the development to better understand the scale, how the houses have changed, and better understand the culture and practice of the development,” said Mr. Petrucci.

And how did a group of students -- mostly in their 20s -- feel about visiting the birthplace of Sun City, the nation’s very first active-

adult retirement community?

“They were very impressed by the docents’ historical knowledge,” according to Mr. Petrucci.

“They were also impressed by how spacious the houses felt compared to their 800-square-foot apartment. Additionally, they were surprised by the renovations and modifications to the front yards of the original homes they drove by.”

Speakers Bureau has a story -- or stories -- to tell!

Is your club, organization or business looking for a speaker to present a program showcasing the history of the Sun Cities and the Northwest Valley?

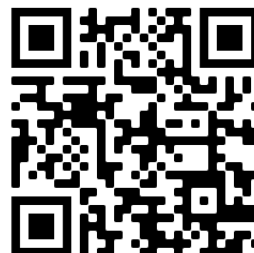
The Sun Cities Area Historical Society is pleased to provide professional speakers to share programs on several interesting topics, including the history of Sun

City and Sun City West, as well as talks highlighting the careers and companies built by Del E. Webb and Jim Boswell, two men hugely responsible for the success of the Sun Cities.

Talks are presented free of charge, although donations to the museum are always appreciated!

Visit our website or scan

the QR code below with your phone camera; find speaker topics under "Contact Us."



Alan Schlemmer presenting a talk on the history of Sun City West during a recent TORCH Academy class.

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