

---

## ***Sun Cities Senior Softball League History 1979-2010***

---

**There would be no history without the generosity and thoughtfulness of Del Webb and the Recreation Centers of Sun City and Sun City West. All of the softball players will surely keep this in mind as they enjoy some of the finest facilities in the country...right here at home. Sun Bowl Field and Kuentz Field (now Liberty Field) are continuing reminders to the players and the entire community that the Sun Cities aim to please their residents. Thank you! And special thanks to our sponsors. They're our kind of people.**

### **Part 1...1979 Through 1997**

An inherited and wonderful Senior Softball League provides genuine pleasure to all of its participants. This didn't happen by accident. The early boards, managers and players did a lot of hard work to prepare and perfect the league for all comers. There were growing pains.

It all started early in 1979 when a Del Webb Development Co. public relations executive received a letter. A Sacramento, CA league official inquired if Sun City had a Senior Softball team they could challenge. The response was no. However, the Del Webb PR department immediately requested information and assistance to establish a team. Within months, a resident organizing committee was established. Generous Del Webb not only sponsored the organization and the league, but also supplied a liaison man and allowed use of its office for meetings.

Del Webb thought senior softball was a good idea for the community and for business. So did Al Reznik, sports editor, in his column "This 'n Data" in the Daily News-Sun paper in the June 22, 1979 issue. This resulted in prospects age 50-plus showing up at Sun City Stadium on 111<sup>th</sup> and Grand where they met with the organizing committee. They discussed whether to play 12", 14" or 16" softball. Through a general vote, the decision went to 12". This was the same size used by the Sun City Saints women's team that played at the Stadium. The Saints won the 1979 national championship.

Prospects played ball for a week during which time they were evaluated by the league organizing committee. Ultimately, 110 players who paid \$5 each were assigned to 6 teams. Wally Henninger was the grandpa of the group at 81. Each team had about 16 men and 2 women. By the end of the season, all but 3 women quit. The following year, the women wanted to remain as a part of the league, so they became umpires, unsuccessfully. Aside from this short stint when the women umpired, the Club has been organized so that the players umpire and score keep for each other.

There were several weeks of team practice starting on July 24. The first official games began on August 7 at the Sun City Stadium at 6:00 P.M. Each team played every other team once until September 6. Then there were two weeks of twilight playoffs. The short, fledgling season concluded with a September 19<sup>th</sup> championship attended by 250 fans in the 4500-seat stadium built in 1971. The 7-inning twilight game ended with the Apaches scalping the Sinners 10-7. The umpire was Rose Sorace, a popular 60-year old grandma who umpired 19 games in 1979.

The appointed league organizers were Hank Anemone, Gene Downing, Tom Eastburn, Milt Radesky and Andy Wagner (chairman). They did a great job. The lucky managers of the first 6 teams were: Ollie Brown, Tom Eastburn, Dick Michalski, Charles Michel, Milt Radesky and Bill Wadell. The championship that first year went to Ollie Brown.

The teams were not evenly balanced because the players and managers were unfamiliar with each other. It took several years to resolve this by using the draft.

There were no uniforms. Each team decided on its own shirt color. Players paid for their shirts which became part of their personal property.

Most participants had not played for 30 or 40 years. There was not much senior ball in those days. In a typical play, a grounder might go through the short stop and then through the left fielder to the fence. The return throw might go only half way to the infield. It was obvious that everyone had to practice and get in shape. Only wood bats were used as aluminum bats were not made then. Standard soft balls were later replaced by restricted-flight balls because of the short fields.

There were no home-plate mats. Strikes were called on the batter as in baseball or fast-pitch softball, that is, from the shoulders to the knees. Umpires needed experience or good judgment. After a couple of years, the league learned about home-plate extension mats used in California. The mats could not be found here in sporting goods stores. The league had no idea what length they should be. By trial and error with adjustable pieces of carpet, our league developed a length similar to today's mat. Rubber mats became available in local stores after several years,

Ball was played at the Sun City Stadium, the same field used by the Milwaukee Braves (Brewers) until they left after 1982. The Braves played spring practice until April 15<sup>th</sup> each year. Our season could run only 4-1/2 months from April 15<sup>th</sup> to the end of August. To make the field usable for softball, the baseball hard mound had to be removed, the grass infield scraped, baseball paths shortened, and an outfield fence erected at 225 feet. The players maintained the field, stands and restrooms so that the Sun City Saints women's fast-pitch team could also use the field. The men had to cut the grass and lay out the field for each game. Men played twice a week on Tuesday and Thursday. The women's fast-pitch league played at night and on the weekends.

Starting with the summers of 1982 and 1983 at the Sun City Stadium, only early morning and late games were played to avoid afternoon heat. The morning games began at 8:00 and ended around 10:30. The night games began around 7:00 after the sun got below the left field stands, and finished by 9:30. Orange balls were used only for day games at first because of the light color of the surrounding stands. It was also easier to see the orange ball at night under the lights. The league quickly switched to orange for both day and night games.

In 1980, the players' wives formed a Ladies Auxiliary to raise money through various enterprises. The first president was Bette Kouffman, wife of Ev Kouffman. The Auxiliary paid for the annual Awards Dinner Dance at a location like Crestview where there would be dinner, trophies, live dance band, etc. The ladies had cake and rummage sales, 50/50 tickets plus soft drink sales at all league games. This later evolved into a League Picnic where each player's wife brought a food dish for several people. Today (late 1997), the league pays for the Beardsley area picnic in Sun City West. It is catered because there are so many attendees. There is also an Annual League Recognition Dinner that is partially subsidized at a local restaurant. The Ladies Auxiliary also aided the players in cleaning the rest rooms, stands and dugouts. They even kept score for many of the games. What a helpful group!

Playing summer ball was not enough for the men to stay in shape. Retired players had time on their hands plus good weather to play winters. The Sun City Stadium could not be used in winters, so winter play was planned for the El Mirage Field on Tuesdays and Thursdays. A pickup league started with 2 or 3 teams, depending on how many people came. When there were enough for 4 teams, a winter league was started. It evolved into 6 teams, the same as the summer league. Today the winter league has more teams than the summer league because summer is hot. Many players leave for all or part of summer.

In 1981, the league managed to get sponsors for jerseys only. Players paid about \$5-10 per person each year to cover the cost of equipment (bats, balls, bases, etc.) for the season. Later, sponsors donated money for complete uniforms for each player. Each team had its own uniform colors. In 1985, the pants, socks and hats were standardized. Therefore, players could keep their uniforms and avoid uniform sizing problems when changing teams every year. In 1982, each new sponsor would pay about \$300 per year. The league would use this to buy replacement uniforms as necessary. Sponsor renewal each season was \$150.

The softball board consisted of the team managers each year. A President and a Secretary were elected from that group. A Treasurer was later needed to track funds from both sponsors and players.

In the beginning, the managers and teams would stay unchanged every year unless players left for some reason. Teams would be supplemented by new players in a draft. This caused inter-team rivalries and problems as players did not get to know players from other teams. The feelings about individual team solidarity were so strong that there sometimes were fights on the field between players. Some players even abused the umpires.

The managers were omnipotent. They would select the players for their teams, then determine who played or sat on the bench. There was no rule, as we now have, stating that each player had to play a certain number of innings or that each player had to bat. The weaker players would play only if someone did not show or was hurt. If the substitutes did not play, they did not get a time at bat. Consequently, many subs quit the teams as they got little or no playing time.

Some players noted that other leagues outside the area permitted all team members to bat even if they didn't field. This reduced the number of players dropping out. Today, everyone must play at least 5 innings and bat all 7 innings.

In 1981, a rule was added that all players would bat.

In 1982, a rule was added that all players would play at least 3 innings.

In 1983, the league took steps to further help solve the above problems. Teams, including managers and players, would be changed every year. This was a critical rule change as the managers and players would become league oriented as opposed to team oriented. A rule was also instituted that managers could serve only one year.

The managers used the draft. Each of the six team managers picked shortstops first because of the importance of this position. The worst team would get first choice of players, the best team the last choice. This was instituted to balance the league in both summer and winter.

Special rules helped to avoid injuries. Sliding into bases and metal shoe cleats were never permitted. Collisions between a runner and catcher were avoided as follows: Instead of

stepping on home plate when scoring, there was a scoring line that simply had to be stepped on or over. Between 1987 and 1988, a second home plate replaced the scoring line and a double first base bag was added to further reduce collisions. Over-running the bases was permitted for a short time in the early 1980's, but was soon stopped due to injuries. The "commit" line between third base and home plate was introduced around 1983 at the Surprise field.

Each team was expected to field 10 players (usually 4 outfielders). In 1989 the number changed to 11 by adding a short fielder behind the pitcher.

Players were age 50 or older from the beginning. In 1989, the age increased to 55. This was due to Del Webb's requirement of age 55 plus to own a home.

Who hit the first home runs? Charlie McKasson hit the first HR at the Grand Avenue Field in 1985; Bob Rentner at Kuentz in 1989; Hal Noonan hit the first in-the-park homer and Gene Carara the first out of the park at Sun Bowl in 1995.

How far were the fences? Sun City Stadium, 225 feet; Grand Avenue Field near Sun City West, 240 feet; Kuentz Field in Sun City West, 250 feet; Sun Bowl in Sun City, 265 feet. Before the Grand Avenue Field in 1985, mainly wood bats were used. It was more demanding to hit homers or long balls. At Grand Avenue, most players bought their own aluminum bats.

Over the years, there have been hundreds of ball players who have made *significant contributions* to the league by volunteering their time and talent in a multitude of capacities. All these generous, ball-loving people cannot be named here. Past and current players thank them and owe them a great deal of gratitude.

*This group of past league Presidents deserves special recognition:* Andy Wagner 1979; Milt Radesky 1980-81; Ev Kouffman 1982; Howie Mullica 1983; Bob Vosbrinck 1984; Chuck Riffle 1985; Charlie McKasson 1986; Don Goble 1987-88; Bob Audsley 1989 (died in office), replaced by Axel Olson 1989-90; Joe O'Toole 1991; John Winterhalter 1992-3; Lou Hurley 1994; Matt Szydlowski 1995-6; Steve Griswold 1997-8.

Where were the fields? From 1979 through 1998, six different fields have been used.

**1979-1983**--- Sun City Stadium, 111<sup>th</sup> and Grand. Played Tuesday and Thursday, for the summer only, April through August. Built and maintained by Del Webb.

**1982-1983**--- El Mirage Field at Thunderbird and El Mirage in El Mirage. Played practice and pick-up games September to March.

**1983-84**--- Gaines Field, on Nash road and Greasewood in Surprise. Played first fall, winter and spring games, September through May.

**1985-89**--- Grand Avenue Field just West of Grand Avenue near Sun City West. This was the first year-around playing field for the league. Built and maintained by Del Webb.

**Oct 1989-98**--- Kuentz Field in SCW at R. H. Johnson/Stardust. Play all year, Tuesday and Thursday. Built and largely maintained by the Rec Center. Players set up and drag infield.

**Nov 1995-98**--- Sun Bowl in Sun City near 107<sup>th</sup> and Peoria. Play all year, Tuesday and Thursday. Built and largely maintained by the Rec Center. Players set up and drag the infield.

The following players were instrumental in working with the Recreation Center to get the latest two new fields: Kuentz Field in Sun City West, Don Goble played the major role with assistance from Charlie McKasson; Sun Bowl in Sun City, Doug Wright was the prime mover with help from Ray Keller, Ralph Snyder, Ed Morgan, Bob Millslagel and Charlie McKasson. Many can now enjoy the fields due to these fine efforts and persistence. For example, it took 5 years to get Sun Bowl from concept, neighbors' approval, zoning, drawings, bids, meetings and more meetings, etc. to the final beautiful field with surrounding track, gazebo, fountain, etc. All the ball players are indebted to you movers and shakers!

How many teams were there? There were 6 in 1979 and 23 in 1998. There may have been some variation in the number of teams within any year, depending on the playing season.

**1979 to 1985**, 6 teams of 15-20 each

**1986**, 7 teams

**1987**, 7 teams

**1988**, 10 teams, 5 American League, 5 National League. In October, the American and National leagues were formed. All teams played each other interchangeably on Tuesdays and Thursdays as team skill levels were roughly the same. There was a playoff at season's end. This continued until 1992.

**1989**, 11 teams. Kuentz Field in Sun City West started up in October. The games ran nearly all day from 8:00 to 4:00 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. More teams could not be added, even though more people wanted to play. Another field was needed.

**1990**, 12 teams

**1991**, 11 teams

**1992**, 12 teams, 5 American League, 7 National League. The leagues were divided according to skill levels for the first time. Generally, the American league had more skilled players. The American and National leagues no longer played each other.

**1993**, 12 teams, 5 American League, 7 National League.

**1994**, 15 teams, 6 American League, 9 National League.

**1995**, 16 teams, 6 American League, 10 National League. **Sun Bowl Field started up in SC.**

**1996**, 18 teams, 6 American League, 12 National League.

**1997**, 20 teams, 8 American League, 12 National League.

**1998**, 23 teams, 8 American League, 15 National League.

The "Green Team" farm team was founded by Loran Swanson in 1997. This concept allows new, unassigned players to practice until there are openings. It provides an opportunity to evaluate players for assignment to the American or National leagues. The games are played on the same fields, under actual conditions so the players know what to expect. And, it's a great opportunity to get the kinks out of "dem ole bones."

The \$25 membership fee began in 1983. Great teams, great facilities...what a bargain!

The Club was chartered by the Recreation Centers on March 9, 1987 under Don Goble. The league was incorporated in April, 1993. The Senior Softball Club is the only chartered club that covers both Sun City and Sun City West. Other clubs operate independently in the two cities.

Phil Batow takes the honor of being the most seasoned current player at age 86. He beats the runner up, Norm Dermody, who is a mere 83. Both were, and still are, infielders.

The following original 1979 players are still on the fields: Phil Batow, Ray Case, Norm Dermody, Ev Kouffman, Joe Marco and Fred Schwetje.

Today the softball board consists of 5 members each from Sun City and Sun City West. Board prospects are nominated by the incumbent board members or an appointed committee, and then elected for two-year terms in April by the players. President, VP, Secretary and Treasurer are elected by the board membership. The remaining 6 board members are Directors.

The team Managers are selected by placement committees according to who is willing to manage at the time.

The team players are selected by the Managers as follows:

In the American league, players are rated from one (high) to five by manager consensus according to hitting primarily, plus other abilities. This list is given to the managers. Which manager chooses first or last is determined by lot. Then the players are selected by draft. Currently, January 1998, there are 12 players on each team.

In the National league, the players are assigned to a team by a committee.

In 1997, Virgil Kozlowski founded our Hall of Fame to honor those who have made significant contributions to betterment of the Club. The first five members will be inducted in 1998.

Club membership is about 320 early in 1998. This number varies, even within any year.

The purpose of this document is to present an informational review of the 19-year history of the softball Club. It is not meant to cover the independent Sidewinders Traveling teams.

The idea of an updated history started while I was talking to Ev Kouffman after a ball game. As a new-comer, I was unfamiliar with background of the league's development. Ev told me some fascinating facts, as only he could, since he was there when the league started in 1979. Then Steve Griswold, our league President, came by. I asked if any of the league's interesting history had been written down for appreciation by posterity. Steve said there had been no recent updates. "John, why don't you take that as an assignment?" And so the story goes.

My thanks to all the players who contributed to this document, especially *Ev Kouffman*, Charlie McKasson, Ray Case, Ken Stewart, Don Goble and Dunc Jewell. It was fun listening to and learning from some real pros.

Dated January, 1998, John Doherty, 623-544-8469

## **Part 2...January 1998 to May 2002**

This is a 5-year update in May, 2002.

Here is a typical schedule referencing the 1997 playing year. It still applies in 2002, but now there are 26 teams instead of 20, with 12-13 players per team. Between October 21, 1997 and December 23, each team played about 18 games. Then new teams were chosen. Between January 8, 1998 and April 16, each team played 29 games, for a total of 47 games on average for both the American and National League teams during regulation season play. Since 2000, the National League has had three sessions in the allotted time instead of the two played by the American League. During the summer of 1998, May 5 to September 29, 43 games were scheduled for teams from the combined American and National leagues. In 2001 (and probably for the summer of 2002), the League played four summer sessions, three as separate Leagues and the last one combining the Leagues.

For years, a 47 COR white ball was used. In 1998, the league changed to a 40 COR, white, restricted-flight ball as too many home runs were disturbing the neighbors, and the players would be safer too. Later that year, a 44 COR ball was used as the 40 COR was too dead. In 2000, a Dudley 44 COR, 525 compression, non-restricted flight ball was favored. In 2002, the same ball was used, but yellow and leather-covered to improve visibility and increase ball life. The new balls last about three times longer, but the price is only moderately more per dozen. In addition, considerably longer life is gained from balls in the practice barrel.

The Cover Story of the September, 1998 issue of "Sun Life Magazine" was written about our Club.

Prior to October 1998, the National and American Leagues would play on the same field. After that, instead of intermixing play, the two Leagues would alternate play at the SC and SCW fields.

In October of 1998, a white "touch line" was added between the batters box and the runners' home plate. A runner from 3<sup>rd</sup> base has a choice to step on or over this line instead of stepping on a slippery runner's base, depending on the weather.

The number of members, which vary from beginning to end of the year, was approximately as follows: **1997**, 227; **1998**, 333; **1999**, 336; **2000**, 340; **2001**, 360; **2002**, 370.

In the American League, players used to be rated from 1-5 (1 highest) by the managers for the draft. In 1999, the ratings were 1-3 plus designated "Star" players, one of which had to be on each team. The Star rating caused problems with substitutions, so it was dropped. Since 2000, a straight 1-3 rating was used. There was no formal rating system in the National League.

The Softball Hall of Fame was proposed and ushered in by player Virgil Kozlowski in 1997. All members have a chance to nominate candidates who must have been in the league at least 7 years and have made significant contributions to the good of the Club. A committee selected by the League board then chooses the inductees, who set outstanding examples for us.

**1998** -- Don Goble, Alex Olson, Charlie McKasson, Lloyd "Red" Thomas, Ralph Snyder  
**1999** -- Duncan Jewell, Ray Keller, Ev Kouffman, Joe O'Toole, Ken Stewart  
**2000** -- Bud Herren, Lou Hurley, Steve Letko, Matt Szydłowski, Doug Wright

**2001** – Steve Griswold, Bob Millslagel  
**2002** – Bob Morgan and Bud Peek

An annual Umpiring School is conducted by our ASA umpire Ken Skinner. It takes place at Kuentz field where players are taught the basics and beyond. “Tie does not go to the runner. There are no ties.”

A Club web site ([www.azsrsoftball.com](http://www.azsrsoftball.com)) was introduced by Ken Skinner in October 1999. Since then it has had many thousands of hits. Look what it features: standings, rosters, schedules, newsletters, message board, bulletin board, photos of players, by-laws, member applications, league rules, calendar, Hall of Fame, board of directors, club history, minutes and code of ethics. Everything can be downloaded anywhere in the country or internationally. This club has gotten pretty sophisticated since those early, start-up days of softball in 1979.

For the first time in many years, several female players joined the guys in the fall of 2000.

In 2000, a wider mat was added to change the strike zone width from 17" to 21". This enables pitchers to make more strikes and speed up the games. No warm-up pitches after the third inning also speeds the games which last from one hour to one hour and 15 minutes.

Here's an update of the number of teams since last reported in 1998 above. Bear in mind that the number may vary slightly depending on the session or season. Six teams started in 1979.

**1999**, 24 teams, 10 American League, 14 National League  
**2000**, 24 teams, 10 American League, 14 National League  
**2001**, 24 teams, 11 American League, 13 National League  
**2002**, 26 teams, 13 American League, 13 National League

Here's an update of the Club Presidents who are the very heart of the League. Note separate Presidents of SC and SCW started in 2000 when the league had to split with separate boards and finances.

**1998-1999** Matt Szydlowski,  
**1999-2000** Earl Bell,  
**2000-2001** Ken Skinner\* (SCW), Steve Griswold (SC)  
**2002** Matt Szydlowski\* (SCW), Steve Griswold (SC),  
\*Simultaneously also League President

Softball players from SC and SCW have commingled teams and used each others fields on Tuesdays and Thursdays for years. In February 2000, League President Earl Bell received notice from the SCW Rec Centers that our Charter might be revoked as non-association members were using SCW facilities. Our 340 members were strongly against this. After numerous meetings and intensive discussions with President Earl Bell, Dave Rinderknecht, Pete Roque and Ken Skinner, the Rec Centers agreed to a waiver on May 25. A new charter was issued to the “Sun City West Softball Club.” The Sun Cities Senior Softball League was no longer a chartered club with the SCW Rec Centers. Sun City rewrote its by-laws to form the “Sun City Senior Softball Club”. After 20 years of being essentially one organization, the league was split into two distinct clubs.

Our appreciation goes to Earl Bell in particular, and to the executive committee, for great tenacity and expertise in seeing this issue resolved satisfactorily. We likewise thank the SCW Rec Board members and General Manager for their patience and understanding. You probably heard the loud cheers all over the Sun Cities when players learned of the agreement.

In the summer of 2000, a transition committee made up of members from SC and SCW met monthly to reorganize the Sun Cities Senior Softball League and set up new rules and regulations. The committee distributed funds still in the old League treasury plus sponsor uniforms, etc. based on a ratio of the number of members. SC got one-third and SCW two thirds. Each Club was then responsible for its own funds. This includes buying uniform shorts, pants, jerseys, socks and hats to be distributed to the Club's players. The balls used in League play are purchased in one batch and the cost divided 1/3 and 2/3.

In September 2000, the two separate Clubs elected Steve Griswold as SC Club President and Ken Skinner as SCW Club President. A newly formed League board, consisting of four board members of each Club, then elected Ken Skinner as the first new League President. The League board is responsible to oversee the day-to-day operation of the Tuesday-Thursday league play and answers to the two chartered softball Clubs.

In 2001, a softball Club logo was designed and implemented in SCW.

Outside play with surrounding senior communities was initiated in 2001. The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual SCW Softball Club Spring Fling tournament was organized. Benefit games with the SCW Firemen began. For the first time, organized play with our new neighbors at Sun City Grand started up with the formation of the "Tri-Cities League." All of the above was organized under President Ken Skinner's SCW Softball Club board. Club members had more opportunities to play ball other than on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Everybody's happy! (Also under Skinner's regime... new bleacher covers, fence height extension, new clubhouse proposal, first web site, initiated Angels in the Outfield, new logo, to name a few.)

Starting In 2001, players were able to get personal baseball cards/pictures, magazine cover pictures and team pictures. These are great to send to grand children, relatives, etc. Bob Stouthamer made arrangements with a professional photographer so the guys were pictured in uniform on the fields (posed batting or fielding—with great smiles of course). Joe Rottmann made up an album for all to see. "I'll trade you one of my Ray Keller cards for a Jim McGuire." Starting in 2001, then in 2002, each of our 26 sponsors was given an 8x10" team photo. This will continue as a way of thanking each sponsor.

"Angels in the Outfield" they are called, and we love every one of them. In 2001, these sensitive and loving ladies formed a group of spouses who react fast when softball members or their close family are hurting in some way. It all started when a player died on the field and some of our ladies wondered what they could do to help. Dick LeMoine brainstormed the idea with his wife. He then called Nancy Durrer, who contacted Ida Aprea. They brought in Joyce Fano and Gail Stouthamer (who does those artful bulletins). And then others volunteered. Now it's history. If anyone is hurt, sick, hospitalized, having surgery, dies, etc., these ladies get the details, report to all of us on the bulletin boards, send cards and keep in touch with the family until all is resolved. They even tell us whether to call, send cards, visit, or whatever is appropriate.

If that's not enough, these Angels assisted with a Toys for Kids fund raiser sponsored by the SCW women's club and supported two Firemen's benefit softball games (after 9-11-01) by their

delicious baking and supply of all sorts of mouth-watering goodies. Then they manned the food tables. We can't think of enough kind words to thank you thoughtful, generous ladies.

For a number of years, the sponsor cost has been \$350 (only \$50 more than the original sponsor cost in 1982) the first year, and \$150 each successive year. In 2002, this changed to \$400 and \$175. Speaking of sponsors of our 26 teams, we have a dedicated member who works with them, makes them happy and keeps them informed. Another two members (News Reporters) of the National and American Leagues assure our sponsors company names get in print in the local newspapers when our games are covered. It's a win-win situation for the sponsors and the softball club. Go team!

The current average cost for a reasonably good aluminum bat is in the \$100-180 area, with some costing up to \$300.

The strike zone: The ball must hit home plate or the mat extension and be, at some point, a minimum of 6 feet high and a maximum of 12 feet high. These height requirements present the most difficult ball and strike calls for the players acting as umpires.

What's the fence distance? The chain link fence in Sun City is 265 feet. In Sun City West, it used to be 250 feet, but the fence height was increased to 12 feet from 5 feet in 2001. This means the ball must fly about 275 feet to clear the higher fence. Dick LeMoine was the first to blast one over the new fence in SCW.

Flexible bleacher covers were added to the stands behind first and third bases in Sun City West in 2001. This is really appreciated by spectators on those hot Arizona days. The Rec Centers paid 2/3 and the Club 1/3.

Our oldest player is still Phil Batow in the National League. He was 91 on 3/29/02. In the American League, Ed "Toast of the Town" Sullivan is still playing a hot third base at age 77. He'll be 78 on 6/27/02.

Fred Schwetje, Ev Kouffman and Phil Batow are members of the original 1979 group who are still playing. And they keep punching out those hits...wouldn't know how to stop!

Some team managers never fade away or get fired. Take, for example, Bob Morgan who has managed 22 consecutive teams in the last 11 years. Mr. "Yes" is very popular with the players because, win or lose, it's always fun to be around him.

In the last few years, the catered Annual Luncheon has taken place in April, indoors, at one of the Rec Centers, alternating in SC and SCW. There used to be an outdoor picnic and/or a restaurant lunch prior to this. Our own funny man Al Benedict has produced, directed, and emceed the stage show in 2001 and 2002. The program is highlighted by the announcement of the latest inductees into our softball Hall of Fame. Entertainment is provided by the ball players and their spouses in addition to special guest talent. In 2002, the cost per member was only \$8.00, partially funded by the League. About 250 attend.

The annual cost per player remains at a bargain \$25 per year. This includes uniforms, field use, etc. In SC, new members will pay \$35 the first year only starting in the fall of 2002. In SCW, an added \$50 initiation fee starts for new players in 2002.

There are five special teams that play on Mondays and Fridays. The Green Team breaks in new players by facing the Gals and Guys on Mondays. The Mavericks, Rinky Dinks, Retreads, and Gals and Guys play on Fridays. This creates lots of "unofficial" softball fun on days other than Tuesdays and Thursdays.

In January of 2002, the Rec Centers board approved blue prints submitted by Treasurer Dick LeMoine for a new SCW clubhouse. In replacing the Kuentz Field scoring tower, the new two-story structure will feature an equipment storage room, his and hers rest rooms, concession area with kitchen, meeting room, scoring area and soft-drink/snack machines. In February, President Matt Szydlowski attended a meeting where the Rec Centers Governing Board agreed with a proposal from the SCW Softball Club to permit advertising on the softball complex and field fencing to generate revenue for construction.

In March, Club members agreed to pay for the structure within three years of start up. In April, a member fund drive was initiated as one-half of the structure cost (in ad contracts or cash) must be on hand before the Governing Board allows building to begin. As of May, over \$15,000 of the \$20,000 goal had been donated by only 115 players in SCW. Major revenue will come from selling bill-board space at \$2500 per year (3 years minimum) on 6x12-foot mats on the inside of the outfield fencing. These 4" thick mats will provide protection for the players too. A new score board costing between \$10,000 and \$18,000 will be paid for by an advertiser. It will be located in center field and have large, 24" LED numbers for much easier reading from a distance compared to our current score board.

Dick LeMoine has been, and continues to be (if his wife lets him), the real ram-rod and Project Facilitator of this important and time-consuming effort. All of the members thank him, Matt Szydlowski, and others who are contributing personally and financially. If all goes well, the structure will be ready later this year. There is a lot of work and selling to do in the meantime.

**Names, names...**Special thanks to the following for their memories on Part 2 of this history: Ken Skinner, Matt Szydlowski, Steve Griswold, Dick LeMoine and Loran Swanson. There are so many members who quietly go about making heavy contributions to this League which has blossomed unbelievably since its inception in 1979. We wish they all could be mentioned as they rarely get thanked personally. But these fine workers know that the players appreciate their generosity and selflessness in giving time, effort, organization, hands on, indeed soul and spirit. **We all admire you. We thank you. You are our personal All Stars!**

Updated May, 2002. John Doherty, 623-544-8469.

### **Part 3...June 2002 through April 2010**

This is the third update, the first being from 1979 through 1997, the second from January 1998 to May 2002 and now the third from June 2002 through April 2010. The biggest event of this update was the addition of a beautiful clubhouse. There have been 31 wonderful and playful years since our Softball League began in 1979.

The Club Presidents and League Presidents were (respectively SCW and SC):

\*Simultaneously Club President and League President

**2002**, Matt Szydlowski\* and Steve Griswold

**2003**, Wayne Mitchell and Doug Wright (Ray Keller League President)

**2004**, Jim Pavolko and Doug Wright (Ray Keller League President)  
**2005**, Bob Stouthamer\* and Mike Graham  
**2006**, Dick LeMoine and Bill Buxton (Arvid Peterson League President)  
**2007**, Art Nelson and John Selby/Don Gault (Mike Hester League President)  
**2008**, Art Nelson and Linda Graham (Mike Hester League President)  
**2009**, Rich McAndrews and Linda Graham (Carol Bowden League President)  
**2010**, Bob Peck and Linda Graham (Jim Keinath League President)

The Club and League Presidents are extremely important to the unity, proper functioning and progress of the League, known as the Sun Cities Senior Softball Association as of 2010. They and the board members have undertaken major trust and responsibilities for the benefit of us all.

Linda Graham was not only the first woman to be elected President of a Club (SC), but she was elected 3 years in a row starting in 2008. In December, 2007, the Club membership voted to change the Rules to allow a Board member to be elected to consecutive terms. Linda is a take-charge gal who can always be seen at the field announcing, keeping scores and contributing far more than most members are aware of.

Carol Bowden, who plays in the Women's League, was the first woman to be elected as League President (SCW in 2009). She was in charge of all team and bill-board sponsors in addition to her other duties.

Inductees into our Softball Hall of Fame were announced at the Annual Softball Banquets:

**2003**, Bill Bromley and Loran Swanson  
**2004**, Gene Chervinko, Tait Douglas and Ken Skinner  
**2005**, Bob Rentner  
**2006**, Carl Johnson  
**2007**, John Doherty, Earl Bell, Dick LeMoine and Paul Turley  
**2008**, Glen Carroll, George Karras, Jim McGuire, Ernie Mueller and Bob Stouthamer  
**2009**, Lyle Bakken, Ray Early and John Winterhalter  
**2010**, Mike Graham, Wayne Mitchell, Art Nelson and Tex Wells

These players deserve recognition as evidenced by their many exceptional contributions to the good of the Softball Association.

At the 2003 Banquet, Phil Batow was given an individual achievement award for being an active National League player at age 92. Batow retired from softball at 96 in 2007. He then came back and retired once again in March of 2010 at **age 99** wearing the Desert Rose jersey. The ageless infielder said he could not hit with enough power. What a history!

As of 2004, there were three active players who were around when the League started in 1979: Phil Batow, Ev Kouffman and Fred Schwetje. By March of 2010, Kouffman was the only original after 31 years of softball and 80 years young. At the 2009 Banquet, he gave a live rendition of his many vivid and colorful memories of the early years of league formation and growth pains. We learned, enjoyed and laughed. Thanks for the memories Ev.

In 2008, Dolores Warrick received a special award at the Annual Banquet for her many contributions to the Sun Cities Guys and Gals and the Sun Cities Co-ed League which were written up earlier as a separate part of this history. Dolores was highly involved as a manager, player and financial benefactor. Many men and women players enjoyed the games due to her

support and enthusiasm. She was an active player until 2008 when she retired but is still a strong supporter of our softball programs. It has been a privilege to participate with her.

In February 2003, a large player survey was taken regarding bat safety. It included single, double and triple-wall bats plus the new composite bats. The results were used by the league in considering what changes to make. This included going to a softer 375 compression ball in view of the new "hot" bats. This would promote player safety and fewer balls going over the fence onto neighbors' property.

In March of 2003, the League banned "dangerous" bats, mainly some composite types. A list of the illegal bats was provided. All new bats must be approved by the League. This was due to player safety considerations related to harder hit balls and balls hit over the fences into residents' yards.

In October 2003, our SCW Club participated in the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of SCW Parade by decorating golf carts with softball items. The players wore their uniforms and the carts showed our sponsors names. Congratulations to SCW.

In November of 2003, a committee was formed to develop information proposed by members on the possibility of splitting or reorganizing the leagues in various ways. This was considered mainly to improve safety but also for greater fun and more level competition. All the members met the following December to hear the alternatives with their pros and cons. In January 2004, a vote was taken by all members who decided 85.2% in favor of keeping things the way they were. At vote time, there were 15 National and 13 American League teams. Proposals were:

- Splitting the American League into 2 leagues with no change to the National League based on player skill level
- Splitting the American League into 2 leagues with no change to the National League based on each players preference
- Making 3 leagues by realigning the National and American based on skill level
- Making 3 leagues by realigning the National and American based on player preference
- Proposal for 8 team American and 2 National League divisions with 11 teams in each
- Leaving things as they are and using local rules to promote safety

In February of 2004, the League decided to use the official ASA Banned Bat List and ASA Certified Bat List as reference for all of our players.

An additional web site was created by Mike Graham in March 2004 to post game scores and articles submitted by our reporters to the local newspapers (Daily News Sun, Independent and Wester). Mike kept our main computer database information faithfully for many years following the transition from Loran Swanson until a new web-based database was adopted in 2009/2010. Collecting and updating information on over 400 members plus accurately recording playing schedules and rosters is important and time consuming. Many of these duties transitioned to the American and National League Committees in 2010.

*2004 was the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Softball Association and 2009 the 30th. Think of that. Thousands of players and fans in SC and SCW have enjoyed the game of softball because Del Webb had great foresight in 1979.*

The Angels in the Outfield continue to do a great job in tracking and reporting on members or spouses who have health issues. They have their own web site (2004) where you can check on

players' health and their own bulletin board areas at the fields. Co-chairs Joyce Fano and Linda Graham have the help of many ladies who follow the status of the player or spouse, make and send cards, send donations, and even raise funds for good causes like Toys for Kids near Christmas time. Everyone loves the Angels.

In 2004, Bob Morgan tossed in his manager's towel after a record 24 softball seasons (12 years) in the American League. That's real dedication. Will anyone ever top that?

In January 2005, the Rec Center provided a new tractor and storage shed for the SC Sun Bowl field maintenance. Extra dugout exits were added.

In 2005, the League switched from two games per softball to a new ball for each game.

Since April of 2005, Team Sponsor fees changed to \$450 for a new sponsor and \$225 each subsequent year. In 2006 the rates changed to \$500 and \$250. Most of the cost is for new, high quality jerseys.

In April 2004, the SCW Club held its first "Sponsor Appreciation Golf Tournament and Dinner Dance" at Briarwood Country Club. It was open to all League members, guests and sponsors. Thanks to organizer-host Scott McLearie with Dick LeMoine and a committee of helpers, it was a huge success. Many wonderful prizes were awarded for putting contest, long drive, closest to the pin, etc. Several sponsors offered cars for a hole in one. There were many door prizes of high value plus a silent auction. Then there was a fine dinner plus live band and dancing in a beautiful, country-club setting. It was a memorable and fun day. Everyone knew this had to become an annual event.

In later annual SCW "Tin Cup" Golf and Dinner Dance days from 2005 through 2009, one of our lucky sponsors won a \$40,000 Lexus. The car was compliments of generous bill-board sponsor Al LeMoine of Arrowhead Lexus on Bell Road. Dick LeMoine (no relation to Al) was the real energy behind all the fun annual golf days since the opening putt on day one. Chairmen were: 2005, Dick LeMoine; 2006 and 2007 Mike Hester; 2008, Dick LeMoine/Larry Bond; 2009, Larry Bond. We thank the many important contributors for working so hard for the benefit of all over the past 6 years. You cannot believe the amount of team effort required to go out and get sponsors for door prizes, hole sponsors, silent auction prizes, raffle prizes, plus awards. Then there are arrangements for putting and other contests, golf pairings, scoring, cart staging, photographing, dinner, entertainment, music, lining up volunteers, etc. Each of the golf outings has been successful. The topper was 2007 when the net was nearly \$20,000. We thank our generous sponsors over and over.

**New Sun City West Clubhouse...New Scoreboard...New Fence Bill-Board Sponsors.** This is a review of big happenings at the Sun City West Softball Club from 2001-2004. The Kuentz Field ball park, now known as Liberty Field, for years had only a scoring tower. A new player clubhouse was envisioned by one Dick LeMoine. It would be special...a meeting room with a large wood table and cherry wood flooring...his and her rest rooms...a concession area with kitchen...lots of storage and cabinets...heated and air conditioned...a second floor scoring and announcing area...a unique, roof-top Copula with a sports weather vane...a courtyard with benches and large bulletin board...a new score board with large, bright, readable numbers plus time and temperature that could easily be seen by older eyes. Ah, the dream.

The year was 2001. For years, the various boards had seriously considered such projects. *Money was always the problem.* The Rec Center could not help. Hold on said player-promoter

Dick LeMoine. We don't need a penny from the Rec Center. Say what! The club figured to cover the cost itself. What? We're talking tens of thousands of dollars. The club developed a package proposal significantly different than those considered in prior years: 1) Raise a reasonable amount from the club members as down payment; 2) Design the building and provide blueprints to minimize cost; 3) Sell fence bill-board advertising to sponsors to cover the remaining costs. On November 16, 2001, club President Ken Skinner sent a letter to the Rec Center detailing the proposal. The ball was rolling.

In 2002 the effort continued in earnest through President Matt Szydlowski. One meeting and negotiation after another took place between the ball club and the Rec Center as details had to be pounded out. Contracts were involved. Ken Skinner and Hugh Kelley lead a crucial player fund raiser that reached its \$20,000 down payment goal, a real tribute to the players. Everyone saw that the players were serious about the project. On March 20, 2002, the Rec Center signed a contract requiring at least 50% down and everything to be paid by the club in 3 years. The first bill-board sponsors came aboard thanks to colorful, detailed booklets and marketing presentations by Greg Johnston and others. Sponsoring a quality 6x12-foot board is no small decision as it costs even more over 3 years when artwork and all are included. The 4" thick soft sponsor mats provide excellent cushioning and safety for the out fielders. On October 7, 2002, the club sent a letter to the Rec Center stating that it had the full down payment.

In 2003 clubhouse activity continued under President Wayne Mitchell. It was a difficult time as many critical decisions were being made in one meeting after another. *A significant event occurred when Dana Moore of Liberty Buick donated \$50,000.* The new clubhouse would later be dedicated as the Dana Moore Clubhouse and the field was designated Liberty Field in appreciation of Dana Moore's generosity. Pepsi Cola sponsored a giant, new scoreboard with clock and large, 2-foot high L.E.D. numbers. It was installed on May 9, 2003. Eyes popped when it was turned on for the first time. What a hit! Plans on the clubhouse were finalized, permits issued, and construction eventually began on November 3, 2003 after a ceremonial ground breaking on October 15. By year end, the complexion of Liberty Field changed dramatically as there were 13 beautiful, sponsor bill-boards in the outfield, many designed by one of the club members Paul Turley who once created advertising for a living. Paul was always on follow-up visits to sponsors working with their graphics people on bill-board designs. He put in an enormous amount of time. There's a lot of talent in this group!

By 2004, we welcomed a total of 19 paid bill-board sponsors. Fence space remained for more. Plans were being made for Dedication of the Dana Moore Clubhouse in the fall. That would be a dream come true for all the ball players. The dedication was on 2/26/05 when all the parties involved got together for a day of highly anticipated speeches, food and refreshments, partying, his and her softball games, and good will to all. Dana Moore of Liberty Buick was there plus bill-board and team sponsors, Rec Center Governing Board members, Administration and Staff. Members of the Rec Center governing board presented the club with a plaque, which is displayed in the clubhouse. The new rest rooms were put to good use--no one had to walk to nearby Kuentz Rec Center.

Deserving very special acknowledgement is Dick LeMoine who spent countless hours spear heading and hovering over the new clubhouse project from the beginning, doing things like this: selling the total concept to the club and the Rec Center; drawing sketches of bill-boards, clubhouse, scoreboard; designing the clubhouse; arranging blueprints and final design; choosing flooring, cabinets, cosmetics and sources; initiating marketing plan for sale of bill boards via 3 year contracts to sponsors; personally selling many bill boards at \$7500; selecting

the scoreboard; working with contractors throughout; attending many meetings; and much more. It would not have happened without his foresight, knowledge, persistence and endurance.

We thank the club Presidents and board members for their heavy contributions working faithfully for the cause over a full four years. Many other club members deserve a pat on the back for getting involved when called on, especially for the \$20,000 kick off. The club appreciates the Rec Center personnel for their over-sight, advice, patience and understanding. It's nice to know that, playing ball together, we all make up one heck of a winning team.

*The SCW Club has spent \$343,000 through 2009 on the clubhouse project including field improvements. The new facility additions become assets to all current and future residents of SCW...at no cost to them...with the compliments of the ball players, generous sponsors and thanks to the cooperation of the Rec Center.*

The Softball Club sponsor approach may be a model for the Rec Center and various other clubs. It is a practical way for clubs to accomplish goals without over burdening the Rec Center for funding. In this case, the Rec Center agreed to a Softball Club down payment of \$20,000 plus final payments over three years from the date of facility completion (based on 3-year sponsor ads at \$7500). After full payment, all bill-board monies accumulated in future years would distribute as follows: 75% to the Rec Center for care, maintenance and upgrading of the ball field and its facilities; 25% to the Softball Club for bill-board maintenance and use as the players see fit. This added Rec Center income means that money the Rec Center would otherwise spend on Liberty Field maintenance is freed up to fund other clubs' needs. It's a win-win situation for everyone. In 2008, the agreement with the Rec Center was changed to a 50/50% share of the bill-board income with the club effective in 2009.

The new clubhouse, score board and sponsor mats on the outfield fence are a real pleasure and benefit to the players and the community. These assets will be enjoyed by thousands for years to come. In the beginning, the members didn't really believe it would happen. It was more of a pipe dream because there was no precedent and no money. This successful project is a sterling example of what can be done with gumption, determination and genuine leadership.

**Our bill-board sponsors are the greatest!** Without them, the above story could not have been told. The table below shows our sponsors have accounted for nearly \$300,000 from 2003 through 2009. The first three sponsors were: Paul Tone Farmers Insurance, Peoria GMC-Liberty Buick and Golden Eagle Distributing—Budweiser. Pepsi-Cola sponsored the score board.

Effective 2010, the cost of a 3-year bill-board has been reduced to \$5000 less 10% for a prepay. This is due to the state of the economy. Please patronize our sponsors and let them know you are from the Softball Clubs.

SCW Paid Bill-Board Sponsors and Other Related Income

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Number of Bill-Boards Paid	13	19	19	17	17	17	12	-
Bill-Board Income (\$000)	45	40	41	50	44	42	34	296
Value of Related Items (\$000)	71**	4	3	2	20*	12*	9*	121

Total Income (\$000)	116	44	44	52	64	54	43	417
----------------------	-----	----	----	----	----	----	----	-----

\*\*Mainly \$50,000 from Dana Moore of Liberty Buick and \$21,000 from players

\*Mainly Tin Cup Golf Outing income of \$38,000 over 3 years

Lyle Bakken deserves recognition for being our Treasurer or “Banker” for 7 years in SCW. We are just fun-loving ball players. Nonetheless, it is critical to keep accurate records for the Club, Rec Center and IRS when dealing with nearly a half million dollars of income or expenses since 2003. There’s a lot to it. Lyle makes it look easy. His reports are understandable even by our members.

In 2008 and 2009 combined, the SCW Club had net expenses of nearly \$10,000 on fun projects such as: Bosom Buddies Fun Raising Tournament, Cardiac Kids Fund Raising Tournament, Sponsor Appreciation Day in the Park, Season Kick Off Day with buffalo burgers, Fun Day with batting circles, 4-Day Spring Fling Tournament, Hot Dog Day, and Tuesday-Thursday donuts. There are many other special events.

Donuts and coffee have been provided free on Tuesdays and Thursdays at Liberty Field during the official softball season from mid October to the end of April. Eight dozen donuts per week cost about \$1500 per season, but a major part of the cost is covered by player and fan donations at the field. We thank those members who access and prepare the sweets and coffee, especially on those cold mornings at the 8:30AM games.

Some of our members make many dramatic contributions “under the radar” without meaningful recognition. Such a person was Paul Turley who was given a first special award in 2006 at the Tin Cup Golf and Dinner Dance. It was for his time, dedication and labor for the SCW Softball Club. A decision was made to make the “Paul Turley Award” an annual event. In 2007, George Karras received the award; 2008, Wayne Mitchell; 2009, Ray Early. You guys can be proud.

The ladies’ Bosom Buddies Tournament was started in SCW on 11/5/05 by Loran Swanson and Gary Kelly to raise funds for the Arizona Bosom Buddies, a breast cancer support group. Five local women’s tournament teams competed originally and eight in 2010. There are two days of fun games, all the goodies you can eat, some prizes and all the bucks you can contribute for a great cause. Everyone must be happy as the games have raised nearly \$30,000 up to 2010, in good part due to event organizer and emcee Ken Skinner who uses the microphone to embarrass that last penny out of our pockets.

Bosom Buddies is a big softball event that attracts many fans and requires lots of cooperative preparation. The women’s committees take over: sponsors; sales and promotion; silent auction program; news media and reporting; graphics; announcers; umps and scorekeepers; grounds work; music and sound; etc. In 2010, a group of four SCW members and others appeared on the live TV program Good Morning America promoting the event. Now Kay Peterson, Malinda Fish, Tony DiBiasio and Ken Skinner are TV stars. Congratulations to all the leaders, players and generous contributors who gave financially or through their personal efforts.

The Cardiac Kids Tournament was founded in 2006 by Bill Bromley for players who had any type of cardiac event, as he did. The purpose was to show what typically four teams of these athletes could do on the field, and to raise funds for the Arizona Heart Foundation, a cardiovascular disease research institute. This was done through 50/50 raffles plus player/member

and fan donations. Nearly \$11,000 have been raised through the combination of National and American League players up to April, 2010. You gotta see these guys go, especially with team names like the Heart Breakers. After Bill died, the event was renamed the Bill Bromley Cardiac Kids Tournament. We are proud of Bill, the players and the fans who contribute financially and enjoy a day of games at Liberty Field plus food and refreshments with the compliments of the SCW ball club. Events Chairman Ken Skinner has been organizer since day one. 100% of the funds go to the Heart Foundation cause.

From the Fall of 2007 to the end of 2009, Carol Bond became our SCW Popcorn Princess providing the freshly popped treat at Liberty Field on Tuesdays. She had popped and given out nearly 5000 bags of free popcorn. Her friendly personality plus the aroma and taste of the popcorn added a lot to the softball park atmosphere. Mmmm.

In 2007, the National League instituted the draft, the same as the American League. For many years the National League committees placed the players on each team and assigned a manager for that session. Some managers expressed concern that they had no ownership of the given team and suggested trying the draft instead. Therefore, beginning in 2007, the committee had the managers vote what they preferred for that session. For the 2007-2009 seasons, they decided by majority vote to draft. Player assignment is still used for the Summer games by both leagues. The National League also converted to the 1-3 player rating system.

In the fall of 2008, the National League Committee and current managers elected to have a playoff (or tournament) at the end of the regular session. Before implementing this playoff, the Committee got the approval of the League Board, known today as the League Association Board. The playoff period would be the last two weeks of the session so that the National League and American League would end their sessions on the same date.

The playoff would give teams ranked lower during the regular session an opportunity to upset or beat teams that had won most of their games. It also gave additional exposure to the Team Sponsors. Our league reporter named the playoffs Desert Winter Classic and Desert Spring Classic. Teams were seeded for the purpose of scheduling games. There have been 14 teams each session since the start. Seedings were based on won-loss records during the regular session. The #1 seed would play the #14 seed, #2 would play #13th seed, etc. After the third playoff, there remained only two undefeated teams that were in the finals. In the April, 2010, the #1 seed Desert Rose defeated #13 seed Brenda's Kitchen 14 to 9.

Not everyone was happy with the new playoff. In the past, managers decided if they wanted to continue. The Board asked the Committee to poll the players to see if they wanted to continue. Based on the polling, it is the Committee's intent to have a playoff at the end of the Fall-Winter sessions only.

In November, 2008, the League promoted a drive for the St. Mary's Food Bank at both fields. It was initiated by Julie McGlynn and Carol Bowden and lasts from November through March. Nearly 2000 pounds of food were collected for the needy in the first two years.

In May 2009, Dick LeMoine was given permanent recognition of his many extraordinary contributions over the years. An area near the third base side of Liberty Field in SCW was dedicated as LeMoine Pavilion and a permanent plaque was set. You need only to read this recent softball history to understand and appreciate why he has been so honored. His creative talents, energy, hard work, dedication, can-do spirit and unselfishness have made him a super

asset, not only to this Club and League, but to Sun City West itself. Luckily for us all, his wife Sharon lets him do it, and we don't think he's finished yet.

The Annual League Softball Banquet usually takes place at one of the Rec Centers with each Club hosting on alternating years. It's not just a dinner. In 2010, there were over 350 attendees enjoying an evening of fun and humor provided by the emcee, entertainer, special features plus announcement and honoring of the new inductees into our Hall of Fame. Those attending are sponsors, current Hall of Fame members, and our other members, players and their guests. We thank those contributors who prepared the Banquets over the years for our total enjoyment. Jim McGuire was the emcee in 2010 as he has been, on and off, for a number of years. You can't beat the likes of Joe Gallo's professional singing or Bob Morgan wearing an ancient baseball uniform while doing his solo performance of Casey at the Bat. Great entertainment.

Opportunities for softball play include: Official Tuesday-Thursday League from October to April; Summer League; Friday Pick-Up Co-ed League; Northwest Valley Senior Women's Softball League; 70's League; Green Team; Open practice for any resident Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday; and last but not least the Vintage Base Ball League. Some type of play is available every day except Wednesday in Sun City and Sun City West when the fields are closed for maintenance.

There are special days and tournaments also: Cardiac Kids Tournament; Women's Bosom Buddies Tournament; 4-day Spring Fling initiated in 1997; Tri-Cities League; Palm Desert Tournament; State Tournament (WA,MN,WI,MI) new in 2010; Season Kick Off Day; Women versus Half-Pints; One Pitch Tournament (funds raised go to the Angels in the Outfield); Sponsors Appreciation Day in the Park; Hot Dog Day; Fan Appreciation Day; Pancake Breakfasts; and Angels in the Outfield fund raiser "Toys for Kids."

In 2009, The West Valley League was formed with teams from Sun City, Sun City West, Sun City Grand, Sun City Festival, Pebble Creek, Pueblo and El Mirage. In 2010 Vistancia joined. All of the games in 2009/10 were played at Festival since they have a 300 foot fence and only the coyotes to worry about when the occasional ball goes over the fence. The hotter bats are allowed at the Festival field.

In January 2009, a new and improved scoreboard costing \$6800 was purchased by the SC Club. Larry Kuberka led an Aluminum Can Drive supported by both softball clubs. Personal donations made up the remaining costs.

The League uses Trump Stote 375 Compression 44 COR balls. The cost in 2009 was \$2413 split 2/3-1/3 between the SCW/SC clubs. A new Yellow-Optic ball is used for every game.

In late 2009, our "League" changed its name to the "Sun Cities Senior Softball Association," SCSSA. The Association is a combination of the Sun City Senior Softball Club and the Sun City West Softball Club. The SCSSA is composed of board members of both Clubs and is responsible for the day to day operation of the American and National Leagues.

In January 2010, a pitching machine was purchased for the SCW Liberty Field. It allows all our players to practice batting during Open Practice on Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Time permitting, infield and/or outfield practice can take place after the regularly scheduled open practice ends. As of March, the machine has been used only for outfield practice, no batting practice. A limited number of players have been trained to operate the unit.

In February 2010, the SC Club bleachers underwent extensive remodel to bring them up to code by adding: second foot planks, risers and steps with new hand rails, and new fall protection. The cost was covered by: player donations, income from outfield banners, and income from a player group effort working at the Phoenix Raceway.

As of March 2010, there are 13 National League and 3 American League women players in the regular Tuesday-Thursday league.

In 2010, during the Bosom Buddies Women's Tournament, Karri Kinkead was the first and only woman to hit a home run over the newly extended 290-foot fence in SCW. This outstanding player not only can hit, but she has the whole softball package.

The Fall/Spring sessions started 10/27/2009 and ended 4/1/2010. Then Summer ball began and lasts through September, so one can play year around.

In 2010, database and other information was formally computerized and put on the Internet by player Rick Fish (Mr. IT) for quick and easy access by our members and others. Ken Skinner was the Site Web Master for 11 years prior to this. Ken still handles the E-News whereby we receive by e-mail the latest softball info and blow-by-blow game write-ups (deftly done by our National and American League Reporters) on the very day of play. In his spare time he is still the Events Chairman and Official Umpire.

In 2010, the cost to play is still only \$25 per year (plus \$50 the first year) which includes long and short pants, socks, hat and jersey...the best sporting deal anywhere. Players supply only a bat, glove and spikes.

In 2010, the most seasoned American League players are Tait Douglas and Bo Boinski who are 82 this year. In the National League, Joe Rottmann wins the prize at 89 and Steve Griswold is catching up at 87.

The overall average age is 69 as of 1/1/2010. In the National League, the average is 71 and 66 in the American League. The women average 62.

The number of members, which varies from beginning to the end of the year, was as follows: **2002**, 391; **2003**, 400; **2004**, 406 (272 SCW, 134 SC); **2005**, 413 (286/127); **2006**, 437 (306/131); **2007**, 428 (310/118); **2008**, 449 (320/129); **2009**, 442 (321/121).

How many teams were there on average for the fall and spring sessions? In **2002**, 27 teams, 13 American, 14 National; **2003**, **2004** and **2005**, 26 teams, 13/13; **2006**, 14/14; **2007**, 13/14; **2008**, 14/14; **2009**, 13/14; **2010**, 13/14.

Field Manager George Karras' work began in 2007 under President Art Nelson who cut him loose on facilities improvement projects at Liberty Field in SCW. Money was there for wish-list projects. The membership voted on which of the more costly projects to pursue first. George knew how to get them done well, even while saving funds by using our own SCW field crew volunteers who literally do great work. Here's a partial list of projects that started in June of 2007, continued with President Art Nelson in 2008, then President Rich McAndrews in 2009, and now with President Bob Peck in 2010. There's no stopping George and his faithful crew.

#### **SCW Liberty Field Projects from 6/2007 to 4/2010 Lead by Field Manager George Karras**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Item</b> (* Work performed free by SCW Club voluntary crew)	<b>Cost</b>
6/07	Install steps on both bleachers*	353
	Install paver blocks and wall blocks to form patio area on first base side	4,000
7/07	Covered dugout roofs with shade screens	670
	Covered patio area with shade screen	3,513
8/07	Installed turf batter's boxes*	350
10/07	Install paver blocks and wall blocks on third base side	5,250
	Install new benches for dugouts*	1,094
	Install plastic bleacher seats*	1,499
1/08	Expand and change warm-up area on third base side and install artificial turf. Includes removing concrete driveway and re-pouring new section.	10,821
3/08	Install new bulletin boards in bulletin board area*	2,199
4/08	Install new bunting for outfield fence*	424
6/08	Install new parking lot for golf carts, with wall. Rec Center did the wall. SCW Club crew did the striping.*	15,049
	Installed 2 new BBQ islands	4,134
3/09	Replaced bleacher chairs. Added one more row in each bleacher.	525
	Install new misters for bleachers and dugouts	8,723
4/09	New 36-bin mail sorter for Clubhouse	178
5/09	Three new picnic tables for the field	2,587
7/09	Install new 10-foot extension on outfield fence	8,892
9/09	Install covers over tables behind third base dugout	2,140
10/09	New garden cart	64
	New freezer for ice	222
	New small shed for line chalk	259
	New foul line marker	400
1/10	New Jugs batting practice pitching machine	1,800
3/10	Four "A frame" signs announcing 4 special events--to put on street	550
	New shed for storage	1750
4/10	Install new canopy-awning over bull pen	1,398
	Much more to come	

A great deal of information may be obtained through our softball web site: [www.arsrsoftball.com](http://www.arsrsoftball.com)

The purpose of this document is to present an informational review of the 31-year history of the Sun Cities Senior Softball Association (SCSSA). Many of our high rated players belong to the Sidewinders Traveling Tournament teams that have won regional and world championships. When the Sidewinders evolved from our league back in the late 1980s, they became totally independent of our League. They present great playing opportunities for skilled players within age groupings from 55-80 who don't mind traveling.

My thanks go to those who helped with this Part 3 History update, especially: Linda Graham, Lyle Bakken, George Karras, Dick LeMoine, Ken Skinner, Loran Swanson, Glen Carroll, Mike Graham, Carol Bowden and Herb Clark. It is simply impossible to note all the unsung Club members who have contributed so heavily and unselfishly to our excellent Sun City and Sun City West Clubs. I would like to express our grateful appreciation on behalf of all our members.

Updated April 2010, John Doherty, 623-544-8469

### **History of the Women's Senior Softball League in Sun City West—Carol Bowden 3/2010**

2001: Women officially began playing for the Sun Cities Senior Softball League (Now SCSSA)

March 2005: President Bob Stouthamer discussed the possibility of women forming a true co-ed league. Loran Swanson held a meeting on March 30 with 11 women present to discuss forming their own league. Initial costs were absorbed by Bob Morgan, Gary Kelly, Ray Early, Dolores Warrick and Loran Swanson.

October 2005: There were enough women (age 50+) playing to begin our own "in house" league of 4 teams. Loran Swanson and Carol Bowden took charge of the women's program.

The "Hotflashes", a combined Sun City/Sun City West team, began its initial venture in the Northwest Valley Senior Women's Softball League. This team went undefeated for 2 years! The women formed their own governing board which had representation on the NW Valley League board.

A tournament was established by Gary Kelly and Loran Swanson for Bosom Buddies breast cancer support group with 5 teams playing. To date, \$30,000 has been raised.

2006: A second women's team from the Sun Cities began, the "Sparks." The "Hotflashes" team name was retired for tournament use and the original team was now known as the "Flames." A "green team" was started to help develop the skills of incoming women players.

Our "in house" league dissolved as many of the women discovered they: didn't enjoy playing; too much competition; other commitments; their skills weren't up to their personal expectations; or many did not have a place in the Women's League.

2010: There were growing pains and lots of issues to overcome since startup. The women's program now has about 25 dedicated players. Their exceptional skills and dedication help to keep the program viable. There are many people to thank for their faith in this fun endeavor.

(The Women's League is not a part of the SCW Softball Club. It is sanctioned by the Club to play at the SCW Liberty Field. All of its members belong to the SCSSA.)

### **History of Vintage Base Ball in Sun City West—by Herb Clark 3/2010**

In September of 2007, Mike Hester showed Herb Clark a small newspaper clipping from the Glendale newspaper. The article was about a meeting that was to be held at Victory Sports Complex. More curious than anything else, Herb decided to attend and he invited his friend Arvid Peterson to go along. The meeting was about forming a Phoenix area team to play vintage base ball. Herb and Arvid eagerly joined the newly formed Bisbee Bees. After practicing every Tuesday night for a month, they realized that the Bees did not have opponents to play. Clark said he would try to form a team utilizing several of his senior softball friends.

The Sun City West Black Stockings were formed in late October 2007. After a couple of practices to learn the rules, they were set to play against the Bisbee Bees. In late November the very first vintage base ball match was played at SCW Liberty Field. The nine inning match

ended in an 11-11 deadlock when the Bees scored 3 tallys in the ninth inning. Due to darkness the match was declared a tie. Ken Skinner was the first Arbitrator (umpire). A rematch was scheduled for January 2008. The Black Stockings won 12-5. The Black Stockings team consisted of Clark, Art Nelson, Jerry Bianchi, Carl O'Leary, Bob Dobbins, Chuck Cruz, Arvid Peterson, Jim Reimold, Eddie Eckhart, Dave Toepel, Cal Shirey and Cal Goings.

In the Fall of 2008, the SCW Red Stockings joined the league as well as the Arizona Aces and shortly thereafter the Arizona Miners. The SCW Black Stocking went undefeated until February of 2009 when they were upset in the finals of the Winter Classic Tournament by the AZ Miners. The Arizona Territories Vintage Base Ball League was formally set up in September of 2009. Herb Clark was elected the first Commissioner of the league.

The league now has five full-time league teams from around the valley. The playing season is from late October until early April. SCW is still the home of vintage base ball, but each team is required to have its own venue. The League now consists of the SCW Prospectors, Keystones, Bisbee Bees, Phoenix Senators, and the Glendale Gophers. As of March 2010, the SCW Prospectors are undefeated in league play.

(Vintage base ball is not a part of the SCW Softball Club. It is sanctioned by the Club to play at the SCW Liberty Field.)