

Vol. No 11 Issue No. 4, October, November, December 2014 * <http://threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org>

The NASCAR “Air Force”

NASCAR weekends are always an exciting time in our area. However, it’s really exciting at the Phoenix/Goodyear Airport. With the event scheduled at PIR for the first weekend in November, the airport is gearing up for this busy time.

The airport staff lovingly names the rush of private planes carrying the NASCAR drivers the “NASCAR Air Force.” During race week about 40-50 aircraft arrive with the NASCAR drivers and almost always their entire family. A number bring their parents, too. Racing is obviously a family affair. In addition to the drivers and their family members, another twenty private planes arrive that week for the event.

The drivers and their airplanes begin arriving on Wednesday, but Thursday is the busiest day. Most of them utilize ground transportation to get from the airport to the track; a few use a helicopter. After the race, departure is a mad house with drivers and their families all departing within four hours of the race’s end. This makes for a hectic day for the personnel at the airport.

Ryan Reeves, with Lux Air Jet Center, provided me with the information. He has also told me that NASCAR drivers are very polite and courteous. Because their families travel with the drivers, airport staff becomes acquainted with the children and watch them grow up. The airport enjoys being a part of NASCAR weekends.

Last spring, the race at PIR was celebrating Phoenix International Raceway’s 50th anniversary. During the National Anthem, a group of 51 experimental home-built models of the Van Aircraft Company did a “fly-over.” The aircraft left the Phoenix/Goodyear Airport in groups of four, separated by eight seconds of time, formed up and were on station exactly as the song got to “...and the home of the brave.” Quite a fete for that many aircraft! It was quite a fete, too, for the airport to handle so smoothly that many more aircraft on a busy NASCAR weekend.

Thanks to Ryan Reeves, Lux Air Jet Center and Ed Crogan, Aviation Supervisor II, Phoenix/Goodyear Airport for information and photos.



Salt  Agua Fria  Gila
Three Rivers Historical Society

Fire Engulfs Tolleson Tank Farm

Tolleson experienced a devastating fire on April 19, 1948. On that day, gasoline storage tanks belonging to Farmer's Oil and Supply Company exploded. The tank farm was located in the downtown area of Tolleson. The fire was fueled by 54,000 gallons of gasoline. It destroyed the businesses on an entire city block and several residences. More than twenty people were injured. The spark that started the fire came from a pump which ignited a fuel spill from a tanker truck. Seconds later the tanks were aflame and then exploded. Two of the businesses lost to the fire were Buck Byrne's station and the Sandoval Grocery Store.

Tolleson Volunteer Fire Department was assisted by Glendale and Phoenix firefighters as well as firemen from the Army and Navy installations. These valiant men battled the fire for almost two days.

Jeanne Lyerla Morgan Caudle shared her experiences of the fire. "When the Tolleson fire took place, my son, Joe and I lived with my parents in the parsonage of the Christian Church located on Van Buren across the street from the station where the fire occurred. ...I went upstairs and looked out the window. The tar on the flat roof was bubbling, it was so hot! ...At the parsonage, I got the garden hose and put out some small fires in the front lawn. I turned to spray the front of the house, which was blistering, and heard a hissing sound from the fire. I got scared and ran to the side of the house, then to the back and into the alley where I fell. People watching from a distance said that the fire was only 18 inches above my prone body. The next thing I remember was my friend saying that I was one big blister. I had walked three blocks, but didn't remember any of it."

"Dr. Flor came to treat me. My burns covered all of my back. Where I had been covered by clothes it was like bad sunburn, the rest were second and third degree burns. It took eighteen months for the burns to heal and for me to walk straight."

Thanks to Elsie Busse for supplying the photo and background information and to Jeanne Caudle for sharing her amazing story. Thanks, too, to Jim Green and Reyes Medrano for helping me locate the information and the people who told me the story of the fire.



Photos Needed for Goodyear Farms Camps Book

Belen Moreno and Cruz Dominquez are gathering photos and information on the Goodyear Farms Camps. Belen was instrumental in organizing the Camp Reunion hosted by Litchfield Park Historical Society several years ago; both ladies grew up in the Camps. If you have photos they can scan and return to you, please give them a call.

Belen Moreno, 623-932-4316 or
Cruz Dominquez, 623-925-0319.

Meet the People Who Produce “The Quarterly”

Historically, Three Rivers Historical Society began a newsletter for its members as a mimeographed paper that told of up-coming events and scheduled meetings. In 2008, Gloria King reintroduced the newsletter as a full color publication with articles about local and state history, and information about the historical society. She had enlisted the help of local artist Ed Buonvecchio to create colorful graphics that incorporated our logo and added color and interest to the newsletter. Ed, talented in all things computer, did the layout of the articles and photos as well as the printing at West Valley Art Council to complete the finished product.

In 2010, Sally Kiko began editing the newsletter; Ed continued to do graphics, layout and printing. 2012 brought huge changes. Ed moved to Maine and Sally was scrambling to find folks to do all the tasks that he had done. Gratefully, he did leave us his graphics. Then Brian Day, of BMD Business Services, who had been printing our meeting flyers, took over the printing of our newsletter. Beatrice Day volunteered to do our layout. What a lady! She wasn't familiar with the program that Ed had used, but worked diligently to use his graphics and her favorite program to get our newsletter into its familiar form. We thank Brian and Beatrice Day for the countless hours they contribute to the production of our newsletter.

This year, Diane Fekete joined the staff of “The Quarterly.” She helps with editing. As a retired teacher, she has a keen eye for grammar, punctuation and sentence structure. She keeps the rest of us on our toes! Over the years we have had contributors; those who write stories that help keep the newsletter fresh and interesting. I would be remiss in not acknowledging these contributors: Gloria King, Ken Wood, Lenore Semmler, Peggy Jones and JoAnn Gongaware. I hope you enjoy our newsletter. We are continually looking for interesting stories, maybe *your* story! We welcome articles about local history. Please send your story/article to kskiko@cox.net.

Sixty Years Ago

I recently came across portions of a May 27, 1954 issue of “The Westside Enterprise.” I thought you would enjoy reminiscing with me. The advertisements were the most interesting.

E.T.W. Coulter advertised a furnished apartment for rent. The ad read: \$45.00 all utilities furnished. Also for rent, is a two bedroom house, unfurnished, good location in Avondale, for \$65 per month. Another ad read: Nicely landscaped, 2 bedroom home in Goodyear for sale, kitchen has been enlarged and this is a large plan house. Price \$8500. Is in excellent condition.

Davis Furniture, at 5th and Western, advertised a 7 piece living room suite for \$129.00.

Second Ave. Grocery and Market on 92nd Ave, Tolleson advertised ground beef 25 cents per pound, pork sausage 43 cents a pound, MJB coffee for \$1.10 and 5 pounds of sugar for 49 cents

Goodyear Variety and Hardware had a 17 inch, Hallicrafters TV for \$149.00.

Other ads were from businesses of long ago such as Gage & Simon Garage, Clark & Son Chevron Station, Slaughter's House of Fine Furniture, Taste-Freez, Avondale, Moe's Food Fair, Arnett's Gulf Service, Lorenz's Café, Waddell's T.V. Service, Hoctor Lumber, and Goodyear Beauty Shop.

Prices were a bit different in 1954, but the wages were, too!

Annual Membership Reminder

Membership dues for 2014 are due and reminders have been sent out. If you have not yet paid, please mail payment to P O Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ, 85338.

If you haven't officially joined we would love to have you as members. Membership information is on the back page of this newsletter.

Thank you.

Coldwater Commercial Company

Coldwater Commercial Company was the company that owned the property in Coldwater, later Avondale, Arizona, that was between Western Avenue on the south and Skubitz Alley on the north, and from Dysart Road on the east to 6th Street on the west. This may be hard to follow since the roads and even the town had other names over the time. The town was called Coldwater for years, but in 1911, the post office was located at the Avondale Ranch and became the Avondale Post Office. The town officially became the Town of Avondale upon incorporation in 1946. The present Dysart Road has been called Lateral 129 and 8th Street. I believe that what was Skubitz Alley is now the alley behind the houses on Hill Drive.

In the 1921, Coldwater's Post Master was Henry A. Weaver, who also ran Billy Moore's store. In 1922, Ballert and Richardson General Merchandise took over the store. Next, William O. McGill was manager of the Coldwater Store when it moved into the Coldwater Mercantile Building on the north side of Western Avenue near Dysart Road. Avondale's population in 1920 was 10, but the business served the larger farming community.

The known history skips forward to the 1930's when the Coldwater Commercial property, including Coldwater Mercantile was owned by O. B. Sutton. At that time Coldwater Mercantile was managed by Dick Kinderman, who managed all the other property. He oversaw the grocery store, barber shop, public toilet, gas station, auto parts store, nine one room houses, four three room homes and a water well that supplied the water. By 1930, Avondale's population had soared to 350. The Coldwater Mercantile Building was home to Coldwater Mercantile and Serrano's Grocery. G. F. "Lupe" Ross managed Serrano's store. When Mr. Serrano died, the Burn's family bought the grocery store. Pat Aragon remembered that he and his brother, Maurice, held their first jobs at Serrano's. One of Maurice's jobs was to drive the pick-up into Phoenix once or twice a week to transport the fresh produce to the store.

Coldwater Mercantile was a general store with a soda fountain and merchandise including shoes, blue jeans, dresses, household goods, nails, ammunition and some building supplies. Martha Fulks Anderson remembers that they sold magazines, newspapers and funny books. She remembers walking there barefoot in the summer to buy a funny book for ten cents. "My feet burned and I stepped on goat heads!" Paul Faith said that his grandmother, Anna Chisum, had her first job at Coldwater Mercantile. JoAnn Skubitz Tolman remembers that she worked at the soda fountain when she was in high school. Her father, Louis Skubitz, Mr. Kinderman, Henry Matill and Anna Chisum worked there, too. The store was open until 9 PM on Saturdays, so her mother, Elsie, would cook a pot of beans or stew and take it to the store so all the workers would have something to eat. JoAnn also remembers that during the 30's the phone company set up a small switch board to handle the few phones in the area. If an important call came, in someone would deliver the message. There were also post office boxes in the back of the store until an addition was built on the west side of the building for a separate post office. She remembers that Mrs. Kinderman and Gladys Ross worked at the Avondale Post Office. When the post office moved to a new building on Central Avenue, Anna Chisum worked there until she retired from the USPS. Coldwater Mercantile was also a bus stop for students going to Litchfield High School. Its large roof overhang provided shade.



In the early 1940's, Mr. Kinderman died and Louis Skubitz managed the property. Later, he bought the property and continued to run the business for a number of years. About that time, a man named George worked at the store. He was a very good carpenter and he remodeled the small cabins, combining them to make small homes. Dr. Martin, Avondale's first physician, lived in one when he first came to Avondale, using one room for his medical clinic.

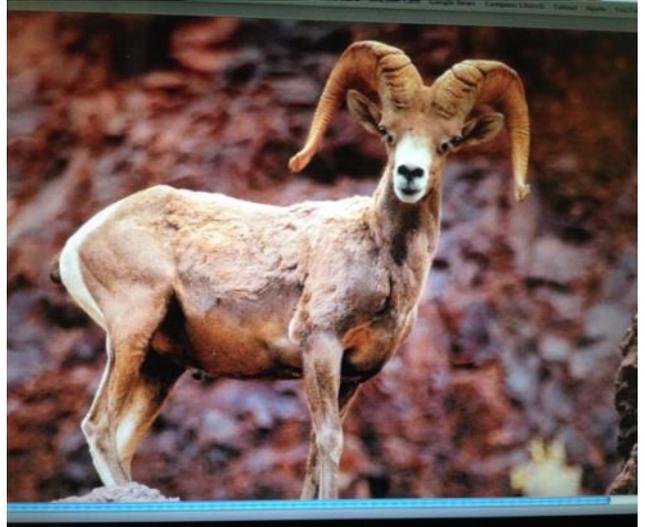
The City of Avondale has grown to 45 square miles and has a population of about 78,000 people. It's fun to remember its humble beginnings, a time when few had telephones, business was conducted with a handshake, and children were safe to go to the store alone.

Estrella Mountain's Bighorn Sheep

Did you know there may be Bighorn Sheep (*Ovis canadensis*) residing very close to the Three Rivers Historical Society's Centennial Trail? Yep that's right...matter of fact, high upon a nearby hill you may be being watched by one of these magnificent animals when you are out visiting the Estrella Mountain Regional Park. The sheep on this range of mountains today are indigenous sheep whose ancestors have inhabited the mountains for centuries. Early hunters of these animals were the Hohokam Indians that lived at the base of the Sierra Estrella Mountains. Ancient Indian pictograph etched into rocks depicting bighorn sheep, can be seen at the far east end of the Estrella Mountains near the community of St Johns.

These magnificent animals are considered the rarest big game animals on the North American Continent. A hunting permit for bighorn sheep is the hardest for hunters to obtain due to thousands of applicants each year and the limited number of permits. In recent years, only 100 permits have been allotted to Arizona hunters. A hunter can only bag one bighorn sheep in a lifetime. The eastern half of the Estrella mountain range is within the Gila River Indian Reservation, home to a large group of Pima and Maricopa Indians that consider these mountains to be a special place. Their tribal members can hunt year round with no limit on the number of bighorn sheep taken.

These animals survive in the most rugged, desolate, and arid mountains in Arizona. It would seem to the casual observer that no living mammals could ever survive here, but as long as there is water they do survive. Drought and mountain lions are the two factors that limit the sheep's ability to increase in number. This is where the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep Society comes in. Founded in 1967, with a current membership of over 1200, the Arizona Desert Bighorn Sheep



Society each year constructs new and repairs older water-holes in these arid mountains mostly in central and western Arizona. Because of the difficulty of constructing these water catchments, the use of helicopters is now employed. In earlier years everything had to be hand carried up steep, rough canyons to the project site.

How many sheep on the Estrella Mountains, you ask? I contacted my good friend and longtime Arizona Game and Fish Region Manager, Dave Conrad. He replied, ***Ken, the population estimate from the AZG&F survey in Oct. of 2012 (most recent) for the non-tribal portion of the Estrella Mountain range is 17, so for the entire mountain range I think 40 would be a reasonable estimate.***"

I have had the privilege and pleasure of working on all three Estrella Mountain water projects, by the names of Montezuma, Butterfly and Star Catchment. Hard work you betcha, but once the project is completed, all the hard work and devotion to these noble and majestic native animals is well worth the effort... and all of this for the mighty Desert Bighorns. So the next time you visit the Three Rivers Historical Society's Centennial Trail, pause a moment and look up into those Sierra Estrella Mountains and maybe, just maybe, you may get to see one of these noble animals. If you don't see one, rest assured that there are sheep on this mountain, just as there has been for hundreds of years.

On a personal note...the first legal sheep hunt in Arizona was in the fall of 1953 when only 20 lucky tag holders were drawn to hunt. The first bighorn sheep taken in Arizona was taken by my dad, Ronald Wood. He went by himself the night before the season opened, got his sheep, packed it out all alone and took it to Salome where all hunters were required to check out. Since then seven more members of the Wood family have bagged their sheep, including Ronald's daughter and my sister, Margaret Carl. She went on to complete the Grand Slam of bighorn sheep in America which are the Desert, Dahl, Stone and Rocky Mountain Bighorn Sheep. She was the second and the youngest, at age 21, to complete the Grand Slam. She bagged her Desert Bighorn when she was sixteen. Ronald's great-grandson, Brandon, was lucky to get a tag for this year's sheep hunt. Good luck, Brandon!

By Ken Wood

Rosie the Riveters

A recent inquiry received by Three Rivers Historical Society sent a few of us on the hunt. A lady was trying to find more information about a relative that had been a “Rosie the Riveter” somewhere in the West Valley. All she had was a name and a photo of a group of ladies in front of a Stearman biplane. She had already done extensive research eliminating Luke AFB as a possible place of employment. Ryan Reeves, our go-to guy for all things pertaining to aviation, told us that Thunderbird Field was the only airfield that used the biplanes.

The same lady, knowing our interest in the history of WWII, sent us a Reader’s Digest, Special Edition “World War II” magazine that had a section on Rosie the Riveters. Some of the facts gleaned from those pages follow. The rivet gun was heavy and difficult to hold on to. But that was only half of the job because for each riveter there had to be a “bucker,” too. The buckler was the person, most often another lady, standing on the inside of the piece being riveted holding an iron bar against the place being riveted. This served to flatten the rivet. If both ladies didn’t perform their jobs correctly, the rivet would be too loose and have to be redone.

Prior to the war one percent of the workers in the aircraft industry were women.

With the start of the war, 6.1

million women joined the workforce; by the end of the war there were 16.5 million women working. Many of those that entered the work force were over thirty-five years of age; half of them were earning their first paycheck. These skilled women earned an average weekly wage of \$31.21. A third of them had been fulltime homemakers prior to the war. Besides riveters in the aircraft industry, there



were welders in the shipyards. The women helped build tanks, make parachutes, ammunition, rations and other items needed in the war effort. Once their shift was over, the women returned home where they faced food shortages, rationing, maintaining a victory garden and caring for children whose father was serving in either Europe or the Pacific. Locally, women filled many jobs at Goodyear Aircraft Corporation, Litchfield Naval Air Facility, and Luke Army Air Field. Most historic photos of GAC feature women working machinery. Unique to Goodyear were the “balloon girls.” These women worked on the blimp envelopes, often on their knees all day.

The average monthly salary of an enlisted man was \$71.33. They were paid an extra \$12 for their first child and \$10 for each additional child. An officer could expect to make \$203.50 a month. Maybe that was another reason the women went to work!

Secretary of the Navy, Frank Knox, asked America’s children to build thousands of model airplanes. The models were used to help the young pilots learn to recognize enemy aircraft in the middle of dogfights; in the chaos it was vital that they be able to recognize the enemy in a split second. Children were also used to collect metal during scrap drives. They would go around the neighborhood collecting pots, pans and other metal that could be scrapped and used in the war effort.

We tip our hat and give our thanks to the brave and hardworking men and women who served in the war and to those at home that built the ships, planes, tanks and munitions, and kept the home fires burning until the war was over.

Hubbell Trading Post

In an effort to end raids, counter-raids and treaties that were quickly broken, the United States Government removed the Navajo people from their land in northeastern Arizona. In 1864, they were forced at gunpoint to walk thirteen miles a day to Bosque Redondo, New Mexico. At least 200 died during the eighteen day, three hundred mile walk. This is known as the “Long Walk of the Navajo.” The internment camp, Bosque Redondo, had serious problems from the beginning, and internment ended in 1868 with a treaty that

established reservations. The Navajo were allowed to return to their traditional lands and were granted 3.5 million acres. The Navajo reservation has since then increased to sixteen million acres.

Upon their return, the Navajo people found their herds decimated and their fields destroyed. They experienced an economic depression; trading what they could make or grow for goods they needed became an important economic tool. Determined traders set up shop in the remote northeastern corner of the Arizona Territory. The Hubbell Trading Post in Ganada, Arizona, was one of those trading posts.

Originally owned by William Leonard, the trading post was purchased by John Hubbell in 1878. According to an article in *Arizona Highways*, July 2003, John Lorenzo Hubbell was one of the most successful traders. At the height of his career he operated more than thirty trading posts on the reservation, two wholesale houses and several curio shops on the California Coast. Trading wasn't new to the Navajo; they had traded with other tribes for centuries.

Mr. Hubbell started the business as a single, twenty-three year old man. He was raised in Pajarito, New Mexico, the son of a Caucasian father and a Spanish mother. When he arrived he spoke English and Spanish and soon acquired a basic vocabulary of the Navajo language that allowed him to conduct business. He eventually became fluent in the native language. He married Lina Rubi, a Spanish lady, they had two sons and two daughters. Unlike other traders who left their families in the East, the Hubbell family spent most of the year in Ganado.

He began the trading business when he bought several rundown buildings of a trading post. In 1883, he added two stone rooms. Over the years, corrals, barns, and guest houses were added. The trading post still stands on the original 160 acre Hubbell homestead near the Pueblo Colorado Wash in Ganado. The Hubbell family operated the trading post until 1967 when it was sold to the National Park Service.

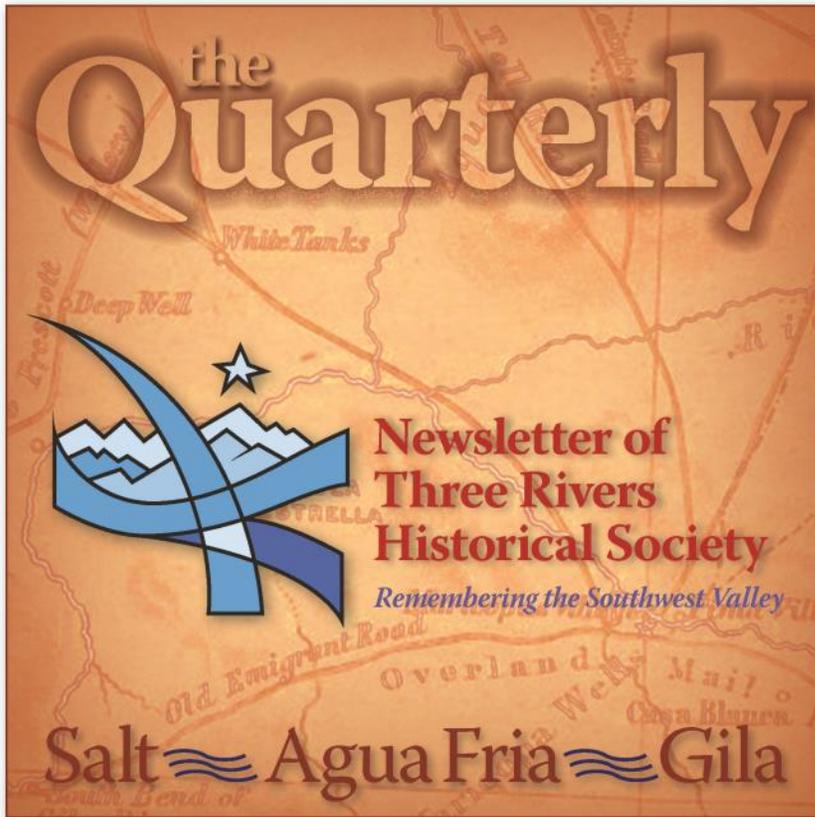
The trading post was an important contact with the world outside the reservation. In addition to trading, a visit to the trading post allowed the Navajo to learn the local news and perhaps show off a new baby or recently broken horse. The post provided the Navajos with the staples they needed to supplement their homegrown products. In exchange for these goods, the Navajo traded wool, sheep, and later rugs, jewelry, baskets, and pottery. It was years before cash was used between the trader and the Navajo. The supplies traded to the Navajo came by freight wagon fifty-six miles from the little railroad town of Gallup, New Mexico. In the early days that was a trip that took two to four days each way in good weather. The wagon returned to Gallup with huge sacks of wool.

Hubbell was instrumental in the creation of the popular market for Navajo blankets and rugs. He documented traditional patterns and techniques. He introduced bright colors and finer wools. The pattern called Ganada Red came about under his influence and is among the most important patterns to come out of

this period. He was not only a trader to the Navajo, but a friend and mentor as well. His philosophy is best summed up in a quote in "It Happened in Arizona," by James Crutchfield, "The first job of an Indian trader, in my belief, is to look after the material welfare of his neighbor; to advise them to produce that which their natural inclination and talent best adapts them; to treat them honestly and insist upon getting the same treatment from them...to find a market for their products and vigilantly watch that they keep improving in the production of same and advise them which commands the best price."

John Hubbell died in 1930. He was buried on Hubbell Hill, the location of the family cemetery. His younger son, Roman, operated the business until his death in 1957. Roman's wife, Dorothy, managed the store for another ten years until the National Park Service purchased the site. Now, as a National Historic Site, visitors can explore the historic trading post, watch weaving demonstrations, shop the store filled with locally made rugs, jewelry, baskets and more.





Yes, I want to join Three Rivers Historical Society!

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$5* | <input type="checkbox"/> Single \$15* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25* | <input type="checkbox"/> Business/Professional \$45* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor \$100* | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor \$250* |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime \$500 | * <i>Yearly Fee</i> |

Join _____ Renew _____ Call me to volunteer _____

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Phone _____ (Evening) _____

Cell _____ e-mail _____

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ _____
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Make out your check and mail to:

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Sally Kiko & Diane Fekete

3RHS Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at Good-year Library, 14415 W. Van Buren, Goodyear, Arizona. Notices of date, location and guest speaker are e-mailed. Be sure we have your correct address. E-mail Sally at kskiko@cox.net