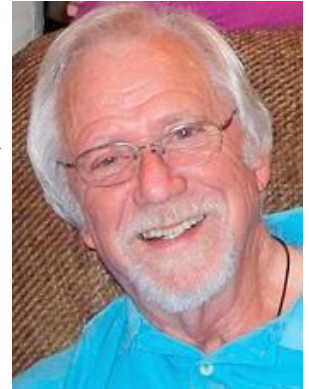




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Farewell to Past President, John M. Leach

We were saddened to hear of the death of John Leach. Mr. Leach was primarily an educator, spending forty years as an exceptional chemistry teacher, first at Agua Fria Union High School and later at Estrella Mountain Community College. Many students considered Mr. Leach their favorite teacher and knew they were well prepared for the next level in chemistry. He was active in the community serving as a Goodyear City Council member. In 2004, John joined the Three Rivers Historical Society. He served as president of the organization in 2006 and 2007. He added to our archives with his donation of Agua Fria yearbooks accumulated during his years of teaching. John Leach will be missed by his family, his many students, and the communities he loved and served.



A Fashion Show to Remember

On January 31st, Gloria King and Lenore Semmler were guests of Mrs. Gwynn Henline at the Church at Litchfield Park for a very unusual fashion show. It was an expression of "Art on Cloth." The women of the church's Circles planned the event as a fundraiser for some local charities.

The room was filled with round tables covered with white table cloths and antique napkins decorated with old fashioned lace medallions. Each table had a centerpiece consisting of a teapot filled with cut flowers of many colors. There were platters of homemade cookies and bars to enjoy and waiters provided coffee and soft drinks for the many guests.

The theme for the show was "Capturing the Romantic Mood of History." The fashion show models were woman and girls who were daughters, granddaughters, and great-granddaughters of Gwynn and Scott Henline of Litchfield Park. Scott Henline was the narrator.

All of the dresses were hand sewn by Gwynn's mother, Lois Hogan. The clothes had a Spanish and Southwest look. Many of the garments were very colorfully decorated with crocheted strips and exquisite antique laces, hand crocheted medallions, and myriad petticoats. The fancy buttons and some of the laces on the dresses were over 150 years old. The models wore a variety of hats, boots, mantillas, and gloves; some carried European fans, tambourines or castanets. The many, many colors added to the outstanding looks that charmed the guests.

This unique fashion show was a real showcase of the gorgeous handicrafts and fashions of another era and a tribute to Lois and her family who have preserved these fashions and displayed them in such an entertaining way. The show has certainly enhanced the life of the many guests here in the West Valley.

The Phoenix Buckeye Railroad

On occasion, a question about the history of the Southwest Valley leads to research to find the answer for the one who asked the question and an article for you. That's how this came about.

"When did the railroad come to Avondale (Coldwater)?" I had that information for an earlier project, but now couldn't find it. A search for the book that contained the information was full of hope and disappointments. A library listed the book, but it turned out they didn't have the correct volume of a three volume set. That's when our member, Perry McCully, came to the rescue. I knew he was also active in a train club, so thought it was worth asking if the club had the book. Eureka! They did and were willing to let me use it.

In 1909, the Phoenix Buckeye Railway Company was incorporated with the intent to build a railroad from Phoenix to Buckeye. In 1910, the population of Phoenix was 11,314 and the combined population of Buckeye, Liberty, and Arlington was 1387. However, the Buckeye Valley was famous for its alfalfa seed, cattle ranchers had to drive their herds to market, and there was a recent discovery of gold in the White Tank Mountains. The stage coach was still the way of getting to Phoenix. The Buckeye Valley wanted a railroad. Officers of the Phoenix Buckeye Railway Company were President George M. Halm, vice-president of Valley Bank, a mining broker, I.T. Hosey was vice-president, while S. J. Michelson and Sidney Goldman, Phoenix merchants, were secretary and treasurer respectively. District Attorney George Purdy Bullard was the company's lawyer, and Lee H. Landis was general manager and promoter. All these men plus Sheriff Carl Hayden were directors. Of course, Carl Hayden later served as Arizona State Representative for eight terms and State Senator for seven terms.

With the organizing done for the fledgling company, they tried to convince the Arizona Eastern and the Santa Fe to build the line, but neither was interested. Various other attempts at finding funding and procuring right of way failed. Finally, at a meeting of the Phoenix City Council, in April, 1910, Landis told of the problems and frustrations and said the only way the line would be built was if Arizona Eastern Railroad constructed the line. At last, they agreed to take on the project. Landis, the general manager of the project, sold the shares of the Phoenix Buckeye Railway to Arizona Eastern and turned over the promissory notes and the deeds to the right of way to Gibson Taylor, secretary of Arizona Eastern.

Grading for the rail line began in May, 1910. A crew of 75 men arrived from another job in Arizona and began work. Rail was being laid at the rate of one half mile per working day. When 268 mules arrived from a job completed in Nevada, the rail stretched out quickly. An opening day was announced for July 25, 1910. Buckeye and Arlington people had planned a big celebration until they realized that the opening would be in the middle of summer heat!

The first scheduled train left the Phoenix station about nine in the morning. The train consisted of seven freight cars, two coaches, and a caboose. The forty-three passengers, many from the Buckeye area, had come to Phoenix by stage to ride that first train back home. Passenger fare was five cents per mile for a total of \$1.95.

Sixteen years later the line was extended to Yuma to form the Main Line through Phoenix.

The spur that went north from the line along MC 85 just west of Litchfield Road was the result of an agreement in 1920, between Southwest Cotton Company (Goodyear Farms) and Arizona Eastern Railroad. Southwest Cotton graded the five mile branch at company expense and then conveyed the roadbed and right of way to Arizona Eastern. Arizona Eastern laid the track to Indian School Road in Litchfield. The branch opened on June 8, 1920. The wye, or triangular junction, was called the Litchfield Junction. The Avondale station was changed to Litchfield station on March 31, 1927.

Another branch that supplied railroad service to Luke Field, an Army Air Corp base, came off the Santa Fe Grand Avenue line. The Ennis Branch that left the main line five miles south of Beardsley ended in Bumstead. In 1941, when Luke was being constructed, the Bumstead Spur was pushed south 1.27 miles to the Webb station to connect to the government railroad on the north side of Luke. This line went into service April 11, 1941. The Webb station was named for Del Webb, the builder of Luke Field.

Finding that a man named George Purdy Bullard was involved in the railroad in this area may have answered another question, how Bullard Avenue received its name.

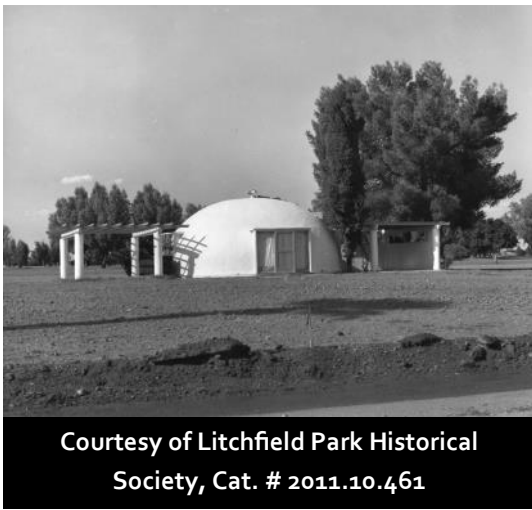
Thanks to Perry McCully and Mark Pelletier for their help in finding needed information. *Railroads of Arizona, Volumes II and V*, by David Myrick were our reference sources.

Bubble Houses of Litchfield Park

For about forty years, there were some innovative homes near the Wigwam Golf Course in Litchfield Park. These were the bubble houses, or Airform constructed homes, that were developed by Wallace Neff, an architect famous for designing large, elegant homes in Southern California.

As a young man he taught himself enough about architecture to be admitted to MIT. However, WWI interrupted his studies and he spent the war years working in shipbuilding. There he gained experience working with cement construction.

He first began developing bubble houses in 1934. Similar to other buildings, the bubble house required a footing, foundation, wiring, and plumbing. Then the balloon, manufactured by Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, was inflated to form the mold. Next temporary wooden scaffolding was built around the balloon. These frames formed the doors and windows. The balloon was then coated with a powder to keep the gunite from adhering to the balloon. A layer of mesh came next and then the gunite was shot from a hose onto the form. After the gunite dried a layer of waterproof insulation was added, then another layer of gunite. After twenty-four hours, the balloon was deflated; it was removed through one of the doors and was ready to be reused.



Courtesy of Litchfield Park Historical Society, Cat. # 2011.10.461

Neff began building the bubble homes in 1942 to fill a need for low-cost defense housing. He built his first homes in Virginia. The government expressed interest but committed to few new projects.

He then turned to building Airform grain storage bins for the Southwest Cotton Company, later known as Goodyear Farms. He used the same construction techniques but used much larger balloons, again made by Goodyear Tire and Rubber. Twenty grain bins, each thirty feet in diameter and fourteen feet high, were built. Instead of using gunite, cement was applied by hand with trowels. The bins ensured the quality of stored grains and protection from moisture while offering significant cost savings.

With the grain storage bins under construction, Neff was awarded a contract with Paul W. Litchfield to build some bubble houses. He built three single bubble houses and one double-bubble house offering a contrast to the Southwestern architecture of the Wigwam property. The bubble homes were on the fairway of the first hole of the Wigwam Golf Course. They were first used to house Goodyear guests and visiting employees. Later the homes were used for Wigwam guests.

In the 1980's, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company was threatened with a hostile takeover. As a result, they sold their Goodyear Aerospace business, the Wigwam Resort, and Goodyear Farms. All of the bubble houses were demolished and replaced with more conventional guest housing for Wigwam guests. The grain storage bins were also demolished and the land they were on and the farm land that surrounded them became the lots for the homes of Palm Valley and Pebble Creek.

Source: *No Nail, No Lumber* by Jeffrey Head

Special thanks to Litchfield Park Historical Society for the photograph and research material.

3 Rivers Historical Society Dues Reminder – Invitation to Join

A reminder to all our loyal members, it is time to pay your annual dues. Our rates are reasonable: students \$5; single \$15; family \$25; and business/professional \$45. You can become a contributor for \$100, a benefactor for \$250 and a lifetime member for \$500. Please send your payment to Three Rivers Historical Society, P O Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338. If you'd like, you can use the form on the back of this newsletter.

For those of you who receive this publication and have never joined, we invite you to consider taking that step. Our historical society works diligently to preserve the history and the artifacts of the area. Most months we provide an interesting guest speaker who shares his/her knowledge of the history of the area and in addition we publish this interesting newsletter that has stories about state and local history. We depend on your financial support to continue this important work.

Thank you.

JEAN STEWART

Jean Stewart's year with the Peace Corps was exciting and a dramatic change, coming after her retirement from teaching in 1988. It was the fulfillment of a dream. She was designated as a teacher/trainer and assigned to the Philippines. On arrival she found a country in turmoil. A year later she and her colleagues' were forced to leave because of the political unrest. She received a T-shirt from President Corazon Aquino, which she treasured.

Jean's life has always been involved with education. Having left ASU to marry after one year, Jean realized that if she planned to teach she needed to go back and get her degree. When her marriage failed she spent ten long hard years working, raising her five children and going to school.

By the time she graduated cutbacks were already being felt in the Head Start program so she went into the public school system. She and her youngest son lived for five years on the San Carolos Apache Reservation while she taught there, transferring to Dateland in Southwestern Arizona at the end of that time. Jean taught English to youngsters who didn't speak the language and developed an adult education program for their parents. The program was taken over and accredited by Yuma College. When she retired she was named runner up for Teacher of the Year in Yuma County.

When Jean moved to Goodyear she saw the need for an organization to coordinate volunteers in the area so she formed Southwest Volunteer Services and became its executive director. The organization was recognized by the Points of Light program.

Jean served on the boards of several non-profit organizations and was a member of the Toastmaster and the Soroptimists Clubs. She was honored as one of the twelve finalists for the Penney's Golden Rule Award and was selected as one of the 24 finalists for Channel 12's Twelve Who Care Award.

Art has always played a big part in Jean's life. She has worked as a commercial artist and a sign painter. She did most of the scenery for the West Valley Player and the mural for Arturo's Mexican Restaurant in Goodyear, and was one of five local women artists who created the 40 by 70 foot mural on the back of the Arizona Mining and Mineral Museum in Phoenix. In addition to her art, Jean has written an autobiography called "Jean's Tapestry", which is available at Catitude Galley and Studio, 404 E. Western Avenue in Avondale. The gallery was founded by Jean's daughter, artist Bonnie Lewis, who is its executive director.

By Nancy L. Brandt

Editor's Note: On December 11, 2015, Jean was surprised with the Southwest Community Network's Humanitarian Award, a tribute to the many ways she served her community. Jean was a founding member of the Three Rivers Historical Society, bringing together residents of Avondale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park and Tolleson to discover and preserve the history of the area. She served as President of the society from 2003 through 2005. She brought the same energy and passion to Three Rivers as she did to all her endeavors.

Three Rivers Officers and Board Re-elected

At the February meeting of the Three Rivers Historical Society, elections were held. Al Field, chairman of the Nominating Committee, presented the slate of officers. His job was made easier since all board members and officers agreed to serve another term. Nominations were called for from the members, but none were offered. Nominations were closed and a motion was passed that the slate of officers and board members be accepted by acclamation.

Your officers are President, Mark Pelletier, First Vice-President, Betty Lynch, Second Vice President, Laura Kaino, Secretary, Sally Kiko, and Treasurer, David Meese. Board members are JoAnn Gongaware, Diane Fekete, Wendy Neely, and Al Field.

Congratulations and thank you for continuing to serve our organization. We seek your ideas and help in increasing membership and improving Three Rivers Historical Society.

Arizona Women Get the Vote!

It's hard to believe that there was a time when women were not allowed to vote. It is interesting to note that the Western states and territories were more open to women voting because they could see that many of the women were instrumental in settling the West. They did the hard labor next to their husbands, clearing the land or helping to run a small business. Some of the Western territories and states allowed the women to vote in municipal or school board elections. The Western states led the way in women's suffrage issues. Wyoming gave women the vote in 1868, Utah in 1870, and Colorado in 1893.

Back in the nineteenth century most Americans believed that there were separate spheres of influence. Maricopa County Judge Alexander D. Lemon was quoted as saying, "...Woman moves in a higher sphere, and whenever you dethrone her from her exalted and dignified position intended by the deity and bring her into the maelstrom of politics, instead of conferring a favor upon her you degrade her. Instead of purifying politics by her presence, you contaminate her character by the contact..." Women were considered physically and mentally fragile and more suited to the duties of homemaking, the rearing of children and the wellbeing of the family. Men, being stronger physically and mentally were better suited to work in the public arena. The reasoning followed that because men better understood the workings of government, they should be the ones casting votes.

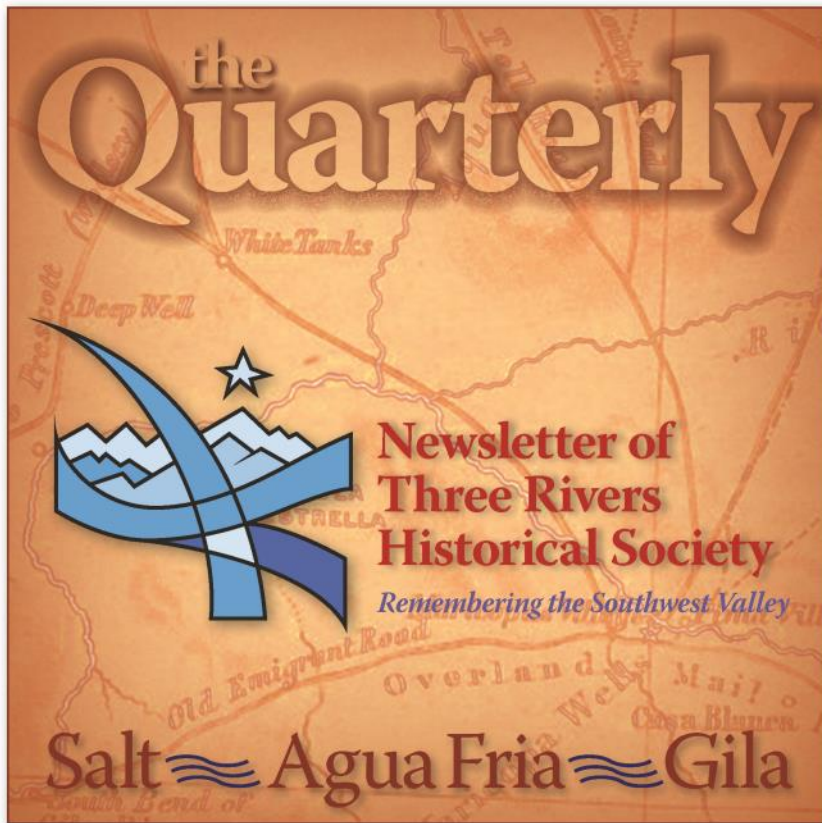


In 1891, Josephine Brawley Hughes of Tucson established the territory's first woman suffrage organization. Hughes was a former teacher and partnered with her husband to run the *Tucson Star* newspaper. She was joined in the suffrage campaign by Pauline O'Neill and Frances Willard Munds, both former teachers and temperance advocates active in Prescott. Perhaps to placate women, the Territory of Arizona gave taxpaying women the right to vote in municipal elections in 1897.

As the territories of Arizona and New Mexico struggled to gain statehood, woman's suffrage was hotly contested. The women's leaders argued that woman's suffrage would help Arizona become a state, but the leading politicians countered that it would jeopardize statehood. An editorial in the *Arizona Republican* pointed out the hypocrisy of the delegates who supported direct democracy, but not woman suffrage. The provision for woman suffrage was defeated and the constitution was approved by Arizona's male voters and eventually by President Taft. Arizona gained statehood, but women remained unable to vote.

However, the new state constitution provided voters the right to amend the constitution by initiative. Suffrage leaders launched a petition drive in the summer of 1912 and collected signatures from over 4000 registered voters. This was enough to place a suffrage amendment on the ballot. On Election Day, November 5, 1912, the suffrage amendment passed with 69 percent of the popular vote. Nationally, the Nineteenth Amendment was ratified by enough states to become law in 1920; all women in the United States had gained the right to vote. The passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 permanently eliminated barriers to political participation by racial or ethnic minorities. Finally, Native Americans and Blacks were able to vote in all states.

The vote for women was a tough battle. In this election year, retelling the suffragists' story is important. Each of us has a voice in how our government is run; your vote in the polling booth. Don't squander that right by staying home this November!



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 _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ (Evening) _____

Cell _____ e-mail _____

Check enclosed in the amount of \$ _____
A receipt will be issued to you.

Make out your check and mail to:

Three Rivers Historical Society,
P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

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Three Rivers Historical Society

Remembering the Southwest Valley

P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

Mark Pelletier, President

Betty Lynch, 1st V.P.

Laura Kaino, 2nd V.P.

Sally Kiko, Secretary

David Meese, Treasurer

Joann Gongaware,

Diane Fekete, Wendy Neely,

Al Field

Board Members

The Quarterly

Editor:

3RHS Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at Goodyear Library, 14455 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

