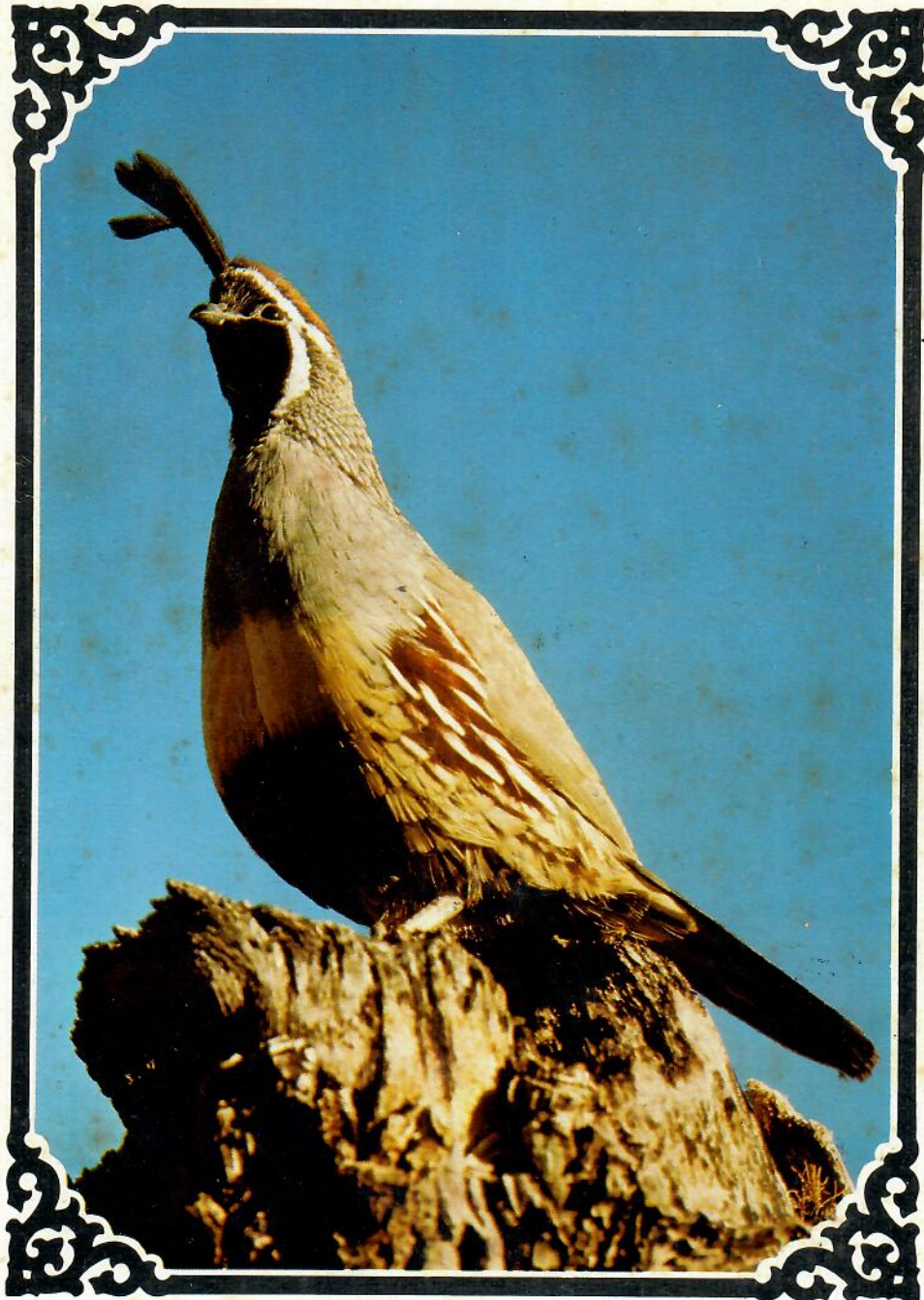


# The Heritage of Yucca Valley

CALIFORNIA

INCLUDING GIANT ROCK



Vol. 1, No. 1

3 OF 3

\$20.00



*The population was sparse, but the spirit was high. The roads shown on this early aerial photograph are still being used. Can you locate any of today's buildings or topographical features? The wash in the upper right of this*

*photo, leads to Pioneer Town. The barren area at the upper left is now Blue Skis Golf Club. Can you locate the old school house at Yucca Trail and Wamego Trail?*

*The photo was taken by Willie Boldizar in the summer of 1947.*

Willie Boldizar

## Yucca Valley Calif. - 1947





# Willie Boy and the Yucca Valley Rangers



ifty-seven years later Morgan Reche, grandson of the heroic deputy, John "Corky" Kee, Phil Geeson and Mick Dickson, along with their wives set out to re-locate the Willie Boy gravesite. They drove their jeeps as far as they could and hiked up the rest of the way to Ruby Mountain. Morgan had been there before, as a boy. He grew up with the legend of Willie Boy's endurance and his grandfather's persistence. His father, Walter Reche, had been an 8-month old boy at the time of the famous manhunt.

They located and marked the gravesite. The Yucca Valley Search and Rescue Unit, also known as the Yucca Valley Rangers, heard of the re-discovery and decided to honor the former posse members by dedicating the site "to all regular and volunteer law officers past, present and future." It was not intended to glorify the fugitive murderer.

Bob Nordyke, of the Rangers, began making arrangements for the preparation of the site and the dedication ceremony.

In April, 1966, the Rangers drove up a rough "jeep-tracked" in from the end of the New Dixie Mine Road by Jim Ishmael and Corky Kee. They installed a chain link fence, donated by Art Miller, around the grave. The right spot for the dedication plaque was chosen and, down and away from the grave, behind a huge boulder, a picnic table was set up for future visitors.

Then, on Sunday, October 9, 1966, almost 57 years to the day, the Willie Boy Monument Dedication Ceremony took place. The Yucca Valley Rangers and their distinguished guests had driven in by jeep and four-wheel drive vehicles. The Morongo Basin Mounted Sheriff's Posse had retraced the earlier posse's route from Old Woman Springs Road where they left their horse trailers.

Nordyke introduced all of the San Bernardino and Riverside County officials and other special guests.

Present to pay homage to the bravery and perserverance of the early-day posse were descendants of those determined men. They were Morgan F. Reche and Mrs. Donna R. Clifford, grandson and granddaughter of Charlie Reche; Mrs. Walter M. "Kit" Reche, who was married to Charlie's son; David L. and Susan L. Clifford, Charlie's great-grandchildren; and Jane Penn, daughter of Willie Pablo. Mrs. Penn is director of the Malki Museum at the Morongo Indian



*PICTURED here at the Willie Boy Gravesite are left to right: Morgan Reche with his hands on his wife's shoulder, Kit Reche, Donna Clifford and T.J. Clifford with their children in front. Morgan Reche and Donna Clifford are the Grandchildren of Charlie Reche. Kit Reche was Charlie Reche's daughter-in-law.*

Reservation at Banning. Except for Morgan, it was the first time any of them had been to the site.

Still another intensely interested and important personage present was Harry Lawton, author of the book, "Willie Boy."

Representing the San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department and Sheriff Frank Bland were Undersheriff Kendall J. Stone; Inspector Floyd E. Tidwell; Capt. Harry Hoekstra, of the Victorville substation; Lt. Joseph Karr, of the Twentynine Palms substation; Sgt. Louis Richenberger, Det. Roger Melanson and Dep. Ted Dykes, of the Yucca Valley Sheriff's Office, which has opened on March 1, of that year.

Representing the Riverside County Sheriff's Department was Undersheriff Robert E. Presley, now a State Senator.

Capt. Jim Couzens, then president of the Yucca Valley Rangers, made the dedication presentation and the plaque was put in place.

Among the Yucca Valley Rangers present were Ray Atherton, Charles Haynie, Val Jones, Al Wente, Dr. R. Sterling Butler, Ernie Sall, Art Miller, Jim Ishmael, Jack Volcic and Corky Kee.



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In all there were 95 members of the Sheriff's Department, the Yucca Valley Rangers, the Morongo Basin Mounted Sheriff's Posse, the Twentynine Palms Sheriff's Reserves and three members of the Apple Valley Rangers.

The mounted posse, led by Capt. Donald B. McDowell and Det. Roger Melanson, included Rudy Meier, George Hostler, Russ Rassmussen, Ray Milsted, Yogi Cline, Hap Harlow, Fred Johnson, John Hurlburt, Red Davidson, Darrell Pitts, Rex Combs, Jack Phillips and Howard Vore.

As the mounted posse retraced the last 12½ miles of the back-breaking trail laid down by the cunning Piute Indian, its weary members reflected on those earlier hardships.

Said McDowell, "Willie Boy was trying desperately to elude his followers and chose the roughest, most precipitous trail. Now that we have ridden over it and back again, my hat is off to him, in this respect only—and very definitely to that posse."

The Rangers were presented copies of a special limited edition booklet pertaining to the event. Its forward was written by Lawton. The text was the official report of the manhunt by Sheriff Frank Wilson to the Riverside County Board of Supervisors.

The report, dated November 2, 1909, concluded, "I cannot too earnestly praise the bravery

and persistency with which our men from Banning followed the trail for over two weeks through hardships and danger that can only be realized by those who were in the hills, or know the hardihood required to stand for over two weeks without shelter the hot days, cold nights and almost sleepless pursuit of a desperate and well-armed murderer in a mountain country well-known to him. He was so vigorously pursued that he was finally worn out, and used his last cartridge to end his own life. The posse are entitled to all the credit for having driven the desperado to his death . . . The course taken seemed to me to be the only one consistent with my duty to follow to his arrest or death one of the most desperate and cold-blooded murderers ever known in our country."

At the monument ceremonies Lawton, who eloquently told those assembled of the tragedy of Willie Boy and his crimes and of the spirit of the lawmen and their heroic deeds, summed up the spirit of dedication. "Because so many of the men who rode under Sheriffs John Ralphs and Frank Wilson were volunteers, it seems to me particularly appropriate that this site of the West's last great manhunt should be marked today by another volunteer group that renders non-salaried services as commissioned sheriff's deputies — the Yucca Valley Rangers." ■

*THE DEVELOPMENT of the Willie Boy Monument included a broad spectrum of private citizens, law enforcement and politicians. Below left are the Yucca Valley Rangers. They are, left to right: Fred Johnson, Charlie Haney, Val Jones, Alan Writz, Ernie Sall, Art Miller. Kneeling: Jack Volcic, Willie Boy author Harry Lawton, Bob Nordyke and Sterling Butler. Below right: Floyd Tidwell, our current sheriff, Harry Lawton, Bob Presley, Kendall Stone and Harry Hoekstra.*



SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT



SEARCH AND RESCUE UNIT



# FASCINATING FACTS

ONLY A CHAMBER OF COMMERCE COULD LOVE



One of the earlier fire runs the new Volunteer Fire Department made came when a call went out, "House on fire!" All the volunteers immediately stopped whatever work they were doing (even pouring cement) and, with their car headlights on, reported to the fire station posthaste. Jules Boldizar picked up Volunteer Bill Lace at his home. It should be remembered that the whole town was located in what is now called "the west end.

The fire truck set out, all eyes sharply scanning the horizon for flames and smoke. They also listened for cries for help. They could see or hear nothing. The truck and other vehicles began going up and down the residential streets. Finally, Lace asked who had reported the fire. It seems that Buck Buxton — a most tactiturn New Englander and newcomer to Yucca Valley — had called and reported the fire, gave his name and hung up. When Jules said the name was Buxton, Lace said, "Why, he lives across the street from me!"

The firefighters swung over to the Buxton home and put out the fire in quick order. In all fairness to the volunteers — no flames, not a whiff of smoke, could be seen from the outside, on all four sides. The fire was all interior. Fortunately, the damage was not too extensive.

When the excitement was over and the volunteers were leaving the scene, Buxton emerged on the front porch, pulled out his tobacco and asked, "Does anyone have a match?"

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The Pack Rat (now Ace Hardware) sold fresh vegetables and fruit in the late '50's. He ran local comedy ads in the Desert Star which everyone in town looked forward to reading. Somewhere in each ad was his "signature" — telling of his location which was always "across from Callahan's . . . Boat Landing, Distillery, Sardine Factory, Beanery, Television Show Room (Pay as you drink) or Bait, Tackle and Fishing Licenses." It was fun to shop there, too. In addition to the running gags and general visiting of the townspeople, there was a variety of delicious fruits at delectable prices such as: seedless grapes, 28¢ a lb.; nectarines, peaches and plums, 18¢ a lb.; bananas, 17¢ a lb.; tomatoes, 15¢ a lb.; lemons, 35¢ a doz.; summer squash, 9¢ a lb.; and cantaloupes and honey dew melons, 7 for \$1. (Sigh. Life was happier then.)

Hal Bahr came out to Yucca Valley in April, 1958, to get away from the Los Angeles smog. He proved what great insight he had by purchasing the property next to Lonnie Wightman's Chevron Station. He intended to build a shopping center there. However, by March 1, 1960, he and his wife, Dottie, bought Callahan's Restaurant. Francis and Lily Callahan had bought the establishment from Tommy Bouchey in the mid-50's. In 1965 Hal sold the restaurant to Lee Karhonian, of Indio. He kept it four months and sold it to Lou Kublic. Later it was sold to Bob and Ruth Moody, and still later it was sold to Carl and Carroll Trantum. That first bit of property that Hal bought? Oh, yes, it is now the Desert Hills Plaza Shopping Center and the home of the Safeway Super Store . . . and Hal was right in his judgment!

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Francis Callahan and Alton Young started the first taxi service in August, 1959. Now, whose restaurant do you suppose they recommended to the passengers?

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Francis was canny, at that. Because in one month, in September, the brand new Glen Restaurant, owned by Scotty and Margot Gillanders, opened for business. Their Crest Room was the largest and nicest public dining-dancing-bar facility in the whole area.

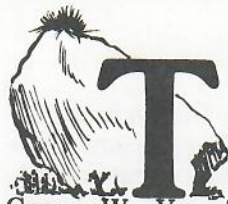
In 1959 Jim Stoops opened up the Hi-Desert territory and began the United Parcel Service. He soon became famous for his fearless striking out in uncharted lands to deliver his packages and parcels. Some said that Jim went where Roadrunners feared to race. At any rate, he set a great example and provided his company with a fine, shining image. He is retired, now, but still living here. Jim Smith is now in charge of the increasing UPS business throughout the Hi-Desert.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Anna and Luigi Castellucci were very good friends of Actor Leo Carrillo. In 1949 they had Bill Pace remodel the fireplace in the house at the back of the lot just west of the building complex now housing The Fish And Brew Restaurant. They opened and served melt-in-your-mouth Italian food. It was always popular but especially in the cold wintertime when the townspeople would drop in for a meal and a long visit around the fire. Nobody was in that much of a hurry then.



# History of Giant Rock



The following is a copy of "A Brief History of Giant Rock Covering the Last 90 Years, 1887-1977," which was written and published by the late George W. Van Tassel, owner and operator of the Giant Rock Airport, originator and host of the Giant Rock Space Conventions and creator and builder of the Integratron.

The copy was loaned to this publisher by Arthur De La O, of Joshua Tree. De La O filed on his five-acre claim in 1955, and became interested in George Van Tassel and the activities at Giant Rock from his very first trip to the Hi-Desert. He also became a good friend of the late Billy Royal who is mentioned in Van Tassel's history. Royal, who went to school, grew up and lived all of his adult life in Yucca Valley, was surprised to find he was included in the history, said De La O. The full text follows:

"When I came out here in 1947, I became a close friend of Charlie Reche. Later, I bought Charlie's property, which was known as Reche's Wells.

"Charlie Reche had been here since 1887, at which time the people living in the area were all Indians. Most of the information I gathered concerning the history of Giant Rock was from both the Indians and Charlie Reche. So I figure this information is right from the horse's mouth, so to speak, because they were the ones who were here before it became what it is now.

"According to the Indians, this was an Indian Holy Ground, where the North and South Tribes met annually. The Chiefs held their seances and meetings close by the Big Rock, which they called the 'Great Stone,' because to them it was the largest single object in the area. Today, it is still known as the largest single boulder in the world.

"The Indians assembled for their meetings here for up to three days at a time. During their meetings, none of the tribesmen were allowed close by as the meetings, per se, were actually the V.I.P.'s in the tribe. The rest of the people in the tribe had to camp about a mile or so away so as not to be near the actual meeting place.

"I had the honor of being able to speak to the son of an Indian Chief. This man was ten years old when his father put a mark on the Giant Rock, on the North side. The Indians called this mark 'The Sign of the Scorpion.' To the Indian's understanding, this means a good place. Also, wherever an Indian Chief put a sign, no other Indian was allowed to put other signs. This being the reason for only the one sign on the Big Rock.

Whenever one finds an area where there are numerous Indian Hieroglyphics on the rocks, this is an area where Indian children have been practicing the art.

'Charlie Reche, having homesteaded here in 1887, was allowed the privilege of meeting with the Indians many times. Reche's homestead included the area where the Integratron now stands, as well as several acres besides.

"In 1930, while I was still in Santa Monica, a very interesting person arrived at my uncle's garage. This fellow had taken up prospecting because he had been in a fishing fleet and also in the Merchant Marine, and as a result, had acquired too much moisture on his lungs. Therefore, under doctor's orders, he had discontinued these activities where he had to be in fog and moisture all the time. He had a four cylinder Essex car which had a rod knocking in the engine and he had no money.

"My uncle, Glenn Paine, had his garage on 2nd Street, just off of Broadway in Santa Monica, across from the Carmel Hotel. He engaged mostly in the selling of overnight parking for the Hotel inside his garage. He also did repair work and was a Buick specialist.

"When I came to California from Ohio, in 1930, to see my uncle, he needed someone to help him. So I stayed with him and that's how I happened to be there.

"This man I spoke of, happened to be Frank Critzer. When he came into my uncle's garage, he was looking for someone to correct that rod knock in his Essex, who would do it without charge.

*AT RIGHT. Walter Critzer who build his home under Giant Rock. He needlessly died there in August of 1942.*







*THE SIZE of Giant Rock, given dimensions, doesn't sound awe inspiring. However given a photograph like the one above, with a large group of people to scale the size, it becomes "one big rock."*

"Being interested in mining and having a period of lull during the depression, we just happened to have a little time on our hands when this fellow drove in with his Essex. So, that same day we took him to lunch with us. We discovered he was a very intelligent person and that he did know quite a lot about prospecting. Thus in the course of getting acquainted we became instant buddies, so to speak. My uncle allowed him to sleep in the garage and we repaired his Essex.

"When Frank Critzer was ready to leave, we gave him \$30, which was a lot of money in those days. We also stocked his car full of canned goods and we headed him out. He told us that wherever he would settle down then he'd write to us and also that we would be included in any mining claims he should happen to declare.

"A year went by before we finally heard from him. We had practically given up on him when we received a letter in which he had drawn a map showing how to get to Giant Rock. The following weekend my uncle and I went to Giant Rock to see him.

"Frank had already started to dig under the Big Rock to make a place to live. Banning was the closest town in which one could purchase supplies for building so Frank was getting by with what was there. Too, he had only squatter's rights and a mining claim on Giant Rock. He didn't own the property, for it was government land. By digging under the Rock he could have a place to live without having to purchase materials to amount to anything.

"Frank had shrewdness and comprehension, so he reasoned that if he dug a room under the North side of the Giant Rock, that the boulder would take all summer getting warm and hold the

warmth beneath it during the winter. By the same reasoning the Rock would get cold during the winter and keep the room temperature cool during the summer. Thus, there would be little need for heating or cooling. This would amount to six month's delayed thermal reaction.

"This had proved to be good engineering on Frank's part because the maximum temperature under the Rock is 80 F. without any refrigeration in the summer time, and a minimum of 55 F. in the winter time with no heating. The outside temperature will vary from approximately 25 F. to 115 F.

"The Giant Rock covers 5,800 square feet of ground and is seven stories high. The rooms dug out beneath it amount to approximately 400 square feet, so one can readily see that this is a very small fraction of the total area of the bottom side.

"Frank was falsely accused of stealing dynamite, failing to register for the draft, and several other things, in 1942, while the U.S. was at war with Germany. Having a German name, it was assumed by many people that he had to be a German spy in order to live in such a desolate place as Giant Rock.

*AGAIN! The scale is immediately obvious. The dark area in the lower right corner is the area where Critzer excavated his home. It was a 900 square foot apartment, with temperatures ranging from a low of 55 degrees to a high of 80 degrees without air conditioning. David Harmon Barney Copley Virginia Cooke*





"The only radio Frank Critzer had was one that Charlie Corell (of the 'Amos and Andy' radio comedy team) had given him. I spoke to Charlie later about this as he made frequent trips to Giant Rock. The radio was a little three-dial, A & B dry battery, Atwater Kent, with the tubes exposed and no case around it. It wasn't any good for transmitting messages to Germany, although it was a superheterodyne receiver (the first efficient receiver to be produced up to that time).

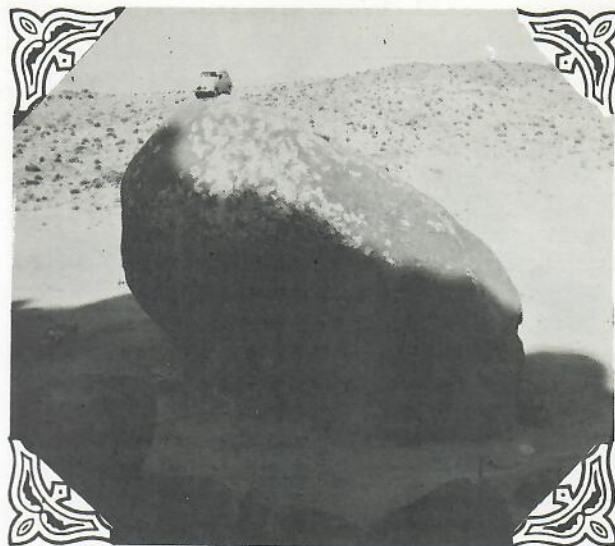
"The stories had generated from some people's erroneous thinking. Frank did have a German name. He had served in the German Navy as a mess boy on a German submarine in World War I. But he had come to our country, worked in our Merchant Marine, and was a naturalized citizen. Besides, he had no further affiliation with Germany whatsoever. But because he did have a big radio antenna on top of the mountain, some people assumed he was using his radio for spying purposes and without first checking with the F.B.I. these people started the rumor that Frank surely must be a spy. Consequently, in August of 1942 three deputies came to Giant Rock, supposedly to take Frank in for questioning.

"I spent many weekends visiting with Frank at Giant Rock. Frank had a big kitchen table, and a big wood-burning cook stove, on which he prepared, cooked and served German pancakes for anyone who happened to stop in. He usually had a case or two of dynamite and a partially opened case under the big kitchen table. We would put our feet on them when we were with him. He also had some caps, as he was doing some prospecting and dynamiting, and he knew how to use these things.

"When the three Deputies came to take Frank in the first thing he noticed was that they were from Riverside County. Giant Rock being in San Bernardino County and Frank being a man of principle, he knew they had no authority in this county and he told them so.

"According to Bill Royal, who had brought the Deputies out here—as they didn't even know where Giant Rock was, Frank after a lot of arguing, said that if they were going to take him in anyway, that he needed to get his coat. When he went into his living quarters beneath Giant Rock to get his coat he pulled the 2 x 4 bar, which he had across the door on the inside to hold it in place, and thus barricaded the door. The Deputies immediately assumed Frank was defying them so they lobbed a tear gas grenade in through the North side window. The unfortunate part of this whole incident was that the grenade landed underneath that table, thus setting off the caps and dynamite. The explosion killed Frank Critzer, blew the windows out, and injured the Deputies.

"Newspapers ran the story that he was a German spy. I had personally talked with the F.B.I., they knew the newspaper stories were not true.



Lorrain Goodhall Koleff

*IN the late forties, Life Magazine ran a photo of Giant Rock with an automobile perched atop. Here is a similar photo, just for scale.*

"Frank had written a manuscript called the 'Glass Age' which he'd given to a friend to type. In 1936 he had already in print all of the plastics we use today, and some of which we do not have yet. He was an advanced thinker—in his own right with a brilliant mind.

"When I finally had the time from work to come to Giant Rock, after reading about Frank's death in the newspapers, there was nothing left but the hole under the Rock. All of Frank's belongings had been hauled away, including the 4-cylinder Essex. The place was literally stripped. I was working for Douglas Aircraft at the time and about a month had passed before I could come to Giant Rock.

"On numerous occasions, after the death of Frank I came with my wife and family to spend our vacations here camping out—because we all loved this place.

"When the war ended, in 1945, I made application to the Bureau of Land Management—to acquire this property, and wanted to make an airport here. Frank had already cleared an area and many airplanes had landed. However, it wasn't on the airmaps. Being of hard decomposed granite it is a perfect natural runway. But it was not until 1947 when the paperwork which was involved was finally completed and we were able to move to Giant Rock.

"It was in 1953 when we began the weekly meditation meetings in the room under Giant Rock which led to the UFO contacts. This resulted in the information which led to the principles of rejuvenation and to the creation of the Integratron.

"I operated the Airport from 1947 until December, 1975, at which time I sold it to Phyllis and John Brady, who in turn turned it over to Jose Rodriguez and his family in 1977.





Darlene Wing

*GEORGE VAN TASSEL 1910-1970. Author, Inventor and controversial U.F.O. advocate. Some agreed, some disagreed with his Philosophy. None found him boring.*

"Giant rock has been known world-wide for a long time for its unusual UFO activities and for the many unmatched Annual Space Conventions which have been held here."

After Van Tassel's death, the government ordered that the hole under Giant Rock be completely filled up and sealed. The small restaurant that Van Tassel had built at the Airport was also ordered to be taken down. But the government cannot erase the memory of the man or the discussions held at Giant Rock. Van Tassel, although he dealt with abstract (and what some believed to be unreal) subjects, was an uncomplicated man who believed and kept the faith.

Van Tassel, who was born in Jefferson, Ohio, on March 12, 1910, sponsored and presided over seventeen Spacecraft Conventions held at Giant Rock. The first one was held on April 4, 1954, and the last on October 10, 1970. Events of this kind seem bound to attract a certain number of "kooks." But at each of his conventions Van Tassel had a number of fascinating and knowledgeable guest speakers and the audience was made up, predominantly, of people vitually interested in the subject of UFOs.

Van Tassel died unexpectedly of a heart attack on February 9, 1978. At memorial services held for him the following March 12, at The Institute of Mentalphysics, Yucca Valley, two of the songs he had composed, "Say I'm Not Dreaming," and "There I Am," were included. Printed on the program was a statement typical of Van Tassel's philosophy and faith:

*"And the Lord said Go*

*"And I said Who Me?  
And he said yes, You,  
And I said*

*But I'm not ready yet  
And there is company coming  
And I can't leave the kids  
And you know there's no one to take  
my place  
And he said you're stalling*

*"Again the Lord said Go  
And I said But I don't want to  
And he said I didn't ask if you wanted to  
And I said*

*Listen I'm not the kind of person  
to get involved in controversy  
besides my family won't like it  
And what will my neighbors think?  
And he said Baloney*

*"And yet a third time the Lord said Go  
And I said do I have to?  
And he said do you love me?  
And I said*

*Look, I'm scared  
People are going to hate me  
and cut me up in little pieces,  
I Can't take it all by myself,  
And he said where do you think I'll be?*

*"And the Lord said go  
And I sighed  
Here I am, send me.*



# A Big Need Fulfilled . . . . . . . . By An Even Bigger Labor Of Love

**W**ay back when the Morongo Basin was populated mostly with ranchers and miners and their families, if anyone became ill or got injured they usually took to their beds and were nursed and attended to by their relatives or friends. Many regained their health, but there were always other who, despite all the loving care and best medicine available, did not make it. Whenever possible the sick and injured were taken to the nearest hospital, in San Bernardino—but it was a long, slow trip by wagon or early-day automobile.

In the 1930's two of those trips involved Ruth Duarte, who had a homestead high up in Pipes Canyon, and Carl and Nellie Yonse, her friends and tenants. She was putting in a garden one summer when she injured her leg. When it did not heal properly, Carl took her on the long trip to San Bernardino. Later, in the winter when the snow was unusually deep and cold, Carl's son, Russ, had a bad attack of appendicitis. Carl enlisted the help of John Olson, who lived down-canyon from Ruth's homestead. They tried driving the car but the snow was too deep. In a harrowing, time-consuming trip, the adults tried shoveling and driving their way down to John's house, where a man with a larger, more powerful car awaited. The snow was much too deep. Ruth suggested that Carl and John pull Russ and her the rest of the way in the two large scoop shovels. They did just that. Then came that trip to San Bernardino. Russ was a lucky boy. He made it.

At the end of World War II John Olson, a true friend to everyone who came to his house or the Onyx Mine, befriended a soldier passing through the area. John did not know the soldier was AWOL. But the deserter, thinking he knew his secret, shot him and fled. John was not discovered for a few days but was then taken to San Bernardino as quickly as possible. He was too badly injured and, despite the excellent care, he died in the hospital.

Through the years there were many other close-call experiences. One such happened in the early spring of 1957, when a young Steve Heard injured himself in an accident at home. His mother, Mary, didn't wait for anyone; she got Steve in the car and drove him non-stop to the Ince Memorial Hospital, which had been built in Twentynine Palms.

In May of that same year the Rev. Lawrence Piazza had a serious medical emergency. He

was taken to Redlands Community Hospital by his "Good Samaritan" neighbors Ed Ware, Clyde Donlee and Joe Karvelis. Later, he thanked his friends, saying, "May God bless them," and launched a campaign of his own. The Reverend urged the townspeople to get behind the Chamber of Commerce in getting a clinic or medical center established in Yucca Valley. He had travelled personally to northern California and the offices of the California State Medical Board. There he was advised that the Chamber, representing the full community, would receive more consideration from officials than would a lone individual. His efforts were not in vain, however, he had broken the ice.

The next serious episode took place when Eddie Schell, a local boy, was involved in an accident. The car had flipped over and he had a broken leg. A call went out to the Twentynine Palms ambulance, owned by the Ince Hospital. Additional calls went out as it became a two-and-a-half hour wait. Dr. William T. Ince explained later that the first duty of his ambulance was to be on call for the people of Twentynine Palms.

In the following Grubstake Days Parade, Ida Van Nest hung a sign on the side of her station wagon. It read, "We need an ambulance!" The Yucca Valley Lions Club took up the cry and funds were ultimately raised for the purchase of a used ambulance, costing \$3,500. It was inspected by Bill Riesen.

*MRS. IDA VAN NEST'S station wagon advertising the need for a hospital. In earlier years, she advertised the need for an ambulance in the same way.*





# ... Hi Desert Memorial Hospital

The first major use of the ambulance, manned by Yucca Valley Fire Department personnel, was in response to a bad head-on collision on the Victorville Road near V. Ray Bennett's home. Bennett, the inventor of the famous Bird Machine for respiratory patients, took all the children involved in the accident into his home and kept them until they were called for by their families. A seriously injured grandmother was loaded into the ambulance, which was driven by Woody Wilson. His wife, Joan, followed in her car in case she could be of any help. At Smoketree the wiring malfunctioned and the ambulance lights went out. Joan pulled her car in front and led the way. A California Highway Patrol officer stopped them, found out the problem and then he led the way to the Ince Hospital.

By now it was apparent that a hospital was sorely needed in the west end of the Morongo Basin. But how does a town go about it and who even dreamed such a project could really succeed?

In March, 1958, a community committee was formed to look into the cost of a possible hospital. Bob Barngrover was the chairman. Other committee members were V. Ray Bennett, Rev. David Hansen, Dean Howell and Harold Brown. U.S. Department of Health construction cost figures at that time were \$24.00 per square foot. A ten-bed hospital would cost \$276,500 to build and equip. That was considered too high. Barngrover suggested the alternative of a clinical facility which would include a doctor's office, emergency room, ward with one or two beds and volunteer nurses.

Yucca Valley organizations represented at the committee meeting held at the Elementary School were the American Legion, Lions Club, Chamber of Commerce, Property Owner's League, Players, Rotary Club, Dirt Diggers' Club, Toastmistress Club, Sojourners, PTA, Sheriff's Reserve, Pioneer Desert Board of Realtors, Dandee Lions, Community Church, Light and Life Chapel, Assembly of God Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church. Dr. Dwight Rawson, of Morongo Valley, represented the medical profession. From people and organizations such as these the High Desert Memorial Hospital Fund evolved.

With interest definitely growing in getting a hospital, Dr. Byron Walls, of Torrance, and Dr. Kenneth B. Kincy, of Twentynine Palms, opened Yucca Valley medical offices in the Martell Bldg.

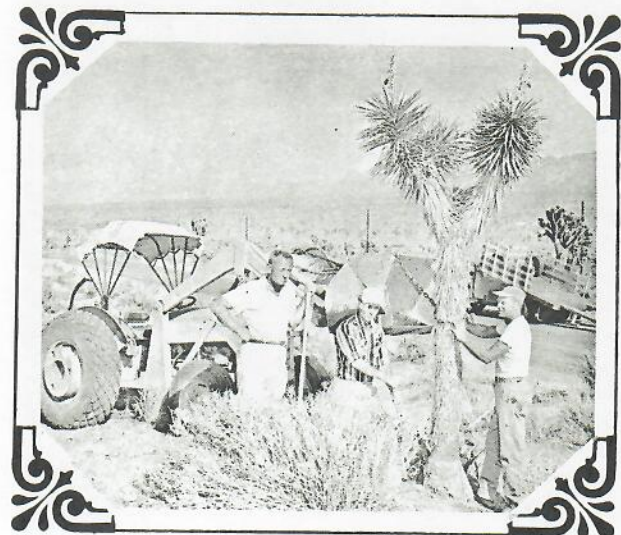
The first major fund-raising project, that of building a house, was conceived by Bud Stewart and Lou Holland. And here's how the hospital story officially started:

July 3, 1958, is a day which will be long remembered by those involved in fund-raising for the hospital. For that was the date when the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors approved the idea of constructing a house. The entire Chamber of Commerce approved the construction idea at a general meeting on July 10, 1958... and the work soon got underway.

And what a house it turned out to be. Built with the labor and love of the entire town, it was a tourist mecca for months. And even today, residents still refer to it as "The Hospital House."



ABOVE, sign on site of Hospital House. Many parcels were offered. The parcel donated by Art Miller was used. BELOW, Lou Holland, Bud Stewart and Bill Adams clearing the site of Hospital House.





The Hi-Desert property owners proved themselves to be generous as a number of lots were donated to the project. Lots which were donated to the cause through the High Desert Memorial Hospital Fund came from the real estate offices of Hacienda Knolls, Sky Harbor Ranchos and Estates, and Art Miller's Western Hills Estates; and from individual property owners like Mr. and Mrs. D.F. Geil, of Morongo Valley; and Mr. and Mrs. Si Stanley, of Twentynine Palms. The total value realized of this donated property exceeded \$12,000 by 1961.

Art Miller's lot was chosen for the Hospital House and "bosses" for each phase of construction work were named. Norm Essig, Harold Brown and Bob Schoenleber planned the construction schedules.

Materials and labor were also donated, with only a bare minimum of building expense involved. "Tish" Tisue and Don Kingston poured the slab for the Hospital House.

On Labor Day Weekend hundreds of workers, virtually every local member of the construction industry and every other skilled worker in the area, showed up, worked around the clock in some cases, and at the close of the holiday, the house was finished.

Dorothy and Ernie Littlepage showed up, too, and cooked pancakes by the hour for the crews working on the house.

No mention of the Hospital House could be made without recalling "Mr. and Mrs. Hospital House" themselves. Mr. and Mrs. Charlie Gross earned the undying gratitude of the Morongo Basin with their faithful support of the project (and, later, the hospital itself).

*MR. | MRS. HOSPITAL HOUSE. This couple deserves a special place in the hearts of Yucca Valley. They devoted themselves, unselfishly to the realization of the Hospital — Mr. Charlie Gross, Mrs. Mary Gross.*



Long after the work on the house was completed, the elderly couple remained on duty. For days, weeks and months they occupied the house during the day, conducting tours through the structure and selling tickets on the project. On Thanksgiving Day they stayed at the house all day by themselves, unbeknown to any of the other townspeople. They had decided not to bother with a holiday dinner. When Roy Roush and other chamber members discovered them at the house in the evening, they bought Thanksgiving dinners with all the trimmings and brought them to the steadfast couple.



*THE GRUBSTAKE DAYS PARADE was an excellent place to drum up support for the much needed Hospital.*

The long hours they spent earned them love, respect and the gratitude of the townspeople.

The younger generation did its share, too. A perfect example of this is the project young Butch Miller came up with. Butch, son of Art and Hazel Miller, got out his buggy and "Honey Lou" on October 5, and sold tickets for rides around the Hospital House area. One ticket, one ride.

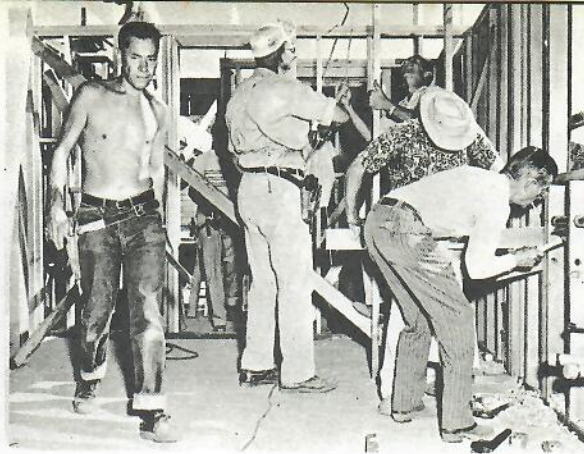
Meanwhile, by 1959 an organization was founded out of the fund-raisers which was destined to play a major role in the hospital campaign. It was Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital, Inc. Its first Board of Directors were Mrs. Elsinore Machris, John C. Marsh, Norm Essig, Jonn Haskell, Mrs. Phyllis Grubaugh, Art Katje, Bill Williams, Honey Fellers, Ethel Chance, Don Moore and Lela Osborn.

One of the important parts of the campaign to sell tickets was conducted by a group of women headed by Joan Wilson and Alice Bennett. Without realizing any of the finer legal points, the group mailed out a mimeographed letter—and the tickets—to property owners, friends and relatives. It wasn't long before Joan Wilson was hurriedly summoned to a specially called meeting of the Inc. members. There she was introduced to a U.S. Postal Inspector who told her of regulations concerning the U.S. Mail and lotteries.





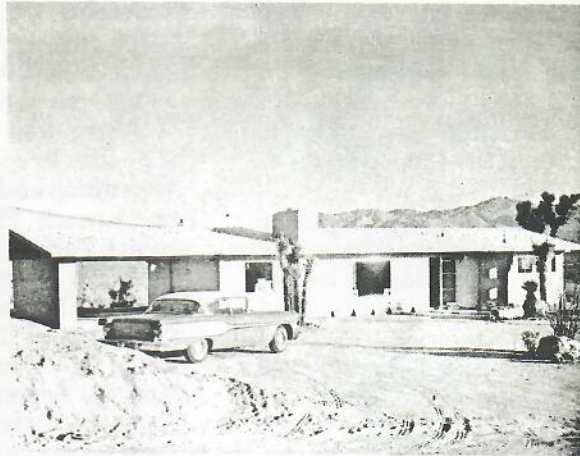
*VOLUNTEER WORKERS putting up walls of Hospital House.*



*WIRING being done by Fred Tripp, Virgil Miller and Son, and others.*



*THE WINNING NUMBER is being picked by Gwennett Swogger.*



*THE FIRST HOSPITAL BOARD — First row — left to right: Ethel Chance, Honey Fellers, Elsinore Machris and Phyllis Grubaugh — back row: John C. Marsh, Don Moore, Bill Williams, Lela Osborn, Art Katje, Norm Essig and John Haskell.*

*ABOVE, labor and materials for Hospital House roof are donated by Anderson Roofing. ABOVE RIGHT, the finished Hospital House, ready for raffle. BELOW, Art Miller and Tyna English take part in the finishing ceremonies.*



*THE AMBULANCE that was the forerunner to the outstanding hospital effort.*





She heard him out—including such topics as penalties, illegal actions, etc.—and then asked if he had enjoyed the trip to Yucca Valley, the fresh air, sunshine, the quiet, etc. He admitted that he had enjoyed his trip.

"Then," she stated, "you're part of the problem because it's people like you who come up from down below and look at all the scenery instead of the road and get into accidents and we don't have a hospital here to take you to for medical attention!"

The inspector proved to be an understanding official. He laughed heartily and admonished Joan and her fellow-workers not to send any more tickets through the mails.

While this part of the campaign was in full swing, Mort and Sam Rosenbaum, of Cabin Homes, spent the time, effort and money to obtain the hundreds of names and addresses of Hi-Desert property owners from the Bureau of Land Management Office and turn the list over to the hospital fund people.

Also, in this same vein, all of the local motel owners made out lists of names and addresses of patrons who had stayed at their motels, looked around the area while visiting and purchased property.

These two separate efforts saved the hospital fund workers days and days of traveling to San Bernardino and looking up the information in the County Assessor's Office.

At that, donations from this part of the drive alone netted more than \$8,000.

As it was worked out, with each ticket purchased, the donor received an Associate Membership in the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce. The winner of the fundraising drive could choose between ownership of the Hospital House or \$15,000 in cash.

By September 11, 1958, there were already 40,000 Associate Memberships awarded to the donors. There was a huge wooden thermometer in front of Fred Storey's office at the corner of the highway and Pioneertown Road which gave the amount of the donations as they came in and indicated each "temperature rise." There were also miniature mail-boxes on counters all over the Hi-Desert where everyone could drop in money for the hospital fund. The boxes were obtained from Mayo Bradfield, an advertising specialties salesman who lived in Yucca Valley.

The Hospital House drawing took place on December 20, 1959. On hand to help with the drawing was Abe Schiller, "Mr. Las Vegas" and Flamingo Hotel publicist. Gwynett Swogger was selected to reach in and pull out the lucky number. The winner of the Hospital House was Benny Lopez, of Pico-Rivera. A truly lucky man, Mr. Lopez's name was drawn from among the thousands of Chamber of Commerce Associate membership tickets purchased by the visitors to the house. Mr. Lopez, who had a good teaching

job "down below" and did not want to move away, chose to accept the money.

By the time all things had wound up the expense sheet showed \$40,380 in gross receipts; \$7,937.13 for the cost of the house; \$7,031.41 for promotional expense; \$273.90 for legal expense; \$1,907 miscellaneous. Thus the venture netted the hospital fund a total of \$23,230.56, and the hospital was on its way to becoming a reality.

From that time on, money-raising events were the order of the day.

A box social had already been held on October 16, 1958, which really seemed to set the tone and the resolve of the "grass roots" participation.

One of the earlier promotions took place on November 27, 1958, when comedian George Gobel rode a camel through the crowds publicizing the need for a hospital.

On December 12 through 14, 1958, a "Roundup of Stars" was held to help publicize the hospital and the hospital house fund-raising projects. Attending and contributing their talents to the cause were Phil Harris, Desi Arnez, Sr. and Judith Parker.

Within several months after the drawing, the Hospital House was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Edward T. Whiter, of Glendora, who moved into their new home. Bill Tenney, of the Ole Hanson Co. handled the sale and turned over his commission on the \$18,500 deal to the hospital fund.

All community efforts went toward the goal. The Sky Drive-In Theatre opened for business with all proceeds on Opening Night going to the fund.

During Grubstake Days in May, 1959, a new Nash Rambler was awarded to the lucky ticket holder. The car was obtained through the auspices of Francis Callahan and his son-in-law, E.G. Price, of San Bernardino.

Pledge cards were mailed to residents and businessmen, with donations continuing to come in from these mailings.

The Yucca Valley Players presented a performance of "My Three Angels" and 50% profit from its run went to the hospital.

Louella Williams, of the Pioneer Desert Realtors, hit the businessmen up and down the main street and returned with \$1,227, bringing the total to \$31,028.85 at this point.

Members of the Hospital, Inc. board appointed Gladys Stiff to be chairman of the Smorgasbord Dinner held at the Hi-Desert Park and which netted more than \$300 for the kitty.

The Glen Restaurant's fabulous weekend Grand Opening boosted the total by \$1,010 as "Scotty" and Margo Gillander contributed the entire proceeds from an opening buffet served to hundreds of visitors.

With viewers donating \$1 to the hospital, L. Adams Hanson showed films of Russia and European countries at the Yucca Valley



Elementary School. Hanson was in charge of Circarama, in Moscow, during the Trade Exhibit at that time.

A Halloween Festival at Osborn's Market featured a pancake breakfast served by members of the hospital committee. More than 1,000 pancakes were consumed.

With perfect weather and a receptive crowd, Bob Brownell and Bob Bennett auctioned off donated items and raised \$356.43. Charlie Haynie had conceived the idea and the auction was held at his second-hand store.

The death of one of the Hi-Desert's most loved women, Margaret Jewett, resulted in a Memorial Fund for a nurses unit. Mrs. Jewett had served as a nurse in the Orient.

The staff of Jerry's Restaurant, in Joshua Tree, donated the time to serve a Chuckwagon Dinner on November 11. A \$2 donation got you all you wanted to eat.



*IN MORE WAYS than one can recall the Hi Desert Tract Owners Association contributed a great deal to our hospital.*

Members of the Yucca Valley Women's Club served a Turkey and Ham Dinner, netting still another \$110 to the growing fund.

Proving that even a small amount helps, the Pioneer Desert Board of Realtors turned over \$24.60 after its annual picnic at the Yucca Corral Acres. This was just a teaser as this board contributed more through the whole fund-raising campaign.

June LeMert Paxton was Yucca Valley's Poet-Laureate and one of its first resident writers. Her love of the desert and its people was evident when the author donated half of her commissions to the hospital from the sale of her book, "My Life on the Mojave." Mrs. Paxton came to the desert in 1932 for her health. Her poetry and philosophical writing soon became well known and greatly appreciated.

Fred A. Storey, one of the Original subdividers and developers of Yucca Valley, offered the hospital board 20 acres of land at about one-fifth of its retail value.

The Directors, at a special meeting, issued Storey a certified check for \$10,000 as the price of the property and, in an all-out effort to raise more funds, informed those attending the general meeting that "there will be a hospital here soon." At that same, August, 1960, meeting some new members of the Hospital, Inc. Board of Directors were named. They were Bonnie Gardiner, Ron Livingston, Fred Storey, Lou Thompson, Scottie Ruben, and Elvira Clift.

At this point an accounting of funds was given and the total was \$33,410.37. The check for the hospital site was to come out of this amount.

The Inc. Directors also voted to issue Life Memberships for donations of \$100 or more; Active Memberships; and Associate Memberships.

Meanwhile, the money continued to roll in with small and large donations being collected. The Women's Club held another Buffet Dinner and other organizations continued their fund-raising efforts.

Mrs. Machris donated \$10,700 for a room in the Hospital Headquarters in the Yucca Valley Plaza.

On October 29, 1960, the facilities of the Copper Room were made available for a Halloween costume party. Chairmanned by Phyllis Grubaugh and Honey Fellers, the party netted \$260 for the ever-growing fund.

The VFW Auxiliary pledged to earn the money to supply the furnishings for a semi-private room at the hospital, and made good on their word.

The Lions Club guaranteed a minimum of \$1,000 to furnish still another room.

A Box Social was held at Callahan's Restaurant in December, 1960, with all proceeds going to the hospital.

One of the most successful projects was the Hi-Desert Children's Christmas Party at the Community Club in Yucca Valley. Hundreds of youngsters, with their mothers and fathers, came to see Santa and stayed for lunch, gifts and a Christmas program which featured Mr. and Mrs. Art Baker, of radio and television fame. Santa, resplendent in his red suit, arrived via airplane at the Yucca Valley Airport and was escorted by the Junior Equestrians to the Community Club. The young riders stayed at the door and sold mistletoe they had collected themselves. They raised \$17 this way and promptly turned the money over to the hospital fund.

Louella Williams and John Haskell were the co-chairmen for the Yule Party.

At a specially-called meeting of Hospital, Inc. on December 28, 1960, its Board of Directors accepted recommendations of Dr. Alfred



Goldman, the City of Hope heart specialist. Dr. Goldman recommended that additional facilities for the proposed 24-bed hospital include a cardiac emergency room and cardiac receiving and treatment rooms.

After much discussion, Directors voted to hire the Hospital Planning and Engineering Company, of Los Angeles, to start preliminary plans for the hospital.

James W. Geddes, vice president of the firm, made many visits to the area checking all phases of the campaign, the site, the area's needs.

The Los Angeles firm specializes in designing, building, procuring and financing of small community hospitals.

Dr. Goldman volunteered to be Chief of Staff at the Proposed Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital and remained active throughout the planning of the structure.

All organizations and so many individuals continued to work for the hospital fund and to contribute as much as they could on a regular basis. Therefore, these fund-raisers were indeed thrilled when it was announced that the hospital site was ready to go out to bids in February, 1961. The Holland Paving Co., with the lowest bid of \$2,828, got the contract for the paving of the first increment of the hospital.

It had been recommended that, to speed the hospital's existence, it would be most beneficial to form a tax-supported hospital district. Hospital, Inc. and some of the more concerned citizens were instrumental in bringing about the formation of the district and its follow-up bond election. At this time the representatives of Twentynine Palms were asked if they wanted to be a part of the proposed district. They declined and set about forming their own district.

The Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital District was voted into existence on April 3, 1962, and officially instituted by the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors on April 16, 1962. The first Board of Directors was appointed by the Board of Supervisors on April 30, 1962. Members of that first board were: Gilbert D. Buck, Lila Mae Final, Owen W. Murphy, John R. Blodgett and Eugene L. Albrecht.

An active and functional Citizens' Advisory Council was formed by the District with representatives from the various communities within the District and reported to the Board all suggestions and ideas garnered from the citizenry.

On December 11, 1962, a bond issue of \$350,000 was passed to construct and equip a 24-bed General Hospital on a 20-acre site already set aside for that purpose. That building was to be the nucleus of a 100-bed facility and was the exact duplicate of the Wilmington Community Hospital at Los Angeles Harbor. It was especially designed to be added on to in separate

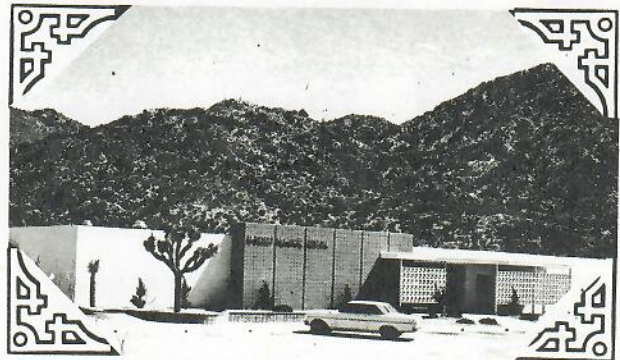
sections as the community's needs arose. This has been done through the years with the Wilmington Hospital.

While the local hospital was under construction, a group of Hi-Desert doctors made an additional suggestion. In the wake of many recent and serious automobile accidents the doctors proposed that a 24-hour emergency clinic be constructed immediately. This would not interfere with the 24-bed hospital, they claimed, and that, to save expenses, the Inc. headquarters in the Plaza could be converted to the emergency clinic.

HDMH, Inc.'s Board of Directors voted to explore the cost of equipping such a clinic and to appoint a special committee to find out all the facts.

The committee for the clinic proposal was composed of Resident Deputy Sheriff Roger Melanson, chairman; and Drs. R. Sterling Butler, Sam Hon, Edward Lincoln Smith and Byron Walls; also, Yucca Valley Fire Chief Harry Brissenden and Ethel Chance.

Construction of the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital was completed on April 24, 1964. Equipment was installed and Open House was held on April 25 and 26.



*THE HI DESERT Memorial Hospital at completion. It served the Hi Desert well until the building of H.D.M.C. in Joshua Tree. The Yucca Valley facility is now a Moyles Convalescent Hospital.*

The total amount of construction contracts, including extras, architectural fees, equipment and incidental expenses amounted to \$425,000.00. The Hospital was dedicated on May 17, and opened on May 18, 1964.

The District selected Mr. Sam Loewen as the new Administrator. He assumed his duties on January 1, 1964.

Resident and non-resident (Associate member) doctors, without exception, praised the unusually well-equipped, staffed and administered facility which was a 24-bed General Hospital with maternity facilities. There were two major surgeries, an emergency surgery and examining room, a four-bed recovery room,



delivery and labor room, nursery with three incubators, a well-equipped laboratory and X-ray room. The newest equipment included a 300 MA 150 KVP Westinghouse X-ray machine with Fluoroscopy and a 100 MA 100 KVP Portable X-ray machine. There was also a Telephone Transmitter attachment for the Electrocardiograph machine.

The hospital staff included a Nurse Anesthetist on call 24-hours a day; four local doctors on the active staff, one of which was on 24-hour call to the Emergency Room. The Associate and Consulting staff consisted of two Dentists, one O.B. Gynecologist, three Surgeons, one Urologist, one Orthopedist, one Internalist, two Neurologists, one Anesthesiologist, one Radiologist and one Pathologist.

Elsinore Machris, who up to mid-1963 had already donated personally more than \$60,000 to the hospital project, now bought and donated virtually all of the X-ray equipment to the new Hi-Desert hospital; as she had earlier purchased and donated all of the very first X-ray equipment for the then-new Desert Hospital, in Palm Springs.

And, so it was accomplished. A dream come true. A hard-fought-for fairy tale becoming reality in their lifetimes. As the people proudly toured the sparkling new medical facility they couldn't help remembering the part each had played in its existence. There were hundreds of them who would always think of the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital as "My Hospital."

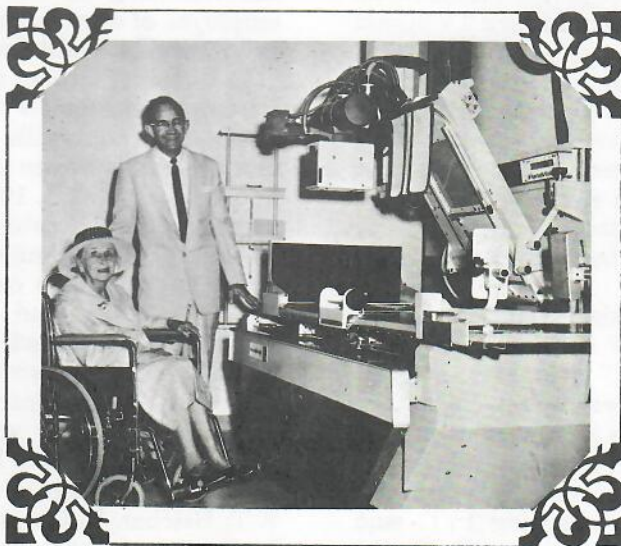
Small wonder, then, that all those who had worked so hard, so long, so constantly, should resent the fact, so soon in the hospital's life, there were concentrated plans to put it out of business!

At first, no one could believe it. But when it became obvious, the anger and deep resentment followed naturally.

Suddenly, these loyal supporters felt, there was the strong, high-pressure push to merge the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital District with the Twentynine Palms Hospital District by re-organization. the HDMH District was the larger and the stronger of the two. Its citizens had requested annexation rather than re-organization. It was pointed out that annexation would be possible (financially, physically, tax-wise, medically and accreditation-wise) almost immediately . . . because financing of a new hospital is available to the strong district and not to the weak district.

The HDMH tax-payers were also concerned about the fact that re-organization breaks up a strong district but annexation retains it.

As the merging of the two districts moved on, the majority of the HDMH tax-payers came to resent the manner in which the matter was being handled, bureaucratically; the ignoring and nullifying of a legitimate election of the majority of the HDMH district voters; the ignoring of the possibility of Safecare Corp. (a hospital construction and medical administration organization) building and operating a private hospital in the Morongo Basin and the subsequent dissolution of the tax-supported hospital district—despite the expressed desires of the HDMH district tax-payers to look into it; and the ignoring of the wishes of Mrs. Elsinore Machris, as expressed in her last Will: that her medically-affiliated bequest be used to benefit the people of Yucca Valley and the other communities of the original HDMH district. ■



*SHOWN AT LEFT is the late Elsinore Machris. International Philanthropist, and regular donor to the Hi Desert Memorial Hospital. Here she is shown presenting a \$25,000 X-ray Machine to the Hospital Administrator, Sam C. Loewen.*

Photos on pages 91 through 97 are from Joan's Collection.



# TV Really Comes to Yucca Valley

**B**y the mid-1950's practically everyone in the big cities had television sets in the living rooms and antennas on the roofs. Out in the country not too many people had TV sets because reception wasn't good, if at all. In Yucca Valley two men, at different times, had come through promising to lay out a TV cable system. They each had collected connection fees and service money from the eager townspeople, but when neither was successful in building or starting a workable system they each had skipped town—without paying the money back.

Therefore, in the fall of 1956, when Joe Freeman, a local land surveyor, called Joan Wilson and said he knew a man who wanted to talk to her about coming to Yucca Valley to put in a TV cable system, she was more than leary. Joan was the Advertising Manager and a Staff Writer for the Hi-Desert Star, a decidedly active member of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and was known to be a devout fan of television before she moved up to the high desert area. Under the previous circumstances, she decided to ignore Joe's message. By the third telephone call it was the man himself—Neal Groom. He told her he owned and operated a TV cable service titled the Lucerne Valley Engineering Co., Inc. He said his company was headquartered in Victorville and that if he could talk to her for just ten minutes he could prove to her that he could bring a TV signal into Yucca Valley.

She was still skeptical but she agreed to meet him at the water tanks located on the hill above the south end of Fox Trail. As Neal Groom talked and told her what he planned and how he was going to do it, Mrs. Wilson said she thought he must be a modern-day wizard. Hesitantly, she again agreed to meet him the following morning at the water tanks.

He arrived in his station wagon with a generator, an antenna, a TV set and a mattress. "I was all the more leary," said Mrs. Wilson. Groom started hooking everything up. He put the mattress over the TV top to provide enough darkness for the screen, then he turned on the set. "All at once I realized I'm standing there in the middle of nowhere and I'm watching TV!" said the no-longer-leary Mrs. Wilson. "I was thrilled!"

She told everybody and excitement grew as the word spread. Groom made arrangements to lease the land by the water tanks.

The Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce authorized a trip to Victorville for Mrs. Wilson to



*NEAL GROOM, who brought cable television to Yucca Valley in 1956.*

double-check what kind of service and reception they got. Posing as someone interested in moving into the town, she went in to business offices and drove into residential neighborhoods making her inquiries. She saw for herself that reception was good and the opinions were too. This she reported to the chamber. Groom also had a good Dunn and Bradstreet rating.

Groom found out about Yucca Valley and its possibilities in the summer of 1956. A friend, Gene Robinson, told him he wanted to build the Yucca Valley system himself but he did not have the financing or the know-how. "He was an employee of ours learning what he could from us in Victorville," said Groom.

In October, Groom received a San Bernardino County franchise for the area and sold out his interest in Victorville to get the capital to put into the Yucca Valley system.

"On November 1, 1956, we began in earnest to construct the TV cable system in Yucca Valley," he said. "The first mile of line was from the water tanks to our office on the southwest corner of Bannock Trail and the Twentynine Palms Highway. We leased that office from Blanche Barrett. That was where we first showed TV and signed up the customers."

The first people who signed up were Paul Albert, Al Peters, Joe Freeman, Arthur L. David, Art Katje, George Evanoff, Charles L. Gross, K.T. Belcher, E.J. Hottenroth, W.C. King, Clyde L. Kenney, Robert Johnson, Gale Taylor, Eddie Spanier, Blanche Barrett, Thomas Humphreville, Odis Ray, Viola Humphreville, Joan Wilson, Francis Callahan, R.A. Potter, William Royal, James Estus, Leo Higgins, Jule Boldizsar, Stocky Stockbridge and Bob Durant. "Not in the



first group but sometime soon after was Mr. Valentine, since he was the first subscriber to be connected to the cable," Groom said.

"From our original head-end on the south end of Bannock Trail, there were only three channels available, 2-4-5," Groom said.

Bill Runyon, the county health inspector, said he got better reception at his property in Morongo Valley. Groom came out to take a look and arrangements were made.

"After moving the head-end to Morongo Valley at Bill Runyon's place, we were able to add channels 7, 9 and 11. At that time we also added FM radio to the cable.

"We first wired Yucca Valley, then east through Joshua Tree before wiring Morongo Valley," he continued. "By New Year's Day of 1957, we had connected up one hundred customers to view the Rose Parade and Rose Bowl game for the first time on TV in Yucca Valley. Four years later, on New Year's Day, we had just barely connected one thousand subscribers to the cable from Morongo Valley to Joshua Tree . . . Our last extension of the system was to Sunfair, where the TV signals were no longer able to be reamplified because of their degradation through the system that far . . . When I sold out in June of 1964 (he was the sole owner), just over seven and a half years from the day we started, there were just over 1,600 connections to the Yucca Valley system and several hundred miles of TV cable from Morongo Valley to Sunfair," said Groom.

He gives full credit to Mrs. Wilson and her checking trip to Victorville, which enabled him to build the local system. Now living in Hemet, he sent a reminiscing letter to her in which he said, "I thank you and all of the very wonderful people in Yucca Valley for all that you have given me. Even though it was a big undertaking, I couldn't have done it without you or them.

*THE CABLE OFFICE on Bannock Trail in the late fifties.*



"I lay awake many nights worrying about all of the problems that confronted me from day to day in building it. At times I was discouraged for sure, but somehow managed to keep going and building more lines.

"I remember one night about 2:30 a.m., some kind soul who had had too much to drink phoned me and gave me hell because his TV picture was blurry and he couldn't see it.



Ron Presley

*IN 1977 the Cable Company had changed hands several times. Each time the system was improved.*

"Then there was another time John (His younger brother) and I worked nearly all night in a blizzard putting up broken cables that had been torn down by the storm. We nearly froze to death that night climbing poles. It was the night that they had that dinner at the Copper Room honoring those of us who had helped the hospital cause in Yucca Valley. I still have that plaque that John Haskell gave me. But when I look at it I can only see snow flakes swirling in the wind on a freezing night in Yucca Valley.

"Yucca Valley, for sure, will always have a warm spot in my heart for all of the wonderful people there. I will always treasure the fond memories that I have of the town and that part of it was of my life."



Neal did more than just express his feelings. He really gave his full assistance to a local Cancer Drive one year. At his own expenditure of a great deal of time and money, he held a telethon over his own cable station originating from the Multi-purpose Room of the Yucca Valley Elementary School. He got the use of six phones okayed from the Palm Springs telephone office and borrowed a camera. They were on the air and everyone in town was watching his own or a friend's set!

George Osborn was the volunteer master of ceremonies. The first call came in from Leo Higgins, saying he could donate \$50 if George would stand on his head. George did it, right on camera. A second caller said he'd toss in another \$50 if George would do it again. He did, thereby helping Yucca Valley to reach its goal and then some.

Charlotte Gibbon went to work for the original Lucerne Valley Engineering Co. in 1964, and ran the office end of things. She resigned from Westinghouse Group W Cable on April 15, 1982, making her the oldest employee, in time of service, of the combined cable company ownerships.

Since Groom's day, the local TV system has been owned by Hi-Desert TV Cable, Inc. (Able Cable) and Teleprompter. The latter was pur-

chased by Westinghouse and is known as Group W Cable. The little system that started with less than thirty subscribers now has 10,000 customers signed up.

"Cable TV can be thought of as a Community Antenna (CATV). The signal (television broadcast) is received at a distant antenna site and is sent down a large cable (trunk line) which is routed and amplified through the town. A distribution cable comes from the trunk line. This distribution cable feeds the individual (subscriber) installations.

"Warning: electrical storms can be quite damaging to CATV equipment. It can travel down the lines for miles, doing extensive damage which can take considerable time to fix." (Editor's Note: Checking all on-spot, adjacent, nearby and connecting points.)

"Although our cable is grounded during an electrical storm, it is a good habit for the individual subscriber to disconnect his TV set from the cable, and, also, unplug it from the wall socket, since he could also get a 'power surge' through the wall socket." (Editor's Note: Very good advice which could save the cable subscriber a good deal of grief and expense.) ■

*As the state of the art improved, so did the cable system in Yucca Valley. The last two operators, Teleprompter and Group W, have effected the most improvement, mostly due to an ever-growing subscription and the ever-present possibility of competition.*

Ron Presley



Ron Presley





# Yucca Valley Art Association



Toward the mid-1960's Artist Chesta L. Spencer and his wife, Angela, invited many fellow artists to their studio-home in Yucca Valley and also conducted numerous field trips and outdoor paint-outs all over the desert. One day in August, 1965, they were holding a paint-out in Pioneertown. Present with the Spencers were Kirk Martin, Margaret Schoenleber, Lucile Morton, Mary Linehan, Josephine Richards and Isabel Cramer. They decided that it was definitely time to have an artists' club in Yucca Valley since there were more than enough professional and amateur artists and still more interested people to make for a lively membership. Martin reached in his pocket and donated the first \$5 "to get the ball rolling."

At a meeting in the Spencer home on September 28, 1965, fifteen artists were gathered to decide on a name for the new organization. A number of names were submitted. The one that was adopted was Hi-Desert Studio Guild, suggested by the late Hildegard Metzger. Along with Chet Spencer, the founder, the charter members of the guild were Lucile Morton, Florence Golterman, Margaret Schoenleber, Kirk Martin, Mary Linehan, Hildegard Metzger, Dr. Rodney Pack, Marcia Terrell, Isabel Cramer, Jack Brenda, Arlet Collie, Angela Spencer, Peter Eagle and Josephine Richards.

Spencer was elected charter president; Brenda, treasurer; and Margaret Schoenleber, secretary.

The Spencers had already started a Youth Program prior to the existence of the guild, so it was only natural for the new organization to sponsor a Youth Art Class in the summer of 1966. Gertrude Perrine was selected as the art teacher. Later, Brenda took over the Youth Program. Lessons for youngsters were free. The regular classes have since been sponsored by the Yucca Valley Parks and Recreation District as both Youth and Adults classes, with Brenda and Erma Washburn as instructors.

Early in 1967, the members decided to change the name of their organization. They voted to call it the Yucca Valley Art Association. The new title was officially accepted on April 18, 1967. The association was incorporated on July 31, 1968.

The Spencers were quite active in trying to arrange public displays of local artists' works. The first such display, other than at professional studios and galleries, was shown at the Security Pacific Bank in Yucca Valley. The showing was very well received and now local art works can be seen on a rotation schedule in many business establishments. Nick Yellenti is another member who has devoted years to transporting and hang-

ing of other artists' works in public and private business houses throughout the lower and high deserts.

The association's pledge is "To make Yucca Valley a Fine Arts Center and promote a cultural atmosphere in our Hi-Desert community." The first yearbook was produced by Angela Spencer for the club year of 1971-72. Her husband had passed away before the impressive yearbook came out. She was assisted by Thelma Irby, Ann Phillips, Grace Clark and Margaret Austin. The cover was drawn by Katholeen Perry.

Sixty-four works of member artists were included in the yearbook. There were 164 members at that time. Photographer Burton Frasher, Jr., took pictures of the art work and the yearbook was edited and published by the Artcraft Print Shop. The selected works included portraits, landscapes, seascapes, rural scenes and still life. It was hoped the yearbook would be adopted as an annual association project.

Member artists whose work was represented were Grace Clark, Joe Rocke, Mabel Cone, Ruth C. Lawson, Bertha Carr, Harry Sabol, Thelma Powell Gunn, Dorothy Pippitt, Kate Mills, Marie Gustafson, Erma Woody, May Crozier, Jack Brenda, Ruth Wainscott, Zelma Bickmore, Bessie Ellsworth "deVeer," Madlyne Murray Seale, Eulalie Reid, Ethel Williams, Vivian Miller, Anne Long, Peggy Stuart "Marne," Theola Smith, Frances Like, Jay Funk, Sally Green, Angela Spencer, Chester L. Spencer, Omer Carroll Rudrud, Georgia Mount, Irene Scoggin, Lucile Morton, Olga Pat Murphy, Mabel Eloise Selzer, Kimley Jackson, Verne Gillespie, Mayme Stannard, Margaret L. Austin, Murl Starr Cushman, Louise Renfro, Floranell Tinsman, Mollie Graham, Nell Havemann, Fran Evans, Marian A. Olsen, Pat Wilber, Kathi Hilton, Charles McMahon, Maxine Fordyce, Marcia Terrell, Bennie Mae De Vault and William F. Staunton, Jr. Two photographs were also included of a collection of sculpted figures by Lois Clarke.

Association activities during the year, in addition to members working on their own creations, include the Annual Art Festival in October; the Grubstake Days Art Festival in May; the Annual Christmas Dinner Party; and the Installation Dinner. There are also demonstrations at the regular meetings. The 1971-72 Yearbook disclosed that Mollie Graham, Fred Penney, Rafael Daraio, Maxine Fordyce, Marshall Merritt and Lyle V. Ball gave demonstrations of their works in various media. At a May paint-out at the Spencer home the guests were the Shadow Mountain Palette Club, Desert Art Center and the Yucca Valley Art Association.



# A Citizen of Merit . . . . .

**H**ow do you say goodbye to someone who has meant so much to so many people? How do you let her know how much you appreciate all she has done done for the community? How do you show your good friend that you care?

In one of the biggest turnouts in the town's history, the people of the Hi-Desert came to an Appreciation Dinner to do just that for Mrs. Phyllis O. Grubaugh on July 1, 1979. The awards event was sponsored by the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and was held at the Scenic Mountain Club, which was filled to overflowing.

They were gathered to pay homage to a lady who was terminally ill with cancer and who had done so much for Yucca Valley and many of the other communities in the Morongo Basin.

Phyllis and her three young children — Robin, Jay and Gale - had returned to the United States and California following the death of her husband, James C. Grubaugh, a USAF officer who had been killed in a plane crash in West Germany. She and the children settled in Yucca Valley in 1958, where she entered the realm of real estate.

Through the years she worked for the E.R. "Bill" Williams Real Estate Office, Frances Ross Real Estate, Marvin Krantz Paradise Valley Realtor, Sky Harbor Estates and Ranchos and Art Miller's Western Hills Estates. She was a member and officer of the Yucca Valley Board of Realtors and in 1965 served as its president.

Then, in 1974, she went to work at the Empire Savings and Loan Association office, in Yucca Valley. It was here that Phyllis suggested a goodwill idea to the manager, Mildred Radzke, which was quickly adopted — providing free bus service one day a week as a benefit to those residents, especially the older ones, so they might be able to do their shopping and conduct their business. (This service preceded the county-sponsored Senior Citizen Dial-A-Ride Program.) In 1975 Allstate Savings and Loan Association bought out Empire, Mrs. Radzke retired and Phyllis became the manager, a position she held until shortly before her death.

These are the bare-bone facts. Her interests and her actions tell much more about her. She set up the sick and elderly daily phone call-ins to check if these people were all right; she saw to it that those who might have gone without were provided holiday dinners courtesy of the Colonel's Kentucky Fried Chicken but which



PHYLLIS O. GRUBAUGH,  
*A Lady who cared*

were paid for by Empire and which were delivered by Yucca Valley's own cabbie, LeRoy Tolen; she worked long and hard to establish a Yucca Valley home for the Indoor Sports, a national organization of wheelchair handicapped people. All of her continuing efforts on this last project became fruitless when another site was chosen for the Indoor Sports.

Anyone who was in trouble or needed assistance could count on her to help out in some way.

Although she never served as a director, she also never missed a board meeting of the Morongo Unified School District, the Hi-Desert County Water District, the Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital District and most of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce meetings.

She was always interested in youth activities for the sake of her own and all the other Yucca Valley children. At the Appreciation Dinner, Al Gilbert, then MUSD Superintendent, told of an earlier day when he was the teaching principal at Yucca Valley Elementary School. He said he was working at his desk one afternoon when a slim shadow fell across his work. He look up to see a smiling face which then became serious. Phyllis introduced herself, said she and her family had just recently moved to Yucca Valley and she was concerned that there was no Little League or boys' baseball team in town. Al said before he knew it he was swept up in the whirlwind of activity and, presto, "we had a baseball team."

Before, during and after her tenure on the Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, she was instrumental in starting many of the youth sports programs, providing night lights for the tennis courts, assisting in the land and legal details of acquiring Machris Park,



# . . . . Phyllis Grubaugh

getting the Yucca Valley Swim Team started as well as the preliminary work on the Community Center Complex.

No one who attended those earlier Cutting Horse Exhibitions, Yucca Valley Swim Team Meets, Little League Baseball games or the Yucca Valley Trojans Varsity Football games will ever forget Phyllis' loud and very enthusiastic cheering for her children and the teams; nor her infectious laughter at any funny happening.

As an indication of her full schedule of interests and active support, at the dinner she received the following plaques and citations of merit:

Easter Seal Society, four separate citations dating from 1974 to 1978; Muscular Dystrophy Association; Yucca Valley Art Association; Hi-Desert Playhouse Guild, Inc., where she served as president in 1976; Morongo Basin Amateur Radio Club; American Association of Retired Persons; and the HDMH Guild.

She also received: the Distinguished Service Award from the Southern California Chapter of the National Arthritis Foundation; the Outstanding Service Award of the MUSD; the Outstanding Citizen of the Year Award of the Soroptimist International of Yucca Valley; the Outstanding Citizen Achievement Award of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce; the Outstanding Service and Leadership Award of the

Yucca Valley Park and Recreation District; and a special award for 20 years of outstanding service to Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital, Inc.

She was also presented with a U.S. Congressional Resolution of Commendation which Representative Jerry Lewis had read on the floor of the U.S. Congress and which was entered into the Congressional Record.

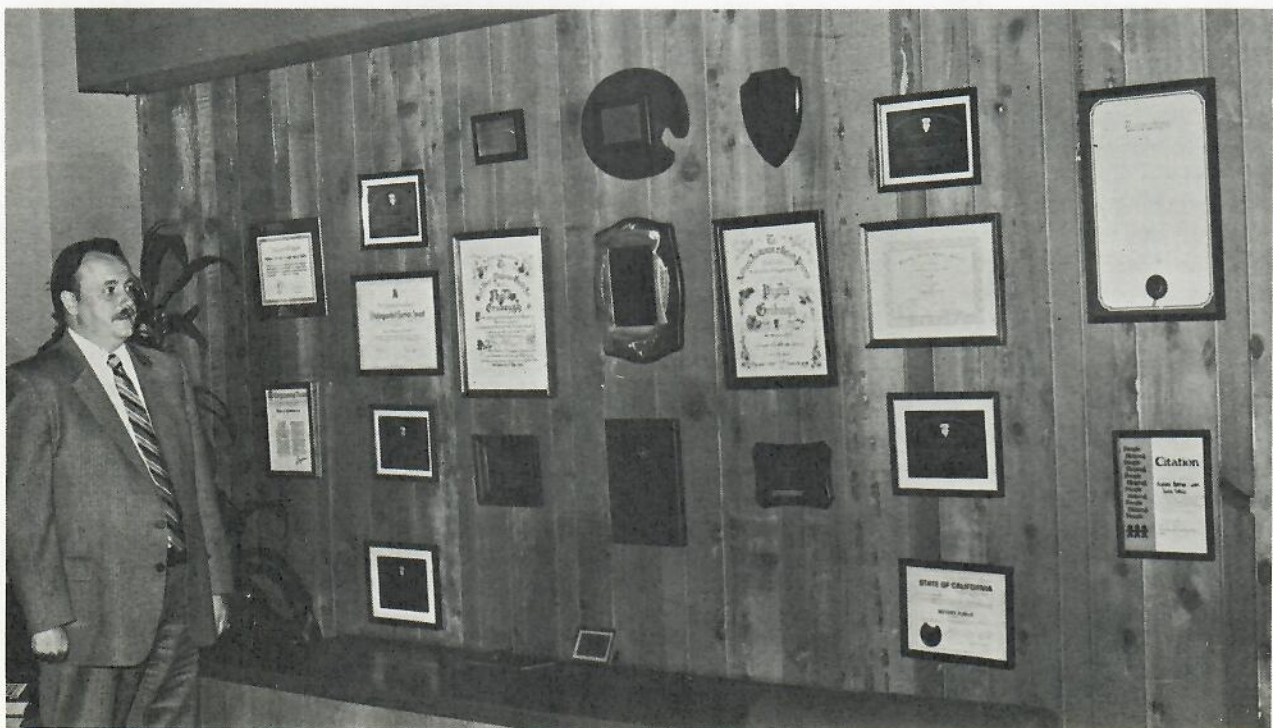
Still another honor was a State Resolution presented to her by State Senator Robert B. Presley and Assemblyman William R. Leonard which had been read and recorded in the State Capitol in Sacramento. It commended her "for her tireless service to the people and to the area" and for receiving the chamber's highest award.

It was typical of Phyllis that, despite her weakened condition, as each award was presented she stood up, accepted it and thanked the donor-representative. In keeping with her spirit, the entire program was kept in a light vein. Then, at the conclusion, everybody departed and, in the privacy of their own cars and their homes, they wept for Phyllis, for her family and for the loss of a true friend.

Phyllis Grubaugh died on July 8, 1979, and is buried beside her husband in the Park View Cemetery, in Stockton, California.

Her son, Jay, lives in Spokane, Washington, and her two daughters, Robin Grubaugh and Gale Lewis, continue to live in Yucca Valley. ■

*PHYLLIS GRUBAUGH was a person who gave much of herself. Her awards and citations, shown Below, attest to a broad spectrum of appreciation of her work.*





# Yucca Valley Players

**W**hen M. Brooks Buxton was asked to supply research material for "The Heritage of Yucca Valley," he, aided by Kenn Witting, supplied volumes. The following passage from "Historical Notes By The Historian," was written by Buxton and is typical of his humor and his sense of humanity.

"It all happened something like this. Yucca Valley, the town we live in, was then in its youth. I am not sure that it isn't still in its youth. Be that as it may, very little in the nature of local entertainment had blessed the valley at that time. Somehow a couple of meagre efforts in that direction had been endured by the gentry in the form of an amateurish musical, 'Kowhand Kapers,' and a hand-hewn 'who-dunnit' called 'Checkmate.'



FROM A Yucca Valley Players, "Playbill" in the mid 1950

"Without rhyme or reason these broken down vehicles proved to be financial successes, cast as they were with volunteer talent. Much of the glory can be attributed to the fact that both were benefit performances for worthy local causes. That was way back in 1953 A.D.

"The astounding part of the whole thing lies in the phenomenal effect these productions had upon the participants. It may have been prompted by mercenary inclinations. After all, one of these people were oblivious to the swift current of cash pouring in from the gullible public. Then, again, it could have been the thrill of hearing the applause for their efforts over the footlights; or, it may have been a simple craving for the companionship afforded during rehearsals.

"Who can say? Whatever the inspiration, an idea was born. Soon a small group, comprised of persons involved in these two productions, was called together at the home of Floyd Peters for the purpose of forming some sort of theatrical club . . . On that fateful night, God bless them, they organized a theatre guild and named it The Yucca Valley Community Players. Forthwith officers were elected and, thus, they bonded together until desperation do them part. The minutes of a subsequent meeting carry the names of those intrepid hams, glorified under the titles of Charter Members."

Those minutes, dated December 16, 1953, reflect that the fledgling thespians and charter members were Floyd J. and Charlsie Peters, Ruble and Minette Caerbert, Goerge and Lola Scott, Kirk and Laurel Martin, Martha Knott (Jeffries), Paul and Muriel Perrin, Vesta Peters, Kenn Witting, M. Brooks and Margaret Buxton, Harold and Irene Westcott and Ruth English.

Actually, everyone on stage and in the audiences had discovered how much fun there was to be had in putting on their own plays and shows. They had all had a taste of it and they all wanted more. And that was what generated the Players and the audiences from the very start — the fun.

Therefore, following a great deal of rehearsal time and even more public anticipation, on April 7, 1954, the curtain rose on The Yucca Valley Community Players' first production, "He Ain't Done Right By Nell." It was produced on the stage of the Community Service Club. Directed by Witting, it starred Bernice Ferris, Vesta Peters, Harold Westcott, Anna Lee Beard, Laurel Martin, George Scott and Ruble Caerbert.

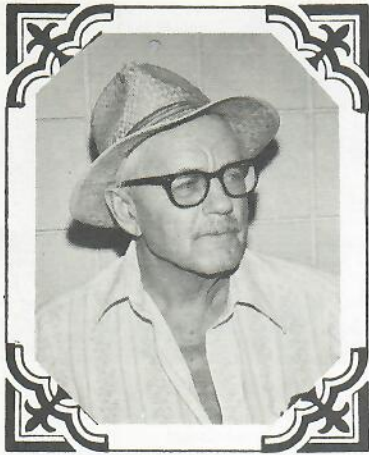
It was more than a success. They even got to take it on the road — to Twentynine Palms, for a Chamber of Commerce benefit there.

After that there was no holding them back, they were off and very enthusiastically running. On a schedule reminiscent of the old motion picture studio contract players' days before the advent of the Screen Actors' Guild, the local group dove in, happily, and produced and staged "Which Shall He Marry" and "Stoney's Brides" — July, 1954; "Plumber vs. Plumber" - August, 1954; "Ghost Road" - September, 1954; "Your Face Is Familiar" - March, 1955; "The Yucca Valley Follies of 1955" - May, 1955; "Dirty Work at At The Crossroads" - August, 1955; "Yucca Valley Varieties" - November, 1955; "Lost Gold" March, 1956; "Take Your Medicine" - May, 1956; "Ready Made Family" - August, 1956; and "Lo And Behold" - October, 1956.

In September of 1954, the Players voted to drop the word "Community" from their name and they became The Yucca Valley Players. Then, in the summer of 1955, they opened up a bank account and started a Building Fund. But their primary goal remained the same. "Everyone was having fun," said Buxton. "After all, that was our purpose. No one had any aspirations for professional acclaim."

At the end of 1956, in order to insure the use of the Community Service Club for their productions, the Players entered into a one year contract. They would have the use of the hall for four plays, plus rehearsal time.





*KENN WITTING, charter member, Director and all around hard worker.*

The plays produced under the contract that year of 1957, were "The Late Christopher Bean," March; "Abie's Irish Rose," May; and "Adam's Evening," August. A fourth play was scheduled but had to be dropped, forfeiting the production dates and box office receipts.

"Everyone was beat, exhausted, expended, drained, tired out, bushed and completely lifeless," said Buxton. . . "Somewhere along the line the original idea had been lost. Before the contract, their only desire had been the enjoyment of dramatics. Under the contract it had become another. Under the contract it had become drudgery. It was decided to recess and rest and never again bind themselves to any fixed schedule of regimentation."

June 19, 1958, was a happy night when "The Tender Trap" opened at the Yucca Valley Elementary School Multipurpose Room. It was directed by Nick Yellenti and the magic and the enthusiasm were back.

"The dramatic success was unquestionable," said Buxton, "the Players were again in business."

Indeed, staging their productions in either the Elementary School, on the Yucca Valley High School stage, the Burnt Mountain Dude Ranch patio or the American Legion Hall stage they continued on with spirits and artistic soul free in such enterprises as the "Remember When Variety Show" and "Motel Madness - November, 1958; "Rebel Without a Cause" - March, 1959; "My Three Angels" - June, 1959; "The Brat" - November, 1959; "The Curious Savage" - February, 1960; "See How They Run" - June, 1960; "The Bad Man" - December, 1960; "The White Sheep Of The Family" - April, 1961; "Mr. Christmas" - December, 1961; "John Loves Mary" - March, 1962; "The Just And The Damned" - June, 1962; "Pistol Pete" - August, 1962; "The Eager Miss Beaver" - December, 1962; "The Mousetrap" - April, 1963; "The Bad Man" - reprised - July, 1963; "Grubstake Gladys" - December, 1963, and May, 1964; "Hong Kong Hotel" -

September, 1964; "The Colonel's Niece" - December, 1964; "Grubstake Gladys" - starting a trend, May, 1965; "Everybody Loves Opal" - November, 1965; "Under The Sycamore Tree" - June, 1966; "Grubstake Gladys In Denver" - May, 1967; "Outward Bound" - October, 1967; "They Honeymoon is Over" - January, 1968; "The Movie Man" - March, 1968; "Grubstake Gladys In The Yukon" - May, 1968; "Mister Peepers" - November, 1968; "Hong Kong Hotel" - reprise - March, 1969; "Grubstake Gladys In Texas" - May, 1969; "Ten Little Indians" - August, 1969; "Bus Stop" - November, 1969; "Tobacco Road" - March, 1970; "Grubstake Gladys In Nevada" - May, 1970; "High Cockalorum" - September, 1970; "Mid-Winter Capters" - February, 1971; "The Good Ship Humidor" - May and June, 1971; "It Happened in Monterey" - September, 1971; "Grubstake Gladys In The Yukon" - reprise - May and June, 1973; "Come Blow Your Horn" - September and October, 1973; and "George Washington Slept Here" - November and December, 1973.

During the twenty years the Players were active, Kenn Witting directed 21 plays; Buxton, 12; Chris Virden, 5; Wes Johnson, 3; Norval Jeffries, 2; Lewis Bradshaw, 2; Nick Yellenti, 2; Dee White, 2; Janice Burke, 2; and Bernice Buchanan, Sherm Wehrung, Ernest Crutcher, Dorie Pope and Bill Groves one apiece.



*THE YUCCA VALLEY Players Production of "The Good Ship Humidor," in 1971*

There were 286 local actors, singers, dancers and musicians who appeared in Yucca Valley Players' productions from 1953 through 1973. Some were shy at first but, as they appeared in many plays and gained experience and poise, other family members joined, too, and took their place on the boards. It happened over and over.

Those who were on stage for the Players include Ruth Collins, Tyna English, Dick Peters, Clyde Barth, Ruth English, Joyce Pitcher, Jackie



Horton, Sandy Harmon, Nancy Marble, Scottie Marble, Roxy Caerbert, Frances Derden, Diane Urmston, Muriel Perrin, Sandi Peters, Paul Perrin, Floyd J. Peters, Kenn Witting, Fred Landgraf, John Arch, Charlsie Peters, Jo Engle, Joan Papendick, Jack Newton, Margaret Buxton, M. Brooks Buxton, Lola Scott, Sandra Peters, Debbie Jernberg, Bessie Gordon, Harry Wallman, Dorothy Ballard, Martha Jeffries, Gene Peterson, Norval Jeffries, Carol Peters, Judy Hammett, Millie Bayes and Ellie Bayes.

Also, Gloria Allee, Midge Tunstall, Sally Peters, Larry Gray, Helene Fisher, Betty Brownell, Bob Brownell, April Jernberg, Al Fisher, Minette Caerbert, Betty Blackburn, Bob Wadle, Jack Aleo, Marguerite Scheuler, Jimmie Hodges, Jack Jecker, Ralph Kingston, Louise Gray, Marvin Katka, Wesley L. Johnson, Bob Brownell, Jr., Duke Hemsley, Gwen Johnson, Dorothy Kingston, Bill French, Elizabeth Gordon, Steve Stine, Harlan Shippee, Paul Hammett, Jean Arch, Patrick Doonan, Jack Sundin, Norman Poulsen, Debbie Shippee, Charlene Bradshaw, Charleen Wilson, Chris Hammett, Gussie Sothman, Myrl Rupel, Georgene Bradshaw, Brad Bradshaw, Rodney Jones, Eunice Rupel, Joe Scott and William Greene.

Others were Horace Rich, Jessie Rae Taylor, Marguerite Hardesty, Melody Scott, Fred Smith, Sr., Bud Buxton, Bob McKay, Darb Bradshaw, Virginia Yellenti, Louise Witting, Ross Weber, Fred Smith, Jr., Frank Heard, Valerie Bradshaw, Joan Valerie, Arthur Aason, Alaris Bradshaw, Jo Ellen Valkis, Cab Caerbert, Gary Collins, Hazel Hitch, Bernice Buchanan, Susie Buchanan, Sharon Collins, Marian Collins, Pat Dotter, Greg Dotter, Bill Dotter, Bill Harmon, Bob Botts, Jim Linehan, O.L. Scheibler, Fern Scheibler, Jack Klempner, Nancy Garber, Toby Price, Betty Claus, Bessie Truehart, Danny Delahoyde, Gloria Treuhart, Ainslee Fowler, Jo Lafferty, Bob Fowler, B.R. Clements, Jr., Sharon Littleton, Dee White, Gladys Buchanan, Eileen Wells, Sharon Streeter, Gary DeRosier, Purssell O'Neal, Betty Vogel, Barry Johnson, Imogene Jones, June Ginn, Ruby Sims, Ed Burke, James Mitchell, Ernie Cameron, Fred Eubanks, John Steele, Claudia Kingston, Jim Buchanan and Fred Wheeler.

Still others were Melba Carlton, Ronnie Ash, Dick Hapsburg, Kay Brown, Bill Pace, Janice Burke, Coy Foster, Sherm Wehrung, Ray North, Anthony Tumolo, Danny Lang, Merlene Wellman, Kathy Arch, Marlene Warren, Doreen Smith, Carolyn Maiefski, Juanita Smith, Tom Proctor, Bill Nicely, Denny Helps, Gus Kaskel, Cora Cotter, Randi Procter, Dick Dawes, Laura Cernich, El Gato (!), Martha Barszcz, Rick Murdock, Jim Cox, Don Massey, Jane Goold, Steve Gilbert, Marti Smith, Rick Walker, Steffy Schoenleber, Bill Booth, John Waysilk, LeRoy Schwenk, Chris Virden, Carey McCarter, Anita Wilkinson, Mike Fanberg, Joe McConnell, Verna



THE 1969 Production of  
"Ten Little Indians" A  
success, as usual.

Fagan, Orville McCarter, Dorie Pope, Pat Rubak, John Springler, Charlene King, Brandon Kelly, Noel Virden, Bob Hand, Maria Bowden, John Garcia, Virgil Schooley, Ed Nau, Walter Barden, Ron Young, David Browning, Richard Miller, Tony Cross, Rochelle Garcia, Linda Rusterholtz, Mary Browning, Peppe Aloj and Doyle Browning.

And still others were Robin Robbins, Sherry Browning, Tammy Browning, Chuck Browning, Jack Cobden, Chuck Young, Joe Cook, Paul Mounce, June McCracken, Tom McGuire, Gene Barkdoll, Tillie Brown, Laura Lei Cox, Betty Fanberg, Jeane Pope, Don Stout, Dianne Cherry, Gene Selzer, Mary Delahoyde, Zella Virden, Cliff Selzer, Sandi Chapman, Ed Smith, Steven Garcia, Ethel McGuire, Alta Gilbert, Hilda Cobden, Phyllis Marshall, Stocky Stockbridge, Jeanie Selzer, Betty Mounce, Jenny Reis, Mary Craig, John and Rosemary Piraino, Jason, Jane Albertson, Pete Richards, John and Dorothy Porter, Carroll Rudrud, Steve Kessler, Mike Virden, Mary Lou Fleming, Sean Callaghan, Louise McCoy, Marilyn Mitchell, Gary Licher, Jim Romoser, Don Van Horn, III, Pam Bishop, Arlene Smelko, Gary Schuler, Janice Talbert, Mitch Sanders, Beverly Dragonette, Warren Lavender, Delcie Vuncannon, Joy Groves, Brian Matthews, Dianne Maline, Patricia Matthews, Steven Miller, Kenice White, John Linville and Fred Eubanks.

There was one more Player listed who should not be slighted here, the notorious and traditional "Phil Inne."

Certainly one of the foremost guiding lights of the Players, Buxton wrote eleven original plays and musicals for the group. They were "Checkmate," "Yucca Valley Follies of 1955," "Lost Gold," "The Just And The Damned," the entire "Grubstake Gladys" series, "Hong Kong Hotel" and "It Happened In Monterey." Mrs. Bertha Saunders Clark, then of Joshua Tree, was the author of "The Colonel's Niece."

Looking back over the years, they should all be happy people. They accomplished what they started. It was fun, while it lasted! ■





**Rotary Club  
of  
Yucca Valley**

*The Four Way Test:*

1. Is it the truth?
2. Is it fair to all concerned?
3. Will it build good will and friendship?
4. Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

*Congratulations on Another  
GRUBSTAKE DAY CELEBRATION*



Yucca Valley  
District 469  
Yucca Valley  
Auxiliary

# Business and Civic Development In Yucca Valley

ROAD RUNNER ROUTE

The development of any society is dependent upon its civic and business growth. The following pages deal with just such development in Yucca Valley. We owe a great debt of thanks to those organizations that comprise the backbone of this, as well as all societies in which they exist.



HI-DESERT STAR



68  
YUCCA VALLEY WOMAN'S CLUB



US POST OFFICE

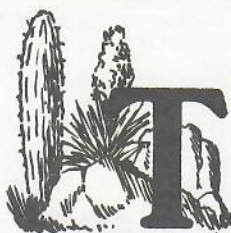
YUCCA VALLEY  
GROCERY & SERVICE  
STATION

BARBER SHOP





# Yucca Water Company LTD.



Three Seattle doctors, appreciating the dry climate, purchased three sections of land in 1926, in what was ultimately to become the western end of Yucca Valley. They intended a restoring sanatorium, to be called the Alpine Sanatorium Hotel. A well was drilled on the property, but all plans changed and all work was discontinued after the Crash of 1929.

Fred Storey and a select group of people from the Los Angeles-Orange County area purchased the three sections in 1945. The group, with Storey, consisted of Guy Richards, Roland Thompson, Gus Tamplis, Al Anderson, Hugh Estes, John Vogel, Oliver Campbell, Thomas Bouchey and Flora McCann. They had a pump installed in the existing well and formed the Yucca Village Company, the town's first subdivision. The Yucca Water Co., Ltd., was also created to service the subdivision and the new residents who were moving in. A partner in the water company was Ted Jurling, an engineering graduate of Cal-Tech. Storey, Anderson and Jurling were the main ones who operated the water company.

The Yucca Water Company grew as the town itself grew—with a steady, phenomenal pace. Starting out with a comparative handful of residential hook-ups, the privately-owned utility has grown until today there are approximately 2,600 hook-ups, with more requests coming in all the time as the last vacant spaces fill in and the houses climb the hillsides. The water company, now owned and operated by Jurling, services the western half of Yucca Valley.

The company now has five wells within its territory, with one of the most successful wells and pumps in the system being that located on the grounds of the Blue Skies Country Club. The way the golf course was laid out and constructed, with its underground grid of pipelines, the water used for irrigating the fairway and greens is deep-filtered down to a subterranean strata and pumped back up for future use.

In 1950, Al Anderson struck out for himself and did something the more timid townspeople thought was crazy. He didn't go just to the east edge of town—he went "way out" east of town and opened up his own subdivision, Joshua Forest Estates, which extended along the valley floor on the north side of Burnt Mountain. He also formed the Joshua Forest Water Co. He was a firm believer in bringing people out to the desert and building up the town. The new people

were hooked up to the Joshua Forest system and the houses began to mushroom. He did not install water meters but charged a low, flat rate of \$3.00 a month for an unlimited amount of water.

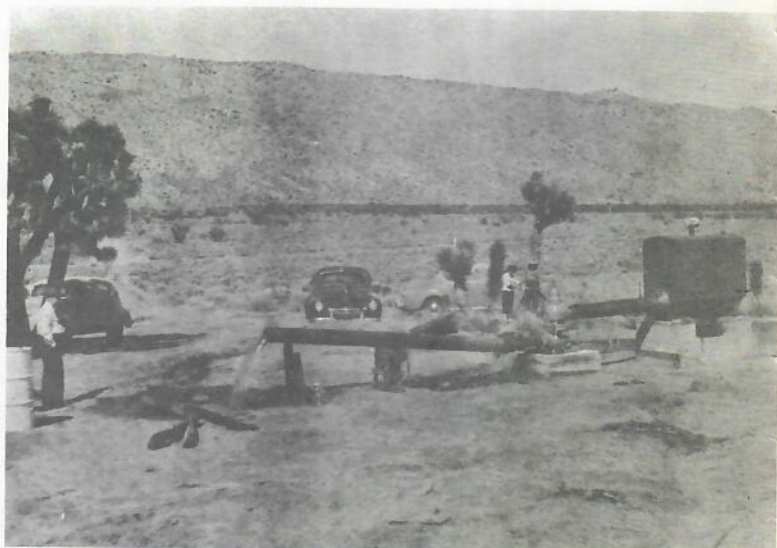
He built a big concrete patio floor and a huge, native-rock fireplace and barbecue pit by the corral at his ranch on Joshua View and told all the new property owners it was for their use to hold barbecues, dances, sing-a-longs and social functions so they could all get acquainted with their neighbors. Needless to say, it was a popular spot. Most recently that property has been purchased by Corky and Jean Kee and a house has been built around the fireplace.

Even though the new area kept growing, the low water rate was hurting Anderson. Roy Roush, one of the most persistent and staunchest supporters of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and the town, helped him out in operating the water company. He was most effective in chasing down the very few water wasters, but it only takes a few to ruin it for the many. One man in particular would turn his hose on his plants on a Friday and let it run all weekend while he visited relatives in Los Angeles. Roush would drive by and turn off the water and finally, by threatening to turn off the water permanently, he broke him out of the habit.

In those troubled times, Jule Boldizsar also gave considerable assistance to Anderson.

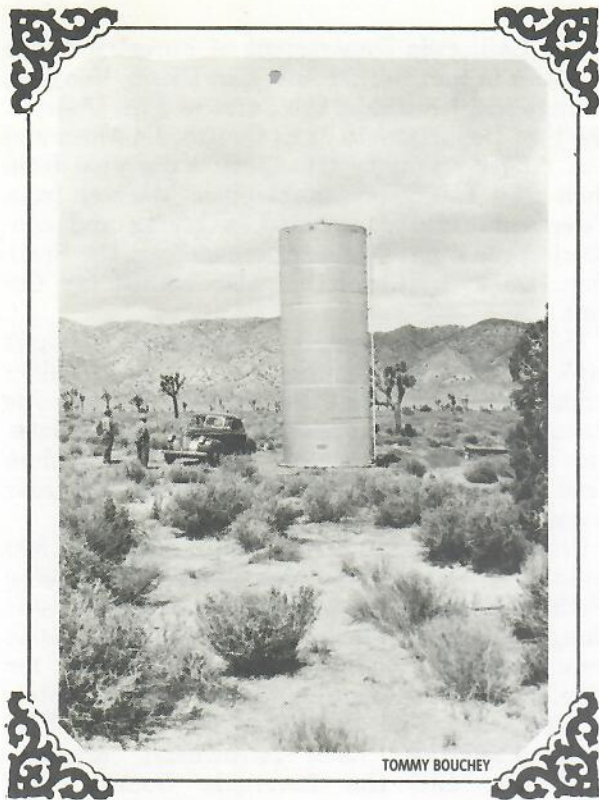
Mrs. Elsinore Machris, principal owner of the Wilshire Oil Co., and her nephew, Norman Essig,

TOMMY BOUCHEY



PRIOR TO 1956, Yucca Valley had no water system. Above is a photo of the first functional well in Yucca Valley's first water system. The original well was north of 29 Palms Highway, not far from what is now the golf course.





TOMMY BOUCHEY

*THE FIRST WATER tank. The water system and Yucca Valley are growing.*

purchased two sections of land in the southeast corner of Yucca Valley, in 1958. On this land, in two increments, they developed Sky Harbor Ranchos and Estates. Developer Robert Schoenleber had also opened up the Alta Loma Estates subdivision due west of Sky Harbor. Art Miller had built up the first unit of his Western Hills Estates and Ranchos east of Old Woman Springs Road and north of the Yucca Valley Airport. Bob Potter was building his subdivision south of the Twentynine Palms Highway and flanking Hanford.

By now Anderson, as ill from the bursting of a dream as from his physical ailments, could no longer go on. Essig and Schoenleber took over the operation of the water company.

Time passed and ore people moved in, more hook-ups were made. Then came an unexpected blow—the California Public Utilities Commission told them they could not sell any more property or build any more houses, there was only water enough for those already living in Yucca Valley. Additional geological studies assured them there was enough water for further expansion, so the principals set about establishing the groundwork for a County Water District, which is self-governing.

Essig, Schoenleber, Miller and Potter all created their own water systems in their subdivisions. These systems were to be turned over to the district if the voters approved and voted the district into existence.

The people did vote to create the Yucca Valley County Water District in 1964. They also approved the original (parent) district bond in excess of \$200,000. Anderson was paid for his company, the four subdividers were paid off for the pipeline systems and the rest went into district operations.

There was immediate interest in the new district in a number of quarters. Almost before the newly-sworn board directors—Harold Brown, Norman Granger, Lou Holland, Norm Essig and Art Miller—got comfortably seated in the earliest meetings, Ted Strong, general manager of the Rancho Ramon Mutual Water Co., in Paradise Valley, expressed an interest in joining the district. It soon did. Next in line were sections of Yucca Mesa. When the original district was created it took in approximately eleven square miles. With the addition, through the years, of Improvement District No. 1, in Yucca Mesa; Mountain Mutual Water Co.; seven different Assessment Districts; Improvement Zone F; and the buying out of the Hacienda Heights water facility, the district has expanded until today it encompasses forty-four square miles and borders the Big Horn Mountains Water Agency and Desert View County Water District in Landers.

Ron Rick was the first general manager of the district, followed by Fred Tripp. Ernest Thompson followed Tripp and is the current general manager. Harold Sutton is the assistant manager and is the oldest employee in point of time.

When Sutton started working for the district in 1968, there were exactly 900 hook-ups for water service. Today there are over 3,850. The Joshua Forest Water Co. started with Well No. 1 located behind the office. Today there are four wells and ten tank reservoirs. Fifteen full-time employees keep the district running. The name was changed to Hi-Desert County Water District in the early '70's.

*FLOWING WATER, at last. No more water hauling.*



TOMMY BOUCHEY



Other citizens who have served as district board directors through the years include Perry Maynard, John Delahoyd, Jule Boldizar, Fred Bishop, John Flowers, C.P. Dennhardt, William E. White, Harold Dunn, Thaddeus "Ted" Strong, Donald McDowell, Jean Nichols, Robert Stephenson, Eugene Riggs, Lee Kenney, James Wallace, A.J. Napier, George Bruen, Leonard Malin and Harry Marshall.

The Hi-Desert County Water District is a part of the Mojave Water Agency, a purveyor for the State of California Feather River Water Project. The people of the local district voted to join the MWA on July 13, 1965.

On July 5, 1972, the Hi-Desert district experienced its only real water crisis. The water system broke down completely due to mechanical problems and structural difficulties with the main well. An early report suggested that the well's structure could have been damaged by underground movement caused by the February, 1972, destructive earthquake centered in Sylmar and which damaged large portions of the San Fernando Valley and the Los Angeles area. But, this was never proved.

Following 1st District Supervisor Bill Betterley's request, the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors declared a state of local emergency. The County Department of Communications and Disaster Services began organizing the emergency effort with local coordination under the direction of the Yucca Valley Fire Protection District. The county's declaration also set in motion emergency help from state and federal agencies.

Over eight miles, or 43,000 feet of six-inch aluminum fire-fighting pipe belonging to the State Office of Emergency Services and stored throughout Southern California was sent at the request of Jack Burke, county Fire Warden. Burke coordinated efforts to install a temporary water main that connected the Yucca Valley district with the Joshua Basin County Water District, eight miles to the east in Joshua Tree.



TOMMY BOUCHEY

The California Department of Forestry in the counties of San Bernardino, San Diego, Ventura, Orange and Riverside; the Barstow Fire District; the Fire Departments of El Centro, La Mesa and Los Angeles County transported the pipe from their own emergency stock-piles. Marines from Twentynine Palms assisted in laying and connecting the pipe. Two work crews from the State Department of Correction also helped lay the pipe.

In the meantime, before the pipe arrived, eight tank trucks were dispatched to Yucca Valley from the County Road Department, Twentynine Palms Marine Base and Norton Air Force Base, San Bernardino, to shuttle water from Joshua Tree to the local district reservoir on Palomar Avenue.

Crews continued to haul loads of 1,000 to 1,800 gallons of water while the pipeline was being readied. Then, to act as relay pumping stations along the up-hill pipeline, eight pumper trucks were provided by the California Institute for Men, at Chino; the Corona Rehabilitation Center, at Norco; the Fire Protection Districts at Barstow, Fallbrook, Lake Arrowhead, Muscoy, Rubidoux; and the Riverside County Fire Department.

Later sixteen portable pumps were sent out from the Marine Supply Depot, at Barstow, to replace the pumper trucks once the pipeline became operative.

Additional supportive equipment was obtained from the Fire Departments of Colton, San Bernardino and San Diego.

During the two weeks the well was being repaired the pipeline provided a limited but adequate water supply to the Palomar reservoir. From there water was distributed to four other reservoirs throughout the district.

As citizens from the whole Morongo Basin turned out to see the on-the-ground pipeline grow in length and see all the people so hard at work, it was a truly warm and comforting feeling to realize that in an emergency a town is not left alone but given help from so many places by so many willing people. ■

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Western Sky Ranch Club opened in October, 1962. It later became Jellystone Park and is now Black Rock Canyon Park.

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Cornet opened on May 16, 1963. It was the first large variety store to come to Yucca Valley.

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George and Virgene Osborn opened their Broasted Chicken restaurant in 1968.

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*TOM BOUCHEY and daughter June, early residents watch as the water system starts to work. The Boucheys later built the restaurant which was a Yucca Valley landmark for years. The pump they are watching was not too far from Boucheys' Restaurant.*



# Community Service Club

**T**he Community Service Club of Yucca Valley started life in July, 1937, to all intents and purposes, at "the better half" of the Legionnaires.

However, while the twenty members always stood ready to assist their veteran husbands whenever and wherever they could, they also found projects of their own and soon became on influence in the community in their own rights.

In writing about the club's early history, Mrs. Cyril Millington said, "There were only a few scattered homesteads in the area at that time and Morongo Valley was the 'most settled' of all. The name 'Community Service Club' was chosen because it was to take in what is now Joshua Tree, the Pipes Country (which is now Pioneertown), Yucca Valley and Morongo Valley. Since there was no organized social life, the Club was also to provide such a medium."

Saturday night dances, square dances, dinners, card parties and all community social functions were put on by the club.

They met in the smallest of the two school buildings on Yucca Trail, while the Legion used the largest one (now the Boy Scout Headquarters). "It was our original Community Service Club group who planted the trees that are still growing around the Boy Scout Building," said Mrs. Millington.

Still another club historian was Mrs. Charlotte Guinan, who said, "... The old school house was cleaned, painted and converted into the women's clubhouse. A two-burner gas plate was installed, cupboards built in and a long table for meetings and on which to serve refreshments was found. At one of the meetings it was voted that the club buy a good flag for the American Legion, so dinners were given, cakes and pies raffled off and eventually \$125.00 was accumulated and presented to the Legion." The local post proudly displayed the newly-purchased colors at the 1938 Legion Convention in Los Angeles.

"All was not too flowery, however, as the community was made up largely of many destitute people who came out for health sake, so the club members began having dinners, rummage sales, quilting parties, quilt raffles, box lunches, etc., for much money was needed for charity funds. The women sewed layettes for the new babies. Several times checks were sent to the needy, always baskets of groceries and loads of wood went where most needed," said Mrs. Guinan.

"Sewing sessions were had, the women bringing their own machines down to the clubhouse, and those machines hummed, sewing for



*THE Community Service Club. It is now the Elks Club.*

the hospitals. When we look back at the good old days of our pot-luck dinners which were really sumptuous — 'tis with real joy — lots of fun and good fellowship prevailed at these get-togethers. If that little building . . . could talk it would tell how its sides used to bulge from so much laughing and the activities inside," continued Mrs. Guinan.

Later the roomier building was constructed on the property donated by the Stacys. Even larger dances were held, more community events took place there including the Grubstakes Days Queen Contests and Dances. Also, the Yucca Valley Players' productions were presented there.

By far one of the most important services that the club ever provided was its First Aid Kit Campaign. In those days there were no doctors. The club invited Dr. Gill and Hal DeVoist, of Hal's Pharmacy, both of Banning, to make the trek over the rough roads to give the members lectures and First Aid lessons. "So, our next project," said Mrs. Millington, "was to purchase First Aid Kits (which Mr. DeVoist was kind enough to give us at wholesale prices) and they were placed in all filling stations, stores and wherever they seemed necessary. The club saw to it that replacements were made of the supplies every two months or as needed, and Mr. DeVoist continued to give us wholesale prices to help us keep up this very worthwhile project."

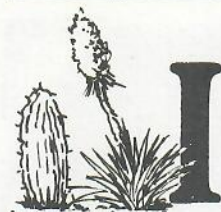
Among the first officers and members of the club were the Mesdames Lula Mae Stacy (the charter president), Myrta Guinan, Charlotte Guinan, Cyril Millington, Ray Bolster, Anna Bull, Julia Overbay, Celeste Hollinger, Berta LaFerne and Clara Livingston.

Years later the club's membership, not as active anymore, decided to sell the Community Hall property on Yucca Trail. Roy Roush, one of the local park district commissioners, worked closely with the club's board members and it was all but finalized for the district to purchase the property. However, arrangements for the sale were called off.

Still later the Yucca Valley Elks Club purchased the property.



# Yucca Valley Lions Club



It was a very special occasion because it was the first service club to be organized in Yucca Valley. The newest Lions Club was to be chartered by Lions international on February 21, 1947, and everyone wanted to make it a memorable event - it was.

The weather had been holding nicely but, on the big day, naturally, it rained. Steadily. Undaunted, Tommy Bouchey, owner of the town's biggest and nicest restaurant, arranged to rent a tent, tables and chairs from the Royal Palms Hotel, in Palm Springs. It all came off just beautifully as the tent was pitched right next to the restaurant and Tommy served 200 Lions and their guests some most welcome hot food prepared in his kitchen and passed out a window into the tent. In the organizational ceremonies the charter officers sworn in here O.D. Thomas, president; and French E. Lewis, secretary-treasurer.



Probably because the club came into being in an emergency of sorts, it has since functioned continually in support of various needs of the community and long ago established a reputation for always being one of the first of the organizations to respond to calls for help or support for specific projects.

A very good example of the club's concern and its spirit of cooperation was in its determined fund-raising campaign to purchase Yucca Valley's first ambulance. As one of the club's first major undertakings, the year 1958 was devoted to this project and deeply involved all twenty members and their wives - the tremendously hard-working Dandee Lions Club.

Under the direction of Paul Perrin, president, they diligently raised \$3,500.00, all of which was donated to purchase a used, but much-needed, Ford ambulance. The emergency vehicle, purchased by the Lions Club, was turned over to the Yucca Valley Fire Department for the sum of

\$1.00. Perrin, along with co-chairmen Luther Colvin and Roy Roush, presented the keys to the ambulance to Fire Commissioner Odis Ray. Operated and manned by the volunteer firemen, it was in service for several years.

The club also purchased an orthopedic walker which was available for the use of any citizen and maintained a local fund account for aid to the blind and those in need of glasses or treatment.



Also, in those earlier years the Lions Club members helped to get street numbers erected on all the business houses for quick and easy identification. In addition, the members went to each business house early in the morning of every holiday and put up American flags on poles in front of each establishment - a patriotic practice that is still observed today.

Working right alongside of each Lion on every club project was his wife - a Dandee Lion. The feminine branch of the club was one year old in May, 1958, and growing stronger and more influential.

The officers at that time were: Hilda Hardesty, president; Vi Ray, vice president; Betty Huntsman, secretary-treasurer; Muriel Perrin, song leader; Fern Cudihy, publicity; and Emily Howell, "nickel nabber."

The regular members were Gussie Sothmann, Edith Howell, Rose Tripodo, Edyth Bassel and daughter, Toby; Val Boldizar, Dottie Tunstall, Betty Ehrisman, Maude Landgraf, Marge Laumann, Chris Hammett, Evelyn Durant, Pat Cummins, Edith Howland and Bertha Appler. They accomplished much.

Always eager participants in the Grubstake Day Celebration, the Yucca Valley Lions Club traditionally sponsors and prepares the Annual Pancake Breakfast. The early-Saturday-morning event is held before the big parade.

In 1963, the local Lions hit upon an exciting and novel idea for raising funds to support their world-famous Sight Conservation Program. As it happened, many of the local club members were qualified, experienced pilots who owned their own well-equipped airplanes. So, they decided to stage



their Flight For The Blind over each Grubstake Days Weekend. In the five-year period the project was conducted they flew literally hundreds of people through the clear, blue sky. Many of the passengers were getting their first plane ride and all were fascinated at seeing Yucca Valley and the high desert from the air.

In more recent years the Lions Club has made special contributions to the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce's Grubstake Days financial committee, which enabled it to procure the carnivals for everyone's enjoyment.

They also operated one of the booths at the spectacularly colorful Indian Pow Wow in 1969.

Other community programs and events, many of them youth-oriented, in which the Lions Club has been engaged over the years include: sponsoring of the Yucca Valley Boy Scout and Cub Scout Troops, the Fishing Derbies at the Blue Skies Country Club, Kite Flying Contests, Flag Programs, Ten Kilometer Run, Student Speech Contest, Christmas Gifts For The Needy and Clothes Drives for New Mexico Indians.

The primary beneficiaries of the Lions Club fund-raising activities are: Guide Dogs of the Desert, Lions Eye Institute, Yucca Valley High

School Scholarship Program, support of the Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce and support of the various Lions International Programs.

The local club, which meets twice monthly, has increased its membership continuously.

Club presidents, following in order after the charter officers, were: Tommy Bouchey, 1948-49; Al Hardesty, 1949-50; Charles Watkins, 1950-51; Tommy Humphreville, 1951-52; D.F. Geil, 1952-53; Wes Wood, 1953-54; E.R. "Bill" Williams, 1954-55; William Runyan, 1955-57, Edward Hardesty, 1957-58; Paul Perrin, 1958-59; Sam Rosenbaum, 1959-60; John Ehrisman, 1960-61; Luther Colvin, 1961-62; Leo Higgins, 1962-63; Dick Miller, 1963-64; Al Peters, 1964-65; Robert Crawford, 1965-66; Bob Roberts, 1966-67; Howard Vore, 1967-68; Leroy McCulloch, 1968-69; William Shemmer, 1969-70; Donald Cummins, 1970-71; Roger Braniger; 1971-72; Lanny Moffitt, 1972-73; Marvin Wood, 1973-74; Darryl Ovesen, 1974-75; Roy Cato, 1975-76; Eddie Hobbs, 1976-77; Ken Moyle, 1977-78; Jerry Paulsen, 1978-79; Paul Bailey, 1979-80; Vic Cataldo, 1980-81; Bill Warner, 1981-82; Jack King-Ellison, 1982-83; Tom Brennan, 1983-84; and Gil Collins, 1984-85. ■

## Soroptimist International



**T**he Soroptimist International of Yucca Valley was organized and chartered in 1966, following sponsorship by the Twentynine Palms club. District President Brigette Page, from Banning, was very instrumental in helping for form the local club.

The Charter President was Kay Vilott. There were fifty charter members. Besides Kay, there are only two remaining charter members who are still active. They are Alice Johnson and Joan Todtman. The club, however, retains its original strength with thirty active members and a good number of honorary, sustaining, life and special members. Many of the active Soroptimists are new members of recent years.

Betty Argoe succeeded Kay as president in 1967; Patsy Skidmore in 1968; Kay Vilott again in 1969 and '70; Frances Boyd in 1971 and '72; Patsy Skidmore returned to office in 1973; Ellie DeuSchel in 1974; Joan Todtman in 1975; Kay Baker in 1976 and '77; Carol Hayes in 1978; Kathy Malin in 1979 and Patti Funk in 1980.

The officers for 1981-'82 are Betty Collins, president; Joan Todtman, president-elect, Melba Carlton, vice president; Lorraine Marino, corresponding secretary; Carol Pervy, recording secretary; Carol Hayes, treasurer; Kathy Malin, one-year director; and Patti Funk, two-year director.

Among the club's earlier community projects were the assistance given the Hearts of Yucca Valley in getting organized, the setting up of the Scholarship Fund Program for local students, establishing the House Beautiful Tours, supporting the hospital and highway projects and supplying Grubstake Days Buttons.

More recent projects include working on the Harvest Hoe-Down, the Aluminum Can Conservation Campaign, establishing a Half-way House for Alcoholic Women and sponsoring a Re-education Program for under-privileged women.

The local Soroptimists also sponsor the S Club at Yucca Valley High School. This year's S Club officers are Susan Perri, president; Pat Galka, vice president; Danelle Mudd, recording secretary; Donna Grant, corresponding secretary; and Kathy Slater, treasurer. Faculty advisor is Margaret Hyek, Soroptimist advisor is Cookie White and Maureen Gamel.

The membership of both the senior and junior clubs take pride in the fact that Charter President Kay Vilott is listed in Who's Who In America as an American Businesswoman from San Bernardino County. ■

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One of the first slogans suggested for promotional use by the chamber was, "Summer, Fall, Winter, Spring — Four good reasons for living in Yucca Valley."



# General Telephone



hen World War II ended Galdys Longshaw, a former WAC, was among the new people moving into the Hi-Desert. A new business that was also moving in at that time generated quite a bit of excitement and comment.

It was the California Water and Telephone Company. They hired Gladys Longshaw as the first telephone operator and set up an office in the small building off of Desertaire and Park Blvd. in Joshua Tree. She ran the switchboard and lived in the rear. All the customers had 3-digit numbers. In those days there were more homes in Joshua Tree than in Yucca Valley. By 1947, the first phones were installed in Yucca Valley, hooked on three ten-party lines. When last checked they were still busy.

Mrs. Longshaw trained Mary Ford's young daughter, Norma (Ojala), how to operate the switchboard so that whenever the town gave a fund-raising event for the building of the future Community Hall Mrs. Longshaw could go, too. Norma proved to be a responsible pupil. Not at all bad for a girl of twelve! It was generally thought that since most of the town would be at the fundraiser anyway, the switchboard wouldn't be too busy.



YUCCA VALLEYS first Telephone Office and Switchboard. All handled ably by Gladys Longshaw Bassett.

Mrs. Longshaw (now Mrs. Bassett) retired in 1955 when California Water and Telephone switched over to Joshua Tree 5 and Joshua Tree 6 prefixes and installed new dial system equipment. Around 1958 the phone company adopted the Forest prefix. Then in 1960 Forest gave way to 365 and 366.



GLADYS LONGSHAW BASSETT at the Switchboard — 1947.

Although California Water and Telephone was affectionately known as "good old Sprinkle and Tinkle," there was no disguising the pride the town felt in 1964 when the Open House crowd toured the newly-constructed Toll Center and Business Office on Yucca Trail. The phone company had occupied The Lombard Building while awaiting the finishing touches on its new headquarters. Prior to that it had been located in Twentynine Palms.

General Telephone bought out California Water and Telephone in 1967. A count in 1968 showed there were between 7,000 and 8,000 primary telephones installed in the whole Morongo Basin. As of March, 1981, there were 5,880 residential and 823 business phones in Yucca Valley only.

If one were to look back through the old phone books it would be possible to trace the area's development. For instance, the 1953 book had ten pages of subscribers' listings and 37 pages of classified ads. By 1960 there were 24 pages of subscribers' listings and 110 yellow pages. Both of these directories were the smaller size of 9 1/4" x 6 1/8".

A milestone was reached in 1969 when Mrs. Camilla Hudson was the recipient of the first telephone in Pipes Canyon. Johnson Valley joined the ranks with its first telephones in 1970.

Yucca Valley got direct distance dialing in 1978. For the early-day residents who remember the old-style pay phones (where you dialed, got your party and then dropped your dime in) this was quite an innovation.

When California Water and Telephone was working on the new toll center in Yucca Valley, Jim Riggs was the Customer Services Supervisor and Jim Simpson was the Service Center Supervisor. Both of these long-time Yucca Valleyans have subsequently been transferred to General's Indio offices and promoted. Riggs to Customer Services Superintendent and Simpson to Service Center Superintendent. E.C. "Buzz" Kropf has been the Exchange Manager in Yucca Valley for thirteen years. ■



# Kiwanis of Yucca Valley



The Kiwanis Club of Yucca Valley was chartered in December, 1961, and was sponsored by the Montebello Kiwanis Club. Its president was Hugh (Pop) Leonard, one of the area's early-day residents who watched its growth and development with a special sparkle in his eye.

Other local presidents have been Art Chase, Dr. Richard Nahhas, Ted Trevett, Charlie Barner, Pat Toy, Bob Hettig, Jerry Ducey, John List, Ron Prescott, Dave Eckenroth, Jack Thomas and Bob Marinello. The 1981-82 president is Gary Bowman.

His fellow club members feel that Jerry Ducey has brought distinction and honor to them by rising to and serving as Kiwanis Lieutenant Governor in 1978-1979.

The local club has been involved in many programs and projects for the benefit of the community, especially the youth of the community. Some are well-known and widely recognized as club projects. Others are carried on quietly and in comparative anonymity. But, one of the club's happiest and noisiest projects, and one which has produced super-charged feelings and spirit, has been the Kiwanis Victory Bell! Charlie Barner, representing the Kiwanis Club of Yucca Valley, presented the bell to Keith Lee, Yucca Valley High School principal, at the conclusion of the first football game between the Yucca Valley Trojans and the Twentynine Palms Wildcats in 1968. Since then the perpetual trophy has gone back and forth between the two rival schools.

The Kiwanis Club has consistently maintained scholarships for Yucca Valley High School graduates, sponsored the school's Key Club, sponsored music students' continued studies and was instrumental in starting and contributing to the High School Band Uniform Fund Raising Campaign.

In addition the club has sponsored and paid for the Bicycle Safety Programs at the Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree and Morongo Valley Elementary Schools; Kiwanis Kids' Day for the recognition of athletic and physical prowess; the Annual Easter Egg Hunt; and the Junior Olympics for handicapped children. The last time the latter was held it drew participants from Los Angeles, Long Beach and San Giego as well as the closer Inland Empire sectors.

Still other worthwhile club projects include removing the graffiti from the faces of the boulders and other big rocks along Old Woman Springs Road and making periodic contributions to the Hi-Desert Nature Museum. The last instance of this was the recent donation of a new display case.

The last two years the club has been in charge of the Grubstake Days Parade, working out all the details of the annual event from keeping track of all of the floats to handling the traffic barricades before, during and after the parade.

One of the most satisfying projects that the club has been involved in has to be restoring of the old schoolhouse on Yucca Trail. It started when Ted Jurling, owner of the property, donated the schoolhouse to the Yucca Valley Kiwanis Club. The members built new doors, put on a new roof, painted it, generally upgraded it and installed a \$1,600 fence around the property. At the 1974 dedication ceremonies, attended by Mr. and Mrs. Jurling, a heavy wooden plaque, built especially for the purpose in Big Bear, was presented and installed over the entry gate. It designated the property as Ted Jurling's Kiwanis Scouts Park. For the use of all Scouts, at present it is the site of the Cub Scout and Girl Scout activities. This was a truly fine club effort since it simultaneously preserved an historic landmark and provided a center for the local Scouts to use and enjoy.

In all of the Kiwanians' good deeds they have been most ably assisted by their wives — the Kiwanettes. ■

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After taking ten months to compile and cross-index every known fact and data about each resident, Bob Barngrover and Joan Wilson put out a city directory and street map. They called themselves the Yucca Valley Publishing Co. and they were located in the building at the corner of the Twentynine Palms Highway and Inca Trail, now occupied by Paul Bailey.

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Florence Harmon took over the Yucca Valley Coffee Shop from Marie and Ed Edwards on August 1, 1957. She also got their recipe for lemon chiffon pie from the Edwards. Florence sold over 700 cuts of that fantastic pie per month during her tenure. Mary Christianson helped Florence in the coffee shop.



# Yucca Valley Board of Realtors

**W**ith the opening of Yucca Valley's first subdivision could an active real estate board be far behind? Of course not! And a good thing, too, since this since this group became one of the town's guiding lights.

On May 3, 1949, the first organized real estate board in the area held an organizational/installation dinner meeting at Bouchey's. Altogether, there were twenty brokers and associates who had gathered to witness the start of the professional group which was named the Pioneer Desert Real Estate Board. Frank Whitelock, of San Bernardino, was the organizing officer.

Board officers elected that first night were Pat J. O'Neil, Morongo Valley, president; Charles Mitchell, Joshua Tree, vice president; Cyril Millington, Morongo Valley, secretary-treasurer. The first board of directors were Gwen Bouchey, Yucca Valley; E.R. Williams, Yucca Valley; J.C. Eisenbouch, Pioneertown; and John L. Duncan, Joshua Tree.

That organizational night was quite a significant event for the desert area real estate industry. And, while those officers (the original seven members) did not hear a distant drum-roll as they performed their duties, the work they accomplished laid the groundwork for what was to follow.

One of the last boards under the Pioneer Desert name was the executive panel of 1958. Paul Goakes, Morongo Valley, was president; Al Peters, Yucca Valley, was vice president; and Ethel Stine, Yucca Valley, was secretary-treasurer.

In 1960, the official name was changed to the Yucca Valley Board of Realtors. President Carl Piazza pledged that the high ethical standards and goals set by the original group would remain unchanged.



While some jokesters tease about "Escrow Indians," it is generally acknowledged and appreciated that throughout the years the membership, which has grown to well over 150, has been professionally and morally involved in the orderly and steady growth of the area. They generously gave their time and expertise in promoting the goals of adequate police and fire protection, roads, zoning, hospital and educational facilities, parks and recreational programs. In all of these endeavors they worked in close liaison with governmental agencies at all levels.

Those realtors who have served as presidents of the board include Pat O'Neil, 1949; Charles Mitchell, 1950; E.R. Williams, 1951; Wilson Lindsey, 1952; John Duncan, 1953; Honey Fellers, 1954; Hugh Green and Duncan, 1955; Lindsey, 1956; Charles Watkins and Paul Goakes, 1957; Goakes, 1958; Al Peters, 1959; Carl Piazza, 1960; Luther Colvin, 1961; Mary Hugentugler, 1962; Hugh Leonard, 1963; Bill Hanson, 1964; Phyllis Grubaugh, 1965; Harold Dunn, 1966; Gilbert Buck, 1967; Peters, 1968-69; Chic Helvey, 1970; Colvin, 1971; Helen Pearman, 1972; Colvin, 1973; Ernie Sall, 1974-76; David Meyer, 1977-78; Leona Hille, 1979-80; and the current president, Bill Myers, 1981.

Among those, in the past who served as vice presidents were Dorothy Sall, Dorothy Turnham, Walter Baker, Mitchell, Peters, Piazza, Colvin and Pearman.

Cyril Millington, Ethel Stine, Mary Otis, Alfred Fisher and Jean Nichols have served as secretary-treasurer. Judy Wolcott is in that post at the present time.

The Yucca Valley Board of Realtors is a member of the National Association of Real Estate Boards and its members belong to the California Real Estate Association. In 1963 it was the second largest local board in the 28th CREA District, which consists of boards in the lower and Hi-Desert. Today it ranks third in size, holding its own among the very large memberships in Palm Springs and Palm Desert. There are 47 real estate offices in the town of Yucca Valley alone. ■

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Betty Brownell, using her advertising contacts, got Yucca Valley on the first set of oil company maps in 1968.

*THE FIRST PIONEER Desert Realty Board elected, May 3, 1949. They are left to right Cyril Millington — Secretary & Treasurer, J.C. Eisenbouch, Bill Williams, John Duncan, Charles Mitchell, Gwen Bouchey, Pat O'Neil — President & Installing Officer.*



# Yucca Valley Rotary Club



**W**hen the Yucca Valley Rotary Club was being organized in 1957, it was under the joint sponsorship of the Rotary Clubs of Twentynine Palms and Yorba Linda. Its formation meeting, held at the old Wagon Wheel Restaurant on November 18, 1957, was attended by District Governor Harry Harper; Dr. J.W. Yale, president of the Yorba Linda club; and, from the Twentynine Palms club, President Moorhead, Ted Richardson, Bob Vanlahr, Earl Swain, Walt Worth, Dick Lathrop, Earl Walker and Judge John Allen.

Potential and future Yucca Valley Rotarians were Wes Yale, acting president, C.H. Jacobs, acting secretary, Terry Pausch, Roger Stine, Ollie M. Donald, Joe Freeman, Pat Thornton, Roy Caldwell, John Richards, Herb Medack, Rev. Ramsey Williams, Jack Coffman, Bill Goodwin, Allan Sears and K. T. Belcher.

The club's organization meeting was held on December 16, 1957. It received its charter on January 18, 1958. Since Wes Yale carried out most of the initial detail work in getting the club organized and on the move, it was deemed fitting that he become the first president. And when the club was chartered, it was immediately unique. It was the first time in Rotary that a father and son served simultaneously as club presidents. Wes at Yucca Valley, his son at Yorba Linda. Wes also earned some distinction by being a charter member of both clubs.

The Yucca Valley charter board included Wes Yale, president; Terry Pausch, vice president; C. H. Jacobs, secretary; Earl Deal, sgt.-at-arms; and directors Joe Freeman, Roger Stine, Wilburn Lewis and Earl Mac Donald.

Later in 1958, Terry Pausch succeeded Wes Yale as president. It was Terry's inspiration that kept the club going, gave it momentum and lent it a humanitarian touch. Early residents of Yucca Valley recollect the crusade for an ambulance and the help for a blind resident of the town. Rotarians remember the dignity with which Terry conducted the meetings, though

beset with great physical pain from an illness that was soon to claim his life.

Members who also have served as presidents are Bill Lewis, 1959; Ted Morton, 1960; Neal Groom, 1961; Ken Tornborg, 1962; Al Gilbert, 1963; Bob Nordyke, 1964; Dr. William O. Autery, Jr., 1965; Jim Riggs, 1966; Sam Loewen, 1967; Dale Harrison, 1968; Bill Edmondson, 1969; Ted Fogel, 1970; Walt Altnow, 1971; Buzz Kropf, 1972; Al LeFevre, 1973; and George Petro, 1974.

Still others have been Frank Page, 1975; George Derrington, 1976; Duck Dowell, (succeeded Phil Quayne, 1977; Al Peters, 1978; Dennis Hinde, 1979; Irl Greer, 1980; and Glen Zanella, (succeeded Jack Everett), 1981.

Under the guidance of all of these presidents, and in addition to the clubs' regular and traditional programs and projects the Yucca Valley Rotary Club engaged in many supportive and developmental community efforts.

Some of these local programs and projects included the donating of a PA System for the Yucca Valley High School Gym, furnishing a room at Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital, presenting an ever-growing number of annual scholarships to high school seniors, participating regularly in Grubstake Days and sponsoring the Whisker Contest, establishing The Yuccatarian news bulletin, inviting the club members' wives to become Rotary-Anns, donating an orthopedic high chair and other items to the Desert Hot Springs Angel View Children's Hospital, sponsoring the Interact youth service club at the

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*THE ROTARY CLUB has sponsored many civic activities. Among them was, for several years, the Children's Fishing Derby at Blue Skies Golf Club.*





high school and assisting that club's regular visits to Angel View, sponsoring Career Days at the high school, supporting the Retarded Students of the Desert Foundation, introducing the interschool "Four Way Test" public-speaking competition, donating heavily to the American Field Service Foreign Student Exchange Program, assisting in the Drug-Abuse Program, providing fish for the Youth Fish Derby at Blue Skies Country Club, sponsoring Little League teams and the Yucca Valley Swim Team, sponsoring a Girl Scout troop, putting up school-safety signs, sponsoring the Rotary Junior Varsity Basketball Tournament, building the fence around the high school campus, donating funds for high school band uniforms, sponsoring an Easter Egg Hunt and building an activity marquee at the high school.

Still other club projects which have aided the community are the providing of lights for Desert Christ Park, building the shooting range at Yucca Park and sponsoring numbers of "Turkey Shoot" Contests, supporting the Heart Association Fund Drive, filling and distributing annual Christmas

baskets, contributing to the Cancer Crusade, developing the landscaping for Triangle Park and helping to clean up the town, supporting the Pioneer Pass Golf Challenge, building a service club signpost on the edge of town, repairing and contributing "The Goddess of Flight" statue by Antone Martin to the present-day Community Center, building and lighting the Welcome Sign at the west end of Yucca Valley and building a barbecue pit in the Joshua Tree park.

Focusing on its International Relations Program, the club has had direct contact with a club in Warmbad, South Africa, and also with a community in Mexico. It is also a 200% Rotary Foundation Club assisting the Foreign Students' Education program.

Under Sam Loewen and Dale Harrison the ten year old club stepped out and played an active role in the Desert Council of Rotary Clubs. But the members are especially proud of George Petro, who became the Hi-Desert's first district governor after he was demoted from his Yucca Valley Club presidency. ■

# A.A.R.P.



Louis Cunningham, charter president of the Yucca Valley chapter of the American Association of Retired Persons, said the local effort started with a committee meeting.

There were several high desert residents who were members of the National Association of the AARP. Its headquarters were in Washington, D.C. They formed a committee and held a meeting to consider the feasibility of establishing a local chapter in the Morongo Basin.

With encouragement from the National Association, said Cunningham, the committee held monthly meetings in Yucca Valley for a year or so. The response was very good to the committee's publicity campaign and open invitation to eligible people.

In 1964, the AARP's National Office granted a charter to the local group, said Cunningham, and it was designated Yucca Valley Chapter No. 236.

Monthly meetings have continued throughout the years and the Yucca Valley chapter has participated in many worth while activities in the Morongo Basin. The AARP, being a Community Services Organization, has as its motto "TO

SERVE - NOT TO BE SERVED." The Yucca Valley chapter lives up to its motto, but also finds time for enjoyable social get-togethers, too. From those first few committee attendees, the membership rolls have grown to 400 people by the end of 1981.

Members who have served as President of Yucca Valley Chapter No. 236 are, in order, Louis Cunningham, 1964; Arthur Chase, 1965-66; Arthur Jerchow, 1967-68; Margaret Winne, 1969-70; Leroy King, 1971; Joan Hoffman, 1972-74; Conrad Lange, 1975; Ruth Murray, 1976-77; Jack Brenda, 1978; Al Perrault, 1979; Merwin McCoy, 1980; and Ruth Murray, 1981. ■

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The Sky Drive In Theatre opened for business on June 3, 1959.

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Osborn's Market opened on August 14, 1959.

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The Alamo Market also opened in August, 1959.

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Mr. and Mrs. Dick Miller opened their insurance office in 1959. They represented Safeco Insurance and other national companies.



# Thank You



We would like to offer a very special "Thank you" to the following people for their willingness and cooperation in supplying pictures and information. Needless to say, this book would not have been possible without their participation. We would also like to thank everyone mentioned in these pages for choosing to live in the Hi-Desert for they have added the warm, flesh and blood dimensions to the story of Yucca Valley. If we

have inadvertently omitted anyone from this book we apologize and ask that persons knowing of such oversights let us know so they may be included in subsequent editions. At this point, the one firm promise made to the readers is that a sequel will not be entitled "Heritage of Yucca Valley II." Finally, special mention should be made of the encouragement and great patients of Ken Witting, who probably thought he would never get his pictures back after all these years! Again, many thanks to:

Loretta and Ralph Fields  
Roger Melanson  
Clay Tunstall  
Ralph and Dorothy Kingston  
Verna Bunch  
David and Vaal Eckenroth  
Mabel Becker  
Joe and Corrine Hammett  
Louise McCoy  
Pauline Marse  
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Nordyke  
Jerry & Karen Woodring  
Art Mitz  
Bob & Doni Stephenson  
Tommy and Gwen Bouchey  
Norm and Elmarie Essig  
Ann and Milt Murry  
Bob Schoenleber  
Jule & Val Boldizzar  
Paul & Lily Griswold  
Rose Tripodo  
Mabel & Harry Housh  
Nancy Rengert  
Evelyn & Lem Parsons  
Hank & Lois Scott  
Maude Landgraf  
Norm Granger  
George & Emily Balazs  
Camilla Hudson  
Alma Katje  
Jack Weaver  
Pauline Hansen  
Richard Rhoades  
Ken and Louise Witting  
Vi Thomas  
Thelma Martell  
Ralph Martine

Don Shiflett  
Rita & Ted Fogel  
Laura Frazee  
Mrs. George Lyall  
Carolynne Hanson  
Mr. & Mrs. Bill Harlow  
Ted Jurling  
Harry Lawton  
Kendall Stone  
Ray Libengood  
Marvin Wood  
Melinda G. Zimmer  
Robert E. Zimmer  
Ruth Duarte  
Sandra Harmon  
Tommy & Lo-Rena Humphreville  
Homer & Ruth Stewart  
Bill & Trudy Underhill  
Edward Kenney  
Hal Paradis  
Art & Mary Gerpheide  
John Wuerth, Jr.  
Pat Hughes  
Gene and Eric Albrecht  
Jean and Corky Kee  
Morgan Reche  
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Paul Perrin  
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Harold Sutton  
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Bill Hanson  
Mary Hugentugler  
Mary Young  
Jean Nichols  
Pat Toy  
Florence Harmon  
Vonda Carlson  
Jim Riggs  
M. Brooks & Margaret Buxton  
Ron Presley  
Liz Leach  
Hi-Desert Nature Museum  
Lorraine Goodhall Koleff  
Merrol Belfield  
Capt. Jerry Glover  
Search & Rescue  
Rod Jones  
Harry Scheibing  
Hi-Desert Star  
Hal & Dottie Bahr  
Mr. & Mrs. Del Moss  
Margaret Keck  
Darlene Wing  
Nick Solbrino  
Mr. & Mrs. Al Gilbert  
Mary Evanoff  
"Cookie" White  
Ethel Stine  
Albert Le Fevre  
Gil Collins  
Pat Cummins  
Billie Reynolds  
Rick Philbrook  
Sheriff Frank Bland

*Finally, we want to thank the following people for their patient response and tireless efforts on our behalf: Hal Paradis, Marge Clayton, Doni Stephenson, Bob Stephenson, Richard Johnston, Donna Bare, Alice Bradshaw, Pat Cole, Mary Fountain, Neda Harper, Janette Rote, Karen Tripp and Lisa White.*



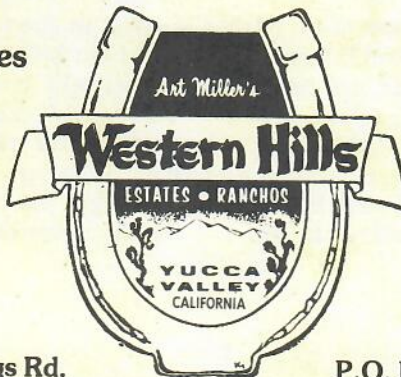
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