

Fall  
2016

# Litchfield Legends

A publication of the Litchfield Park Historical Society and Museum

Without our farms, America would not survive as a nation – and *the Southwest Valley is all about farming*. Our two new museum exhibitions dip into this rich history. We all know about Paul Litchfield and Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. coming to this area to grow long-staple cotton. But the general public knows little about the impact Goodyear Farms had on international farming methods, the story of the Apprentice Farmer Program, and the farming families who still work the land in the Southwest Valley today.

**New Exhibits  
GRAND OPENING  
Sunday, October 23rd  
1:00—4:00 p.m.**

## *The Apprentice Farmers ... and Beyond*

In 1936, Paul Litchfield had an idea. While judging a Future Farmers of America event, he asked what happened to the young men who studied so hard throughout their teen years to learn all they could about farming. He was told that many of them would have to find jobs wherever they could since this was in the middle of The Great Depression in America. And so the struggle of these young boys to realize their dream of becoming farmers and owning their own farm led to one of the most unique farm training projects of its kind in the nation's history – **The Apprentice Farmer Program**. Litchfield's concept was a direct outgrowth of a method he had devised for training young men for industrial operations 30 years prior. First calling the program **The Flying Apprentice Farmers** (after his *flying industrial squadron* in Akron, Ohio), he soon realized that it needed a new name. People thought that the *flying farmers* actually flew planes. Renaming it **The Apprentice Farmers**, Litchfield sought to give these young men an opportunity. It was one of the first training programs in the United States to combine business practices with actual farming. The company provided land, training, and capital – the apprentice farmers furnished the labor. These young men would be educated thoroughly in the management and operation of a farm by Goodyear Farms employees. They had to learn how to do bookkeeping, understand farming markets, and work hard developing a farm of their own. After finishing the apprenticeship, the men could purchase the farms they had been developing at fair market value. The first class began in 1937.



*Apprentice Farmer Classes*

In this exhibition you will see photos of these hard-working young men and

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### Special Thanks

The City of Litchfield Park  
Tim Blake, LandCare LLC  
Palm Gate RV & Self Storage

## Letter from the President

*Heads, you win ... Tails, we do too!* That's probably not how you remember that saying going, but it's the reality if you purchase one of the **copper coins** the LPHS is selling to commemorate **Litchfield Park's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary!** As you all know, we have commissioned the striking of a .999% pure Arizona copper coin featuring an image of Paul Weeks Litchfield on one side and three cotton bolls on the reverse. These coins come enclosed in a protective case along with an information card detailing the historical coin press on which they were made. They are really beautiful and reasonable at just **\$20 each**. They make the perfect gift to remind someone of the unique environment and history we all share because of the efforts of Paul Litchfield 100 years ago. Think what it might mean to someone who has long since left the area to receive this reminder of days gone by, or to a child who in the future might reflect on growing up in the Litchfield Park environs. They are available in the museum gift shop and will be for sale at all events in which the LPHS participates over the next year.

That leads me to the **Litchfield Park 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration** that will be held on **February 10, 11, and 12 of 2017**. Planning for the celebration of this important milestone has already begun! Detailed information will be available soon – so keep an eye out for it!

Finally, in addition to looking back at where we started and taking note of how far we have come, it is equally important to continue to make plans for the future. The Litchfield Park Historical Society is doing just that. We are moving forward in the selection of a

permanent location for our museum and determining a roadmap for how to get there. The one thing we know for certain is that this step will require the support of all our stakeholders. Each one will need to contribute in whatever way he or she can to make this dream a reality. We will keep you posted and thank you in advance for your support for this exciting new venture.

**Lisa Brainard-Watson**

**President of the LPHS and MUSEUM**

## WWII Memorial Fixed



**Old WWII Memorial**

Many of you noticed that two of the metal plaques on our WWII Memorial fell off during a wind storm in August. Plaques had fallen off at least three times before. So it was time for a permanent correction to the problem. They have been attached now with bolts and we believe that they won't be falling off again. We wish to thank the Litchfield Park community for your concerns. It was heartwarming to see how protective everyone was of our WWII Memorial.



**Current WWII Memorial -  
before repairs**

### ***The Apprentice Farmers Cont. from page 1.***

hear their stories – men who loved to work on the land and just wanted to have a chance to own their own farm – *their American dream*. At first, these young men were required to be unmarried. That didn't last for very long. Soon they had wives and children; a bountiful crop in and of itself. You will see how these young men and women struggled through the later years of the Great Depression and weathered the stormy years of World War II. Trying to cope with the loss of many of these men to the military, they established a co-op with the approval of Goodyear Farms. The **Adaman Farms Co-operative** was established in July of 1942 with headquarters in the project's Community Center. The success of sharing machinery to make each farm more profitable soon led the group to establish the **Adaman Mutual Water Company** in November of 1943. Because of this, the Apprentice Farmers soon went by the name of the **Adaman Farmers**.

Living along Sarival and Alsup Roads, these young farming families developed a strong community. They knew each other well and shared with each other in order to survive. Down through the decades, these farmers and their wives along with their children and grandchildren met often for reunions and shared memories of the times when they were *the apprentice farmers*.

Also included in this exhibit are photos from the **1943 Farm Forum**. This event showcased all of the things



***Paul W. Litchfield hosts  
the 1943 Farm Forum***

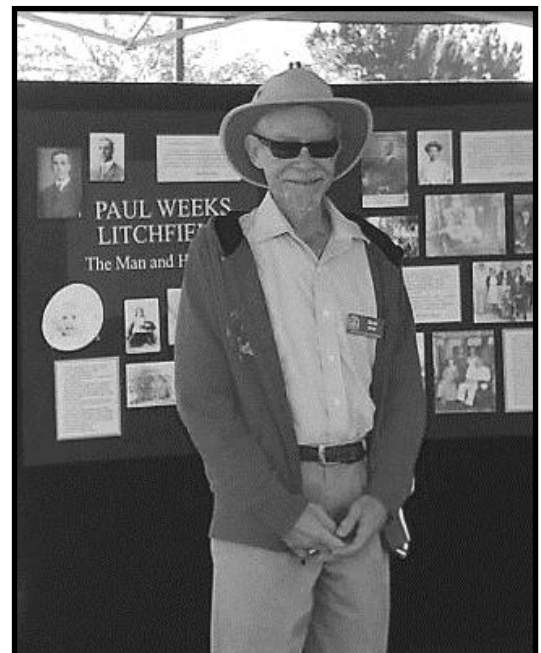
Goodyear Farms was doing at that time to agricultural writers and farm machinery manufacturers from around the country. They spent three days at Goodyear Farms learning about all sorts of farm machinery that had been placed on Goodyear tires, new packaging paper for citrus, The Apprentice Farmer Program, the *green feeding* of cattle, and even the new *Wingfoot* homes. Eighteen stations around the farm, each marked with a wooden saguaro, presented some new farming method to these visiting men. Dressed in Western gear, they also enjoyed barbeques on the grounds of the Wigwam and at the base of the White Tank Mountains. A hi-light of the forum was the awarding of land contracts to the first seven *apprentice farmers* who had earned their right to purchase their own farms. The forum turned into a yearly event and showcased not only the latest from Goodyear Farms, but also farmers from around the country who had developed their own techniques for water and soil conservation. These farmers treasured the chance to see the famous Goodyear Farms in action.

### **Samuel Jay Fox (1948-2016)**

Sam Fox, one of our LPHS Museum docents, passed away so suddenly last June 16<sup>th</sup> that it took our breath away. He loved being a docent and had been one since we opened in October of 2012. He was one of our best! Sam was always reading to gather information to make the tours he led of our exhibits more meaningful for our visitors.

Sam attended every museum opening, 'Remember When' event, and Annual Meeting. In addition, he was an ever-willing volunteer – manning our LPHS booth at art festivals (shown in the photo), helping with our bulk mailings, and entering information into our membership records.

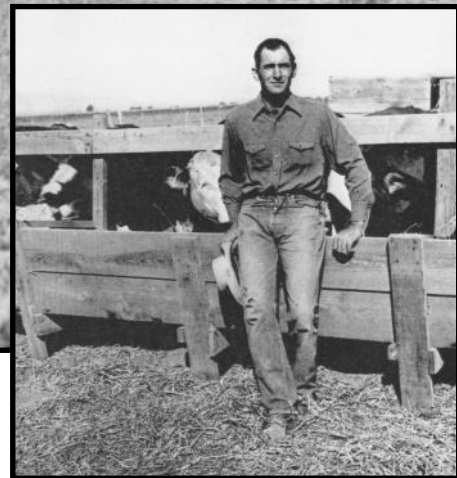
Sam gave his last tour on May 24<sup>th</sup>. He was our good friend and fellow volunteer – and we miss him greatly. *Shalom, Sam – May you rest in the hands of God forever.*



# *The Apprentice Farmers*



*Apprentice Farmers and their wives*



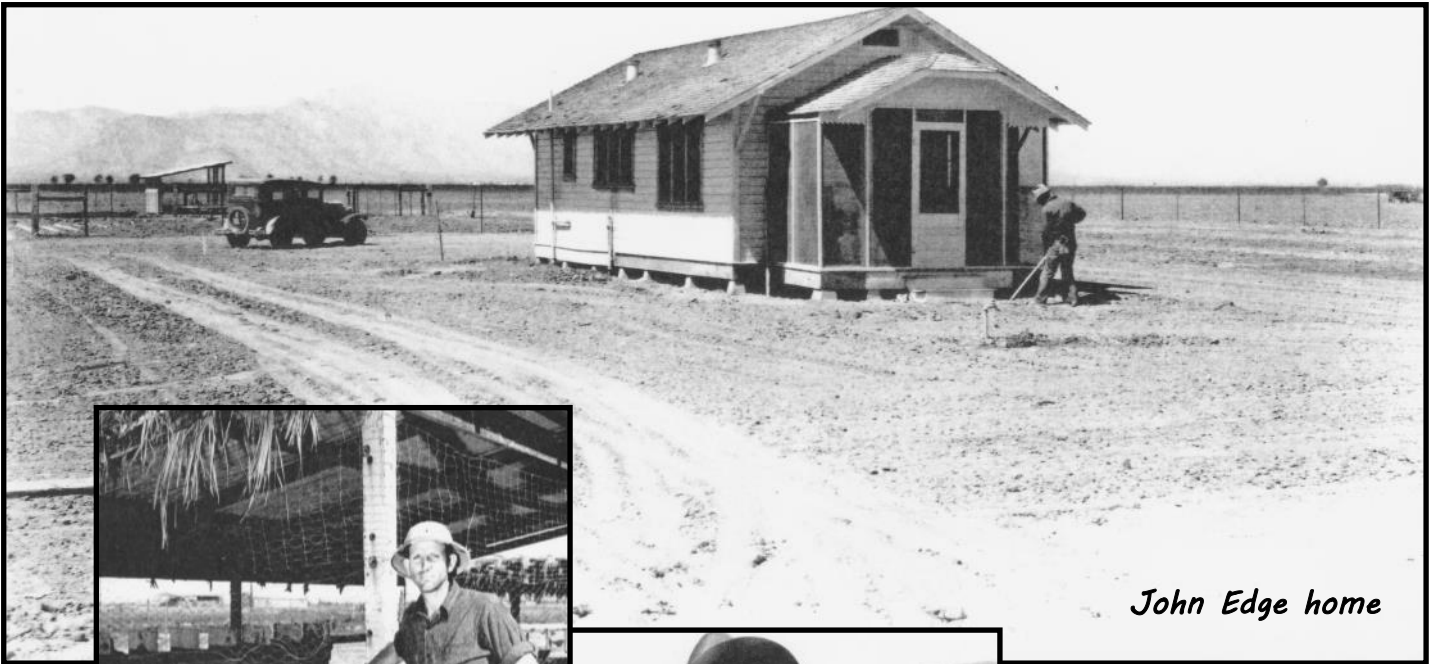
*Ralph Hunt*



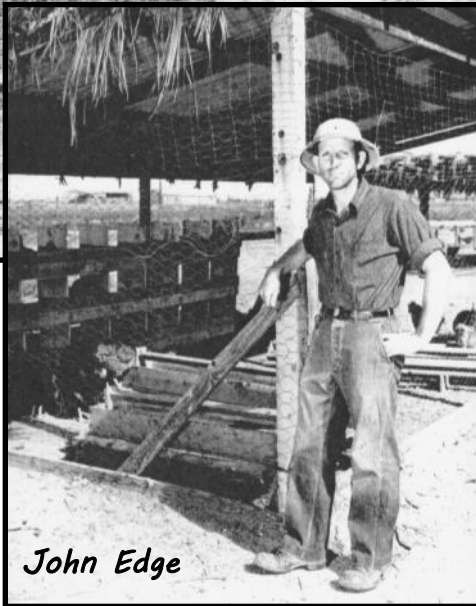
*Armon Curtis*



*Adaman community picnic*



*John Edge home*

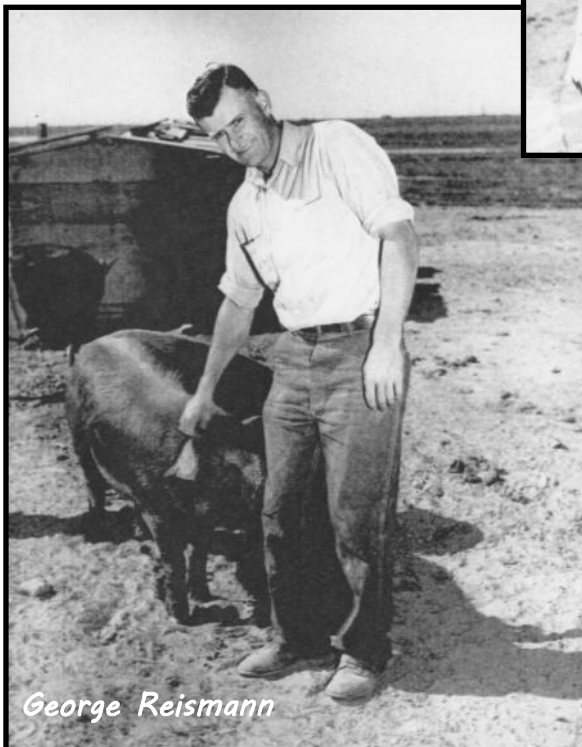


*John Edge*

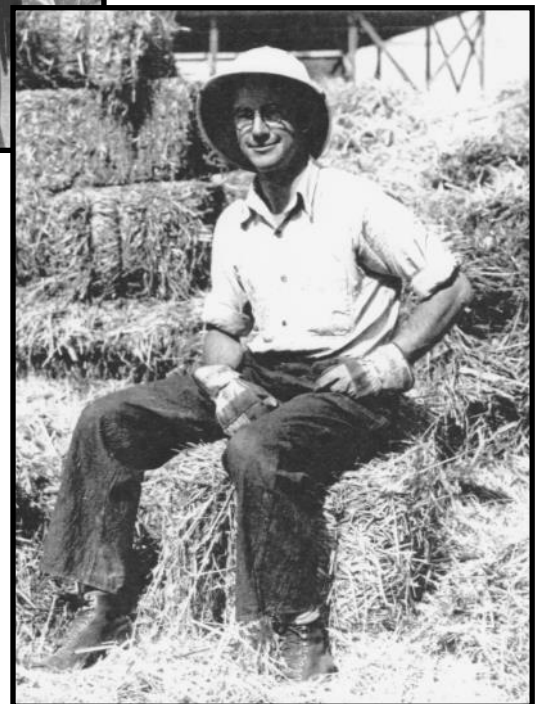


*Juan Brashears*

*Exhibition underwritten  
by Wilbur E. Kaufman*



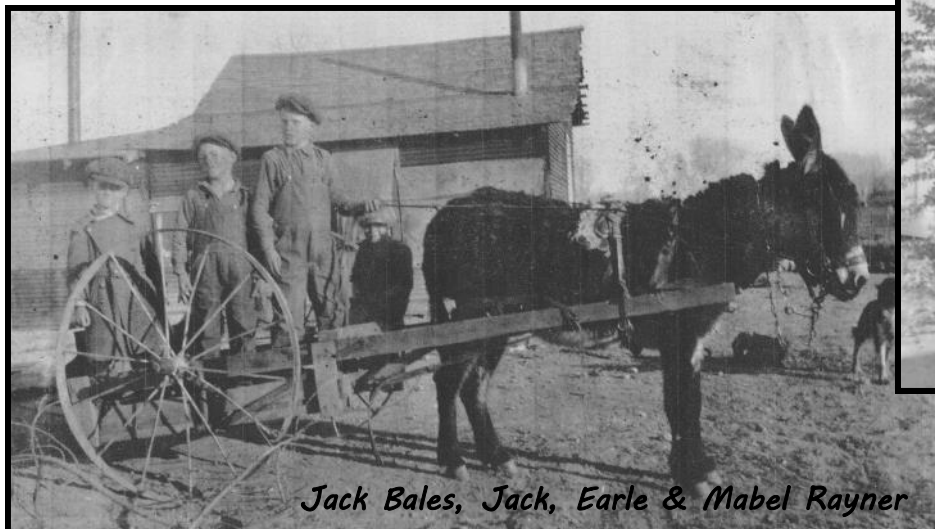
*George Reismann*



*Richard Lyman*



# Southwest Valley Farming Families





*W.T. Gladden*

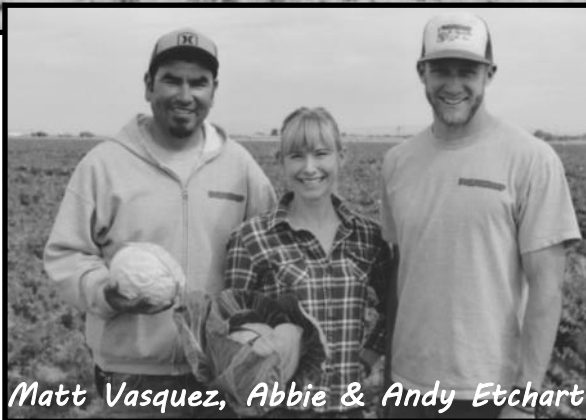
*Heiden Family*



*Pierce Family*



*Les, Hal, Art & Bruce Heiden*



*Matt Vasquez, Abbie & Andy Etchart*



*The Duncan Family*



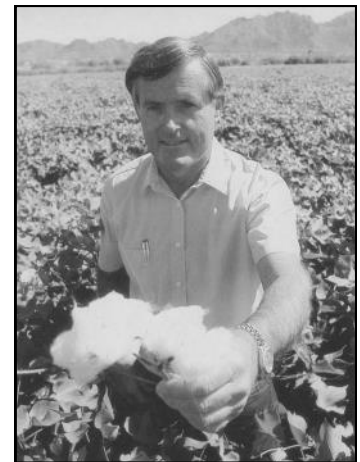
*Realtor Dylan Robinson of Charity Realty AZ and new home owners Kale & Jordanna Saunders present a check to LPHS President Lisa Brainard-Watson. The money will be used to underwrite the Southwest Valley Farming Families exhibit.*

# *People of the Land: Southwest Valley Farming Families*

This companion exhibit to *The Apprentice Farmers* takes a look at farming today in the Southwest Valley. In researching the information from the 30s, 40s and 50s, we decided we wanted to know what has happened since those early years. So we asked twelve families who have been farming in the Valley for at least three generations to share their families' histories. We were particularly interested in how farming has changed in the last six to seven decades, as well as their concerns for the future of farming. Of particular interest, we wanted to explore the issues of water, the evolution of farm machinery, and labor issues along with shifts in markets and demographics. What we found out is fascinating.

Going back three, four, and five generations, this exhibit has examples of dairymen, cotton growers, vegetable farmers, rose growers, organic farmers, and the Rosztoczy Family who not only made available the best farm equipment they could find, but own farms of their own. Along with the Rosztoczys, you will be able to see the histories and farms of the following families: Henry Conklin, Arnott Duncan, Mike Etchart, W.T. Gladden, Bruce Heiden, Larry Jarnagin, Greg Pierce, Ron Rayner, Will Rousseau, Jerry Rovey, and Leyton Woolf.

We discovered that farming today requires being able to balance a multitude of factors at any given time and adjust to them quickly. Certainly water is an important resource to each and every one of them – a challenge in the middle of a desert. You will see the canal system and methods of water conservation used today. You'll even see how tractors, using advanced technology, can grade the land to any degree and thus improve irrigation of the soil – no water is wasted. You will hear about nutritionists who specialize in cattle feed and make monthly visits to farms to evaluate what is needed. See how cows are kept cool in the desert heat and how cattle are kept healthy. Our Arizona farmers produce some of the world's best cotton and about 80% of all roses grown for market. See how these roses are cultivated, how cotton is harvested, and how organic vegetables are kept safe. Added to this, see how our farmers adjust to changing local, national, and international markets, new government regulations, and labor requirements. See how they battle the impact of unexpected weather, disease, and infestations. Then there are the encroaching development issues. There are four times as many people living today as there were during the era of Goodyear Farms – yet the earth remains the same size.



***Ron Rayner***

These farming families have spanned a century of rapid change – moving from simple manual labor to complicated businesses that have to shift rapidly with changing times. The sophisticated techniques used today would astound their ancestors. Each farm has a tale to tell. You'll be amazed at what's going on around you daily. And you will be grateful for these people – because without farms, there would be no food. Don't miss this fascinating exhibit!

## **New Front Door**

We are pleased to announce that over the summer we have had installed a new front door at the museum. Our old one was deteriorating quickly and difficult to open. It was paid for by a grant from the city of Litchfield Park and a generous donation by LPHS Lifetime Member Wilbur E. Kaufman. We are grateful to both for our new door. Take a look at it the next time you visit our museum.

## **Litchfield Park Centennial**

February 10, 11, and 12, 2017

Mark your calendars now for next February –  
and join the city of **Litchfield Park** as we  
celebrate **its first 100 years!**

Don't miss it!



## Litchfield Park Centennial Coins

**The PERFECT gift for Christmas!**

They are on sale now at the museum. Buy one today!



And don't forget all of the other wonderful items in our gift shop – kachinas, SoapRocks, Christmas ornaments, license plates, journals, note cards, Mexican and Native American wood carvings, books, and cotton bolls.

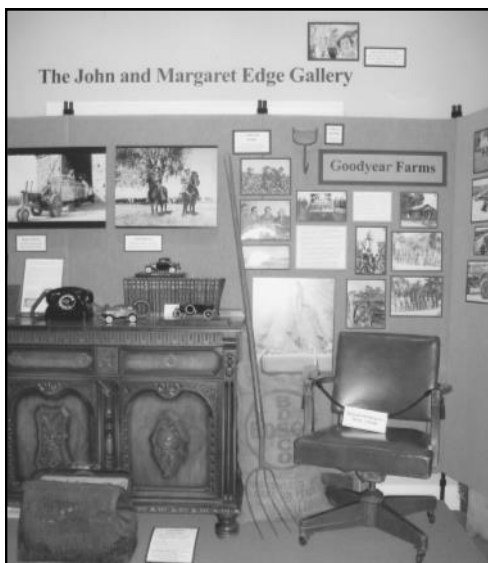
**Stop in soon and take a look.**

### Gallery is Named

The last gallery in our museum finally has a name. It is called **The John and Margaret Edge Gallery** and it was sponsored by LPHS Lifetime Member Wilbur (Bill) E. Kaufman. Bill had lived with the Edges during his last two years of high school earning his way by working on John Edge's farm. It was during that time that John became Bill's mentor and life-long friend.

John Edge was in the first class of Apprentice Farmers in 1937 and among the first group of seven to receive their land contracts in 1943. He was a bit older than his fellow farmers and was a hard worker. As a result, many of these young Apprentice Farmers looked up to him. John raised the record stand of cotton during the project's history – 83 bales of 500 pounds each on 36 acres. He also had 55 cows (Guernseys and Holsteins), 80 acres of sorghum grains, and 2,900 chickens. John later left the program and moved to the Verde Valley where he farmed until his passing in 1986 at the age of 76. His wife Margaret still lives there and just turned 97.

This gallery covers the start of the Southwest Cotton Company in the Salt River Valley as well as the work done by Goodyear Farms. Included in the gallery are photos of the 1937 and 1938 Apprentice Farmer classes, as well as a photo of John Edge in front of his home on his farm. We thank Mr. Kaufman for his generous sponsorship of this gallery. We know that the Edge Family is truly honored to have this privilege bestowed on them.



## Sponsors

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### Museum Hours

Wednesday, Thursday and Friday  
10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.  
And by appointment - call 623-535-4414

Address: 13912 W. Camelback Rd.  
Litchfield Park, Arizona 85340

email: office@LPHSmuseum.org

#### Do you have empty aluminum cans?

The LPHS will recycle them for you.  
Leave them at the garage door of  
610 N. Old Litchfield Road, Litchfield  
Park. The money will help the LPHS  
pay its utility bills.



**Join Us.** It is through your dues and donations that we are able to continue our efforts  
to preserve the history of Litchfield Park. *Become a member today.*

### LPHS 2017 Membership/Special Donation Form

January 1 – December 31, 2017 membership year

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Membership Dues** ☐ Single Adult \$20 ☐ Family \$30 ☐ Business/Professional \$60  
☐ Contributor \$125 ☐ Lifetime \$600

**I would like to make an additional Special Donation of:** ☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Thank you! Please make your check payable to:** **Litchfield Park Historical Society**  
PO Box 1936, Litchfield Park, AZ 85340

Would you be interested in volunteering for our organization? ☐ Yes

The Litchfield Park Historical Society is an official IRS 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation, and membership dues and other donations are tax deductible for persons who itemize.