



# the Quarterly

Remembering the Southwest Valley

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Salt ≈ Agua Fria ≈ Gila  
Three Rivers Historical Society

## Yes, Arizona Has A Heart!

You live close enough to hear the beat. It is Monument Hill in Avondale. There is an actual Monument on top of the hill. A climb to the top takes you up 1,158 feet above sea level; look down and see three rivers; the Agua Fria, the Gila and Salt. This is a riparian area that is home to wildlife; so when you hike up to the marker you might see many birds, reptiles, toads, frogs, lizards and squirrels, rabbits, bobcats, coyotes, deer - plus trees and vegetation, often in bloom.

Besides the beauty of the panoramic view for miles, this very spot has been the Heart of Arizona since 1851 when the US Boundary Commission made a reconnaissance survey of the United States-Mexico boundary under the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe-Hildago.

In 1865 John A. Clark, Surveyor General for New Mexico and Arizona, selected Monument Hill as the initial point for surveys in Arizona. A survey from this point was conducted in 1867 covering 36 miles in five days.

One Hundred and nineteen years later (1984), the

Bureau of Land Management Cadastral Survey team, Arizona State Lands Department, Salt River Project, Gila River Indian Community, Arizona Professional Land Surveyors Assn. and Bureau of Reclamation initiated a project to refurbish the monument.

In 2002 the Monument received status on the National Register of Historic Places.

*By Gloria King*



## Goodyear Aircraft Helps in War Effort

Goodyear Aircraft, a part of Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company, was built in 1941 in Goodyear, Arizona to help supply airplane parts, blimps and other defense items. The following is compiled from an article in the May, 1943 Arizona Highways. It describes some of the workings of this busy factory that produced, among other things, the flight decks for the PB2Y3 Convair.

*The machine-formed shapes pass along to the third factory, the fourth, and the fifth until they come to the bench of a skilled metal craftsman.*



*Machines are good, but not that good. Final shaping, trimming, and smoothing are done by hand.*

*Parts are shaped, smoothed and drilled to exacting tolerances and moved on to be cleaned. The shiny metal has picked up acid from the sweat of the worker's*

*hands and oil from the machines. Now it is subjected to a powerful non-injurious chemical. Every trace of foreign matter is removed.*

*Clean parts move on to the paint shop. To protect their workers against the health menace of air brushed lacquer paint and fumes, Goodyear has*

*Continued on page next page*

*built a waterfall twenty feet long and ten feet high. Behind the waterfall are powerful suction pumps. The air in the paint shop is constantly exhausted through the water. Thousands of parts can be sprayed each hour and the air in the room remains clear and healthful.*

*Next it is the finished parts store. Racks, bins and shelves hold some six thousand catalogued items. Then we move on to sub-assembly. Let's see what is done in the manufacture of the bucket seats for the pilot and co-pilot. A chair is a chair, right? Not so. These chairs must be extremely comfortable. The pilot may sit at his controls twenty-four hours at a stretch, and every minute that he is there, he must be free to concentrate all his skill on the task of flying the giant boat. Goodyear chairs have at least fifty different parts and they are fitted together piece by piece in a sub-assembly.*

*On the side of the boat in the wall of the flight deck is an escape hatch; an emergency exit for the crew. About a hundred small parts are used in the hatch which is light, strong, and water-proof. The aft deck is added to the forward deck until the floor is finally completed. The side panels have been growing on their assembly lines. The three lines meet in the mating jig where massive side panels are joined to the deck and part of the roof is installed. Bit by bit sub-assembly lines add completed sections.*

*Less than 25% of the workers at Goodyear Aircraft were skilled mechanics when hired. Goodyear's record of success in training these unskilled personnel is as impressive as the record production these workers have established.*

*A number of revolutionary instruction systems evolved. Engineers read blue prints, but these workers didn't. Ingenious executives realized that to train these people to read blue prints would waste precious time when the war effort needed the flight decks. They had artists create drawings of the individual parts which the employees must build. With the picture and pattern in front of him, he was able to turn out the perfect job. Watchful eyes of Goodyear Aircraft inspectors check every part after every operation, and sharp eyed Navy men provided a double check.*

*Somewhere far at sea the crew of a PB2Y3 goes calmly about the business of flying this giant sky ship confident in the quality of the boat they fly. Navy inspectors will tolerate nothing less than perfection, the pilot and crew's lives depend on it.*

By Peggy Jones

## A Note from Bill Arnold



*Past President Gloria King and President Bill Arnold*

I am honored to be chosen by the board of directors to be the next president of the Three Rivers Historical Society for 2010. I am impressed with the progress 3RHS has made in its brief history. Dedicated people working together has made this organization a success and an outstanding example of community pride.

I am following a dynamic leader who has done an outstanding job and has many accomplishments to her credit as president. One only needs to read any of the Quarterly newsletters to see the amount

of work and creativity Gloria King and her team of volunteers have accomplished in her past two years as President. I have my work cut out for me as I follow in Gloria's footsteps.

I am proud of this year's team of officers as follows: Jo Ann Gongaware is our 1st vice president; Ed King is our 2nd vice president; Sally Kiko is our secretary; Peggy Jones is our treasurer; Ed Buonvecchio is the Quarterly editor; Gloria King will continue to serve on the Executive Committee as our Past President.

I love this type of non-profit organization and look forward to working with our southwest communities to tell the stories of our rich history. We want to know who came first to our area and what they contributed to our homeland. We are proud of our family history and how we fit into the mix. If you want to know who, when and how our Southwest Valley was established, come join our membership and learn with us.

I'm looking forward to a good year.

## Growing up in Litchfield

My parents grew up across the street from each other on the hogback just below town in Jerome, Arizona. My dad, George McMillan, was born in 1906, in Jerome Junction which is now Chino when Arizona was still a territory. He played the piano, trombone and sax at the dances at Granite Dells and Clarkdale to help pay his way through dental school. After graduating, he practiced dentistry in Jerome and Clarkdale. My mother, Elizabeth Galbraith McMillan, was born in Colonia Diaz, a Mormon polygamist colony in Sonora, Mexico.

I was delivered by Dr. Robert Hilton in 1941 at the Jerome Hospital. Dr. Hilton left Jerome in 1943 and moved his family and practice to Litchfield Park. One day, Paul W. Litchfield said, "We now need a dentist," and Dr. Hilton told him he knew just the man. So Dr. George McMillan moved his family to Litchfield Park in 1945 when I was just four years old.

I started first grade when I was 6 years old at Litchfield Elementary School. Mrs. Simmons was our teacher. Mrs. Sweeney taught 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade in the same classroom with the second graders on one side of the classroom and the third graders on the other. Mrs. Valunzuela was the School Nurse and Hazel Creche (sp) was the cook. Lunch was a quarter; popsicles and other cool treats were a nickel. Some of the highlights of the school year were parent's night with artwork and penmanship displayed. The upper grades decorated their bikes and did a square dance/quadrille on the football field. I remember the Maypole dance, too; students interweaving crepe paper streamers around a pole.

A lover of animals, my first pet was a canary named "Shampoo". But one day Cindy Barrow's cat got a claw in the cage and ate Shampoo. My next pet was a dachshund. We spent many summer nights hunting toads. One day I saw Cindy Barrow riding a horse and it was love at first sight; for horses, not Cindy. About three years later I bought an old

Map 1867 Mills  
Continued on next page

# Dan Salazar's Memories of Camp 52

donkey that had packed ore out of the mines in Colorado. Jenny cost five dollars and that included the bridle. Later, I sold Jenny to Nancy Hilton for seven dollars, making a profit of two dollars.

My first horse was named Buddy. I rode out and spent the night at Janice Ashby's where Buddy shocked himself on the hot wire while taking a drink of water from the trough. Well, he never drank water out there again! Another time, I remember that Margaret Truman, who lived in Waddell, about twelve miles northwest of Litchfield Park, rode her horse to spend the night with me. The next day we both rode to Ron Rayner's farm, near Bullard and Highway 80 (MC-85) to visit him. We did a lot of horseback riding in those days and had a lot of fun.

After graduating from Agua Fria in 1959, I studied agriculture at both ASU and UofA. I ended up at the University of New Mexico at Albuquerque and became a dental hygienist. After working in several dental offices I retired in 2001. I continued to raise and show quarter horses and have raised chickens, goats, cattle and hogs.

My first husband died and I now live with my second husband. We have no children. I used to play guitar and sing at the Rock Springs Café at their Sunday Jam. Now, a couple of times a month I join the Youngtown Jam. I enjoy gardening, working on the computer and dancing at the Moose Lodge and American Legion.

My mother served on the Agua Fria Union High School District Board for many years. She was the first woman to serve on that board. My parents were married almost 50 years when my mother died. My father practiced dentistry in Litchfield for about 50 years; my brother, George Robert (Bob) McMillan, following in his footsteps was a Litchfield dentist. He and his wife, Rae, raised their family in Litchfield. Their son, Kent, and his family live there, too.

By Diane McMillan LeMaire

Dan Salazar was a guest speaker at Three Rivers Historical Society's meeting last March. He shared his entertaining story with us.

Dan Salazar was born in Litchfield Park, at Camp 52 in January, 1931, to a single mother. His mother had been befriended by Harry Price at Southwest Cotton Company. Mr. Price was sent back to Akron on business and said he would return to marry Dan's mother. He never returned.

He described the camps of the Southwest Cotton Company as little towns where everyone knew everyone else and helped each other. His mother worked for the local doctor, Dr. Ralph Penn. She helped him deliver 100 babies in the camps. His grandmother helped care for Dan. She told him of a severe dust storm that rolled through the camps when he was six months old. The dust was so thick inside the house that his grandmother wet a sheet and draped it over the crib to keep him from breathing the dust. By 1936 his mother had married and they moved to the central coastal area of California. He had 10 younger siblings. His step father was a farm laborer and they moved around as he worked the crops. This made it difficult for the children to get an education. He remembered starting first grade two years in a row. The schools in the small farm communities were often two room school houses with as many as four grades in each classroom.

In 1945, he returned to the area when his grandmother died. While he was here he worked a variety of jobs including the Litchfield Drug Store, the Wigwam Golf Club, and Goodyear Farms (Southwest Cotton Co.). He got well acquainted with some of the German POWs in the area and bought them soap, candy and cigarettes, passing them through the fence.

About that time his friends were talking about joining the military. He joined the Navy, went to radio school, and served aboard the USS Vogelsang, a destroyer. In 1952, he was discharged.

After his discharge he returned home to Litchfield Park. He stayed with his aunt and uncle, Mary & Joe Miranda. Dan met his wife, Charlotte at a local dance; it was the Valentine's dance at the Riverside Ballroom. They married in 1953 and were together for 52 years until her death from cancer. They spent many years of their marriage working with engaged and married couples as a part of Marriage Encounter. He remarried in January, 2009. He is the author of the book "Before the Silver and Beyond the Gold."

## Why History Matters

Some people think that history is boring and does not count for very much. But the minute you begin to forget your own history is the time you begin to lose your culture. Once you lose your history it can be very hard to get it back and other cultures will reclaim your heritage and rewrite your history for you.

*Dilze'e Apache historian Vincent Randall, Clarksdale, AZ*

## Have You Seen Our Website?

We have a great website up and running. Visit [threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org](http://threerivershistoricalsocietyaz.org) and see what our webmaster, Mark Pelletier, has accomplished.

The website includes: *Who We Are*, *Our Meetings*, *Society Newsletters*, *How to Join*, and *Contact us*. Under the heading *Newsletters* you can click and download the last several issues of "The Quarterly." Under *How to Join*, you can click on "Membership Flyer" and download a copy of our brochure. There is even a link to register for our email list.

Our plan for 2010 is to expand the site, adding many of our historical photographs and articles. The graphics are great! Thanks, Mark, for a job well done!

# The Westside Enterprise

The *Westside Enterprise* was a local weekly newspaper that covered the towns of Avondale, Goodyear, Litchfield Park and Tolleson. It might be called a “country paper” because it carried the local news of these towns that included reports of Town Council and PTA meetings, wedding and obituary notices, and a social column from each of the towns. The local social columns might tell of someone’s recent trip, a baby shower, or who hosted the bridge club. And, of course, it carried the advertisements for the businesses of the towns.

I’m not sure when the paper started, but in 1942, Eugene S. Ely purchased the paper from Mrs. Leeta Cox and Ted Allen of Valley Printers in Glendale. Gene Ely came to Arizona from Ohio in 1936 with his parents hoping the warm climate would give him some relief. You see, when Gene was 13 he was hit hard by arthritis. By the age of 18 he was confined to bed. However, after a number of operations, he regained some mobility. He met his wife, Emma, a German immigrant, when she was his nurse. They married in 1945. His lack of mobility may have contributed to his love of reading. He read five daily newspapers and magazines such as *Time* and *Fortune*. He was a student of Roman history, as well. Gene and Emma were active in the community. They were members of the Avondale Community Church, the Chamber of Commerce and the Couple’s Club; Gene was a member of the Goodyear Lions Club and Emma was a member of the Tolleson Business and Professional Women’s Club. They were also the parents of two daughters, Irene and Doreen.

The Ely’s did it all. Gene traveled to each of the towns he covered in his manual-controlled car with Emma at his side. He might stop at town hall to see if the new street equipment had come in. Next, he stopped at the hardware store to check on the week’s advertisement. At home, on the phone and with his typewriter he rounded out the news and advertising for that week’s edition. A trip to Glendale to deliver his copy to the printer, and later, back to the communities to deliver the finished papers to the delivery boys was part of the weekly routine.

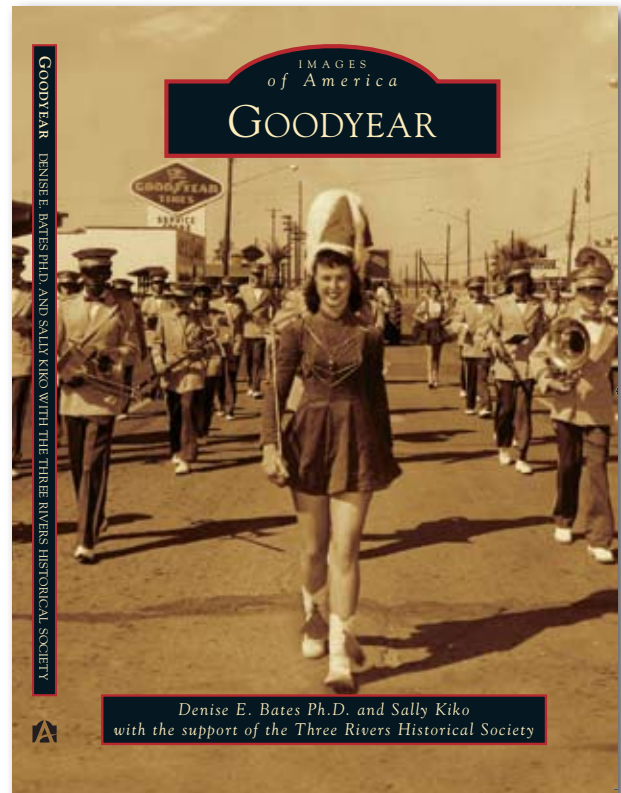
They watched the area develop from cattle range and farms into busy little communities, each town having its own unique personality. As nearby towns grew, the Ely’s newspaper business grew. In 1962, he founded Pueblo Publishers, Inc., a newspaper printing operation. He published *The Westsider* (*Westside Enterprise*), the *Northwest Peoria Times*, the *South Mountain Star*, the *Maryvale Advisor*, and the *Arizona Racing News*. During his career he also owned the *Glendale News-Herald*, the *Youngtown Record* and the *Sun City Citizen*. He and Emma were considered pioneers in Arizona publishing.

Mr. Ely died in 1975. Following Gene’s death, Emma sold her interest in Pueblo Publishers to Bill Toops the partner in the business. She kept the *Westsider* until the late 1980s when she moved to Nevada to be close to her daughter, Irene. In 2000, Emma also passed away.



## Images of America Goodyear

Arcadia Publishing has just released the book, *Images of America Goodyear* by local authors, Denise Bates, PhD and Sally Kiko, with the support of Three Rivers Historical Society. Denise and Sally have spent countless hours on research, the collection of photographs and gathering stories of long-time residents. The book can be purchased at local book stores and gift shops.



# A Sailor Remembers Litchfield NAF

At 17, Len Mozey of Anoka, Minnesota joined the Navy. Following boot camp he was trained as a jet mechanic. His first duty was aboard the USS Boxer, an aircraft carrier. His next duty station was Pensacola, Florida, the home base of the famous Navy flight demonstration team, the Blue Angels. He was invited to join the crew of the “Blues” as a mechanic; his job was to keep the jets in perfect flying form.



*Photo Courtesy U S Navy)*

The “Blues” did their winter training in Key West at that time, but the Cuban Missile Crisis forced them to find a new winter home and for 1963-64 and 1964-65 winter season they trained right here at the Litchfield Naval Air Facility! The pilots loved it because the fine weather permitted them to fly every day. Len told me that the mechanics loved it because with all the airplanes in storage they had a never ending supply of spare parts. But perhaps, even better, Lucky Lager was 10 cents a glass at the Enlisted Men’s Club!

Although they were here for only 6 weeks each winter, Len remembered that keeping the jets repaired meant long hours. When “The Longest Day,” a movie about D Day, opened in Phoenix the studio had asked the base to send some servicemen. So a busload of sailors in their “dress blues” went to Phoenix. They arrived a little early and the officer in charge told the men they could go to the bar across the street from the theater for one beer. Len said, “You should have seen the bartender’s face when 60 sailors came through the door!”

Although Len took great pride in being a part of the Blue Angels, it was also a tough assignment, especially during the show season. They were often on the road for 2-3 weeks at a time and might be in 7 states in 7 days. He loved the “Blues” enough to manage the Blue Angel Alumni website for a number of years.

## Did You Know?

Tolleson was named for Walter Gist Tolleson. In 1908, Mr Tolleson came from South Carolina seeking a cure for his son, Roy, who suffered from inflammatory rheumatism. Just west of Phoenix he found and purchased a 160 acre dairy ranch.

In 1912, he subdivided 40 acres of the farm to sell. Evidently a good salesman, he advertised free train rides and lunch to entice folks to travel eleven miles to inspect the land. There was a brass band and \$5 gold pieces were prizes. He sold more than 80 lots at an average price of \$50 each! And, thus, a town was born.

# The Indianapolis of the West

“Indianapolis of the West?” Yes, Phoenix International Raceway, located south of the Gila River on Avondale Boulevard, was once billed as the “Indianapolis of the West.” The race track, originally owned by Dennis Wood, was completed in 1964. Carved out of the foothills of the Estrella mountains, it was intended to create an Indy racing experience for the western states. The raceway has a one mile tri-oval race track and a 2.5 mile road course. In March of 1964 A.J. Foyt won the track’s first Indy Race, a 100-mile USAC race at an average speed of 107.5 mph. Over the years 58 Indy Car races were held here and Mario Andretti, Al Unser and Bobby Unser all graced Victory Lane. Steve McQueen won a sports car race on the track’s road course, too.

1985 saw a change in ownership as Emmett “Buddy” Jobs purchased the track. A lightning strike in April, 1987 started a fire that destroyed most of the main grandstand. Reconstruction started quickly and a three story suite building was added outside Turn 1. By October, 1988 PIR with seating for 30,000 fans was ready for it’s NASCAR debut. By PIR’s 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1994, Bill Elliot, Dale Earnhardt, Davey Allison and Mark Martin had won Cup races and Michael Andretti had topped 170 mph in an IndyCar. Stock cars and motorcycles have also used the facility. In 1996, reserved seating capacity grew to 65,000 and in 1997, International Speedway Corporation purchase PIR.

PIR has continued to grow and make improvements. The lights were added during the winter of 2004, allowing night time racing and NASCAR added a second race at PIR each year. The Buddy Allison Grandstand was expanded, increasing seating capacity to 76,000. The SPEED Cantina, a sports bar and grill, opened in 2008. With all those race fans streaming into PIR rural neighbors and Estrella residents know to either stay home or avoid the traffic prior to race time.

Another interesting feature is the “Hillside,” a fan-favorite viewing area located on “Monument Hill” by turn four. At the top of this hill is a USGS bench marker known as Baseline and Principal River Meridian. It is the reference point for most public land surveys. It was selected by John A. Clark, Surveyor General for New Mexico and Arizona in 1865, after the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hildago. After that treaty, ending the Mexican war, the northern border of Mexico was the Gila River. The monument is now listed on the National Registry of Historic Places (See “Yes, Arizona Has a Heart” in this issue).

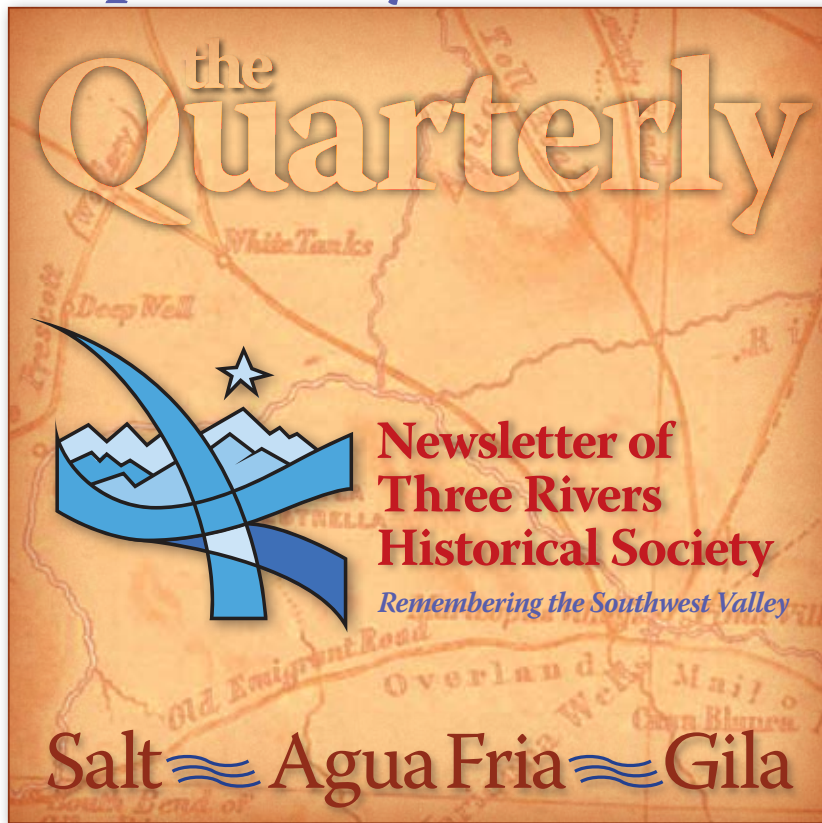
*By Sally Kiko*



*Photo  
Courtesy PIR*

# April, May, June 2010

## Yes, I want to join Three Rivers Historical Society!



- Student \$5\*
- Family \$25\*
- Contributor \$100\*
- Lifetime \$500
- Single \$15\*
- Business/Professional \$45\*
- Benefactor \$250\*
- \* *Yearly Fee*

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Cell \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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

Make out your check and mail to:

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

Three Rivers Historical Society is a 501 (c) 3  
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## Three Rivers Historical Society

*Remembering the Southwest Valley*

P.O. Box 7251, Goodyear, AZ 85338

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*The Quarterly* editor & graphic designer:

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### ***3RHS Meetings***

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at Goodyear City Hall, 190 North Litchfield Road, Suite 117, Goodyear, Arizona. Notices of date, location and guest speaker are e-mailed. Be sure we have your correct address. E-mail Sally at: [kskiko@cox.net](mailto:kskiko@cox.net)