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Salt  Agua Fria  Gila
Three Rivers Historical Society

2012 Gallery 37 Art Project Finds a Home

During the summer of 2012, Gallery 37 recruited students for a community art project. Gallery 37 is a program of the West Valley Arts Council that provides both employment and an opportunity for aspiring artists to design, develop and install public art in the West Valley. Each summer a group of students under the direction of a professional artist create art that a community has requested. Over the years, Gallery 37 projects have been done in Avondale, Buckeye, El Mirage, Goodyear, Peoria, Surprise and Tolleson.



In 2012, the group was asked to create art to depict the theme of the exhibits proposed for the Centennial Trail. The discs have been in storage since their completion in 1912. Guylene Ozlanski, Goodyear's Art and Culture Coordinator, was the instructor for the Gallery 37 project and shared the disappointment of the students that their project had been in storage rather than out where the public could appreciate their talent and hard work. The discs recently found a home near the Nature Center at Estrella Mountain Regional Park. They have been mounted with a brief descriptor that tells the geographical, geological and historical significance of the area. A dedication will be held in the fall.

Memories of Phoenix Trotting Park

For many years the only thing that reminded people there had once been harness racing in the Southwest Valley was the forlorn skeleton of the once proud grandstand visible from I-10.

After a protracted absence, harness racing returned to the Valley on January 11, 1965. Manes and tails flying, trotter with their sulkies and drivers in tow flashed around the newly built five-eighth mile tract at Phoenix Trotting Park.

The property was immense, occupying 640 acres at Van Buren and Cotton Lane. The concrete and glass climate controlled grandstand, one of the facility's 35 buildings, could accommodate five-thousand people with room on the ramp for another 10,000 spectators. The parking area held 5,000 cars.

Track support operations such as the racing secretary's office, entry room, driver's locker room, emergency blacksmith shop and veterinary facility were located on the ground floor, while patrons dined in style on the terraces and main floor. Reversible escalators served the various levels.

The first season kicked off with 60 nights of racing, but the track was ill fated from the beginning. Owner James J. Dunnigan, Sr. had been advised that the I-10 would pass by his doors within approximately three years, proving easy access from the Valley population centers. With construction of the track expected to take a couple of years, he thought he could weather the nearly inaccessible conditions for one season. Unfortunately, construction of the freeway was slower than predicted, forcing the track's closure after just two and a half seasons.



The building sat empty for years and then in December of 1997, it was used as the site of a large explosion staged for the Charlie Sheen movie No Code of Conduct. To the horror of Valley residents the explosion caused the death and severe injury to hundreds of birds living in the abandoned building.

By Nancy L. Brandt

Editor's Update (Phx Trotting Park)

The Phoenix Trotting Park facility was owned for a time by Grand Canyon College. It was then purchased by Citrus Commerce Centre LLC, which is owned by the Roles family. In 2002, they built a 285 space RV Park; phase two expanded it by another 300 spaces. Westview Storage Solutions has repurposed the horse barns into storage lockers.

On January 14, 2016, the Phoenix Trotting Park property was listed for sale by Colliers International. The asking price for the 194.32 acre property was \$16,500,000. On August 10, 2016, it was announced that the sale was in escrow. By mid-December it was announced that the deal had fallen through.

Now the West Valley iconic structure is scheduled to be demolished by the end of the year. Asbestos removal is currently underway. A maintenance building and the jockey building on the south end of the property are also scheduled for demolition.

For more information and wonderful photos please visit www.phoenixtrottingpark.com. This website has photos of construction and great interior shots of the various areas of the grandstand.

Avondale Street Names Honor Its Pioneers

Avondale has a variety of street names. Some are generic, like Central and Western Avenues; some are numbered, such as First and Second. Some streets have had more than one name; one has had three. Dysart, which is named for a rancher north of Avondale, was first known as Lateral 29 and then Eighth Street. In the early days many of the streets took their name from the “lateral” canal it bordered.

Aragon Lane is named for a pioneer family that came to Coldwater in 1928. The patriarch, Tomas, did farm work, made adobe bricks and then built homes and businesses with them. His family performed the garbage service for both Goodyear and Avondale for years. His boys worked hard, collecting the garbage and then going door to door to collect the fee. During World War II, seven of his sons were part of the war effort.

Ely Lane is named for the publisher and editor of the local weekly newspaper, The Westside Enterprise. Gene Ely had limited mobility because of severe arthritis, but managed to edit, sell ads, publish and deliver a newspaper with some help from his wife, Emma.

Rhodes Lane was named for farmer and businessman, T.C. “Doc” Rhodes. There is a corner park on the northwest corner of Central and Western Avenues named for him, too. It is the former site of his Chevron service station. “Doc” Rhodes served on the Avondale School Board for 32 years and the Arizona House of Representatives for 16 years.

Holly Lane is named for Joe Holly who was a bulk distributor for Union Oil Company. The business was located adjacent to the railroad track on Western and Dysart. He also served on the Avondale School Board from 1948 to 1973..

Riley Drive was named for Fred Riley. He was an engineer on the Southern Pacific Railroad and the owner of Riley’s Bar on Western Ave. Riley’s Bar had two entrances back in the days before desegregation; one for whites, the other for blacks.

Hill Drive is named for Joe Hill. The Hill family had extensive history in Avondale. They built a canal helping to bring irrigation to the area. They also subdivided some of their property and sold lots in the heart of Coldwater. He owned a service station and parts store on Western Avenue.

Kinderman Drive is named for Mr. Kinderman, who owned the Coldwater Mercantile on Western Avenue. He also served as Postmaster. As a youngster, going to Coldwater Mercantile was quite an adventure. It carried a variety of merchandise from farm supplies to household goods, irrigating boots to shovels. Did I mention that it also had an ice cream counter?

Madden Drive is named for the Madden family. “Grandpa” Madden came from Arkansas and he worked for the WPA. Effie Victoria Madden ran Madden’s Sweet Shop on Western Avenue at Second Street in the late ‘30’s and into the 1940’s. W. C. Madden served briefly on the Town Council in 1949.

Greenleaf Lane is named for Jack Greenleaf, who built the community pool. It was a nice big pool with lots of cottonwood trees for shade, a great place to spend a summer afternoon. He also had a trailer park that had a few Wingfoot homes. Two of the Wingfoot homes remain, but have been modified so much it’s hard to tell they started life as Wingfoot homes.

Ludlow Drive was named for Tom Ludlow, Sr. He was a minister and was convinced to come to Avondale and be the pastor of the Avondale Community Church. He served his town in a number of ways. His daughter, Alma, was a fourth grade teacher at Avondale for years.

Bohne Lane was named for Lucy Tolleson Whyman Bohne who owned the water company that served Avondale in the early years.

Brinker Drive was named for Russ Brinker, who owned Westside Ranch Supply. He and his wife, Lucille, served the needs of both ranchers and townspeople. He served Avondale as a Councilmember 1952-53 and as Mayor 1955-57.

Goold Blvd. is named for Josephine Goold and her husband, who owned a store and cabins on the southeastern corner of Central and Western Avenue. They also had an ice house where you could buy ice by the 25 or 50 pound block. An ice house was very important back when you used an ice box to store your perishable foods.

Lawrence Drive is named for Geoffrey Lawrence. He owned a farm on North Central Avenue and was a physician who had his practice in Tolleson.

Elesio Felix, Jr. Way and School are named for Elesio Felix Jr. He was the first casualty of the Gulf War. He was 18 years old at the time of his death. He was a Lance Corporal in the USMC and a graduate of Agua Fria Union High School.

De Concini Park is named for the Congressman who helped obtain the funds to buy and develop the park.

Dessie Lorenz Park is named for Dessie Lorenz. Dessie was known for her friendly way, first in the Post Office and later as an Avondale Councilmember 1964-1972 and as Mayor 1973-78. She and her husband built and ran a café on South Central Avenue, near Avondale School. It had a soda fountain and a jukebox that made it popular with the teens. Her husband Charles was a school teacher.

Our major streets originate in Phoenix. Thomas Road is named after William E. Thomas, who served the Arizona Territory as Deputy County Recorder. He also owned a ranch about a mile and a half north of the Phoenix city limits which was Van Buren Street at that time. Van Buren is named for Martin Van Buren, the eighth president of the United States. McDowell Road started as a road that led to the Calvary outpost, Fort McDowell, near the confluence of the Salt and Verde Rivers. The fort, road and mountains are named after Civil War General Irvin McDowell, who never lived in Arizona. Indian School Road was named for the Phoenix Indian School which opened in 1891. It served as a boarding high school and trade school for Arizona's Native Americans. It closed in the 1960's. Bethany Home Road was the road that led to the Bethany Home Tuberculosis Sanitarium operated by a church in the early 1900's. Broadway Road was named for Noah M. Broadway, Maricopa County Sheriff from 1885-1886.

Jack Rabbit Trail is named after large bands of big-eared hares that roamed the West Valley before development.

Hope this makes driving around more interesting as you think of the early settlers that made significant contributions to our communities.

Civil War Battlefield...In Arizona?

In the westernmost battle of the Civil War, Confederate and Union soldiers fought briefly at the foot of Picacho Peak. While not a major battle, more like a skirmish, the battle left three Union soldiers dead before the Confederates retreated.

Picacho Peak west of I-10, between Phoenix and Tucson is a 3,374 foot high pile of volcanic remnants. It was home to a Butterfield Overland Stage station in the 1850s. Several springs are at the base which has attracted travelers such as the early Hohokam and their descendants, the Spanish missionaries, and the Mormon Battalion that built the first wagon road across the southwest. To early immigrants on the Gila Trail, Picacho Peak served as a beacon and a watering hole.

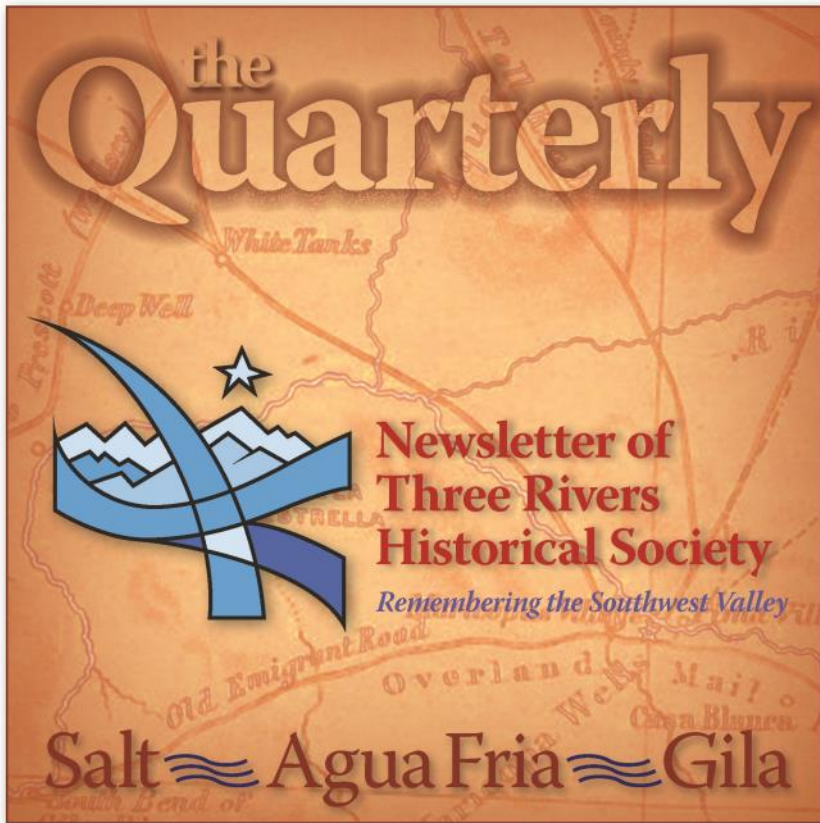
I Never Thought I'd see the Day!

- Did you hear the Post Office is thinking about charging 7 cents just to mail a letter?
- If they raise the minimum wage to \$1.00, nobody will be able to hire outside help at the store.
- When I first started driving, who would have thought gas would someday cost 25 cents a gallon? Guess we'd be better off leaving the car in the garage.
- I'm afraid to send my kids to the movies any more. Ever since they let Clark Gable get by with saying DAMN in "Gone with the Wind," it seems every new movie has either "hell" or "damn" in it.
- I read the other day where some scientist thinks it's possible to put a man on the moon by the end of the century. They even have some fellows they call astronauts preparing for it down in Texas.
- Did you see where some baseball player just signed a contract for \$50,000 a year just to play ball? It wouldn't surprise me if someday they'll be making more than the President.
- I never thought I'd see the day all our kitchen appliances would be electric. They are even making electric typewriters now!
- It won't be long before young couples are going to have to hire someone to watch the kids so they can both work.
- I'm afraid the Volkswagen car is going to open the door to a whole lot of foreign business.
- Thank goodness I won't live to see the day when the government takes half our income in taxes.
- I sometimes wonder if we are electing the best people to government.
- The fast food restaurant is convenient for a quick meal, but I seriously doubt they will ever catch on.
- There is no sense going on short trips anymore for a weekend. It costs nearly \$2.00 a night to stay in a hotel.
- No one can afford to be sick anymore. At \$15.00 a day in the hospital, it's too rich for my blood.
- If they think I'll pay 30 cents for a haircut, forget it!

Flags of Arizona

Arizona has lived under the flags of Spain, the Emperor of Mexico, the Republic of Mexico, the Confederate States of America and the United States of America.





Yes, I want to join Three Rivers Historical Society!

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3RHS Meetings

We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 3pm, at Goodyear Library, 14455 W. Van Buren, Goodyear, Arizona. Notices of date, location and guest speaker are e-mailed. Be sure we have your correct address.

E-mail Sally at kskiko@cox.net

