

SATURDAY, May 26, 1990
Keith Carter, Managing Editor/News: 322-8889

Mobile home fire causes \$60,000 loss

PALM SPRINGS — Fire swept through a Palm Canyon Mobile Club coach late Friday night, gutting nearby trees and threatening neighboring coaches before firefighters brought it under control.

The \$40,000 blaze gutted the coach at 602 Bell Drive, and caused an estimated \$60,000 damage, said Kent Ramos, the owner of the mobile home. Additional fire units were sent to the 22-acre property at 1180 S. Palm Canyon Drive after Ramos' coach and at least one palm tree were reported to be ablaze with flames threatening other coaches.

The fire was brought under control in about 15 minutes, fire officials said. No other mobile homes were reported damaged. Paramedics were summoned to the scene shortly after 10 p.m. to assist an unidentified pregnant woman, who reportedly lived next door to Ramos. Her condition was not immediately known.

Many valley residents still without KMR-TV

KMR-TV was back on the air Friday for Palmer Cablevision subscribers, but Warner Cable customers and Coachella Valley residents without cable hooks were still without channels 5 and 11 late Friday.

The Palm Desert-based NBC affiliate went off the air late Wednesday, after high winds toppled the station's Edom Hill tower. Warner Cable subscribers were expected to view KMR on Channel 5 through antennas to the city's tower which is adjacent to our building on Edom Hill.

"We expect to have our over-the-air broadcast service operating by Monday," he said.

GOP women to hear candidate Bergeson

RANCHO MIRAGE — State Sen. Marian Bergeson, a Republican candidate for lieutenant governor, will talk about "Women in Politics" during a Tuesday luncheon sponsored by the Palm Springs Republican Women Federation.

Bergeson, of Newport Beach, will speak at the 11:30 a.m. luncheon at the Ritz Carlton Hotel, 58-900 Frank Sinatra Drive.

Training program schedules ceremony

INDIO — About 300 Regional Occupational Program students are expected to receive certificates of training during a June 5 ceremony at the National Date-Festival fairgrounds.

The 6 p.m. ceremony will be held in the Taji Mahal auditorium. 342-1546.

Decco

Winning card numbers picked Friday for the California Lottery's "Decco" game.

Hearts: 4
Clubs: 4
Spades: 2

Four correct cards, \$6,000; three correct cards, \$1,500; one correct card, \$5; one card, free entry in next daily drawing.

'Vonda's Valley' on Page 4 today

Vonda Carlton's "Vonda's Valley" column is on Page 4 today.

Its regular location on this page.

For the record

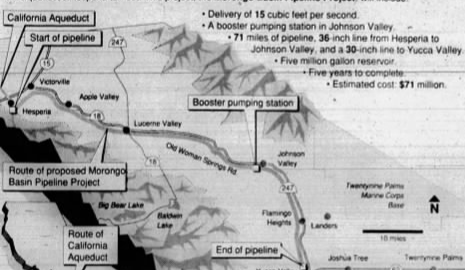
The policy of The Desert Sun is to report news as it happens. If you have a correction or clarification, please call 322-8889.

YUCCA VALLEY'S WATER CRISIS

Stories/LYNDEE KEMMET Photos/MAX ORTIZ

Morongo Basin Water Pipeline Project

The California Aqueduct brings water from Northern California to Southern California. Since joining the Mojave Water Agency, property owners in Flamingo Heights, Johnson Valley, Joshua Tree, Landers and Yucca Valley have been paying for construction of the aqueduct. To get water to these areas requires another pipeline from the aqueduct's Hesperia turnout. This project, the **Morongo Basin Pipeline Project**, will include:



Hi-Desert Water District
• Has two primary canals and six secondary wells, with seven tanks holding 7.5 million gallons.
• Area of coverage is Landers on the north, Joshua Tree National Monument on the south, Joshua Tree on the east and Yucca Water Company Ltd. on the west.

Yucca Water Company Ltd.
• Serves 3,000 customers.
• Has 10 wells, with 8 water tanks holding 1.7 million gallons.
• Area of coverage is Sage Street on east to east of town on west.

Where the water comes from

- In the Mojave Desert, the only water available is underground (groundwater) which comes from mountain runoff of rain and melted snow, and from infrequent local rainfall.
- The flow of water into the groundwater system is called recharge. Groundwater collects in underground pools called aquifers. Major aquifers are called basins. Some of the basins in the high desert are Copper Mountain, Giant Rock, Joshua, Pines, Riche and Warren Valley.
- It is then pumped up through production wells.
- It is stored tanks which are usually at a higher elevation so it is easier to flow back down to consumers.

Source: Yucca Water Company Ltd., Mojave Water Agency, Coachella Valley Water District

The days of Gene, Cisco and Roy live in

Pioneertown

—PIONEERTOWN — Nestled in the hills-four miles west of Yucca Valley lies Pioneertown, an escape from the modern world.

With its dirt roads, Old West-style buildings complete with horse hitching posts and quiet serenity, Pioneertown has a real western charm.

Built by a group of movie actors in 1941, the town was originally designed to serve as a movie set. The 1950s and 60s were busy times for the town, said Pioneertown resident Wayne Garrison.

"They were busy shooting movies all the time with people like Gene Autry, the Cisco Kid and Roy Rogers. They filmed a lot of western television shows here too," he said.

A resident since 1978, Garrison said he started spending weekends here in 1948. "I came up here to get away from everything," he said.

Garrison said the movie boom ended when the actors who built the town ended their joint operation. Some speculators who bought the town with big plans and then sold it after the plan fell through, he said.

"One person even wanted to turn this into one of those nudist places," Garrison said.

But regular folks also discovered the charm of Pioneertown. They bought some old buildings on Main Street, turned them into homes, or bought nearby land and built homes. And unlike the speculators, they stayed.

"This is a wonderful place. When you buy a home here, you're not being greedy. You're buying a more safe, natural environment," said Constance Walsh, president of the Pioneertown Property Owners Association.

She said there are 250 people living in the one-square-mile of Pioneertown.

And while the movie business isn't booming anymore, film commercials are often shot here.

"They still like this place. Free here else do you get to about a movie town for free?" Walsh said.

She said if residents are here, they'll negotiate with the production crew for payment if their house is used in the film.

And recently:

Within 15 minutes you'll be at a restaurant and bar with live country music, a motel, animal park, shopping, and a bowling alley.

It's a town of trucks with rugged

For most, making a living means hitting 'The Hill'

They call it "The Hill." And every morning, hundreds, maybe thousands, of people climb down it and climb back up each evening.

No one knows for sure how many living up Yucca Valley residents commute to jobs in the lower desert, but those who do claim they're there.

There are about six or seven of us here at Verphone Company just in three town, a department head at Vons Grocery store on East Palm Canyon Drive in Palm Springs.

"The hill is the stretch of Highway 62 from here sharply from the desert floor and climb through a rock canyon and opens into Morongo Valley."

"It's a big hill for sure," said commuter Robert Moore, an employee at Desert Electric Supply in Palm Desert.

"This is the time of year when you really appreciate living up there. As I drive up the hill, the temperature drops 20 degrees and for me, it's a little better."

Sandra Garvin, an 18-year Yucca Valley resident.

Garvin has commuted to her job for more than a year since she was promoted to branch manager at the Palm Desert branch of Pomona Federal Savings and Loan Association.

"It's not bad because there's good freeway traffic. It's always moving," she said.

For Donna Wue, head teller at First Federal Savings and Loan in Palm Desert, the commute is twice because I use the time to relax on the way home.

For the Commuters

started springing up along Highway 62.

A nine-hole golf course was built in 1955 and expanded to 18 holes in 1965. The sheriff's office was opened in 1949, followed by the Yucca Valley County Fire District in 1951.

In 1964, the community got a hospital — Hi-Desert Memorial Hospital. In the 1960s the population began to boom. Yucca Valley became an easy commute for those seeking escape to the clear desert air from the smog and crowds of Los Angeles.

Retirees discovered that at an elevation of 3,300 feet, it was cooler than Palm Springs. Winter temperatures average in the 50s with a light dusting of snow not uncommon. Summer temperatures average in the 90s.

Car dealer sped Yucca's growth

Spanish explorers and Indians came by foot and horse, miners traveled with their pack mules, cowboys rode in on their horses. But it wasn't until a flamboyant car dealer from Nebraska drove into town in a long, white gun-bed decked convertible that people began to settle the Yucca Valley area.

In 1956, a billboard along Highway 62 welcomed travelers to Yucca Valley. On it, a resident Art Miller Sr. stride his palomino, Plover's Golden Major, saved his hat, ballooning Western Hills Estates. And an era of boisterous growth was born.

Miller knew the value of advertising and the art of promotion. He was equally at home in sequined cowboy outfits, riding his horse in the famed Tournament of Roses parade, as he was behind the wheel of his gaudy convertible.

For years, Miss Yucca Valley rode in the annual Grubstake Days parade in the back seat of a car that sported steer horns as a hood ornament, cowbells and six guns for door handles.

Miller began busting prospective buyers for his real estate subdivisions from the Los Angeles area. They came, they saw and they bought. "They had friends come only to repeat the process.

The retirees that Miller and other real estate developers brought to an area others had already discovered.

With its blue skies, warm, dry climate and miles of cactus and wildflowers, the area had long attracted weekenders who grabbed a few acres and homesteaded by building weekend cabins.

Getting there became easier in 1937 when the highway was opened from Morongo Valley through Yucca Valley to Twenty-nine Palms.

The Post Office came in 1945. Telephones followed in 1947 when the California Water and Electric Company put in three 10-year lines. Electricity came a year later with the California Electric Power Company and business.

Progress is not all bad, they say.

When everyone knew everyone in town, the "little bitty post office" had mail boxes that sometimes contained stray kittens that needed a home and the pet bellied stove at Al Peters' real estate office was a Monday morning gathering spot.

"I think the small town feeling remains, there are many who welcome the banks and supermarkets. Progress is not all bad, they say."



DAVE HARMAN / Staff artist

PORCH OF THE PIONEERS: Constance Walsh sits outside her Pioneertown home on Main Street.

Grubstake Days gallop into Yucca Valley this weekend

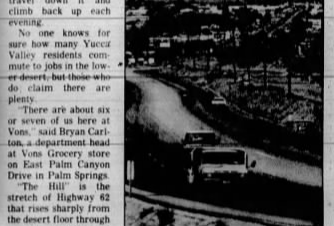
YUCCA VALLEY — With horses and buggies, miners and mules, bands and color guards, this high desert community takes a step back in time today as thousands line the main street to view the 48th Annual Grubstake Days parade.

Shortly after dawn this morning, spectators begin lining up for prime viewing spots for the 10 a.m. parade, bringing motor homes, pickup trucks, picnic lunches and chests full of ice cold beer — prepared to watch a colorful bit of small town Americana.

It all began in 1951, when the Western Mining Council chose to hold its annual meeting in Yucca Valley for the fourth straight year; residents decided to hold a three-day celebration during the meeting.

Yucca Valley Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Marilyn Patton said this year's celebration will have two new events — the bike throw and the ugly pet contest. A new bike will be given to the man and the woman who can throw a bike the farthest.

This year's celebration kicked off Friday with a 7 a.m. breakfast and ends with the closing of the Western Valley Art Association Art Festival at 8 p.m. Monday.



ON THE HILL: Commuters traveling on 29 Palms Highway through Yucca Valley view the scenic beauty of the desert.

Moore said better jobs with more money is what turned him into a commuter. Like the others, he doesn't plan to leave Yucca Valley.

"I don't mind the drive at all. It takes about an hour by the time I drop everybody off. But for us it's kind of a time when we all around and talk."

But with the whole family coming down the hill each day, why stay in Yucca Valley? "For many reasons," says Rosie Carlton said.

"It's more affordable up there. And it's quite a bit cooler." She said Moore said better jobs with more money is what turned him into a commuter. Like the others, he doesn't plan to leave Yucca Valley.

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