

99 Characters in Search of an Author

by Marco Messina

Chapter 1

Introduction

The famous Italian playwright Luigi Pirandello, Nobel Prize for Literature 1932, wrote a play titled *Six Characters In Search Of An Author*.

In 2015, as I found myself in this retirement community in Sun City, Arizona, I found dozens of characters that I thought might be in search of an author. It seemed a shame not to try.

Whether I can or should be the author, I will let the reader decide. It remains that the characters I met here, are real, are fascinating in their honesty about themselves and their past. Collectively they offer a glimpse of how happier society would be if most tried to emulate their kindness and determination to live and let live.

So, dear reader, if any of the characters you run into forthwith, appear in any way lacking, hold that against the would-be-author, not them because they are all real, complete, honed by lived lives, by lessons learned, by families built, gushing with memories worth

telling. What you find lacking may simply be a would-be-author pitching beyond his range, fishing the wrong pond, and on occasion, overly focused on banal clichés. You are warned.

Chapter 2

The Tennis Players 49

Mike & Barb

Mike and Barb were the first we met of the “Tennis Gang at Bell Center”. Both were solid regular tennis players. Mike is a former Air Force officer, friendliest ambassador of the Drop In Tennis program, and organizer of the summer camp that many tennis player attend in Utah on the campus of

Were it not for them and the rest of the Bell Centre Tennis Welcome Wagon, Darlene and I probably would not be in Sun City today. Thank you all from the bottom of our hearts.

This is a side-bar on how it happened:

In 1986 Darlene and I moved from Seattle WA to Scottsdale because of a new job that I had accepted there. Darlene’s mom and dad Vern and Char were snowbirds spending winters in retirement in Sun City in their fifth-wheeler. After our permanent move, they decided to buy a condo in Sun City, on Pinaire on the Willowcreek Golf Course. They lived

there from 1989 until Char passed in 2013 and Vern in 2015. Over those years we visited Sun City for weekly Sunday dinners and came to know the community and the rec centres and the world-famous Tip Top Dancers of which Char was a member. When we lived in Park City UT from 2010 to 2020, Darlene would often say she'd like a little second home in Arizona to regularly visit kids, grandkids, and old friends. On those occasions I always said that Sun City was the place where we should have that second home. Having lived in Scottsdale, Darlene was more prone to go back to her old stomping grounds of younger years seeking a younger crowd.

When her dad died in 2015, she and her brother inherited the condo on Pinaire. Neither was interested in living in Sun City and so in 2016 we came to clear out the place and list it for sale. We spent a few long stressful days of packing-to-Goodwill, house cleaning and memories inventory. On the morning we were to meet our agent to list the property, Darlene and her brother and sister-in-law decided to go for a morning walk around the neighbourhood. It was not my habit to join them in those walks, but by some accident that day I did. When we came close to the Bell Rec Centre, I noticed that there were new lights over the tennis courts and I proposed to go and see what had been done.

We arrived as the morning drop-in tennis session was ending and many players were on their way out. We were clearly curious and looking around and Mike asked if we were new residents or visitors and if we were tennis players. On hearing that we played tennis, an unexpected and extremely warm welcome followed. As we left, Darlene asked me "are we making a mistake selling the condo?" I replied that it was not necessary, and to wait a while carried no cost or risk in a rising market, we just needed to buy her brother out. Fortunately for us, Wayne and Lisa wanted no part of Arizona; they are Seattleites in the extreme and love cold and wet NW climate like a snail. So it was that we became Sun Citizens thanks to

old memories of her parents and thanks to the Bell Tennis Welcome Wagon. We had skated to the edge of thin ice and they had pulled us back before it cracked.

Craig & Nancy

For years good friends and organizers of the Thursday Night Mixed Doubles Tennis Social – tennis followed by a happy hour, what a concept. They are from Wisconsin. She a top Womens 4.0 Team player, the one all want to beat. He a strong 3.5 grounded by aging knees and retraining after knee replacement. They summer in a Wisconsin home in the woods, too solitary; thinking to move to AZ permanently and rent summer vacation cottage instead.

When in his 30's Craig had Guillain-Barre syndrome for near a month. Numbing and paralysis started in the feet, progressed to take the whole body and half the face then subsided. A terrifying experience for both. Perhaps the stone-base of their cheerfulness? Nancy extremely calm temperament perhaps a result that after Craig's experience nothing compares.

Craig & Nancy

Craig and Nancy were among the first to draw us into the social side of the tennis community. For years, they've been the heart and soul of the Thursday Night Mixed Doubles Tennis Social—a delightful invention of theirs combining spirited tennis matches with post-game happy hours. What a concept! The idea of mixing serves and volleys with shared food and drink turned out to be a brilliant recipe for camaraderie.

Nancy is the quiet force on the court, a top Women's 4.0 Team player—graceful, calm, and steady, the one everyone wants to beat, but few do. Craig is a solid 3.5 player, grounded now by aging knees and the careful retraining that followed knee replacement. His

laughter, his mid-game quips, and his effort to keep everyone included have made them both indispensable.

They split their time between Sun City and a home tucked in the woods of Wisconsin, a place Craig describes as peaceful but “maybe too solitary now.” They’ve begun to think that Sun City might be their true center, with a rental cottage up north for the hot months.

Years ago, in his 30s, Craig suffered a terrifying case of Guillain-Barré syndrome. Numbness began in his feet, climbed to his face, paralyzed him fully for a month, then slowly released its grip. It’s the sort of experience that either breaks a spirit or forges something new. For Craig and Nancy, it was the latter. They never mention it as an excuse, only in passing. But when you see their optimism, their humor, and their deep contentment in the everyday—on and off the court—you sense that brush with fragility left a mark that shaped them both. Nancy’s serene demeanor might come from knowing that, after that, everything else is just a good day.

John & Carla

From MI “left side of the hand”. Strong 3.5 strategic player, he has a nasty spin. She went to Michigan State, he went to UoM, obviously a bone of contention. A fun couple to play dart, go dancing and play cards with.

John & Carla John and Carla hail from Michigan, the “left side of the hand,” as they like to say. Both are thoughtful and strategic 3.5 players—he’s known for his tricky spin serves that seem to defy physics, and she’s a steady presence with sharp instincts and a cool

demeanor. A friendly rivalry lingers in their marriage—he's a U of M man, and she's loyal to Michigan State. Game days can get interesting.

Off the court, they're great company for darts, dancing, and cards. They bring easy laughter to any gathering and know how to make newcomers feel welcome without ever making a show of it. In many ways, they represent the best of the Midwest: humble, kind, and always up for a good time.

Dennis & Jill

Minneapolis? RE, bought on golf course by the Sunbowl then bought another on the Willowcreek golf course. Cursing the mowers and early morning chatter. Strong 3.5. Children graduated EE from Berkeley, returned to MS after New England college, one starting Med School in NYC

Dennis & Jill Dennis and Jill came to Sun City from Minneapolis—or so we think; they tend to downplay details that would make them too easy to label. They originally bought on the golf course near Sunbowl, then upgraded to a home along Willowcreek, only to discover the early morning mowers and lively golf chatter are less romantic in practice.

They're strong 3.5 players, steady and consistent. Their tennis reflects their lives—disciplined, balanced, and full of quiet determination. Their children's accomplishments speak volumes: one, an electrical engineering grad from Berkeley; another, now on a path to medical school in New York City. Dennis and Jill don't brag—but when they talk about their family, their pride glows just beneath the surface, like a warm ember.

Mel & Jane

Mel, the chattiest player on the court, seems to enjoy life with a permanent smile. Good 3.5 player. She averages down the chatter maybe aware of the need. He put in a lot of work is president of the club. And behind the scenes was doing all the computer work that was necessary since paperwork and computer work are not his Forte.

Sharen & John

Regulars of the Thursday Night Tennis Social (arranged for years by Craig and Nancy). Sharen seems to play on every ladies tennis group.

Jerry & Debbie

Newly weds. Jerry a 30+ years single guy that spent a life in the used auto business world. He still loves it and cannot stop it. Nice guy with occasionally gruff demeanor. Strong 3.5 player. She does not play, proud Chicago Italian

Jesse & Debbie

Still an officer and a gentleman from Annapolis. Grew up around the world with father in the oil exploration business. Settled in Houston after Navy career. Played tennis and handball daily for 30 years. At 73 still wants to play handball given a willing partner. Top 3.5 player. Works as CPA on the side, busy at tax season. At costumed balls he is the dalmatian

for Crudelia (Debbie). They both love to dance, ballroom style and perfectly by the numbers. Of late they're dancing how to be cut back significantly much to their distress. Not long ago Jesse and I decided to try our hand again at handball no pun intended. We had memories of times when we could hit the ball they're handed and green and bear it. But we found that we were not the studs we used to be anymore. After is short game our hands despite double gloves looked and felt like they had been massaged under the tires of an SUV. I guess time had moved on

John & Michelle

Australian guy of Italian ancestry moved to AZ temporarily to tend Michelle's mother. His father was from Salina in the Aeolian islands of Italy died when he was 9. John never learned Italian. All the family moved from the island to Australia. Good tennis player, hard hitter. She did not play because of bad knees but in the last couple of years has picked it up again quickly got better and now a strong player.

Tim & Sharen

Good 3.5 players. She plays in men drop in more than the other women. Tim was a high school teacher, now a realtor with an eye for buying at the right time.

Jo & Jim

She is a tennis fanatic that still works at Indian Wells Tournament every year after 10? Years. Jim is a witty guy with a nice sense of humour. Mostly a golfer but held up by various health issues.

John & Jane

J and J are solid tennis players and supporters of the community. John got the call from Bill P. and ran for the BOD of RCSC at a time when the community needed to regain control of its administration. It will be a merciless but not thankless job. He'll contribute more than tennis balls.

Dave & C.

Relatively recent arrivals to SC. Dave is very committed to get involved to support the community. Member of the Posse. President of the Tennis Club, strong player, all around nice guy. Has worked for four years to improve the clubs, protect the tennis courts from pickleball encroachments.

Rory M.

Former high school athletics teacher. Retired as a painter, watercolorist. Wins awrds all over the place, sells at high prices. Goes to shows all over the US with his trailer and movable booth and at a good show sells \$7000 to 9000 in one weekend.

Once he broke his nose; to stop bleeding doc gave him shot of cocaine. Went home stoned with huge hardon - wife happy, lots of laughs. Got prescription for two more. Great fun while it lasted.

Kathy and Bob

She plays strong 3.5, he watches with obvious disinterest. They seem to work all night shift and play all day, what are they on? I need some of that.

Vicky & Carol

Both members of the Women 4.0 team with Nancy and Kathy. Both always cheerful and very active in tennis and bicycling. Vicky plays ukulele. Occasionally they have professional bands playing in their backyard; that is how I met Larry my harmonica teacher.

Doc

Retired ortho surgeon. Set in his ways, methodical practice schedule. Easily set off by changes in games rotation rules, will walk away in a huff to no one's surprise anymore. A friendly guy that used to be friendlier yet.

John

Tennis team member, strong player. Retired from meat packing industry career. Easy going fellow you'd want on your side.

Terry N.

Sweetest and kindest of people. Hard hitting long term member of Thursday Night Tennis Social

Sharen A.

Strong player very active in softball and jymn as well. Quick mover. A pleasant participant in Thursday Nights Tennis Social.

Bob ?

From MN, home on the lake. Seems to have slowed some but precise hitter with strategy

Mike H.

From Buffalo NY. All family still there. He misses his grandkids. City employee all his career. Retired overweight, worked very hard at shedding weight and succeeded, there is less of him almost by the day. Great 3.5 despite never having had a lesson. Unorthodox style that exploits angle shots on the court. He'll soon be a killer based on how fast he is shedding weight and moving quicker. Seems to have little social life as his wife, a Jehova's Witness, does not enjoy social occasions.

Dave O.

Former school teacher and tennis coach. Nicest guy, collects tennis racquets at garage sales and restrings them and gives them to friends trying to match the racquet to the player.

He did it perfectly for Darlene and me. Refuses any compensation for restringing, asks to give m gifts forward. Has taken Random Acts of Kindness to a personal philosophy. Has improved my game dramatically. Makes a great team with Chuck both technically and temperamentally.

Chuck L.

Play tennis with Chuck and you'll know the meaning of "being played with". If he sets his mind to it he'll drive you into the ground practicing his now-short now-long game without breaking a sweat in his formal shorts and tailored collared shirt. For years he has been coach of the Mens' 4.0 Team. Seems to be a natural leader. Unflappable on the court. Fast to kill arguments if there is a line-call dispute. Best hitter on all strokes, seems to enjoy running opponents into circles.

Dick F.

Strong 3.5 player, on the team. Huge health story. Kidney transplant, kicked intestine in the process. Had partial intestine removal. Colo bag many years, unnoticeable. After long n use of colon had to have that removed to prevent cancer. Got back to tennis like nothing happened. Published novelist. Sense of humor. Plays guitar in a band

Dick H.

Tennis team 3.5. Prostate removal, cancer returned, radiation, remission. High school teacher of Economics. I like to swap econ articles of interest. He lent me in line skates too see

if I could kill myself trying to sail with my wing on skates. He failed, I returned the skates only to buy my own and nearly kille myself

Roy & Joy

Disk jockey, operator of jazz radio station Jazz Roy & Joy. He is an extremely softspoken kind man. Often repeats things twice, perhaps a kindness to the many hard of hearing players? One of the top 4.0 Team players on account of hard hitting, incredible sprinting and running speed.

Arnold J

AJ, a very giving guy. One of the top players at Bell Center, and always eager to help anyone to improve their game. He could easily do it as a paid instructor but he seems to do it just to enjoy seeing people improve. Recently he took over coaching the women's 4.0 team. His sense of strategy and court positioning is a tremendous asset to the team. He had an interesting career in Hollywood in the audio in dubbing industry. His calm personality seems to be at odds sometimes with driving his Corvette or dancing at The Copper Penny.

Dave from WA

From Renton WA, seasonal visitor. Mean slice, returns like a wall board Pickleball player too.

Bill L

Nicest of guys. Short of words but always friendly. He was eager to help improving my game. We both like to play late mornings more than early. He was truck driver most of his career, and got to retire early to AZ. Vacations to a condo in Maui where he hits with his son who is college level player and has made him one of the top players in Men's 4.0 Team

Bill ?

Newest and very friendly arrival. Great pickleball and tennis player, returns tennis from nearly on-the-ground at the bounce. Was immediately asked into the Men's 4.0 Team and he'll be a great addition.

Bob C.

One of the younger suncitizens, early retired engineer from the deep ocean oil drillimng industry. Originally from Alberta Canada, still goes there regularly but prefers the balmy weather of Arizona. He is Canadian-friendly and nice and probably the top player of all at Bell Center and plays competitively in USTA tournaments. He's also a gracious and effective instructor. He was an active organizer of tennis and of tennis lessons at Willowbrook, but left because of the better facilities available in Sun City.

Ken H.

Strong 3.5, tennis team. Nicest guy from Minnesota,

Cal B.

Very strong hitter in the 3.5 tennis drop in. He is the only black guy besides Roy that plays tennis regularly. We all seem to be totally blind to the difference. In SC apparently the only groupings that matter are: what sport do you play? Do you like to dance? What do you drink? Do you golf? Do you drive a golf cart? Do you play bridge/canasta/poker? Are you a full or part timer? The country at large could learn something from this.

Chapter 3

Social & Next Gen Club 23

Bill & Lori

Lori is a solid tennis player and outspoken and devoted mom to two huge poodles.

Bill is the Sun City Historian extraordinaire. No one in town knows the history and governance of our community as he does. Former union boss, retired in SC because he fell in love with the concept of community that was its founding. To this day he has been a moving force to maintain owners' participation in the governance of Sun City. If anyone can claim the mantle of bearer of the torch continuing on from the creators of SC (Dell Webb, Meeker, Boswell, etc.) Bill is the one. In the moment when the community needed to regain control of its management, no one I know worked longer and harder. If SC remains true to its founders, Bill will be remembered among them.

Nancy & Jack

They are wonderful friends and the social butterflies of the tennis club and her supporting sidekick always ready for a mixer at The Elks or The Copper Penny. For Nancy,

Sun City means tennis in the morning, then jymn or walking pool, pickleball in the afternoon and dancing in the evening. Her energy outdoes Darlene's. She is Sun City's Energizer Bunny.

Jack plays golf, no tennis anymore. Active in social circles. Helps Nancy with tennis and watches it on TV. Went to Indian Wells, liked it; he'd go again, but Nancy won't, disappointed that Serena didn't play the year they went.

He was in college in 70-74, business degree. Started work in retailing, then started his own printing shop Speedy Print. Never looked back and never worked for anyone. Always wrote the checks for employees before his own. Never grew the business beyond himself as key man; regret? At the same time, proud and self-conscious of own success; a real Midwesterner. Ran the business in St Louis till retirement. Never took more than a week vacation; had to do payroll. At the end, offered his customers list for sale, no takers. Now, continues to serve old customers with "enough business to pay for golf", smiles, likes the idea that it is so easy. Proud of having maintained the business that if bought could have made others some cash, enough for him to play golf on. Clearly went through hard cycles of technology changes: copiers screwing the small printing business, then digital that required more investment than could be justified. Smart move, he decided to just ride the old business to the end. Adapted all along to stay profitable, make a living, earn a retirement. Splendid guy and good friend to all. Now very active board member and officer in Next Gen

Carolyn & Roy

From Omaha, now full timers. Not tennis players, part of Next Gen. Sweetest couple. Roy is a long distance swimmer, golfer, retired military and then retired from Federal

Immigration civil service reviewing immigration cases. She a pickleball fanatic but makes time to volunteer at an Alzheimer's Home. Great walking friend for Darlene. The kind of woman that drops everything to help anyone in need.

Lisa & Mike

Pickleball and golf players, Next Gen members. She is harder to get to know. Very sociable and involved. An extremely early riser, frequently checks out like a light switch was flipped and falls asleep in the middle of a social event. We all know about what time Cinderella checks out by now, so nobody notices anymore.

Mike talks mostly to golf buddies about golf, baseball and football his only interests besides craft breweries. A native Arizonan, Mike joined the Navy to avoid being drafted to Nam. Studied electronics and nuclear but went for nuclear when he heard they were planning Palo Verde Nuclear station. He figured he could get a job there after the Navy. The bet worked and he eventually retired from Palo Verde his only employer after the Navy. On my inquiry about plants got chatty with great details. Too much tech talk for Darlene but I'll have to hear more about it.

Linda & Ken

She a strong tennis player always with a smile perhaps genetically inherited from her mother Happy who, at 93, was still an active painter and bubbly. Lynda is a great Italian cook, makes her own canned olives from a tree they have in the backyard. She has a green thumb and a garden worthy of Monet, plus humming birds, doves, love birds and baby quails.

Ken, a retired Amex IT exec, travelled the world. Plays piano beautifully by ear with a light touch like no one else I heard before. He plays weekly at an Alzheimer patients' home just to see someone smile on the good days. He is President of the Piano Club and organizes monthly performances. They have travelled the world and continue cruising every time their daughter cruise-agent finds a great deal. Offered to teach playing piano a little. Happy died happy in the summer of 2017. Ken liked playing for Ashlie to sing and loves her voice.

My Friend's Hands 4-9-2020

Cami & Jim

Recently lost her husband, reconnected with childhood kindergarten sweetheart. Sociable, adventurous, closest friend with Lorna.

Jim likes to hear and tell stories. His stories are hard to match: His brother impersonated him while being arrested with no ID available, so the record was attached to him and he had nasty experiences as a result. Still cheerful with a mischievous smile.

Lorna &

Recently widowed, making a new life. Friendly self-confident woman. Travels and current President of the Next Gen Club. Great organizer. Former accountant for a very successful startup inside a large company

Dave & Sherry

Fun couple in Next Gen. Seasonal visitors from Minnesota? Dave organizes Cigar Nights that I can no longer enjoy as I developed an allergy to cigar smoke – too bad it was fun.

Paul & Bobby

Paul is a former Navy guy that worked on nuclear subs and saw the world. Loves Italian food and language. He proposed to Bobby in Italian on ferry sailing in front the village of Vernazza in The “5 Terre” in Italy. Many say that Paul is my brother by a different mother because we look enough alike – The white hair?

Bobby is a former professional singer in a band for years. She retired from DEA. He recently retired from Century Link where he managed the maintenance of cell towers , emergency backup power equipment. Until retirement he spent the week in a Flagstaff condo, coming home on Thursday night. They both love dancing. Won't miss a dance or closing at The Speakeasy then at The Copper Penny.

Bobby is now afflicted by short breath and sings infrequently when begged by friends. Paul is an unstoppable social butterfly, Board member and organizer of frequent social events for the Next Gen Club of 600+ members.

Tom & Mary

Tom and Mary are a big force in the softball scene of Sun City. Tom organizes teams and events, lobbies for facilities improvements and provides some out of his own pocket just to be nice. He is a general contractor for homes remodels, has great expertise and contacts and offers free help at every occasion. Mary loves to remodel homes and has great eye for

space layout. She loves to cook and singlehandedly produces picnics for the whole softball team's parties in huge quantities. Wonderful friends with a sense of humour and great live and let live attitude.

Tom Story.docx

Doris & Jim

Doris - stole our lake house! We met some time after that ugly, losing (for us) bidding war and became great friends. Now she is my Fairy of Dawn Lake and lets me sail whenever the wind is right. She seems to enjoy watching me make a fool of myself on the water. Jim is her new love after some years having lost her first love and husband. Doris and Jim love to dance, at Dominic's Grill, The Elks, Copper Penny, Little Bite, wherever there is music.

Jim - Reserved, listens a lot but one night with R&P he opened up. 30 years single now getting into the "matched" groove with Doris and loving it. USAF brat moved every 2 years, learned to detach. Grew up in a Colorado small town, moved to DC USAF base and had rough hazing, built determination to stick with whatever he chose. After DC moved back to CO when dad went to Japan and families were not allowed to go. Buff, gym brat, loves to walk Ellie (Doris' dog) around the lake.

Jim's Story in his words (author edited)

Jim's story.docx

Rich & Paula

They love to dance. They are great swing dancers and, again, they love to dance.

My path with Paula may have crossed before, at the Comdex Computer Show around 1992 when she managed industry shows logistics for Borland International and I had my software consulting business in Seattle. That year she set up a party for all the distributors of Borland in the Las Vegas Museum of Natural History so that all the future-minded software cats were mixing it up under the reconstructed skeletons of dinosaurs. An unforgettable setting and experience.

Rich and Paula love to dance. Rich moves well and lightly but because of his size makes Paula look like she is flying around him, like a moon around Jupiter. She loves to dress up, dresses fit for her body that looks 30 years younger than her age

Rich is a golfer, wood worker, professional photographer, guitar player and all around social nice guy that loves dancing and entertaining. We started jamming together particularly when helped by our good friend Jack of “Jack and BJ” local professional musicians, or playing with Rich’s friend Gary from CA who played for years in professional bands.

Rich is a former Mormon that has no good memories of the religion or the culture. According to a friend he may have gone woke because of it.

Love to entertain. Both into cooking. Hyper focused types, if they do it they study, work and become great at it (water skiing, photography, cooking,

Rich – grew up in poverty, Mormon family, stingy dad, giving mom that owned a diner so he worked in it at 12, crib in the restaurant office. Went to BYU but can do without Mormon and Utah culture, he knows it from the inside he says. Loved to water ski at Lake Powell, for years went with RV and boat every other week, expensive proposition, did not mind the cost for family and friends when he was in the chips. Loves to gamble in LV and they go a couple of times a year, buying clothes at some special gay couple's store, listening to jazz. Spent years in CA he in San Jose after his divorce, she in Santa Cruz (the red white and blue mailbox at the in-town nude beach). CA lifestyle, skinny dipping hot tub, birthday suit sun bathe, a little weed and know enhancers. Ex in PC at Jeremy Ranch (did he live there?). Rich studied professional sound systems to build a recording booth for Harold, friend of Dominic's, singer and now recording studio operator.

Chapter 4

Other Characters 12

Jim & Pam

Our longest standing friends that finally followed us from Seattle to AZ. Darlene raised her children with Pam pushing now almost fifty years. We have countless stories with them through the years. Pam was Darlene's and my Good Fairy that put us together. Next to our parents I owe Pam the most in our lives.

They moved to SC West a few years ago, bought a beautiful home and tricked out the backyard to look like a five stars resort. Great company to play cards and Mexican train late into the nights for bragging rights with Darlene and Jim talking trash at each other. How lucky could we be that they followed us to AZ. Jim is an avid shooter with great knowledge of all kinds of guns and we have become pals shooting plastic jugs in the desert. He teaches, I learn, and we both reminisce about events that we have shared for 35 years. We have much to remember having worked together in his family's grocery stores chain in North Seattle and Snohomish County. He ran Planning and Logistics and my company was the IT consulting manager of all their computer systems.

Dan & Diane

Technically D&D are not part of Sun City as they live in Willowbrook, but with Diane we go back to 1997 when we first moved to Scottsdale and met her and husband Mitch on a volleyball team. We became extremely close friends holding her hand through the misery of her divorce and in the joy of watching her flourish when she found a new love with Dan.

After connecting with Diane, Dan became a very close friend. He retired after 40 years as a Fry's Grocery as Director of Logistics, then they started a wine bar, then returned to his passion, the food retailing industry, to build the premiere cart retrieval service for Arizona retailers. He is legend in the Arizona Food Marketing Association's industry for his long career, and as a no-handicap golfer and organizer of countless tournaments for his colleagues.

Dan is also the guy that cajoling me into helping with his company's computer systems needs; he got me to re-discover my past career as a software developer in the 1980's through 2000's. The software I designed and built for his company continues to run his business to this day, it is my version of sudoku, and it keeps me actively thinking and hopefully of sharp mind. We like to joke that, together, we have retrieved over two million stray grocery carts throughout Arizona.

With Diane we connected because Darlene, part Canadian herself, has a passion for Canadian accents and had to make first contact when she heard her speak. Diane was married to Mitch and we played volleyball and tennis with them about a year. Eventually Mitch split for an office romance, an experience we could relate to. Through the pain that she lived

through, over the years, we became the closest of friends as she reinvented herself as a single mom of two young children, professional accountant and operations manager. Diane is a Canadian from Alberta, in her younger years in Calgary she worked at Shell Oil full-time while raising two kids, playing professional squash and studying for a business degree. One heck of a determined lady. Over several years as a single mom, she successfully reinvented herself professionally a number of times while being a committed parent and then a grandma. When she met Dan, she fell in love again with a guy that adores her. She recently retired from her accounting and admin management job at a major golf club, so, once again, she is on a new quest to find the next chapter of her life in music, painting, sports (scratch golfer, pickleball, tennis). We cannot think Arizona without Diane.

Jack & BJ

Professional musicians, singers, party makers. Jack “Shoes” has an apparently endless collection that provides a pair for any occasion, any theme, any song, any celebration. BJ has a wonderful voice that we recommend be amped every chance we get at Dominic’s or elsewhere.

Dominic & Debbie

Dominic and Debbie own the Dominic’s Italian Bistro they opened in 2011 (?). Dominic sings and plays the keyboard in the restaurant, occasionally assisted by his bongo-man Jesus, attracting a sold out crowd every night. Nice Italian-American cuisine, great music, a nice dance floor for Rat Pack lovers. Dominic sings the genre of Frank Sinatra and

Dean Martin and Tony Bennet and, for the pleasure of the dancers, later styles as well. But he is unique when he sings traditional Neapolitan songs with perfect dialect pronunciation, like Arrivederci Roma and his favourite “Statte vicin’amme pe’natra sera” – Stay close to me one more night - by Jimmy Roselli. If you are there on your lucky night, he’ll sing “Statte” while playing a huge accordion that has a sound I have not heard since I left Italy. Unmatchable.

Debbie is the restaurant’s manager, but more like a general. Last time there, sitting at a high top table by the bar I could see across the whole restaurant. Most of the time, Debbie is busy running around tending to whatever needs immediate attention. Sometimes, however she stops, stands by the entrance of the kitchen and looks like a general studying the battle field. In that position she makes me think of reading about famous generals and their battles: Napoleon at Austerlitz, Patton at the Battle of the Bulge, Hannibal at Cannae, Rommel at El Alamein. Like all of them, she has “the eye” for trouble spots and the calm but instant reflex to go fix it, or send whomever appropriate to ensure victory. Quite a sight.

No place in Sun City beats Dominic’s Italian Grill for the unique combination of authenticity, relaxed charm, great music and a little dance floor for the local would be Fred & Ginger. What a luck to have it here so close.

Darrell & Annie

A staple at Dominc’s Bistro. She grew up in foster homes so she is compelled to be nice to anyone who sits alone. A darling woman.

Darrell has a big property in Glendale, wishes it were bigger to keep neighbors farther away. Discovered the pleasure of recording singers and musicians so he has his own sound booth designed with Rich's help.

Larry R.

Larry is my harmonica teacher. Accomplished professional musician in the Lone Mountain Arizona Band. He teaches also at SPAH, the national harmonica player association where all the top congregate annually. Originally from Canada's BC Okanagan region. In charge of real estate development for several ski areas. Great skier but off the snow a few years now. Still loves to talk about it. My harmonica is something Larry would as soon forget. But I remember his advice "do not practice at the cat, they don't like it and is not fair". I have no cats but I cannot touch my harmonica without hearing Larry's advice.

Dave The Harmonica Player

Harmonica player, 93, at speakeasy every night. Black leather cowboy hat. Great sound on karaoke floor

At the American Legion Post

This. A bartender at American Legion Karana ship, Bartending, changes to welcome a committee to sign up newcomers, then switches to sign up people for slot machine cards, then

shows up to help being competent to deal with card certification and back to More. She should be running a ship or a submarine.

Chapter 5

Marty's Gang 7

Marty & Mark

Friendship with Marty goes back to 2001. When when we were playing Monday night tennis in Scottsdale with this Scottsdale CN ski club crowd. Marty was instrumental in helping me get a job in 2007 with the Maricopa College Small Business Development Center. In many ways she changed my life at a time when I needed it. A truly close friend that I could not do without.

Mark came on to the scene later on. He is a former Navy Seabee project manager that ended up working for the federal government in Iowa for several years to fix his retirement after he had a serious accident with his own construction company. A handyman extraordinaire. Together they are the glue of the Marty's Gang group.

Al & Trudy

More members of the Scottsdale Sea & Ski Club crowd that retired in Sun City. Al was instrumental in getting my Realtor license in Arizona after returning from Utah. Both very active with the Sun City Elks and great additions to any party.

Kathy

Another long-standing friend from Scottsdale since 2000. We used to play Monday Night Tennis with other members of the Scottsdale Sea & Ski Club. She is an avid traveller who has seen more of the world than I could ever keep track of. A fiercely independent woman for with an artistic bent for painting, decorating, remodelling, and more.

Terry & Marylyn

He is an avid pickleball competitive player. She a pleasant sociable woman and part of a competitive bowling team.

Chapter 6

Our Wheatridge Neighbors 4

Terry & Bonnie

Terry is a high level pickleball player. Retired at 50 from BASF. Built, owned and ran Holiday Inn motels including one in Heber UT. We readily share memories of Park City.

She was for a long time an unapologetic happy smoker - but all good things come to an end. She surprised me saying she bought my The Yoda Machine novel , then asked for dedication. How nice! – a real sale. Part of my total royalties of 67 cents is due to her. I love my fans. She was the first woman to be admitted as a Marine, certainly kicks ass but cannot swim.

Daughter's miscarriages weigh heavy on her mind. She likes my writing project and wants to contribute. Bless her patience.

Tammy & Jimmy

Tammy recently turned 60, party at Terry and Bonnie

Jimmy has bad legs and does not get around much. Good spirits and recently after heart surgery has been a new man. Good buddy to meet at the American Legion. He has a story to tell and one of these days he is my next “in his words” guy. Tammy has endless energy to help anyone in need that crosses her path.

Chapter 7

Friends on Dawn Lake 17

Since we moved to Dawn Lake in April 2024 we have added a lot of new friends (in order by distance from home)

Sue D

Our roof-mate, seldom seen, never heard, avid line dancer

Sue W

She is our closest neighbour, an fiery-haired artist (but not an orange Trumper) she teaches clay and mosaics at the Rec Center. Sue is an athlete extraordinaire swimming daily across the lake or to and from the fountains, walking, bicycling and driving her pontoon boat or her kayak around the lake almost daily for trash patrol.

Cindy B

Friendly charming woman, former surgical nurse, avid world traveler and frequently spotted touring the lake in her pedal-propelled kayak.

Bob & Diane

They know Arizona. Not natives but in the Valley of the sun since 1980. Wanna know about real estate? Ask Bob. Need help? Bob will be there.

Tom R

Our condos would fall apart if not for Tom. He monitors, fixes, and helps with anything needed at our condos. After a dozen years on the lake, he knows more than anyone regarding geese, coots, irrigation, maintenance, landscaping. Many on the lake depend on Tom. Bless the man who does it all for kindness and love of community.

Dave & Deb

Midwesterners from Indiana with more than enough friendliness to remind my of my years in Indiana.

John & Sue

Latest arrivals, seasonal snowbirds from Seattle. John is an engineer that built a most unique recumbent-two-wheel bike and experimental aircrafts. They are active pickleball players and we look forward to share a drink while floating in the lake.

Canadian Bill

A typically Canadian-friendly Okanagan and Prescott resident, Bill shows up on and off to join the fun and games of the lake dwellers.

Fred & Margaret

Organizers par excellence. Both devoting endless hours to HOA service, events and maintenance. Bless the givers of their own time. Fred, a former mortgage banker, is our HOA Treasurer. Margaret, retired director and owner of a Montessori school, is the organizer of all social events. The can be seen often touring the lake bass fishing.

Susan &

From across the lake, they provide a lovely night light show for our enjoyment

Sue & Gary

They live at the far Eastern end of the Dawn Lake's South shore. She is the organizer extraordinaire of HOA community events and a BOD member. With 30 years of experience herding and teaching fifth graders, Sue is well equipped to manage her audience.

Gary is a mathematician/engineer that designs and builds masterpieces of wooden cucu clocks. He is well equipped for high precision and performance devices having spent years in "the screw business" designing screws and fasteners for mission critical space and

high risk industrial applications. They recently married, are happy world travellers and committed contributors to charitable organizations including the Lions and their church.

Chapter 8

Closing Scene

- I cannot match my notes with faces and memories

- Does it matter?

- The memories are still mine and still there, I just cannot remember which ones you
were

- Thank you for coming to my book-reading

- I wish you ...

- to have as many friends as I found in Sun City

- to not forget their last names and faces

- to have memories to keep

- to write down your memories and make your friends immortal before memories
vanish like morning fog

- good night