

Sun City Stadium was once spring home to Brewers

RICH BOLAS
STAFF WRITER

Tom Candiotti remembers the golf cars in Sun City Stadium.

As a major-league pitcher, Candiotti spent two springs in Sun City with the Milwaukee Brewers, who trained in the retirement community between 1973 and 1985.

"I remember all these elderly fans would drive into the stadium in their golf cars," said Candiotti, now a radio analyst with the Arizona Diamondbacks. "They'd just hang out on the concourse and watch the games."

Sun City's field of dreams turned into an apartment complex several years ago.

However, for more than 20 years, Sun City Stadium served as the center of the senior community's sports universe, hosting women's softball, Pop Warner football and Cactus League games as the spring home of the Brewers.

The Fountains at Sun City, an apartment complex, now occupies the site of the stadium, which was located on 12½ acres north of the railroad tracks

on 111th and Grand avenues.

Sun City Stadium opened on July 4, 1971, with the Sun City Saints women's softball team as its first occupant.

In an era before cable television and multiple sports channels, the Saints had a large fan base, often drawing crowds in excess of 2,000 to the stadium.

The Saints also attracted a wide range of opponents, drawing numerous squads from around the state and the rest of the country.

On May 26, 1972, the Saints even went international, playing against the University of Tokyo.

Sun City Stadium established itself as a major-league outpost in 1973 when the Brewers made the ballpark its spring training home through 1985.

The Brewers always attracted plenty of fans, including many transplanted Wisconsinites, who sampled beer and brats while watching the action.

As a young pitcher trying to establish his major-league credentials, Candiotti said he had fond memories of playing in Sun City.

"I always remember the fans as being very friendly," Candiotti said. "And

we played on a sunken field, which was different than a lot of stadiums at the time."

Sun City Stadium also had another unique distinction among Cactus League locales — there was no other ballpark where fans could drive onto the stadium concourse and watch the action from the comfort of their golf cars.

As major-league clubs sought more expansive spring training homes, Sun City found itself landlocked, caught between homes to the north and the railroad tracks to the south.

The Brewers opted to leave Sun City after the 1985 season for greener pastures in Chandler. The Brewers now call the Maryvale section of Phoenix their spring home.

"There's no comparison now between the stadiums I played in and the ones the players call their spring homes today," Candiotti said. "They have all the amenities.

"But for me, I was a young player trying to make it in the major leagues. As far as I was concerned, those were all five-star stadiums.

Sun City Stadium had one more serious dalliance with baseball.

The Senior Professional Baseball Association awarded a franchise to Sun City for the 1989-90 season.

The senior league attempted to do for baseball what the Champions Tour did for golf.

The league fielded numerous big-name stars, who provided fans with a baseball nostalgia trip.

The Sun City Rays featured former Chicago Cubs skipper Jim Marshall, who managed a team that featured Ferguson Jenkins and Rollie Fingers.

Sun City averaged more than 1,100 fans per game, but could not overcome the league's financial hurdles with its Florida-based teams.

The league folded midway through the season and brought a sudden end to sporting life inside Sun City Stadium.

Women's softball made an aborted comeback, as did senior amateur baseball.

The stadium was razed in the early 1990s, paving the way for the apartment complex.

Arizona and baseball: A 70-year spring fling

Keridwen Cornelius
Arizona Highways

The story of spring training in Arizona begins, appropriately, with a pitch.

It was 1946, and Cleveland Indians owner Bill Veeck was frustrated with Florida's spring-training scene. Segregation laws prevented mixed-race games, and the Indians' new Black player, Larry Doby, was forced to stay in a separate hotel. In addition, crowds were sparse, and rain regularly canceled games.

Veeck wanted to transfer to Tucson, where he owned a ranch, but he knew his team needed competition.

So, he pitched an idea to Horace Stoneham, owner of the New York Giants: "Me, Tucson; you, Phoenix?" Thus sprouted the first seeds of the Cactus League.

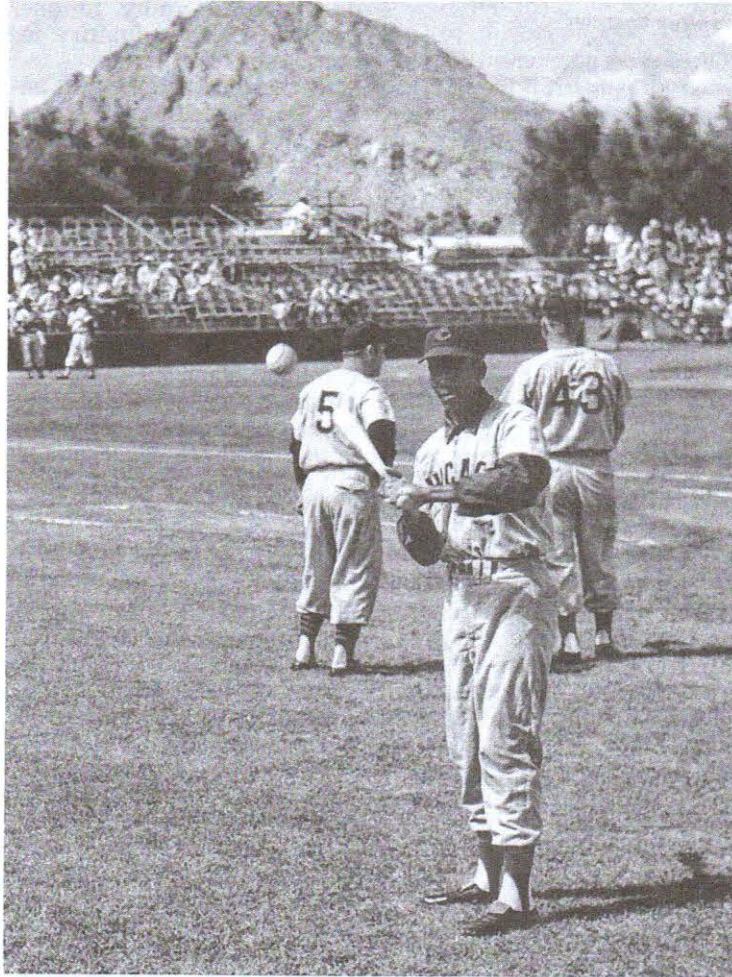
The Indians and Giants were happy with the Grand Canyon State (with the Giants leaving for two years, only to return), but it wasn't until 1952 that another team from Florida's Grapefruit League would join them, and only after a fortuitous chain of events.

In 1951, the New York Yankees were co-owned by Phoenix developer Del Webb.

Eager to be close to his team, Webb asked Stoneham to swap spring-training sites for one year, bringing the Yankees — including Joe DiMaggio and Mickey Mantle — to Phoenix, while the Giants shifted to Florida.

That move enticed Philip Wrigley, owner of the Chicago Cubs, to ship his team from Catalina Island in California to Phoenix for exhibition games against the Yanks. Wrigley loved — and owned — most of Catalina Island, but his team was essentially marooned from competition, so he'd been on the lookout for a mainland site.

Meanwhile, Mesa rancher and builder Dwight W. Patter-



Chicago Cubs shortstop Ernie Banks practices before a 1957 spring-training game against the Baltimore Orioles in Scottsdale. GETTY IMAGES

son formed a group called the HoHoKams, which was determined to recruit a major-league team to Mesa's Rendezvous Park. Webb and Patterson joined forces to connect the Cubs with Mesa. Upon seeing the park, Wid Matthews, the Cubs director of player personnel, declared, "This is it."

Rendezvous Park was demolished in 1976 and later reborn as HoHoKam Park. Its field was eventually named for Patterson, whom many consider the father of Cactus League baseball.

Over the years, those original teams experienced a series of changes. The Cubs

were based in Mesa for 14 years, left for a short stop in California and a long stretch in Scottsdale, and then headed back to Mesa in 1979. The New York Giants morphed into the San Francisco Giants and moved to Scottsdale Stadium. The Indians migrated to Florida in 1993 to be closer to their fan base, then returned to Arizona in 2010. In addition, several other ball clubs switched between the Grapefruit and Cactus leagues and traded stadiums within Arizona.

Now boasting 15 teams across metro Phoenix, the Cactus League is thriving, with attendance reaching 1.66 million this spring.

Valley&State || AZ History

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V F SC Baseball



Remembering when

Cactus League blossoms into big business

By Rusty Bradshaw
Independent Newspapers

The baby of Major League Baseball spring training has grown like the proverbial weed.

The West Valley provided explosive expansion for the Cactus League beginning in the late-1990s, when the spring training philosophy changed from a casual, low-key affair to a revenue producer for the teams and an economic and tourism boost for host cities. Cactus League officials announced this year a \$622 million economic impact for the state of Arizona for both the Cactus League Season and the non-spring training months, according to Mark Coronado, Surprise parks and recreation director.

"The cliché 'build it and they will come' has proven true, and our residents are better served with recreational and entertainment opportunities," he said.

The reason Arizona cities courted MLB is to attract tourists that travel to support their teams, according to Peoria Mayor Bob Barrett.

"We're essentially looking for sales tax," he said. "Sales tax provides funding for almost a third of our budget, so the more spring training tickets we sell, the better."

Mr. Barrett also believes spring training is an attraction for those living in other cities to visit Peoria and see how the city has changed.

The development and exten-



sion of Loop 101 and the ongoing development of the Loop 303 connect the West Valley to the metro Phoenix region. Bringing spring training to the West Valley has played a part in that connection, according to Mr. Coronado.

"Progressive and aggressive municipal government leadership deserves to be recognized and our investments are delivering economic and quality of life results," he said. "No longer is the West Valley an inconvenient gas stop on the way to California."

The stadiums are economic drivers within their cities, as well, according to Mr. Barrett.

"Look at Bell Road and 83rd Avenue and all the restaurants and other amenities that have grown up around the stadium," he said. "Keep in mind also that the stadium sees some kind of use about 340-350 days a year."

The same is true at the other West Valley sites.

"So, it isn't just MLB; but none of that would have happened without the (teams)," Mr. Barrett said.

While the region is an infant in the world of spring training, the

West Valley, including Sun City, a retirement community that has no stadium or MLB team, has had a huge impact on one of the biggest economic drivers of the state.

Some sources claim pro baseball preseason training got its start in 1886, when Cap Anson took the Chicago White Stockings of the National League to Hot Springs, Ark., to train before the start of the season. Others indicate the practice was started in 1884, when the Boston Beaneaters went to New Orleans. While history also records the New York Mutuals and Cincinnati Red Stockings went north for training in 1869.

Arizona's spring training began in 1909, when the Chicago White Sox, training on the West Coast, stopped in Yuma and Tucson for exhibition games on their way back to Illinois to start the regular season. The practice spread to other teams and continued for decades. Arizona's first spring camp was in 1929, when the Detroit Tigers trained and played a few exhibition games at Phoenix's Riverside Park. But it lasted just one year.

Arizona spring training began in earnest in 1947, when the Cleveland Indians, whose 1960s rosters would include Woodie Held, and New York Giants, part of California's Orange League spring training circuit, conducted their training in Phoenix and Tucson. In 1951 part-owner Del Webb, a real estate developer who pioneered retirement com-

Del Webb's team

Those looking to learn more about the long and rich history of America's favorite pastime in the West Valley may want to visit the Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, 10801 W. Oakmont Drive, Sun City. On display is a one-of-a-kind collection of Del E. Webb baseball-related items on loan to the museum from the R.H. Johnson family. Del Webb, the founder of Sun City, owned the New York Yankees from 1945 to 1965, during which time the franchise won 10 World Series titles. Among the items on display is a special award presented to Mr. Webb from Yankees fans and sportswriters shortly before he sold the team to CBS. Admission to the museum is free.

munities with Sun City in 1960, brought the New York Yankees to Phoenix for one year of spring training by arranging a spring training site trade with the New York Giants. But the arrangement, which was Mickey Mantle's first spring training and Joe Dimaggio's last, lasted only one year.

Mr. Webb's influence would surface again.

Into the 1960s, Arizona's Cactus League saw teams come and go, as they experienced dis-

Continued to Page 26

1886

Chicago White Stockings travel to Hot Springs, Ark., for spring training.

1909

Chicago White Sox play exhibition games in Yuma and Tucson on the way back to Chicago.

1929

Detroit Tigers set up first spring training camp in Arizona, but it lasted only one year.

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1946

Indians owner Bill Veeck buys a ranch near Tucson, eventually leading to formation of the Cactus League.

1947

Cleveland Indians and New York Giants train in Arizona as members of California's Orange League.

1951

New York Yankees train in Phoenix when part-owner Del Webb wanted to show off his club to his Arizona neighbors.

1954

Baltimore Orioles leave Florida to train in Yuma.

1961

Los Angeles Angels set up spring camp in Palm Springs, Calif., as a member of the Cactus League.

1962

Houston Colt 45s train in Apache Junction, but leave after two years.

1962

Del Webb build softball field off Grand Avenue in Sun City.

1968

Del Webb talks to Kansas City Royals about training in Arizona, but Royals go to Florida.

1969

The San Diego Padres begin spring training in Yuma, Seattle Pilots in Tempe and Oakland As in Mesa.

1971

Del Webb builds 3,449-seat Sun City stadium in hopes of attracting an MLB team for spring training.

1972

San Francisco Giants play some spring games in Sun City.

1973

Milwaukee Brewers train in Sun City, in a stadium built by Del Webb.

1977

The expansion Seattle Mariners begin spring training in Tempe.

1987

Brewers leave Sun City for Chandler after Del Webb sells the stadium and the new owners raise the rent..

1989

Senior Professional Baseball Association formed for former MLB players 35 and older.

1990

Sun City Rays join SPBA, but the league folds before the end of the season.

1994

Spring training comes to the West Valley for the first time with the opening of the Peoria Sports Complex.

1998

Maryvale becomes the second West Valley site for spring training with a \$23 million stadium complex.

2003

Surprise opens its \$48 million stadium for the Kansas City Royals and Texas Rangers.

2009

Camelback Ranch opens in Glendale to house the Los Angeles Dodgers and Chicago White Sox..

2009

Goodyear completes a new ballpark that becomes the home of the Cleveland Indians.

putes over their Florida facilities. During that time, spring training remained in Phoenix, Mesa and Scottsdale. Apache Junction had a brief stint as spring training host when the expansion Houston Colt 45s trained in Geronimo Park for two years, beginning in 1962. But the desert environment and small crowds hastened their move to Florida.

Major League Baseball's 1969 western expansion rejuvenated Arizona spring training when the San Diego Padres chose to train in Yuma, the expansion Seattle Pilots trained in Tempe and the Oakland Athletics trained in Mesa.

Mr. Webb entered the picture again in 1968, when his attempt to bring the Kansas City Royals to Arizona for the spring sessions failed. In 1971, he built a 3,449-seat stadium at 111th and Grand avenues in Sun City. Two years later, the Milwaukee Brewers began playing spring games there, making Sun City the first West Valley site for spring training games.

However, after low interest rates hurt the housing market, Mr. Webb sold the Sun City stadium in 1986, and the following year the Brewers went to Chandler.

The 1980s saw spring training begin a change to the multi-million dollar economic engine it is today. After Florida legislators enacted laws allowing bed taxes and sales tax to be used to attract MLB teams to the Sunshine State, Arizona Gov. Rose Mofford's task force concluded the Cactus League provided \$160 million to the Arizona economy.

State leaders' efforts were successful in leading to the creation of a public-private partnership between state, county and city governments and private



Photo by Bret McKeand/Independent Newspapers

The Del Webb Sun Cities Museum, 10801 W. Oakmont Drive, Sun City, has an entire room dedicated to the sport and its relation to the Sun Cities. The display features the largest collection of Sun City Saints memorabilia. A professional – and immensely popular – women's softball team that captured a national championship in 1979, the Saints played at Sun City Stadium until the team folded in the early 1990s.

participation. This partnership model led to the creation of a funding mechanism for the renovation and construction of Cactus League facilities.

Mr. Coronado said it is not a coincidence that the West Valley has experienced tremendous residential growth, economic prosperity and national exposure because of the five facilities that have since been built in the region.

"These facilities have certainly been a catalyst and contributed to the West Valley being recognized as a sports mecca and attractive tourism destination," he said.

Newly elected Glendale Mayor Jerry Weiers agrees.

"Spring training introduced the West Valley as a sports venue," he said. "It blazed a trail and showed that fans all over the Valley will travel west of Interstate 17 to see their favorite teams."

Peoria became the West Valley leader in spring training when the \$32 million Peoria Sports Complex was completed in 1994 and housed the Padres and Mari-

ners. Peoria not only opened the West Valley for spring training, but became a trend setter.

"Peoria was the first city to host two teams in one stadium," Mr. Barrett explained. "Prior to that, each city stadium in the Valley only hosted a single team."

Peoria also is the first, and to date, only city to renew its teams. Both the Mariners and the Padres agreed to new 20-year agreements in 2012.

"This is a good thing for Peoria, we don't have to build a new stadium or engage in 'spring training roulette,'" Mr. Barrett said.

That spring training stability is important because Major League Baseball also is an attraction to businesses looking to locate in the Valley, according to Mr. Barrett.

"They help provide a great quality of life, and that is one of the things businesses consider when they relocate," he said.

Maryvale became the second West Valley spring training city with a \$23 million stadium in 1998, but it housed only one

team. Surprise continued the Peoria trend with the 2003 completion of its \$48 million complex to host the Kansas City Royals and Texas Rangers.

"The proven success of the Peoria Sports Complex was a positive model with regard to economic impact, recreation programming and international and national exposure," Mr. Coronado explained.

Surprise elected officials at the time had a vision to build and develop recreation facilities and introduce a full menu of recreational programming for a growing population, he added.

In 2009, Glendale opened Camelback Ranch, the one of the two newest West Valley spring training facilities. The stadium complex became the home of the Los Angeles Dodgers and Chicago White Sox. Goodyear also opened a new stadium in 2009 for the Cleveland Indians, one of Arizona's original spring training teams after a 16-year hiatus in Florida, and the Cincinnati Reds joined the Tribe there in 2010.

The Glendale and Goodyear stadium projects triggered events that brought spring training exclusively to the Valley. With only two teams left in Tucson, spring training there became a nonviable option. The home state Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies moved their spring activities in 2011 to Scottsdale's Talking Stick Stadium, the newest Arizona spring training facility.

Mr. Weiers believes the West Valley is a natural fit for spring training and other sports activities.

"Our facilities were laid out to make driving and parking here as painless as possible," he said.

Venues are also a short distance from shops and restaurants so fans have someplace to go before and after games, he added.

2010

The Cincinnati Reds join the Indians in Goodyear.

2011

The Arizona Diamondbacks and Colorado Rockies leave Tucson on Scottsdale's Talking Stick.

2012

Peoria becomes first Valley city to renew contracts with spring training teams.

For sale

Buyer is sought for unoccupied Sun City Stadium

By **Connie Cone**
The Phoenix Gazette

SUN CITY — The Sun City Saints waved goodbye, the Milwaukee Brewers batted off to Chandler and the Minnesota Twins said thanks, but no thanks, to moving its training camp to this Northwest Valley territory.

So just where does that leave the Sun City Stadium?

For sale.

The 12½-acre site on 111th and Grand avenues has been up for grabs for about a month now, but few prospective buyers have expressed interest in the \$2.5 million price tag.

K. Slanta, one of three O'Keefe Real Estate agents who is handling the property, is optimistic about finding a buyer.

"We've contacted the community and are letting Sun City people know it's for sale," Slanta said. "However, Sun City cannot purchase it because it is unincorporated, but an individual might want to buy it. We're seeing if we can stimulate some kind of drive for it."

Slanta said there have been inquiries about the land, "but nothing materialized."

The agent said O'Keefe has contacted a number of investment groups, as well, but to no avail.

"I think it would make — and this is just my opinion — a great place for a medical complex because you're so close to area hospitals," Slanta said.

The property was purchased from Del Webb about five years ago by Glendale-based B&D Construction and Development, said Gerald Bade, the company treasurer.

The property, which came with a restriction that it be used as a baseball park until mid-1987, was leased by the Saints women's

See ■ Stadium, Page B

■ Stadium

From Page A

fast-pitch softball team and the Brewers. After the Saints disbanded and the Brewers moved its training camp to Chandler, B&D tried to lure other baseball teams to the park.

"We had talked with the Minnesota Twins and other teams, but no one wanted to come out," Bade said.

When the restriction ended in May, B&D began to pursue plans to develop the parcel for multifamily housing or for a retirement facility. "But we felt the market was too weak for that," Bade said.

So, the stadium sits, waiting for a new owner.

"It's kind of an unusual piece of property based on size and location. It's very difficult to estimate how much time on the market it will take or what use it would have," Bade said.

He believes O'Keefe's approach to market the property is correct.

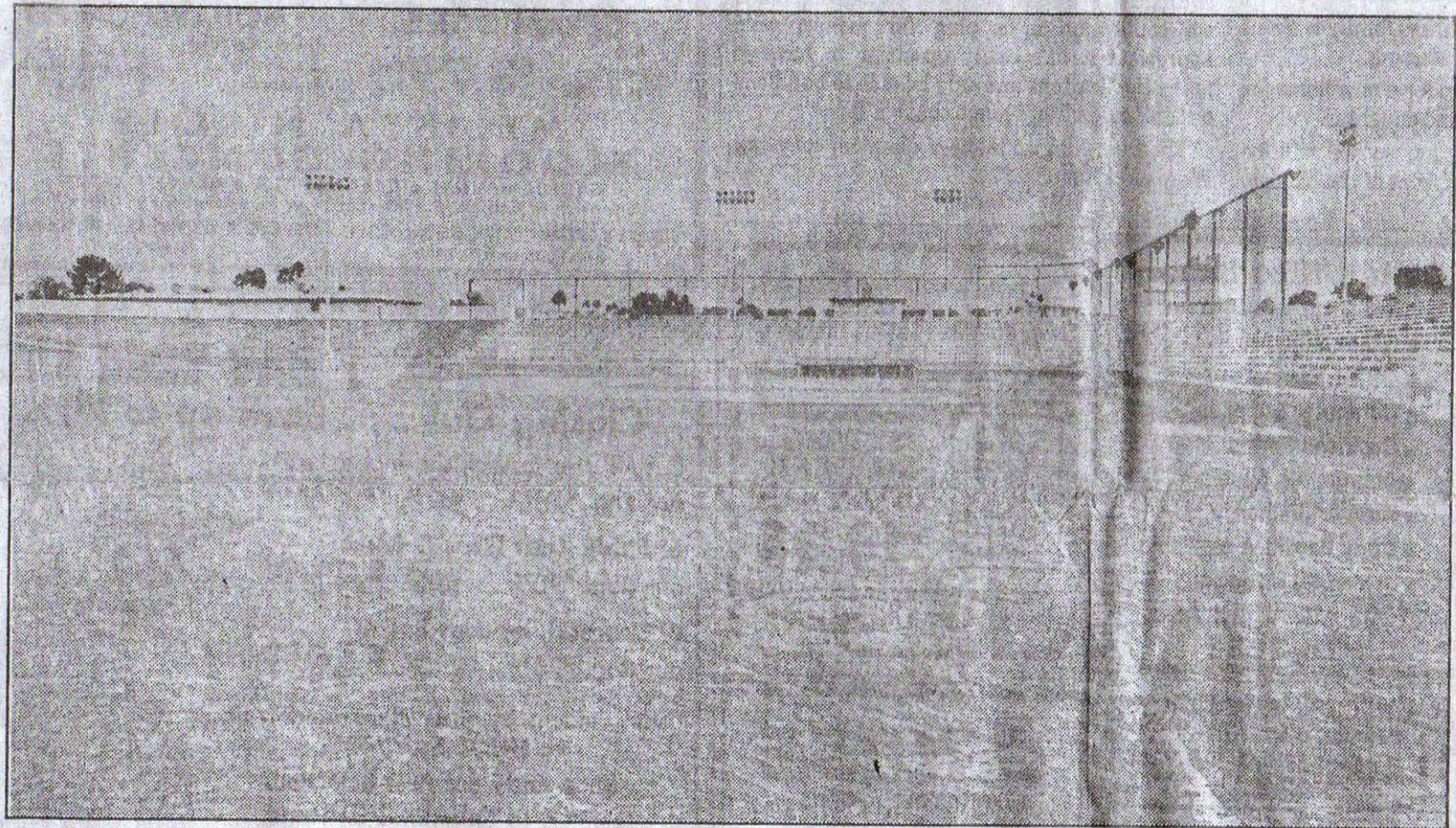
"They're trying to determine if there's interest in Sun City based

primarily in anticipation that someday the area might be incorporated and that it could be an excellent location for municipal facilities," Bade said.

Besides the stadium and the field, three buildings sit on the site — a 5,000-square-foot building, one of 2,000 square feet and one of 1,000.

Bade said although it might be difficult to break up the acreage, "it's not entirely out of the question. I certainly wouldn't be adverse to splitting it in two."

Ed Vandertook, who left last week as general manager of the Recreation Centers of Sun City Inc., doesn't count out the possibility of Sun City ever incorporating. "In recent months, the idea has gotten some strength, and, yes, if that happens, they'd need some place to put a municipal center. Land around Sun City is limited," he said.



Interested in a facility with lots of land and seating? The Sun City Stadium is for sale.

Bob Leiby, *The Phoenix Gazette*

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Field of Dreams



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Selling kisses for \$1 was a popular fund-raiser for the young Saints softball players, who played in Sun City from 1966 to 1986. Here, Debbie Doom, All-American fastball pitcher, gives Larry Silverberg his dollar's worth in 1968. Sun City and Sun City West have a rich heritage that preceded today's softball leagues. It is captured in a new talk, "Fields of Dreams," offered to local groups by the Sun Cities Area Historical Society. It covers the beginnings of softball on dusty, weed-filled lots, the adoption of the women's fast-pitch team, the Saints, the advent of major league training with the arrival of the Brewers and the evolution of today's softball leagues. "Fields of Dreams" will be presented by Ed Allen at the West Valley Art Museum's "Artful Afternoons" program at 4 p.m. March 17. To schedule a talk for your organization, call the Historical Society at 623-974-2568, or Ed Allen at 623-975-1815. There is no charge, but donations are accepted. Plan to visit the Historical Society Museum at 10801 W. Oakmont Drive to view the display of photos and memorabilia from the early years of baseball in the Sun Cities. The museum is open from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Tuesday-Friday.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 2005

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

BASEBALL INSIDER

Series of the week: Not a lot of big showdowns this week but White Sox at Twins, Tuesday-Thursday, might make or break Minnesota's wild-card chances.

Howsam: No Hall for Rose, and get rid of the DH

The man who built one of the greatest baseball teams in history is playing out the late innings of his life in a Valley retirement home worrying about the state of the game.



Joseph A. Reaves

On baseball

He thinks Pete Rose got what he deserved. And he figures anyone who gets caught using steroids deserves the same.

He hates the designated hitter, believes today's fans are getting short-changed and worries that money is eating away at the

beauty of baseball.

"I just think the game has many problems today," says Bob Howsam, 87, who put together the Big Red Machine during an amazing 12-year

stint as general manager of the Cincinnati Reds from 1967-78.

"I think baseball has forgotten the fans to a certain degree. I'm just talking as a normal person, but it seems to me that everything has gotten into the area of the bottom line."

Howsam is anything but a "normal person" in the baseball world. He's a legend.

Before he built the Big Red Machine, Howsam won a World Series ring as general manager of the St. Louis Cardinals in 1964, taking over in August when owner Augie Busch lost patience with an underachieving team.

The Cards were 62-55 when Busch fired GM Bing Devine, who just two months earlier had pulled off the Lou Brock-for-Ernie Broglio trade with the Chicago Cubs.

Under Howsam, the Cardinals went 31-14 the rest of the way and

beat the Yankees in seven games to win the World Series.

During the next two seasons, Howsam added to a solid nucleus, bringing in Orlando Cepeda and Roger Maris to take the Cardinals to another World Series in 1967. But he was in his first year in Cincy by then.

"We had a real good ballclub in St. Louis, but I have to say the peak of my career was when we won back-to-back World Series in Cincinnati," he said in a proud, quiet voice.

Howsam made one of his smartest and most controversial moves when hiring Sparky Anderson as his manager.

Anderson had a reputation as a talented but hot-tempered young manager in the minors. He nearly got blackballed for trying to wrestle an umpire to the ground in Rock Hill, S.C., in 1965. But Howsam

hired him to manage in the minors with St. Louis and Cincinnati before giving him the Reds in 1970.

"He made us a unit," Howsam said of Anderson, who still calls every couple of weeks. "He was a wonderful manager. Great pride. We all worked together to get our jobs done."

The Reds were the dream organization of the 1970s, winning regularly and becoming the first National League team since the 1922 Giants to win back-to-back World Series titles in 1975-76.

Rose was one of the sparkplugs of the Big Red Machine, and Howsam remembers him fondly. But he thinks Pete deserves the lifetime ban he received for betting on baseball.

"I don't look at it only as Pete Rose," Howsam says. "I look at it for any player who breaks the rules and

gambles on our games. He should never be allowed in the Hall of Fame."

Same for steroids users, he says. As for the DH, Howsam says simply: "I just don't believe that's the way the game should be played."

Howsam is winding down these days. He's just had his second hip-replacement surgery but is making plans to celebrate his 66th wedding anniversary Sept. 15 with the woman he met on the University of Colorado campus in 1936.

"I saw her and asked her to go Coke-ing," Howsam laughs. "That's what we said in those days when we went for a Coca-Cola."

"Cost me 5 cents. I tell her all the time it was the most expensive drink I ever bought. Best, too."

Reach Reaves at (602) 444-8125 or joseph.reaves@arizonarepublic.com

over

Geronimo key part of machine



Here in his Sun City home, Bob Howsam has many mementos of his baseball years with the Cincinnati Reds and the St. Louis Cardinals. Here he is with his 1975 Reds World Series championship trophy.

MICHAEL GING/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Start talking about Cincinnati's Big Red Machine of the 1970s and the cast of characters is pretty familiar. Johnny Bench. Pete Rose. Joe Morgan. George Foster. Ken Griffey Sr. Tony Perez. Davey Concepcion.

Heck, even the pitchers get their share of credit: Don Gullett. Jack Billingham. Pedro Borbon.

But one guy that almost always gets overlooked is Cesar Geronimo, the weak-hitting Gold Glove center fielder who started his career as a left-handed pitcher in the Yankees organization and wound up the answer to a trivia question when he became the 3,000th strikeout victim for both Bob Gibson and Nolan Ryan.

Geronimo came to Cincinnati in 1971 from Houston in the same trade that brought Morgan to the Reds.

"Geronimo's the one player on that team who didn't get near enough credit," says Bob Howsam, the general manager who built the Big Red Machine and traded for Geronimo and Morgan.

"Geronimo made it look so easy fielding a ball. And he hit well when it counted. He deserves to be remembered a lot more."

Reflections on baseball

Sun Citian instrumental in Sun Bowl being built

By **Kenn Gorr**

Independent Newspapers

Doug Wright loves baseball.

The Libertyville, Ill., native can still name many of the players who played for the Chicago Cubs during the 1930s.

The names Hack Wilson, Gabby Hartnett, Kiki Cuyler, Billy Herman and Charlie Root roll off his tongue like saliva off the tongues of Pavlov's dogs.

This Cubs fan and retired Presbyterian minister even believes its time to put to rest the recent ejection of current Cubs outfielder Sammy Sosa from a game for using an illegally corked bat.

"The media has done a lot on the incident," Wright said. "Who is to say whether he was lying? Those things happen."

Bats also were a big deal this past year in the Sun Cities Senior Softball League.

And as the president of the Sun City Chapter of the SCSSL, Wright was right in the middle of the fracas.

Wright and the other members of the Sun City League Board desperately wanted the composite bats that were flooding the market banned from the league. So did most of the members of the Sun City West league. Eventually, they got their way.

"Those composite bats were scary," Wright said. "They're dangerous. We've had some people injured even before those bats came along."

Wright and the other members of the Sun City Softball League Board wanted the bats banned not only because of the danger they posed to players, but because the bats were driving a competitive wedge

between players, teams and leagues.

"We're trying to maintain the idea that softball is fun," Wright said. "We don't need all those home runs."

Wright's desire to rid the leagues of dangerous bats is evidence he loves softball almost as much as he enjoys watching baseball.

He played sandlot ball as a kid and participated in a softball league in Milwaukee during the 1950s. Hank Aaron was patrolling the outfield for the Braves in those days. Ernie Banks was a Cub.

The week after he retired from the First Presbyterian Church, Sun City, he joined the Sun City softball league, and he quickly got involved as more than just a player.

Since 1980, he has served several terms as the Sun City league president and several terms on the Sun Cities league board.

It was as a member of the league board that Wright made his permanent mark on Sun City softball.

Ralph Snyder's name rolls off Wright's tongue as easily as those of the former Cubs. It was Snyder, now deceased, who approached Wright with the idea to have a softball stadium built in Sun City.

Wright remembers exactly how difficult it was to get the field built.

"The man who was the president of the Sun City recreation (centers) board at the time we brought the idea to him, was all for it," Wright said. "But he resigned. I don't remember why. And it was a tough sell after that."

Wright said he walked the neighborhood around 107th



Photo by Kenn Gorr/Independent Newspapers

Doug Wright chats about the Sun Cities Senior Softball League. Wright, who is currently the Sun City Senior Softball League president, was instrumental in getting the Sun Bowl built several years ago in Sun City.

Street and Clair Drive collecting signatures — in August.

"It was five acres of weeds. They were delighted for something to be done with that property," Wright said.

Zoning and budget issues cropped up, turning the project into a five-year contest of wills. Wright and his supporters eventually won.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City Governing Board allocated \$200,000 for the project. The low bid came in at \$270,000.

Another battle.

The Sun Bowl opened for business in the mid-90s. Joe Garigiola Jr. threw out the first pitch. Ever since then, the Sun Cities Senior Softball League has grown like the weeds that populated the property prior to the Sun

Bowl's development, expanding from 14 teams to 28.

"I knew it was going to grow, but I had no idea how much," Wright said. "It's come a long way from the six teams we had when the league first started."

Wright is quietly working on another project. He wants to have a cover erected over the stands at the Sun Bowl, to protect the fans from the Arizona sun.

"We really haven't done anything other than ask the recreation board for the money," Wright said. "We have a good relationship with the board. When they get the money, I'm sure we'll get something done."

And, what about summer softball?

"It's too darn hot," Wright said.

Bromley, Swanson inducted into the Softball Hall of Fame

By Mike Russo
Independent Newspapers

Doors to the Sun Cities Senior Softball League Hall of Fame swung wide last week to admit its two newest members.

Inducted as members of the Class of 2003 during ceremonies held April 15 at Mountain Recreation Center were Bill Bromley and Loran Swanson. In addition, Phil Batow was honored for individual achievement.

With the latest induction, the Hall of Fame, which was established in 1998, now has 21 members enshrined.

Both members of the Class of 2003 were inducted for their off-the-field contributions, as well as on-field.

Bill Bromley

A native of Danville, Ill., Bromley, 69, is a 15-year veteran of the Sun Cities Senior Softball League.

He has played all over the diamond, but recently has been predominately an infielder.

His accomplishments on behalf of the league include serving two terms on the board of directors, helping start the National League and ordering and installing mats under the batters' boxes, preventing batters from digging large holes as they took a toehold.

He also served as field manager in Sun City West. During that stint, he was instrumental in having a second opening onto the field installed in each dugout.

During his second term as a director, Bromley was the league's special events coordinator; as such, he assisted in setting up the Fireman's Day charity game and all-star games.

Master of ceremonies Bob Stouthamer jokingly praised Bromley for his invention of the infield ball extra-ball holder.

Bromley said he was honored to be inducted into the Hall of Fame, and he has enjoyed his lengthy association with the league.

Loran Swanson

Another Jack-of-all-trades on the ballfield, Swanson, 73, has been primarily a pitcher in recent seasons.

A 9-year league veteran, Swanson has been a team manager on numerous occasions, and in 1995 managed the Kuentz Field complex in Sun City West.

Mr. Swanson was instrumental in developing the system that led to player drafts in an effort to equalize talent among league teams. He has assisted in conducting player drafts and registering players, and he has maintained league personnel records.

In 1997, Swanson, with the help of Steve Griswold and Dolores Warrick's Gals and Guys team, formed the Green Team, which still serves as the league's instructional squad, preparing players to participate with regular league teams.

Swanson has served on the league's Bylaws and Rules Committees, and served on the board of directors for six years. He is currently the league coordinator.

In accepting his award, Swanson said, "It is a beautiful game we play. Our star players get humbled.

"This is a very precious moment in my life," he continued. "I would like to thank everyone who has helped make this possible.

"To receive this honor in the autumn of my life is very special," he concluded.

Phil Batow

Still active at age 92, Batow has played in the league since its inception in 1979 and he is its oldest player.

"We are so very fortunate to have this special, fiery, young inspiration to look up to and admire. I bet we all hope to be playing the game each of us loves at age 92," Stouthamer said.

Stouthamer recalled a story that defined the diminutive pepperpot, which involved hall inductee

Bromley.

During a game in Bromley's first season in the league, he tapped a ball back to the pitcher and rather than run to first base, figuring he was an easy out, he

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En route to the dugout, Bromley was confronted by a teammate who chided, "We run everything out in this league." That confrontational teammate was Batow.

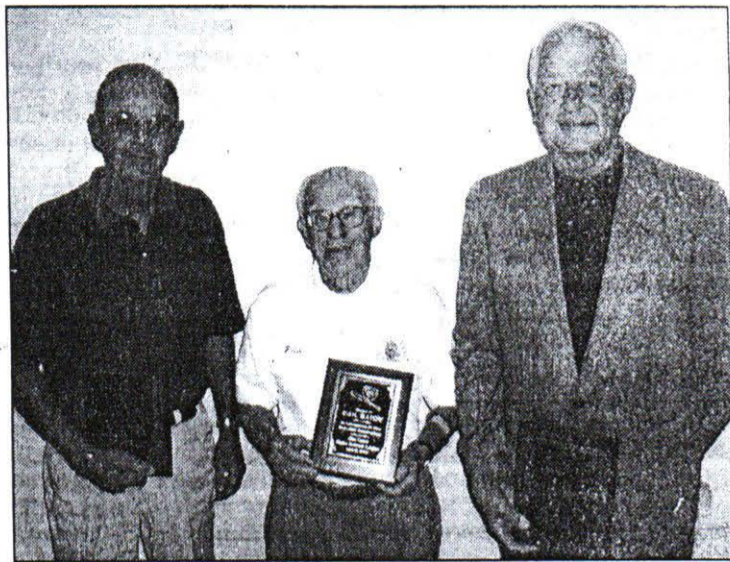


Photo by Mike Russo/Independent Newspapers

The newest inductees to the Sun Cities Senior Softball League Hall of Fame, Bill Bromley, left, and Loran Swanson, right, flank Phil Batow, who was honored for individual achievement during ceremonies held April 15 at Mountain View Recreation Center auditorium.



Photo by Mike Russo/Independent Newspapers

Members of the Sun Cities Senior Softball League Hall of Fame attending last week's induction ceremony were, from left, seated, Doug Wright, Duncan Jewell, Kay O'Toole, representing her deceased husband, Joe, and Bob Millslagel. Standing, Bob Morgan, Ray Keller, Steve Letko, Matt Szydowski and Don Goble.

Bromley, Swanson inducted into the Softball Hall of Fame

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Independent Newspapers

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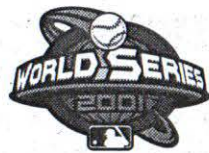
Rich Bolas, sports editor
876-2523

Daily News-Sun • Tuesday, Oct. 30, 2001

Del Webb owned Yankees

GARY NELSON
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Arizona owns the New York Yankees so far in the 2001 World Series, but that's nothing new.



For 20 years, Arizona builder Del Webb possessed the premier franchise in professional sports. He owned the team. He owned Yankee Stadium. He owned its minor-league system.

Fans, Del Webb used to sign Joe DiMaggio's paycheck — if not literally, then at least figuratively as the Yankees' majority owner.

R.H. Johnson, a former president of the Del Webb Corp. who now lives in Wickenburg, remembers Webb as

a passionate and superstitious baseball man.

"When he was a youngster he would solicit work from construction companies. He would always ask them if they had a baseball team. If they didn't he would go until he could find a company with a baseball team," Johnson said.

Webb was putting together a pretty good career as a minor-league player in California until typhoid fever precipitated his move to Arizona in 1926. That illness, plus a bum arm, ended his playing days.

But even as his construction business boomed, his passion for the game remained strong. In early 1945, as World War II neared its climax, he bought the Yankees with two partners.

Total price for the deal:

\$2,850,500. Big-league teams pay that kind of money in one year now for banjo-hitting utility infielders.

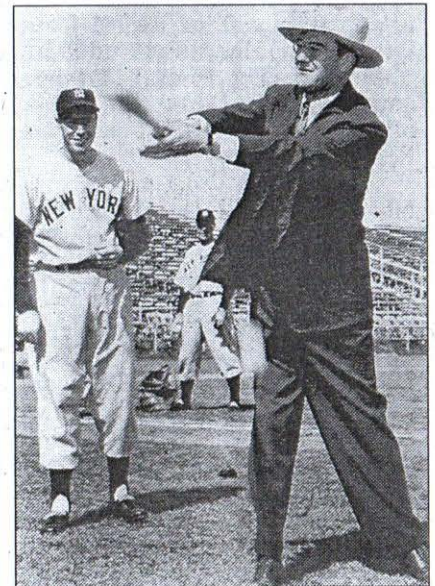
Even so, baseball was already big business.

"Ball clubs used to be started by some old ballplayer getting other players together and keeping his books in his hip pocket," he told an Arizona Highways reporter in 1951. "It is far beyond that these days."

But it took more than money and talent to field a winning team, Webb believed. It also required hat-free beds.

"I remember being at the Waldorf-Astoria once," Johnson said. "I put my hat on the bed and he said, 'Get that hat off the bed.'" Johnson complied, but too late; the Yankees lost that day.

See Webb's teams, A7



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Arizona developer Del Webb swings a bat with Yankees great Joe DiMaggio looking on. Webb used to sign DiMaggio's check.

Saints capture another tourney title

The Senior Saints won their fourth consecutive tournament championship this year coping the crown of the Phoenix Firecracker Tournament June 23 at Papago Sports Complex in Scottsdale.

The Saints raised their season's tourney record to a sterling 26-4.

Making the championship triumph all the more impressive was fact that the Saints played with only 11 defensive players and a total of 13 players because of vacations.

"I was extremely proud of our team because we filled in the gaps and teamwork and supporting each other were the goals," said Diana Gano, player/coach.

The tourney opened with two pool games played in the morning, and the Saints were victorious in both. They needed only five innings to dispose of the Renegades, 11-5, and Las Amigas, 11-4.

In the pool game against the Renegades, left fielder Pam Scherkenback, in her first game with the Senior Saints, made a favorable impression going 3-for-3. Right fielder Linda Samson drove in two runs with a triple. The Senior Saints took advantage of 11 walks, and despite only eight hits, coasted to victory over Las Amigas.

Single-elimination competition took place in the evening, and Las Amigas again fell victim to the Saints, 9-1. Ronnie Zahay limited Las Amigas to six hits. Shortstop Marilyn Rau and left-center fielder T. Irons were both 3-for-3.

The California Renegades proved no match for the Senior Saints in the championship game as they were whipped 18-5. Rover Lynn Shutt and Rau had three hits



Submitted photo

Members of the victorious Senior Saints were, from left, back row: Linda Tellez, Mary Lou Cooley, Sis Iorio, Lindsey Tellez, bat girl, T. Irons, Jim Wardman, third base coach, Pam Scherkenback, J.R. Melander, scorekeeper and Linda Samson Middle row: Angie Halmrast, Lynn Shutt, Jeri Teisl, Ronnie Zahay, Bev Johnson, Marcia Lorona, Maggie Bonin and Marilyn Rau .Front: Diana Gano.

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Rau led the team in hitting with a .750 average. Right-center fielder Angie Halmrast and Irons were important contributors, batting .636. Irons and Samson both drove in eight runs.

Marcia Lorona and Ronnie Zahay each pitched two games, and

both compiled a batting average of .500. They both did an excellent job for the Senior Saints.

The Senior Saints roster included Diana Gano, Angie Halmrast, Marilyn "Sis" Iorio, T. Irons, Bev Johnson of Sun City West, Marcia Lorona, Marilyn Rau, Linda Samson, Pam Scherkenback, Lynn Shutt, Jeri Teisl, Linda Tellez, Veronica "Ron-

nie" Zahay, and substitutes, Maggie Bonin and Mary Lou Cooley.

The Senior Saints dedicated the four home runs hit during this tournament to Com Tel Logistics, Inc., a proud sponsor of the Senior Saints.

The team's next tournament will be in Prescott Aug. 4-5 where they will defend their 2000 gold medal in the Senior Olympics.

Webb's teams won 10 World Series

From A6

Webb was also famous for never carrying cash; Johnson had to make sure there was money on hand.

Webb brought the Yankees to Arizona for spring training one year, in 1951, swapping facilities with the New York Giants, who trained in Florida that year.

During his 20 years as Yankees owner, Webb employed such greats as DiMaggio, Yogi Berra, Mickey Mantle and Whitey Ford. He was on hand for one of the greatest World Series games ever, a perfect outing by an otherwise mediocre hurler named Don Larsen in 1956. Webb's teams won 15 American League pennants and 10 World Series titles, including five in a row from 1949 to 1953.

Webb is famous for master-planned retirement communities that helped

alter the face of the Sun Belt as well as the nature of retirement itself. He also built Madison Square Garden in New York, Anaheim Stadium in California and the first ballpark for the Kansas City Royals. And he oversaw renovations to Chicago's Wrigley Field, whose Cubs last appeared in the World Series the year Webb bought the Yankees.

Webb died on July 4, 1974, after which Johnson ran the company until his retirement in 1983.

Johnson, a native Phoenician, said he is rooting for the Diamondbacks. "I hope it's four and zero," he said.

He was in Bank One Ballpark Saturday night when Arizona clobbered the Yankees 9-1 for the first Series victory in franchise history.

"God, I've never heard such noise," Johnson said. "We tried to talk and by golly you were shouting in each other's ears."

SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT JANUARY 24-30, 2001

New softball league forms in Sun Cities

By **DAVID S. GOODMAN**
Independent Newspapers

A new softball league has formed linking Sun City, Sun City West and Sun City Grand.

The Tri-City League began its inaugural season Jan. 6 and will continue play on Saturdays rotating games throughout the Sun Cities.

"Originally it started to give the lower ability players more opportunity to play," said Ken Skinner, president of the Sun City West club.

Softball leagues in the Sun Cities usually are broken down into two types of players, A and B. The younger, more athletic members are A players and those who are less experienced or older are B players.

"The A players always seem to be able to find places to play while the B players couldn't," Mr. Skinner said.

To try and give B players more opportunities to play Mr. Skinner, John McDonald of Sun City Grand and Steve Griswold of Sun City joined to create Tri-City League.

"It turned out that there was an equal number of A and B players who were interested so we co-mingled them and created teams," Mr.



Submitted photo

Officials of the new Tri-City league meet in front of Del E. Webb Memorial Field, Sun City Grand. From left, Ken Skinner of Sun City West, John McDonald of Sun City Grand and Steve Griswold of Sun City worked to create the new league which has eight teams and plays on Saturdays.

Skinner said.

Eight teams currently make up the league including three from Sun City Grand and Sun City West and two from Sun City. There are usually 12 players on a team and expansion by two teams is already

being considered.

The first game was played Jan. 6 at Del E. Webb Memorial Field in Sun City Grand. The league will also play at Kuentz softball field in Sun City West and Sun Bowl field in Sun City.

"As long as we play equal time on other fields, we can play here (Sun City West) and not have to be concerned with the guest policy," Mr. Skinner said.

The Recreation Centers of Sun City West allow sports chartered clubs to avoid the guest fee when the league plays in outside areas.

Games are played on Saturdays through April beginning at 10:15 a.m. with each team playing one game. With eight teams, there are four games with the last starting around 2 p.m.

There will not be any playoffs or championship game, Mr. Skinner said. "This is just for fun and bragging rights."

No cost is associated with attending games or joining the league.

"We seem to have a lot of support. On the first Saturday we had a lot of spectators," Mr. Skinner said. "We had a lot of people in Sun City Grand when we played out there."

To join the league, residents in Sun City West should call Bill Bromley at 584-6075, Sun City, call Mr. Griswold at 974-5387 and Sun City Grand, call Danny Martinez at 975-2860.

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— SUN CITY 40TH ANNIVERSARY

JDBB

Memories of past springs



Sun City at one time was the spring home to the Milwaukee Brewers baseball team. Thousands of fans would pack Sun City Stadium, located at 111th and Grand avenues, to watch Hall of Fame greats such as Hank Aaron, right. At far right, a resident watches as the stadium is demolished in the early 1990s.



Softball diamonds are a ...

GIRLS' BEST FRIEND

Women join men's league

RICH OTT
DAILY NEWS-SUN

Some players thought Carl Johnson was crazy when he picked three women for his Gonstead Chiropractic team in the Sun City Senior Softball league.

After a 4-1 start, the players realize Johnson knew exactly what he was doing.

"I knew they were good ball-players so when they talked me into managing, I drafted them on my team," the Sun City resident said. "They are doing real well hitting the ball and are excellent defensive players."

Welcome to the new age of Sun City Senior Softball, where there are no longer restrictions on age or gender.

"Any (Sun Cities) resident who has a recreation card can join the league," said Ken Skinner, president of the Sun City Senior Softball league and the Sun City West Softball Club.

When the league was formed years ago the wording on the bylaws read players had to be 55 or older and male. Skinner said the bylaws were changed this

From C1

year to remove the gender and age issues. So the appearance of the league changed with the bylaws, making players like Peg Swanson, a 52-year-old female, eligible for softball.

"We are having a great time. All we wanted was an opportunity to play and have fun," said Swanson, who along with Karen Hill and Joan McKenna was drafted by Johnson for the Gonstead team. "We got off to a great start and the guys have been very receptive."

The same can be said from the two other females playing in the National League division.

"We have been well accepted," said Lavonia Carroll, a player for Dennys TV. "I've had no problems with the men. They have been real nice to me."

"The guys have been real supportive," said Jan Carino, who plays for Sun Health. "We haven't had any negative comments at all. Hopefully we can get more women to come out."

All five women have received

support from their husbands, who play in the softball league as well. In fact McKenna's husband, Bill, recently joined the league with his wife.

"He wouldn't go up (and play) because I wasn't allowed to," McKenna said of her husband.

All five couples participated in the Friday coed league before women were allowed to play in the Sun City Senior Softball league — which has games on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Sun City and Sun City West. Some of them still play in both leagues as

well as coed practice games on Mondays.

"I'm playing four days a week now so I don't know if I'll be able to handle that," Carroll said. "We have become kids again."

These kids are getting noticed for their talent.

"Both (Swanson and Hill) have made a good impression on the league because the other team managers are asking them to sub when they have an absence," Johnson said.

"They are making a wonderful contribution to the league," Skinner said. "It's great. We've welcomed them with open arms."

See Women don't, C3

(over)



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Karen Hill, left, and Peg Swanson watch the action during a Sun Cities Senior Softball League game at Sun Bowl Field in Sun City.



MOLLIE J. HOPPES/DAILY NEWS-SUN

Peg Swanson, left, has pointed Gonstead Chiropractic in the winning direction this season. Gonstead is 4-1 and tied for second place in the 12-team National League.

Five inducted into softball Hall of Fame

By **MIKE RUSSO**
Independent Newspapers

The doors to the Sun Cities Softball League Hall of Fame swung open wide last week and five new members entered.

The newest inductees are Steve Letko, John "Bud" Herren, Doug Wright, Matt Syzdowski and Lou Hurley.

They join those previously enshrined: Axel Olsen, Ralph Snyder, Red Thomas, Charlie McKasson and Don Goble, all inducted in 1998; Duncan Jewell, Ev Kaufman, Ray Keller, Joe O'Toole and Ken Stewart, 1999 honorees.

The honored quintet was selected by members of the Hall of Fame Committee based upon their contributions, both on and off the field, to the league.

"All inductees are selected based upon their contributions to the league, whether as a player, manager or a member of the board of directors," explained Ray Keller, a member of the Selection Committee. "Selection is not based solely on playing ability, but total contribution to the league."

Inductees must have participated in the league a minimum of seven years, Keller noted.

Steve Letko

A 14-year resident of Sun City, Letko has played and managed, as well as served on the league's board of directors, for the past nine years. He plays a prominent role in maintaining the Sun Bowl softball field in Sun City.

Letko never played softball until moving to Sun City for Waukesha, Wis., and he is "still improving," he pronounced.

John "Bud" Herren

His 16 years associated with the league is the longest tenure of



Photo by MIKE RUSSO/Independent Newspapers

The Sun Cities Senior Softball league Hall of Fame welcomed five new members during a ceremony last week. New honorees are, from left, Steve Letko, John "Bud" Herren, Doug Wright, Matt Syzdowski and Lou Hurley, whose award was accepted by Morrie Lane.

any of the 2000 Hall of Fame honorees.

The life-long softball player moved to Sun City 16 years ago from Irving, Texas.

In addition to his playing and managing duties, Herren has served on the league's board of directors and he built trophy cases for the ballfields in Sun City and Sun City West.

Doug Wright

A 20-year Sun City resident, Wright has been affiliated with the league with for 11 years, including serving as the first president of the Softball Club in Sun City and publishing the league's newsletter.

He was instrumental in getting the Sun City field sited, working closely with county officials to obtain the necessary zoning changes.

Wright moved to Sun City from Glens Falls, N.Y.

Matt Syzdowski

He has been active in the softball league since moving to Sun City West 10 years ago from Williamsville, N.Y. (a Buffalo sub-

urb), where he was an athletic director at Mayvale High School in neighboring Cheektowaga.

Syzdowski has played and managed, and been very involved with the board of directors during his tenure with the league, including serving three stints on the board and two terms as league president.

He remains athletically active, refereeing high school football in addition to his softball playing.

Lou Hurley

The only new inductee who is not still active in the league.

Hurley played and managed for eight years, and held the office of league president and treasurer.

He was responsible for introducing Saturday games in Sun City and Sun City West.

A stroke in 1996 ended his softball career, and eventually led to his move from his Sun City home, where he lived for 20 years, to Southern California.

Morrie Lane accepted the plaque on Hurley's behalf.

INDEPENDENT

April 14, 1999

A league of their own

Senior softball league inducts five into Hall of Fame

By **MIKE RUSSO**
Independent Newspapers

One of the founding fathers of the Sun Cities Senior Softball League and four other players comprise the 1999 inductees into the league's Hall of Fame.

Enshrined in the hall last week were Ev Koufman, Duncan Jewell, Ray Keller and Ken Stewart. Inducted posthumously was Joe O'Toole. The quintet joins last year's inaugural class of inductees — Chuck McKasson, Axel Olsen, Don Goble, Ted Thomas and Ralph Snyder. The former three players are still active in the league, while the latter two players are deceased.

This year's honorees were selected by the Hall's first inductees.

"They were honored for their contributions and dedication to the league — both on and off the diamond," said McKasson, who introduced the inductees to the luncheon gathering of more than 300 people last week at Palm Ridge Recreation Center.

Koufman is one of the league's founders and he has remained active throughout its 20 year existence.

A native of Cranston, R.I., Koufmann moved to Sun City West in 1979 from Framingham, Mass. A softball player all his life, he was not ready to hang up the spike's after moving to a retirement community and he was instrumental in founding the Sun Cities Senior Softball league.

Keller began playing in the Sun Cities League in 1985. The youngest of this year's honorees, at age 66, Keller moved to Sun City West that year from Madison, Wis.

A devoted softball player, Keller noted, "I haven't missed a year of playing since I was 16 years old."

For Stewart, induction into the Hall of Fame capped a lengthy softball career that culminated with the completion of the 1998 season, at age 79. He had graced the Sun Cities diamonds since 1985, when he moved to the area from California.

O'Toole, whose plaque was accepted by his wife, Kay, played

in the league from 1986 to early 1999.

In addition to being a topnotch player, O'Toole also managed and coached softball and baseball teams in a career devoted to the diamond.

Unlike the other four 1999 Hall of Fame inductees, Jewell did not take up softball until relatively late in life — 60 — but he has enthusiastically pursued diamond excellence since 1980, when he moved here from Virginia.

Also recognized during last week's luncheon were five league pioneers who began playing in the league's inaugural season, 1979, and are still active. The five ironmen are Norm Dermody, Fred Schwetje, Phil Batow, John Andrulis and Kouffman.

Dermody arrived in Sun City West in 1979 from Bergenfield, N.J., with an extensive background in baseball and softball. "I played all my life," he said.

Batow, the league's oldest player at 87, moved to Sun City West in 1979 from, Willamette, Ill., where he spent years playing softball with

a 16-inch ball. "We didn't even use gloves," he said.

The 16-inch ball is noted for getting "mushy" after the first few batters take their hacks, but that did not deter Batow. "I batted leadoff most of the time, so I got to hit the ball while it was still hard," he said with a broad smile.

Andrulis had been an all-around athlete in Euclid, Ohio, before moving to Sun City West in 1979.

"I played softball, squash, racquetball and handball," he said.

A Sun City West resident since 1977, Schwetje had been a fast-pitch softball player in his native Little Fall, N.J. Upon inception of the Sun Cities Softball League, Schwetje gravitated to the slow-pitch version of the game he relished playing.

The league has experienced tremendous growth during its 20 years. From six teams in 1979, there are presently 24 teams — 10 in the National League and 14 in the American — with 277 players.



Photo by MIKE RUSSO/Independent Newspapers

Five members of the Sun Cities Senior Softball League's inaugural season, and are still active, were saluted during last week's luncheon at Palm Ridge Recreation Center in Sun City West. League pioneers are, from left, Ev Koufman, Norm Dermody, Phil Batow, John Andrulis and Fred Schwetje.

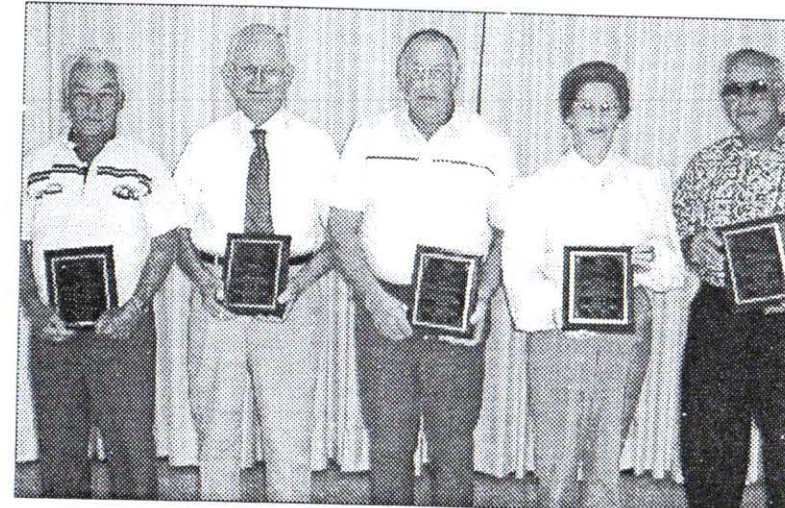


Photo by MIKE RUSSO/Independent Newspapers

Five new members were enshrined in the Sun Cities Softball Hall of Fame last week. Accepting awards during the luncheon at Palm Ridge Recreation Center were, from left, Duncan Jewell, Ken Stewart, Ray Keller, Kay O'Toole, who accepted the award posthumously for her husband, Joe, and Ev Kouffman.

Stand and deliver

Hayden Carpet pitcher enjoys fruits of labor

By RICH BOLAS
DAILY NEWS-SUN

3-23-99

Dave Rinderknecht has found an underhanded way to succeed in the Sun Cities Senior Softball League.

The 68-year-old Sun City West resident pitches for Hayden Carpet, which is tied for first place in the National League with a 10-1-1 record.

Sun Cities Senior Softball

"I had never pitched softball until I joined the league five years ago," Rinderknecht said. "I had played every other position before, but when I showed up my team needed a pitcher."

The Iowa native received a rude introduction, struggling through his first campaign.

"I have to admit it was pretty rough that first year," said Rinderknecht, the retired director of research and development for Coors Brewing Co. "I just decided I had to work at it to get better."

Rinderknecht pitched every opportunity he could get, showing up to throw batting practice for teams two or three times a week.

The work has paid off this season with Hayden Carpet, which is battling with Sun Health for first place.

"Dave knows the league and knows the players very well," said Richard Metz, Hayden Carpet manager. "He's also very cooperative and his attitude makes my job pleasant."

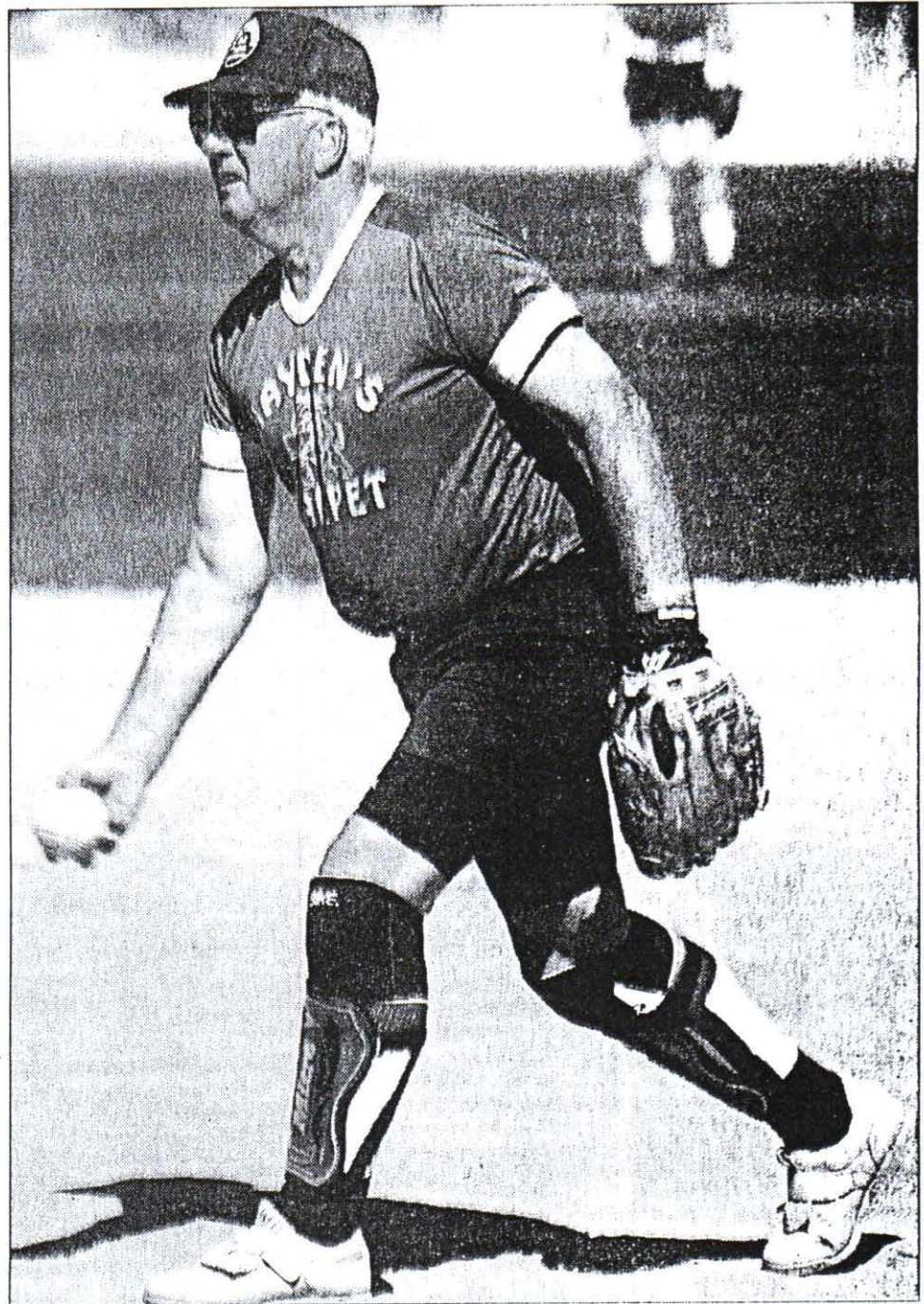
Rinderknecht said he uses that knowledge to complement a three-pitch repertoire which features a flat pitch as well as spinners to the left and right.

Control is the key to success.

"You're not going to strike out anybody in this league," Rinderknecht said. "The toughest challenge is trying to pitch in the wind."

The Northern Iowa graduate also helps himself at the plate. Rinderknecht doubled to drive in one run and drew a bases-loaded walk for another RBI in a 19-6 victory against Dennys TV last Thursday.

The league does not keep in-



Lisa Goettsche/Daily News-Sun

Dave Rinderknecht delivers a pitch during a Sun Cities Senior Softball League game. Rinderknecht has posted a 10-1-1 mark for Hayden Carpet this season.

dividual hitting and pitching statistics.

"I would describe myself as a punch hitter," Rinderknecht said. "I get a lot of singles and try to hit the ball in the hole."

Rinderknecht said he draws inspiration from his senior softball counterparts, many of whom are octogenarians.

"You see these guys out here who've had heart attacks, hip replacements, knee replacements, you name it," Rinderknecht said.

The Sun Cities Senior Softball League plays its games every Tuesday and Thursday at Sun Bowl Field in Sun City and Kuentz Field in Sun City West.

The first game begins at 8:30 a.m. and the last game begins at 2:45 p.m.

Admission is free. ... Sun Health and Hayden Carpet will meet at 12:15 p.m. on April 27 at Kuentz Field in what could be the showdown for the National League title.

Sun City resident enters hall of fame

By MAGGIE REED
Staff writer

Charlie McKasson had his tongue firmly in cheek when he described the reason he plays senior softball.

"It's for old men who can't find anything better to do," he said.

McKasson does it extremely well.

The Sun City resident has been inducted into the inaugural class of the Sun Cities Softball League Hall of Fame. Joining him are Don Goble, Axel Olson, and posthumously Lloyd "Red" Thomas and Ralph Snyder.

"Not only is the award nice, but to get it from fellow people, that's the nicest kind of award to get," the 70-

year-old McKasson said.

"I never dreamed they'd establish this concept. It is going to be great for the league. I know there will be some other excellent selections made in the future."

McKasson joined the league in 1980, one year following its inception.

He has seen the organization grow from six to 23 teams. He has served as president, secretary, treasurer and team manager.

McKasson plays second base and shortstop. He also occasionally plays third base.

Being part of the league's traveling team has been interesting for McKasson, who has played baseball most of his life.

► See Softball player, C2

► From C1

"I think I've played in every part of the country," the Iowa native said. "We even played in Europe one year." Echoing his fellow players, McKasson said he likes the concept of changing each team's lineup.

"You build up the camaraderie when you reform teams," he said. "You meet a lot more people and they're not enemies anymore. With the traveling team you establish even more relationships." It has been noted that as part of the team selection

committee and team manager, he was always extremely fair in selecting players for team balance, taking pains not to stockpile his own team.

McKasson, who was waiting for the Chicago Cubs to come on TV Wednesday, moved to Sun City in 1975 from Illinois,

where he was a U.S. Postal Service inspector.

Of his years as an athlete, including high school basketball and track, he said, "I've learned to give it all you've got. That's the attitude most athletes have. And, leave it on the field."

Home-field advantage

Sidewinders 70s perfect in winning Webb Tourney

After facing deficits of 6-0 and 8-4, the Del Webb Sidewinders 70s rallied for five runs in the final inning to capture a 9-8 win over the Mesa 70s in the championship game of the 11th annual Del Webb Senior Softball Invitational Tournament.

Ed Sullivan had a two-run single, and an error led to another run; Dick Martin had a sacrifice RBI and Connie Vitale knocked in the winning run with a hit to left.

The win culminated a perfect 6-0 tournament record for the 70s, who finished one game ahead of the Anaheim Pirates in the standings.

Mesa was third at 4-2; Colorado finished fourth with a 3-3 mark. The Sun Cities Seniors (2-5) were fifth; with Las Vegas (1-5) sixth and Houston seventh at 0-6.

In the 70s' 16-3 win over Colorado in game five, the Sidewinders scored five runs apiece in the fifth and sixth innings.

Sullivan and Pete Roque both had three hits and Bob Rehburg added a pair of hits as Tiny Paulson took the win.

The Sidewinders had little trouble with Colorado in game four as they won 18-3. Dick Herzer and Tom Pletcher had three hits apiece and Axel Olson took the win.

Two doubles led to five runs apiece as the Del Webb Sidewinders 70s took a 14-4 win over the Anaheim Pirates last Thursday in opening play of the tournament at Sun City West's Kuentz Field.

Following a pair of runs in the opening inning, the 70s loaded the bases in the fourth inning and Earl Mudge cleared the bases with a double to right center.

With Paulson in control, the 70s added five runs in the top of the fifth inning, highlighted by Axel Olson's two-run double.

Following a two-run double by Tom Pletcher in the sixth and two-run single from Mudge in the seventh, Anaheim scored three runs off Paulson in the last of the seventh.

The 70s continued play with a 7-



The Del Webb Sidewinders 70s looked impressive before the home crowds and captured the 11th annual Del E. Webb Senior Softball Tournament played earlier this month in the Sun Cities.

5 win over Las Vegas as they rallied for three runs in the sixth inning. Dick Herzer had three hits and Olson took the win.

In their final game of the day, the 70s (3-0) took a 15-8 win over Houston as they had a pair of five-run innings.

Mudge had three hits, Ed Sullivan homered and Paulson took the win.

The 70s are 17-5 for the season and hit .482 during the tournament.

Pletcher led the 70s with a .667 batting average followed by Mudge's .650 mark. Other top hitters for the 70s were Sullivan (.619); Herzer's .563 and Olson batted .500.

In other action:

After finishing with a 3-0 record in round-robin play, the Del Webb Sidewinders 60s senior softball team was beaten twice in the following three games of double elimination play and finished third at the 11th Del Webb Senior Softball Tournament March 7-10.

In the elimination round, Don Eden collected four hits and four RBI in a 21-15 win over Good Times (Mesa) as Bob Luebben took the win.

Against D 99 (Los Angeles) the 60s held a 15-5 lead but couldn't hold on as they were beaten, 16-15. Spud Miller had three hits and five RBI and Don Gault took the

RBI with Bob Luebben taking the win.

The 60s completed round-robin action with a 21-11 win over Bill Beck (Tucson) as Eden and Dick Erikson had four hits apiece and Gault took the win.

Jorgensen led the 60s with a .777 batting average and 14 RBI; Eden hit .708; Boettcher batted .652 and Miller knocked in 12 runs.

The Del Webb Sidewinders 65s dropped games of 12-0 and 15-3 to the Vipers (California) and Mesa Cardinals, respectively, March 9 to finish with a 2-3 record at the 11th annual Del Webb Senior Softball Tournament March 7-10.

The 65s took a 10-3 win March 8 over the Silver Streaks (Colorado); defeated Seattle, 15-0; and lost 11-10 to Albuquerque.

Jim Sudyk took both wins for the 65s and went nine-for-nine. Harry Battram went 12-for-13 in the three games played March 8.

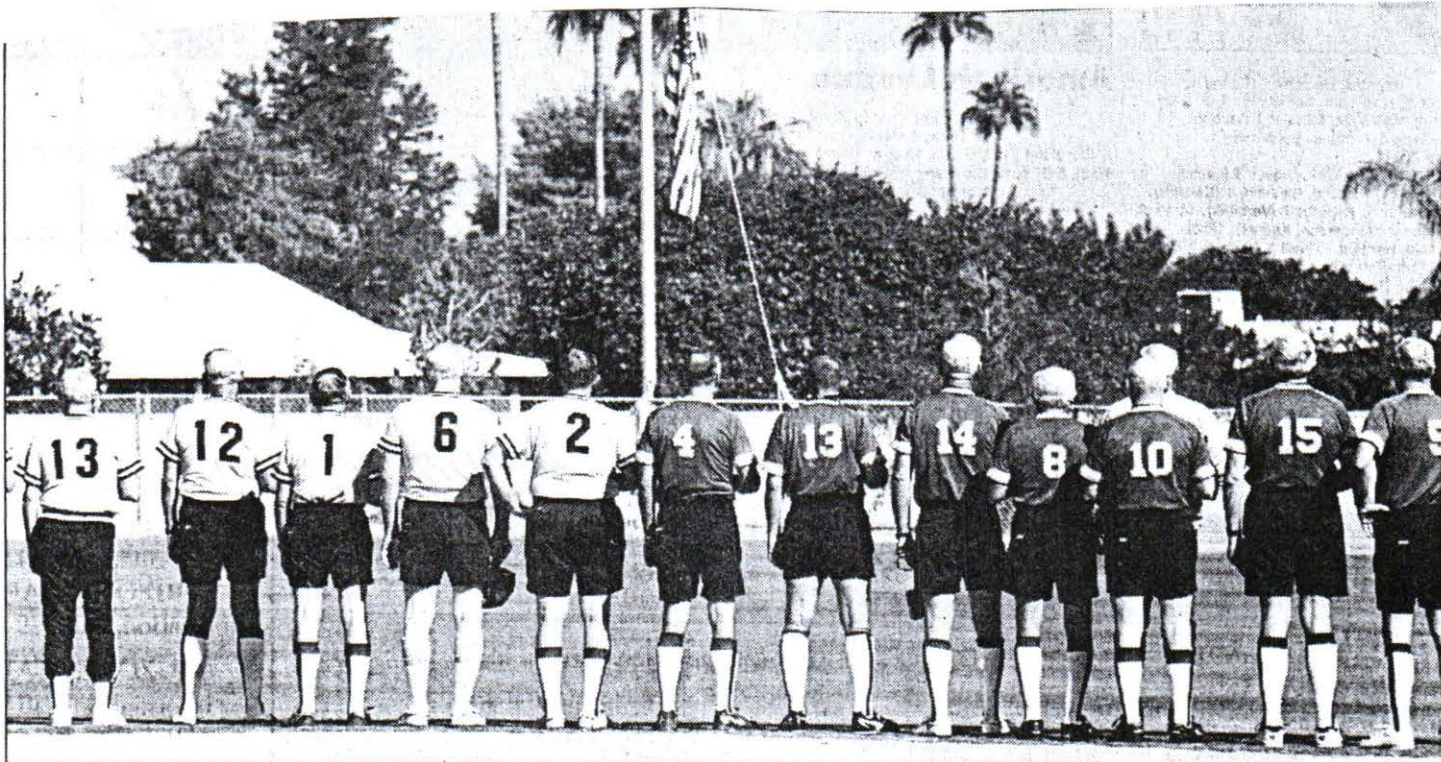
In the championship game, the Mesa 65s defeated the Vipers.

loss.

The 60s were eliminated from the tournament as they were handed a 15-12 loss by the Arizona 60s (Mesa). Gene Boettcher lead the Sidewinders 60s with four hits and Luebben took the loss.

The 60s opened tournament play with a 16-11 win over Colorado as Leo Jorgensen had three hits and four RBI as Gault took the win.

In an 18-12 win over the Emerald City Masters (Seattle) Wes Horan had three hits and four



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Players from the Sun Cities Senior Softball League watch as the flag is raised for the first time at the unnamed field west of the Sun Bowl Monday.

Smash hit

SC softball field opens to rave reviews

By ANN T. DALEY
Assistant sports editor

SUN CITY — Joe Garagiola Jr. surveyed the wealth of talent surrounding him on the softball field Monday morning.

Softball

"I see a lot of prospects out here," said Garagiola, general manager of the Arizona Diamondbacks, the major-league expansion team which will begin play in 1998.

"I hope your agents will call me." Garagiola served up more compliments to the 55-and-older slow-pitch softball players, who gathered to celebrate the dedication of the area's newest softball field located west of the Sun Bowl.

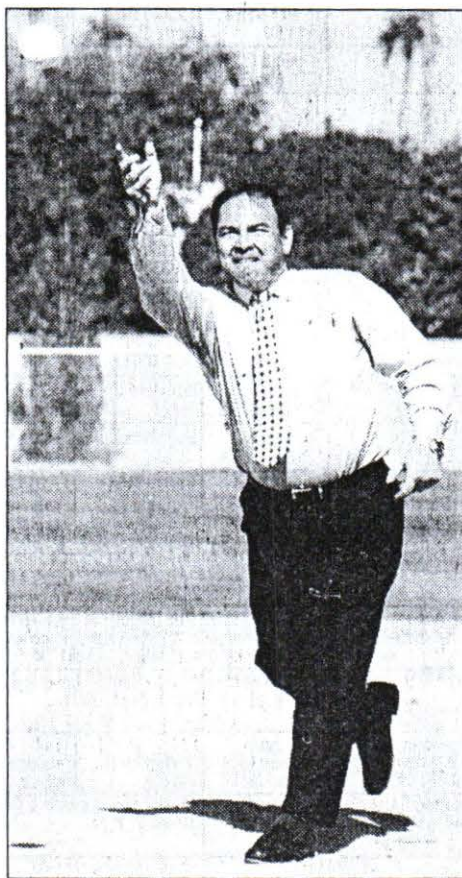
After congratulating the softball players and Recreation Centers of Sun City, Garagiola threw out the opening pitch.

In the ensuing exhibition game, first batter Hal Noonan provided fireworks by driving the softball 265 feet into right field for an inside-the-park home run.

An estimated crowd of 350 fans and Sun Cities Senior Softball League players crowded the bleachers, sidewalks and walking tracks for opening ceremonies at the unnamed ballpark.

The park, constructed at a cost of \$277,000, will play host to area league and national senior softball tournament action.

"It's a great day and it's finally here," said Doug Wright, one of the driving forces behind the move-



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Arizona Diamondbacks General Manager Joe Garagiola Jr. throws out the first pitch Monday.

ment to build the field.

The park is the second in the Sun Cities, complementing Kuentz Field in Sun City West.

"This is a hell of a field. It looks

beautiful," said 84-year-old Phil Batow.

Noonan's run helped the Del Webb Sidewinders 65s to a 14-4 victory over the Del Webb Sidewinders 70s in an exhibition game between the traveling teams.

"This is a real nice facility," said Bob Rehberg, manager of the Sidewinders 70s, who won the Senior Softball World Series Championship in Palm Springs, Calif., on Oct. 2.

"The ball bounces true in the infield and the outfield. We players are going to enjoy it."



Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio also joined in the celebration

Entries for the name-the-park contest may be submitted at the Recreation Centers of Sun City office located in Lakeview Recreation Center, 103rd and Thunderbird avenues ...

After the ceremony, Garagiola addressed the Diamondbacks' plans to find a home for the club's team in the 1996 Arizona Rookie League. Under consideration are Peoria Sports Complex, spring training home of the San Diego Padres and Seattle Mariners, and Phoenix Municipal Stadium.

"We're still trying to figure out what facilities would meet our needs," Garagiola said. "Peoria would offer more room with its clubhouse facilities. Phoenix Muni is closer to our offices."

He said he expects a decision to be made by the end of October.

Sidewinders win 5 straight to capture World Series

By **GEORGE WITKOWSKI**
Sun Cities Independent

Having won just one of their first three games through round robin play, the Del Webb Sidewinders 70s senior softball team rallied to win its next five games and the championship at the Eighth Annual World Series of Senior softball.

The tournament took place Sept. 30-Oct. 2 in Palm Springs, Cal. The Sidewinders concluded play with a 6-2 mark, including a 15-7 win over the Anaheim Blue Jays in the championship game.

"They (Anaheim) came at us but we just put them away," manager Bob Rehberg says. "We had played Anaheim before in April, but they've improved."

The title was the first major championship for the Sidewinders.

With the Sidewinders holding a 6-5 lead after three innings they jumped on Anaheim for seven runs on just two hits and five Blue Jay errors. Morrie Lane, Rehberg and Dick Herzer each had three hits and Axel Olson took the win.

Pete Roque, who was batting 1.000 after three games was named

Sun City officially opens new softball complex

The Recreation Centers of Sun City, Inc. officially opens its new softball field with dedication ceremonies planned 10 a.m. Oct. 16.

The field is located at the Sun Bowl, 107th Avenue and Clair Drive, Sun City.

The field was constructed by T & G Construction at a cost of \$277,000. Work began on the field in February of this year.

Throwing out the first ball will be Joe Garagiola Jr., general manager of the Arizona Diamond Backs.

The public is welcome to attend the ceremony. An exhibition game between local softball teams will follow the ceremonies.

The field will serve as home to the Sun Cities Senior Softball League.

the tournament's most valuable player.

Although the Sidewinders were in the elimination bracket with a 1-2 mark, Rehberg was glad to see his team pull together.

"As soon as we got to the elimination bracket we straightened up and the bottom part of our lineup picked us up and we got clutch performances," Rehberg says of Herzer, Larry Sullivan and Olson.

"We never had the feeling that we lost (a shot at the title) after three games, because we knew we blew it defensively but we had confidence in ourselves," Rehberg says of his team's 14 errors.

The Sidewinders lost 5-4 in the first game of the tournament to A/C

Delco (Florida); were 24-1 winners over Huntington Banks (Michigan); but 11-9 losers to the Tobay Tigers (New York).

Entering the elimination bracket, the Sidewinders were 13-9 winners over Syracuse (New York) as it broke a 9-9 tie in the seventh with four runs. Roque followed three singles and a walk with a bases-clearing triple and Connie Vitale hit a three-run homer in the game.

In a rematch with Tobay, the Sidewinders snapped a 5-5 tie with a pair of runs in the seventh on singles by Lane and Ed Sullivan, a walk to Roque and a two-run base hit from Ab Deleau.

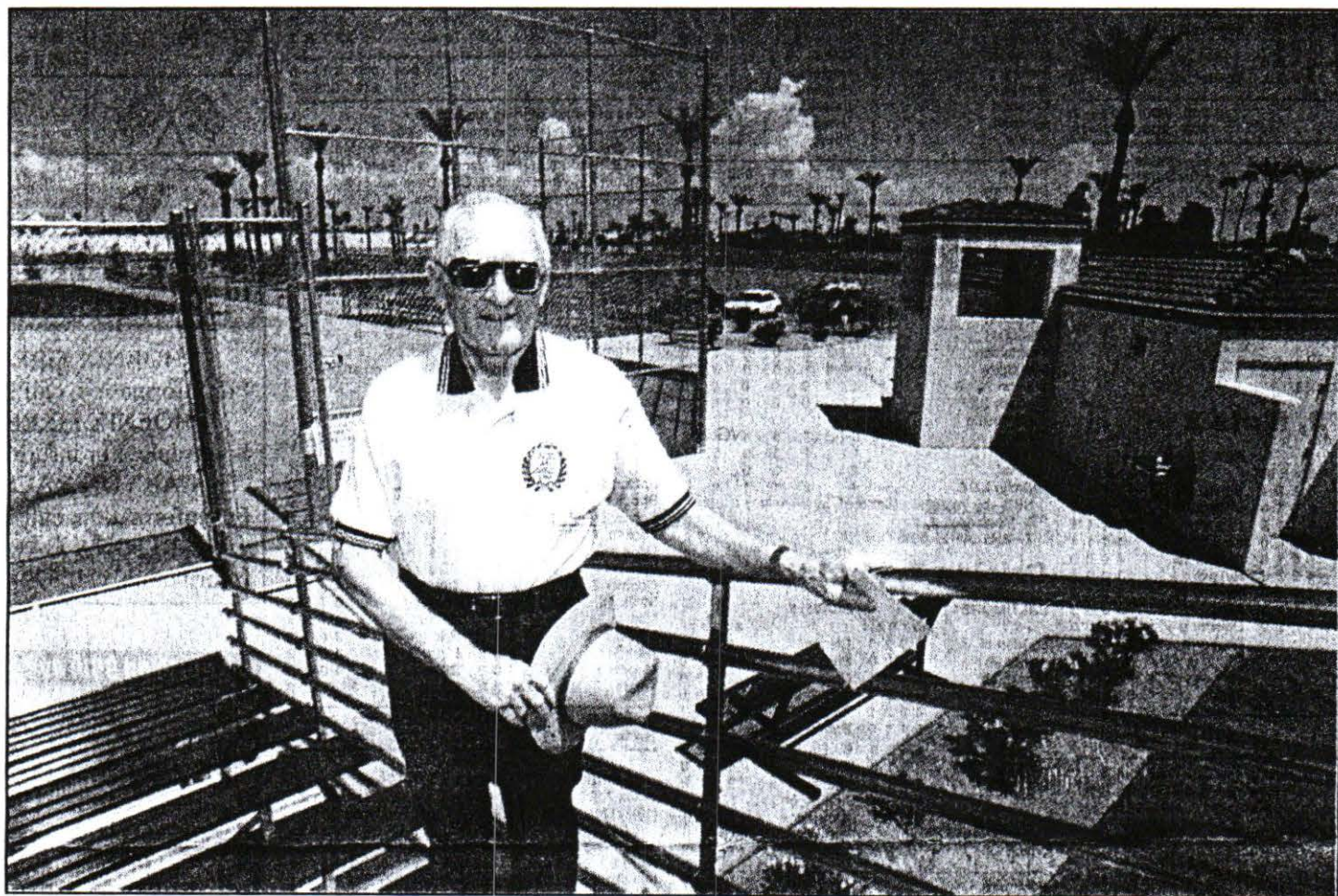
In the quarterfinals, the Sidewinders blew the game open

with 10 runs in the sixth inning for a 15-2 win over Home Depot (Florida).

In the semi-final contest, the Sidewinders saw a 5-0 lead disappear as A/C Delco (Florida) scored six times in the sixth to take the lead. Vitale, Roque and DeLeau all singled with Rehberg's sacrifice fly tying the score. Al Baca delivered Roque from third with the winning run as Olson went on for the win.

Roque hit .792 for the tournament; Rehberg .565; Herzer .522; Ed Sullivan .483; DeLeau .464; and Baca batted .435 with Olson going 5-1.

The Sidewinders finished the season 39-11 and hit .495 as a team.



Mollie J. Hoppes/Daily News-Sun

Doug Wright and other Sun Cities softball enthusiasts will have a new facility to play games this season. The park is located near the Sun Bowl.

Field day

SC softball facility to be dedicated Oct. 16

By ANN T. DALEY
Assistant sports editor

SUN CITY — Doug Wright laughs as he describes his position on the softball field as “wherever I do the least amount of harm.”

Softball

After all, he — like a few of his Sun Cities Senior Softball League comrades — prefers to be known as a “pickup player.”

“Some of these guys have been playing softball all their lives. I started playing it to replace my other interests,” said Wright, who began playing after retiring as senior pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Sun City.

“I just love the game.”

This season, Wright will deliver the biggest hit of his career as five years of work are about to solve the league’s overcrowding problem.

During the last 16 years, the league has grown from six teams to

16. All games were played at Kuentz Field in Sun City West.

On Oct. 16, a new softball field and park in Sun City will be dedicated for use by residents with valid Recreation Centers membership cards. The field is located west of 107th Avenue, south of Peoria Avenue, near the Sun Bowl.

Festivities will begin at 10 a.m. and feature an exhibition game between two of the league’s championship teams.

“I feel pretty good to see it almost completed,” said Wright, 71. “The infield is in good shape. The outfield still needs some work.”

At this time, the field remains unnamed. The Sun Bowl Ballpark would be a logical choice, said Chuck O’Day, project manager of the Recreation Centers of Sun City.

The playing field is situated on five acres and surrounded by a park complete with a half-mile gravel walking track, gazebo and restrooms. Residents already have

been using the walking track and park.

Sun Cities Senior Softball League play will begin on Oct. 17. National senior softball publications have listed the new field among the parks playing host to the 1996 Del Webb Invitational Tournament in March.

“It’s going to be a lot nicer than some of the fields they play on in California and Nevada,” Wright said.

A second field will be welcomed by the Sun Cities Senior Softball League, which boasts more than 200 members.

Last year, trying to schedule eight 60-minute games twice weekly became a major headache for league officials.

“There’s a clock in the outfield which turned on as soon as the teams hit the field,” Wright said. “If a player got hurt or if there was a timeout or an argument, the clock

► See Project takes, C3

Project takes 5 years

■ From C1

kept running. As soon as the game ended, one team would file out of the dugout and another would file in and hit the field, no warmups or anything."

Efforts to clear out the weed-filled area began in 1990 when softball player Ralph Snyder approached Wright with rough sketches of a ballpark.

"He said, 'I've got a dream and you can help me carry it out,'" Wright said.

As a former president of the Sun City Ambassadors and a member of the board of directors for the Sun City Community Fund, Sun Cities Area Transit System, and Recorded Recreational Reading for the Blind, Wright was a natural to lead the project.

"I knew the people to go to and talk to about it," he said.

Snyder died in 1993, two years before the project would be completed.

Softball players Tait Douglas, Bud Herren, Duncan Jewell, Ray Keller, Charles McKasson, Bob Millslagel and Ed Morgan have pitched in to help in the project.

"It's going to be a nice field," Wright said.

FIELD OF DREAMS

Rec Centers put finishing touches on new softball diamond

By LLOYD D. BROWN
Sun Cities Independent

- SUN CITIES INDEPENDENT— JUNE 21-27, 1995

Five years of work and \$150,000 have brought a softball field to Sun City, although no one will be able to use it for a few more months.

"That grass has a long way to go before anyone can play on it," says, Doug Wright, 71, a retired Presbyterian minister and long-time softball field activist.

But a look at the field, located near the Sun Bowl at 107th Avenue and Clair Drive, and images arise of bat-wielding softballers sprinting from the new dugouts.

Estimated to be about 90 percent complete, the dream officially will become a reality in October when the Sun City Senior Softball League, Inc., holds its fall opening ceremonies.

The softball club is scheduled to receive its official Sun City charter June 29 from the Recreation Centers of Sun City Board of Directors.

In April 1994, the board approved money for the new field for about 223 Sun City residents, responding to a survey, recommended repaving and improving the parking area and installing outdoor lighting, landscaping, picnic area, gazebo and walking track at the site.

But the overwhelming popularity of softball in the Sun Cities area shows there was a need for a new field.

According to Mr. Wright, more than 200 men ranging from 55 to 85 years old play softball. Senior softball is one of the fastest growing sports in the nation, Mr. Wright says.

Sun City softball players have been competing in Sun City West since a field was completed there in 1989. Before then, the 12-year-old softball league was almost homeless, playing on a converted cow pasture when the Sun City Stadium closed in the mid-'80s.

The Sun City West field has become so crowded with 16 teams

that games have been limited to 60 minutes, and no warm-ups.

"You cannot have 16 teams play on the same field on the same day," Mr. Wright says.

With the new field, the league will split into two divisions and the games will be lengthened to 75 minutes.

"I'm happy to see it, and I just hope it turns out to be what we want it to be," Mr. Wright says.

In addition to the softball field, a garden will be located along Clair Drive and a picnic area developed along the south side of the property. A walking path will surround the field.

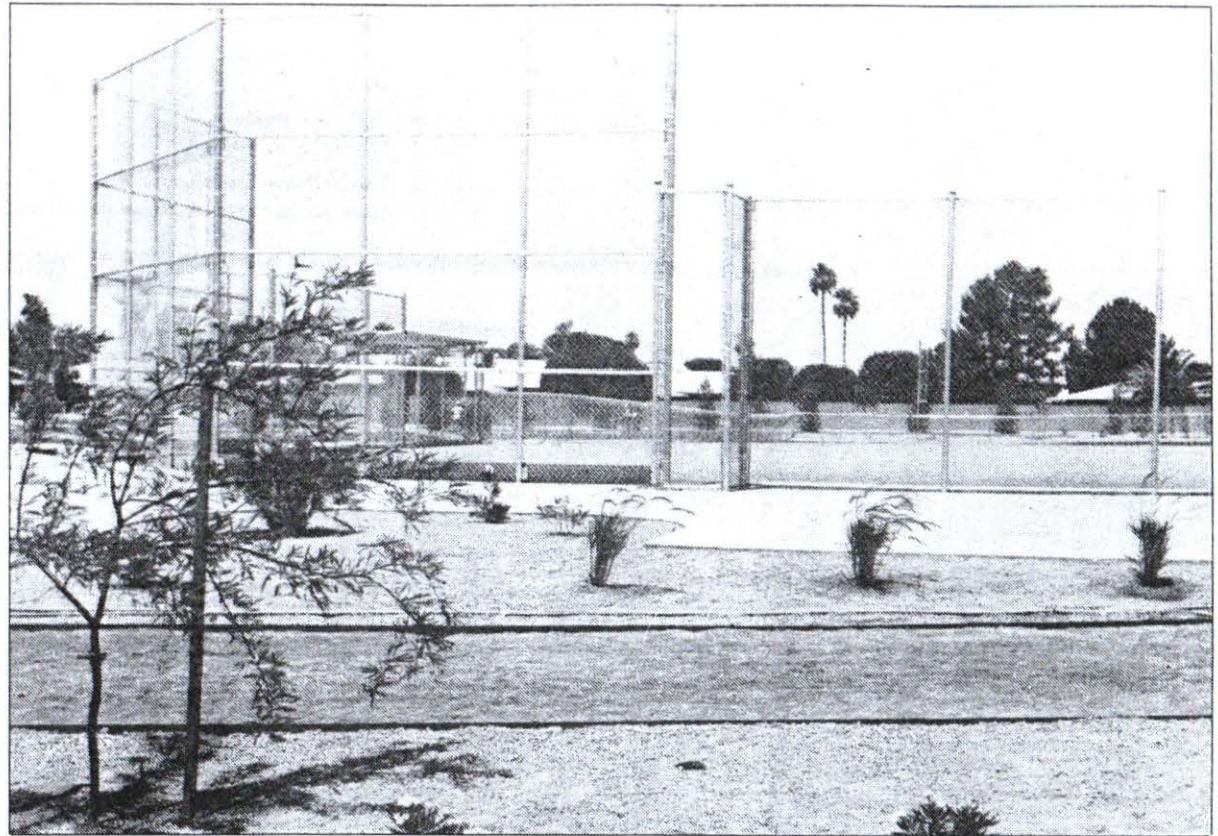


Photo by BRET McKEAND/Sun Cities Independent

The soon-to-be-chartered Sun City Senior Softball League will make its home at a new softball field located near the Sun Bowl at 107th and Clair drives in Sun City. Workers are putting the finishing touches on the field. The league is expected to begin play this fall.

Play ball!

Senior Softball League brings baseball home to Sun Cities

By RICK GONZALEZ
Sun Cities Independent

As most people know, the Sun Cities Solar Sox, Michael Jordan and the Arizona Fall League are in full swing in the Valley even though the baseball strike has wiped out Major League baseball for the year.

What many may not know is the Arizona Fall League teams are not the only ones playing ball in the area.

The Sun City/Sun City West Senior Softball League has been around for about 14 years and is still going strong today.

According to Ev Kouffman, an original and current member of the league, the league began when the Del Webb Corp. put an ad in the newspaper seeking anyone interested in starting a slow-pitch league.

"One-hundred and twenty people

came to Sun City Stadium," Mr. Kouffman recalls.

Included in that number were enough women to warrant that two be placed on each of the six teams created. However, as time went on, the number of women dropped off. Currently, no women participate in the league.

Today, the league has grown to 16 teams with about 12 or 13 players per team. In fact, interest in the league has grown so much that there is a waiting list of players who would like to join.

"There's enough (people) for two to three more teams," Mr. Kouffman says.

With this kind of interest, he adds, the league could potentially grow to about 20 teams.

"We've never had a waiting list before."

The only requirement to join the league is that you live in the Sun Cities and be 50 years of age or

older. Tryouts are held for new players only. Players must also sign a waiver and have a doctor's OK to play.

Originally played only one season a year, the Senior Softball League now has three seasons, allowing the game to be played year-round. The seasons run from mid-October to the first of the year, from the first of the year to mid-May and from mid-May to mid-October.

The teams now practice and play in Sun City West at the field next to the Kuentz Recreation Center on R.H. Johnson Boulevard. A second softball field is now being built at the Sun Bowl and should be ready in the coming months. In the past, besides playing at Sun City Stadium, the teams played at fields in Surprise, El Mirage and on a small field on Grand Avenue.

Mr. Kouffman says he is surprised by the lack of attendance at the

games. The softball field has bleachers, he says, but unless there is a tournament, "we don't get a lot of people. These teams play very good softball and it's very entertaining. We're surprised a lot more people don't come out."

Teams play from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays and practice on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays. The public is invited to attend the games and informal practices.

Because of the sheer number of players, the Senior Softball League now has an "A" and "B" league to allow everyone to play. A committee assigns players to different teams on the leagues, so that everyone is on a different team each year. This also allows for teams to be well-balanced and makes the "A" teams faster and the "B" teams "a lot more equal," Mr. Kouffman explains.

"It also extends the playing life

of players. The more years you play, the better you get."

There's also another plus to this system, Mr. Kouffman points out.

In the early years, he says, there were a lot of hard feelings between teams. No one wanted to get to know anyone else from other teams.

"Half the time we were breaking up fights. I could see the league breaking up because of hard feelings."

Now, he says, "it's league-ori-

ented."

With this system, "everybody gets to know everybody."

Unlike regular baseball, the Senior Softball League teams play seven-inning games and only five runs maximum are allowed per inning until the last inning "so games don't run too long."

There is also no sliding allowed, and home plate and first base have two separate bases — one for the

See ■ HOME, Page B7

HOME

runner and one for the catcher and first baseman.

"These rules were made to prevent injuries," Mr. Kouffman explains.

Being one of only three or four

original players left in the league, Mr. Kouffman has seen the Senior Softball League change quite a bit. Overall, he says, the league is running pretty smoothly.

"The caliber of the guys is

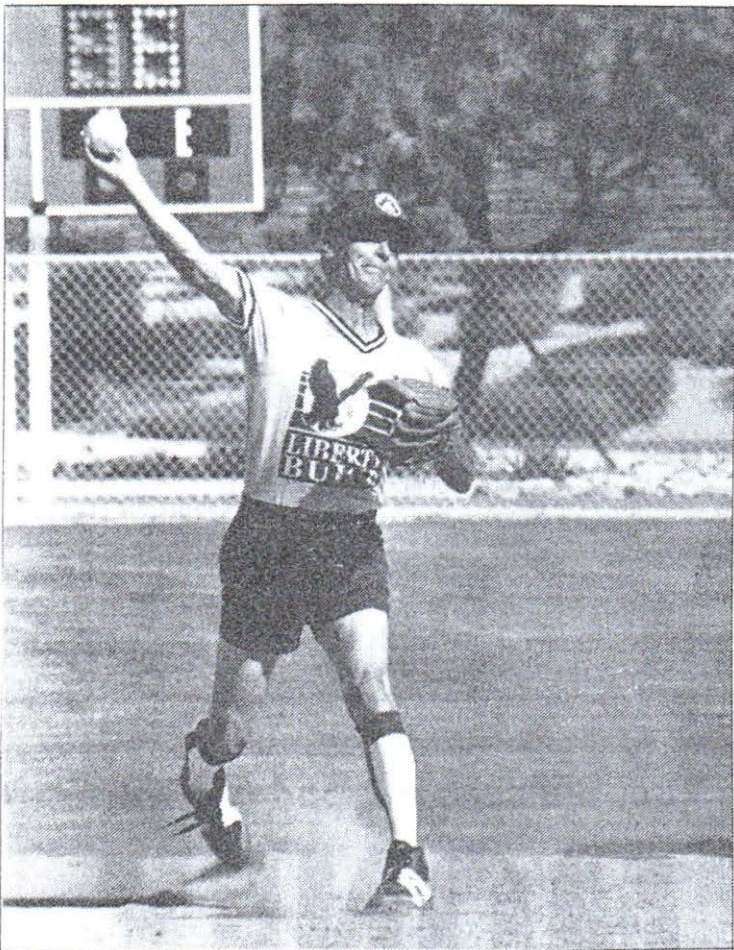
younger. The league is a lot faster and stronger. It's a lot better now than it was years ago.

"It's growing by leaps and bounds and it's gonna get nothing but better!"



Photos by TYSON KUHRT/Sun Cities Independent

Joe McGaffin, far right, and Warren Williams, at left, watch a Sun City/Sun City West Senior Softball League game prior to taking part in the action themselves.



Shortsop Mike Steo of the Liberty Buick team is one of about 200 players in the Sun City/Sun City West Senior Softball League.



Jim Sterhardt of the Sun City/Sun City West Senior Softball League enjoyed a recent game at the field next to the Kuentz Recreation Center in Sun City West. Those who would like to join the league must be 50 years of age or older and live in the Sun Cities.

The girls of summer return

Women's softball team takes over stadium for summer

BY BRET McKEAND
Sun Cities Independent

More than a decade after the Sun Cities lost their beloved Saints, a new professional women's softball team has moved into Sun Cities Stadium hoping to recapture the hearts and minds of local residents.

The Sun Cities Storm Sunbirds, a nationally-ranked women's fast-pitch softball team, has announced plans to play all its games this summer at the stadium. Games begin this month and continue through August.

The stadium, located at 111th and Grand avenues, Sun City, also hosts the Arizona Fall League and once served as the spring home to the Milwaukee Brewers.

But the real "home" team was the Sun Cities Saints. The team first took the field in 1965 and was an immediate success in Sun City. Fans turned out by the hundreds to watch the original team play and before too long the club had its own local booster club selling Saints T-shirts and souvenirs.

Sun Cities Stadium, which opened in 1971, was originally built for the Saints. A national powerhouse during the 1970s and early '80s, it was not uncommon to see crowds of 1,500 or more attend Saints games at the stadium.

The team disbanded in the mid-1980s and no team since has been able to garner the type of support once enjoyed by the Saints. It was that loyalty and support that lured the Sunbirds to Sun City.

"This stadium was built for softball," says Rick Beach, commissioner of the Amateur Softball Association's Metro Phoenix Division.

"We have a really good program here and we think the fans will enjoy it. We'd really like to recapture some of that (Saints) excitement and enthusiasm," he adds.

Although new to Sun City, the team has been around for several years and has some of the finest women's softball players in the country. The Storm Sunbirds have finished among the top 10 in the



Storm schedule

Following is a list of June games. In some cases the opponent was unknown at press time. Games begin 6:30 p.m. at Sun Cities Stadium, 111th and Grand avenues, Sun City.

■ June 15 — Storm 16-and-under team.

■ June 16 — Storm 14-and-under team.

■ June 21 — Storm 12-and-under team vs. Explosion.

■ June 22 — Storm 16-and-under team vs. 'Lil Saints.

■ June 23 — Storm 14-and-under team vs. 'Lil Saints.

■ June 25 — Storm Sunbirds.

■ June 26 — Storm Sunbirds.

■ June 28 — Storm 12-and-under team take on Explosion.

■ June 29 — Storm 16-and-under team vs. 'Lil Saints.

■ June 30 — Storm 14-and-under team.

national championships every year since 1986.

The past two years the team has finished third in the national championships.

"They are by far the best women's softball team in the Southwest," says Mr. Beach.

The team is the only professional women's softball team in the Valley. Despite their success, team members have struggled to find a permanent home and the funds necessary to continue a top-notch program. Moving to Sun City, says Mr. Beach, may help solve those challenges.

The team's roster includes some of the biggest names in the sport. Women's softball will make its debut in the 1996 Olympics and five members of the Storm Sunbirds have already prequalified for the 1994 Olympic Festival.

Five other team members have been invited to Level I Olympics trials and will compete against 500 other participants vying for spots on the U.S. team.

The Storm Sunbirds will have one familiar face returning to the stadium — Suzie Gaw, a nine-year member of the Sun Cities Saints and a 10-time ASA All American.

The team took to the field June 8 for its first home game and, judging by the applause for Suzie Gaw, local fans have not forgotten the Saints nor what the team meant to Sun City.

"We saw a lot of excitement (June 8) for Suzie," says Mr. Beach. "We had a couple hundred people here that night and I think they were all here for her."

In addition to the Storm Sunbirds, the stadium will serve as home to several girls softball teams. Three other Storm teams — 12 and under, 14 and under and 16 and under — will make the Sun Cities their home this summer and will face teams from throughout the Valley.

The youth squads are not your average recreation league teams, says Mr. Beach, and are feature the best young softball players in the Valley. The 12 and under Storm team captured the national championship in 1992 and has won the Metro Phoenix title for the past three consecutive years.

Sidewinders notch victories in local event

The Del E. Webb Sidewinders, consisting of players from Sun City and Sun City West, captured first place in two of three age divisions in last week's Del E. Webb Senior Softball Tournament. Teams from eight states traveled to the Northwest Valley to compete in the event. Among those leading the charge for the Sidewinders were, from left, Mill Slagel, Harry Battram and Tait Douglas.

Photograph by TYSON KURHT/
Sun Cities Independent



Sidewinders capture Webb softball tourney

Sun Cities team captures first in two age divisions

The ninth annual Del E. Webb Senior Softball Tournament ended with good news for the home fans as the Sun Cities team captured titles in two of three divisions.

The tournament, played March 10-13 in Sun City West, Peoria and

Glendale, attracted 27 of the nation's top senior softball teams. Teams competed in three age categories: 60-64, 65-69 and 70 and over.

The Sun Cities were represented by the Del E. Webb Sidewinders.

The Sidewinders' 60-64 and 65-69 teams captured first place in their respective categories.

In the 60-64 category, the Sidewinders defeated Mesa's Arizona 60s in the finals to capture the championship. The final score

was 10-0.

In the 65-69 category, the Sidewinders bombed the Bay Area (Calif.) 65s, 15-4, to win the title.

In the 70-and-over division, first place went to the Sacramento 70s from Sacramento, Calif. The Del Webb Sidewinders finished third with a tournament record of 4 wins and two losses.

Senior Softball in the Sun Cities



Charlie McKassen is the pitcher for the Del Webb Sidewinders 65s team. The Senior Softball League offers Sun Cities residents an opportunity to stay active and enjoy the companionship of fellow team players.

"Take Me Out to the Ball Game" has been sung in the Sun Cities since 1961 when Andy Wagner and others formed the first ball team. However, with a stadium made to order and the Sun Cities expanding in early 1979, Del Webb Corporation encouraged the formation of a Senior Softball League for slow pitch play.

Coming in all shapes and sizes, 65 men and 20 women carrying shoes, sneakers, bats and ball gloves, showed up for the first practice. Although advance notices indicated the only requirement would be a glove, a tube of liniment and an enthusiastic love of softball, the organizing team did evaluate the ability of the players and assigned them accordingly. Believe it or not, Rose Sorace, a grandmother in her 60s, umpired behind home plate for 19 games!

By 1982, the teams were hitting full steam and the League sponsored two All-Star teams in the national tournament. One team came home with a 4th place finish; not bad for a 3-year old team which takes off in the summer months. More recently, the Del Webb Sidewinders 60s won the Top Gun Tournament at Miramar Air Force Base in San Diego. Twelve teams were competing in the 60 and over age category.

While some of the senior players are new to the sport, others like Ray Keller, manager for the Del Webb Sidewinders 60s, have been playing since they were 16 or younger. Keller spent

most of his life playing softball and was inducted into the Wisconsin Softball Hall of Fame in 1992 for his contributions to the game of fast pitch softball. When he moved to Sun City in 1987, Keller read about the softball club in the newspaper and has been competing in all the tournaments ever since.

"I like the camaraderie of the club," said Keller, whose wife Joan also travels with the team.

League play is not a fly-by-night operation, nor is it for the faint hearted. One player said, "This is my way of combating the 'battle of the bulge' I developed before retirement." The players, men mostly in their 60s and some in their 70s, are not decrepit by any means. They

have to be in good condition to play seven innings in 60 minutes.

"Ball has always been my first love," said Dick Martin, who plays on the Sidewinders 70s team and has competed in three world series games. "To me, we're pretty lucky to have this club."

League play is strictly recreational and fun. For the most serious and highly competitive player, tournament play is for them. Games are played in New Mexico, California, Nevada, Texas and at home in Sun City West. Each year since 1986, Del Webb sponsors a Senior Softball Tournament at which 24-28 out-of-state teams compete for national honors.

Don "Oakie" Eden moved to Sun City West in the summer of 1993 after visiting the community to play in his first Del Webb Invitational Senior Softball Tournament the previous March. Eden started playing softball when he was 10 years old and is still playing at age 61. Eden doesn't feel softball is an age restrictive activity.

"Senior softball has special rules so you can play as long as you can still breathe," said Eden. Players are encouraged to play at their own level and not try to prove they are still kids. All batters are allowed to have a designated runner once they reach first base, and there are two first bases and two home plates—one for the first baseman or catcher and one for the runner—to avoid collisions and sliding.

Wives of players are not left out, they are forming a team of their own. Currently the team is mixed with men and women as there are not enough women to complete a team. The mixed team plays against other men's teams. Wives also have formed the Ladies Auxiliary. The Auxiliary holds bake sales, rummage sales and other money making activities to help fund the games and trips.

Sun Cities host senior softball tournament

Nation's top teams compete for titles in three divisions; SCW to host finals

Senior softball players from throughout the country will converge on the Sun Cities this week to participate in the eighth annual Del Webb Senior Invitational Softball Tournament.

The tournament, scheduled for March 11-14, will feature 30 teams competing in three age divisions. Games will be played in Sun City West, Peoria and Surprise.

The top two teams in the nation are scheduled to compete in the four-day event. The San Diego Silver Hawks defeated the Arizona 70's in the finals of the 1992 Senior Softball World Series and both teams are scheduled to participate in this week's tournament.

Of the 30 teams entered, 12 qualified and participated in last year's Senior Softball World Series held in Detroit, Mich.

This year's tournament will include teams from Texas, Washington, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico, California and Arizona.

According to Bob Vosbrinck, tournament director, a Sun Cities team will compete in each of the three age divisions. The Sun Cities Amazing 60's will compete in the 60-and-over division; the Del Webb Amazing 65's will participate in the 65-and-over division; the Sun Cities 70's will battle for the title in the 70-and-over division.

The tournament begins with the 70-and-over division playing 8 a.m. March 11 at the softball field at the Kuentz Recreation Center in Sun City West.

Eighth Annual Del Webb Senior Invitational Softball Tournament

When: March 11-14, 1993

Where:

- Kuentz Rec Center, 14401 R.H. Johnson Blvd., Sun City West
- Varney Park, 11820 N. 81st Ave., Peoria
- Centennial Field, Nash Avenue in Surprise.

Teams:

70-and-over division:

- Sun Cities 70's
- San Diego Silver Hawks
- Houston Super 70's
- Ful Cam Capitals (California)
- Colorado 70's
- Arizona 70's
- Bay Area Barons (California)

- Palm Springs 49ers
- Top Gun Seniors (California)
- Sacramento Blues
- Las Vegas Silver Rebels
- East Mesa Moose No. 2082
- California Jets
- Albuquerque Seniors
- Don Massey Cadillac (Colorado)

65-and-over division:

- Del Webb Amazing 65's
- San Diego Travelers
- Sacramento Braves
- Albuquerque 65's
- Bay Area 65's
- Mesa 65's
- Seattle 65's
- Sacramento Capitals
- Las Vegas Rebels
- Colorado Seniors

- Renton 60's (Washington)
- Prescott 60's

First appearances of Sun City teams:

- **Sun Cities 70's** vs. San Diego Silver Hawks, 8 a.m. March 11, Kuentz Recreation Center.
- **Del Webb 65's** vs. Houston 65's, 8 a.m. March 12, Kuentz Recreation Center.
- **Amazing 60's** vs. Palm Springs 49'ers, 10:10 a.m. March 12, Kuentz Recreation Center.

60-and-over division

- Del Webb Amazing 60's

The first appearance of a Sun Cities team will feature the Sun Cities 70's doing battle with the defending World Series champion Silver Hawks at 11:15 a.m. March 11 at Kuentz Recreation Center.

The 70-and-over division will continue its games March 12 and 13 at Centennial Field in Surprise.

The 60- and 65-and-over divisions begin play 8 a.m. March 12 at Varney Park in Peoria and at Kuentz Recreation Center.

The Del Webb 65's will play their game 8 a.m. March 12 against the Houston 65's at Kuentz Recreation Center.

The Amazing 60's compete for

the first time at 10:10 a.m. the same day against the Palm Springs 49'ers.

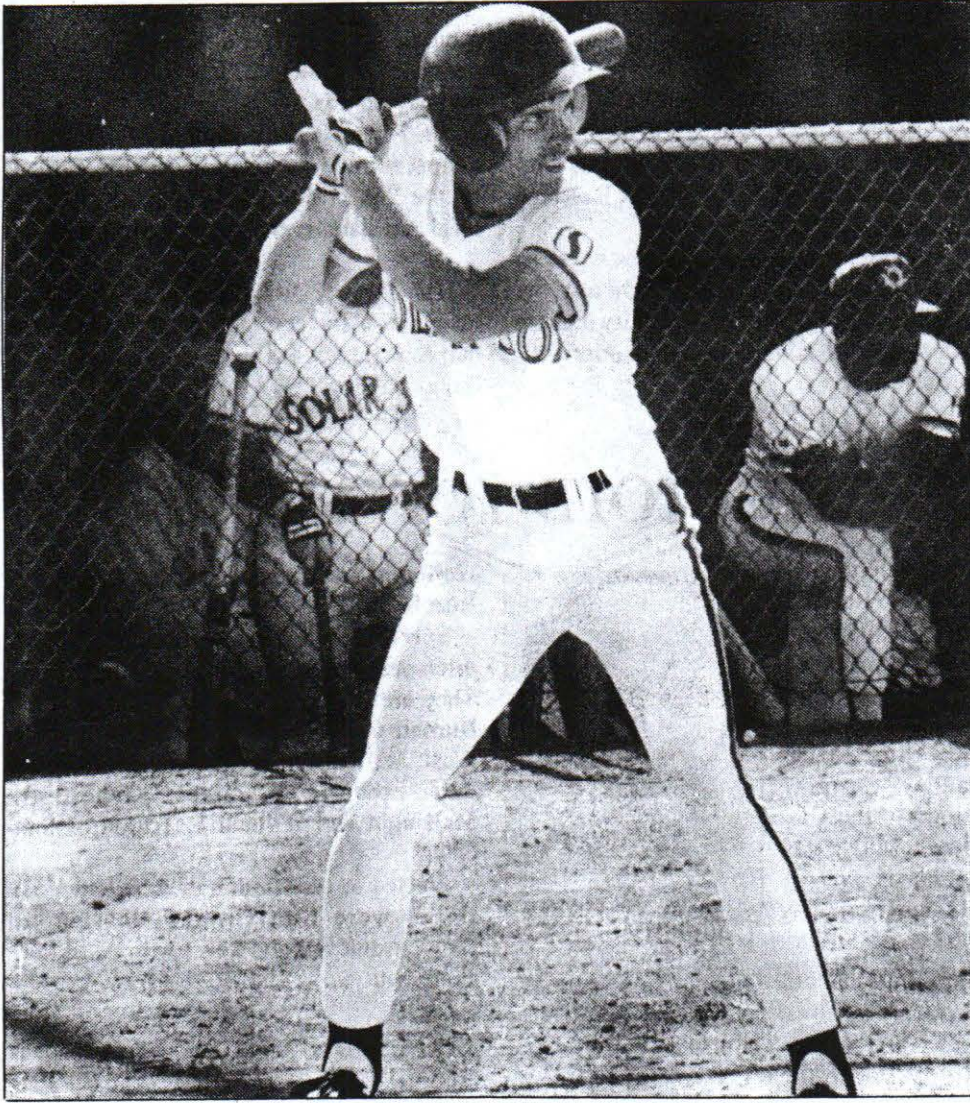
All championship games will be played March 14 at Kuentz Recreation Center.

According to Mr. Vosbrinck, last year's games attracted record crowds.



The Sun Cities 70's will be one of three local teams competing in this week's Del Webb Senior Invitational Softball Tournament. From left, front, Roscoe Henry, John Lavaggi, Lew Hurley, Jim Wagner, Morrie Lane, Chet Lasken and Bob Rehberg. From left, back row, Ed Howe, Paul Vetromila, John Winterhalter, Tom Pletcher, Ralph Snyder, Jack Kilker, Dominic Leo and Norm Dermody. Not pictured: Joe Marco and Fred Mahoney.

In the Spotlight



Baseball returns to the Sun Cities

The Arizona Fall League has begun its initial season. The Sun Cities Solar Sox is one of six teams competing in the league, which features top minor-league prospects. The Sox play their home games at Sun Cities Stadium.

Del Webb Amazing 65's gain World Series berth

Team posts 7-0 record in Reno, Nev.

Daily News-Sun staff

The Del Webb Amazing 65's Senior softball team posted a 7-0 record to win the Reno (Nev.) World Series Qualifying Tournament in the 65 and over division.

The Senior World Softball Series begins Sept. 23 in Detroit. Approximately 90 teams will participate in the tournament in five age divisions.

The Del Webb team opened the Reno tournament with a roaring start, defeating the host team, 25-0. They followed with a 24-9 win over the Sacramento Capitals and a 16-4 drubbing of the Renton (Wash.) 65's.

Senior softball

The Amazing 65's continued their mastery on the second day of the tournament with an 11-7 triumph over the Colorado 65's and then edged the Mesa 65's, 15-14. A seventh-inning single by Morrie Lane and Connie Vitale's triple to right field produced the winning run in the Mesa game.

On the third day, the Amazing 65's took on the top-seeded Bay Area team from California. With both teams posting identical 5-0 records, this game would decide the championship.

The Amazing 65's opened the game with a five-run first-inning outburst and added another run in the third inning. Bay Area scored two in the first and nine more in the third inning to take an 11-6 lead.

Batting in the fourth, the Del

Webb 65's scored eight runs on nine hits to take a 14-11 advantage. Don Goble relieved starting pitcher Axel Olson in the fourth inning and permitted one run in the final three innings as the 65's posted a 14-12 victory.

Leading batters for the Del Webb team were Connie Vitale (.706 batting average), Bernie Ripplemeyer (.692), Don Goble (.688), Larry Sullivan (.647), Tiny Paulson (.636), Bob Rehberg (.632), Axel Olson (.625) and Ralph Snyder (.611). Don Goble finished with a 6-0 pitching mark.

The 65's compiled a .585 batting average in the tournament.

Manager Bob Vosbrinck said he was more than pleased with the excellent team performance and was very proud of the job well-done by each and every member of the championship team.



Submitted photo

The Del Webb Amazing 65's went 7-0 in a World Series qualifying tournament in Reno, Nev. Team members from left: (back row) Roy Burgess, Bernie Ripplemeyer, Axel Olson, Jake Kropp, Bob Vosbrinck, Charles McKasson, Larry Sullivan, Don Goble and Paul Baumhardt; (front row) Bob Rehberg, Lew Hurley, Ralph Snyder, Morrie Lane, Connie Vitale, Tiny Paulson and Dick Herzer. Team members not pictured are Dick Martin, Ed Morgan, Bud Herren and Red Thomas.

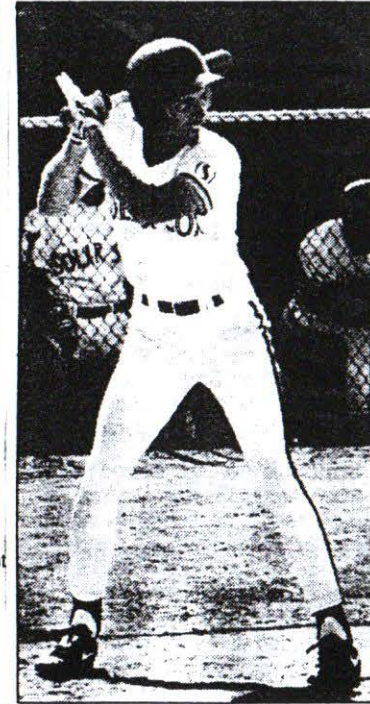


Photo by TYSON KUHRT/Sun Cities Independent

Solar Sox begin fall season in Sun City

Members of the Sun Cities Solar Sox wait to be introduced to local fans before their first home game, held Oct. 7 at Sun Cities Stadium. The Sox won the game, 1-0. The 6-team league is designed to give top minor

league ballplayers a chance to sharpen their skills during the winter months and is operated by Major League Baseball. For a complete recap of last week's games and a look at upcoming games, see Page 10.



Solar Sox win home opener

The Sun Cities Solar Sox narrowly won their home opener on Oct. 7 by a score of 1-0 over the Tucson Javelinas. John DeSilva, a pitcher affiliated with the Detroit Tigers takes batting practice. The next home games for the Solar Sox are scheduled for Oct. 14 and 15 against the Phoenix Saguaros. Both games begin at 1 p.m.

Photo by TYSON KUHRT
Sun Cities Independent

Baseball in the Northwest Valley

- 1962 - Del Webb builds softball diamond at 107th and Grand avenues.
- 1966 - Sun City Saints begin play at park at 108th and Grand avenues.
- 1971 - Sun City Stadium is built for \$300,000.
- 1972 - San Francisco Giants play part of spring season at SC Stadium.
- 1973 - Milwaukee Brewers hold first spring training at SC Stadium.
- 1982 - Webb sells SC Stadium to Bade Boyes Partnership of Glendale.
- 1984 - Sun City Saints disband and move to Phoenix.
- 1985 - Brewers announce plans to move to Chandler.
- 1989 - Glendale businessmen plan to buy SC Stadium for \$2 million.
- 1990 - Senior baseball league establishes Sun City Rays.
- 1990 - Senior Professional Baseball Association folds. Rays disband.
- 1991 - Resolution Trust Corp. takes control of SC Stadium.
- 1991 - Field of Dreams Inc. takes over operations at SC Stadium.

Field holds dream in Northwest Valley

By JACQUE PAPPAS
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Baseball was Delbert Eugene Webb's lifelong passion.

The Sun City developer was co-owner of the New York Yankees for 20 years and president of the American League.

Through Del E. Webb Corp., Webb shared his love of America's pastime with residents in the first retirement community he built.

In 1962, Webb built a softball diamond in what is now the parking lot of the Grand Center in Sun City.

Seniors who came from cities where softball leagues were regular summer fare began playing on the field, which featured a backstop of lumber covered

with poultry netting.

Senior men's teams were grateful for the ball park, but gravel and low-growing weeds with sand burrs often made fielding tough.

The impetus for a new ball park in Sun City developed early in 1965 when a professional women's softball team called the Phoenix Ramblers disbanded and many players were left without a team.

Still eager to play, they encouraged a small contingent of Sun City enthusiasts to urge the Grand Avenue Merchants Association and Webb to build a park.

By February 1965 Webb began to build an \$11,000 ball park in an alfalfa

field off 108th and Grand avenues where JB's Restaurant now stands.

Webb supplied a high chain-link fence and backstop extending from first to third bases, snack bar, restrooms, drink-

ing fountains and other amenities for day games.

Christened "The Saints," the women's fast-pitch softball team began

playing in 1966 in Sun City. The great popularity of the team got Webb thinking about building a more substantial ball park and trying to attract a Major League Baseball team.

But plans for a major league stadium came to an abrupt halt in June 1968 when the expansion Kansas City Royals picked Florida over Arizona for their 1969 spring training site.

Fearing the Saints would leave Sun City for a better park, the Booster Club petitioned Webb to build a stadium instead of another shopping center as had been rumored.

The old park was dismantled in 1970 and Webb built Sun City Stadium on 12.5 acres north of the railroad tracks at 111th and Grand Avenues for about \$300,000.

The 3,449-seat stadium opened July 4, 1971 with dugouts, fountains, a press box, restrooms, aluminum bleachers with backrests, an electric scoreboard and much more.

By 1972 the San Francisco Giants were playing some of their spring training games in the stadium. Stars such as Willie Mays, Willie McCovey and Juan Marichal drew big crowds.

Encouraged by the 50 percent or better attendance the Giants were attracting to the stadium the Milwaukee Brewers decided to make Sun City their spring home in 1973.

Meanwhile the Saints played softball worldwide and drew thousands of fans at local games.

In 1980 the Women's Professional Softball League disbanded when only three of the teams could muster support, but the Saints remained in Sun City.

"Everyone was just crazy about the Saints. There was nothing else like it. People in the stands brought cow bells and honked horns at the games," said John Poja. Poja, known as "Uncle John," sold baseball souvenirs at Saints and Brewers games.

In 1982, seven years after Webb's death, the company sold Sun City Stadium to Bade Boyes Partnership of Glendale.

Two years later, the Sun City Saints disbanded and moved to Phoenix.

Joe Davisson, who was then president of the Saints Booster Club, said Bade Boyes priced themselves out of the market.

"Before we had an agreement

with Del Webb and paid them \$1 every year for use of stadium. The new owners had to secure certain income that we as a booster club could not obligate ourselves to," Davisson said, adding that \$6,000 a month for rent may have been the fee requested. "It was an economic reality that a volunteer group could not pay. Meanwhile Bade was losing \$200,000 a year."

Another blow came to Sun City Stadium when the Brewers in 1985 announced they would move to Chandler.

"The Brewers never had the attendance they thought they'd have. Parking was a problem and they didn't have enough practice fields for the team," Poja said.

The stadium was on the market in fall 1987. In June 1989, Glendale businessmen Bob Atkinson, Bill Bolick and Marv Harper entered into an agreement to buy the stadium for \$2 million from Bade Boyes Partnership.

Just when it appeared the deal was going sour, the Senior Professional Baseball Association announced in spring 1990 that a team called the Sun City Rays would soon play in the stadium.

Several local Men's Senior Baseball League teams also played in the stadium, which was vacant for about four years.

Not even a month after the season began, the association defaulted on payments and the Sun City Rays disbanded having played less than half their home games.

The stadium fell under the control of Southwest Savings and Loan, which had just been taken over by the Resolution Trust Corp.

The RTC put the stadium on the market again. This time the signs caught the eyes of three other Glendale businessmen who had played on a Senior Men's Baseball League team at the stadium.

By May 1991, Craig Kimmell, Bill Dugan and Terry Van Gundy formed Field of Dreams Inc. and entered into a lease-purchase agreement with the RTC to try to bring baseball back to the Sun City Stadium.

Kimmell, Field of Dreams president, said many people were upset with the demise of the Sun City Rays.

"The support waned because of the loss of the Milwaukee Brewers and Sun City Saints. Then people felt like they got a team back with the Sun City Rays and everyone got burned. To this day we are still paying for these things," Kimmell said.

The stands in the stadium, recently renamed Sun Cities Stadium, are no longer jammed with thousands of enthusiastic fans. With only a \$1 admission fee, Men's Senior Baseball League games attract an average of 30 fans. The league schedules games seven days a week from May to November.

"Some people have made the statement that when Del Webb died, baseball in Sun City died. Because Webb was such a lover of the sport, if he continued to

live, he probably would have made the improvements needed to keep the Brewers here," Kimmell said.

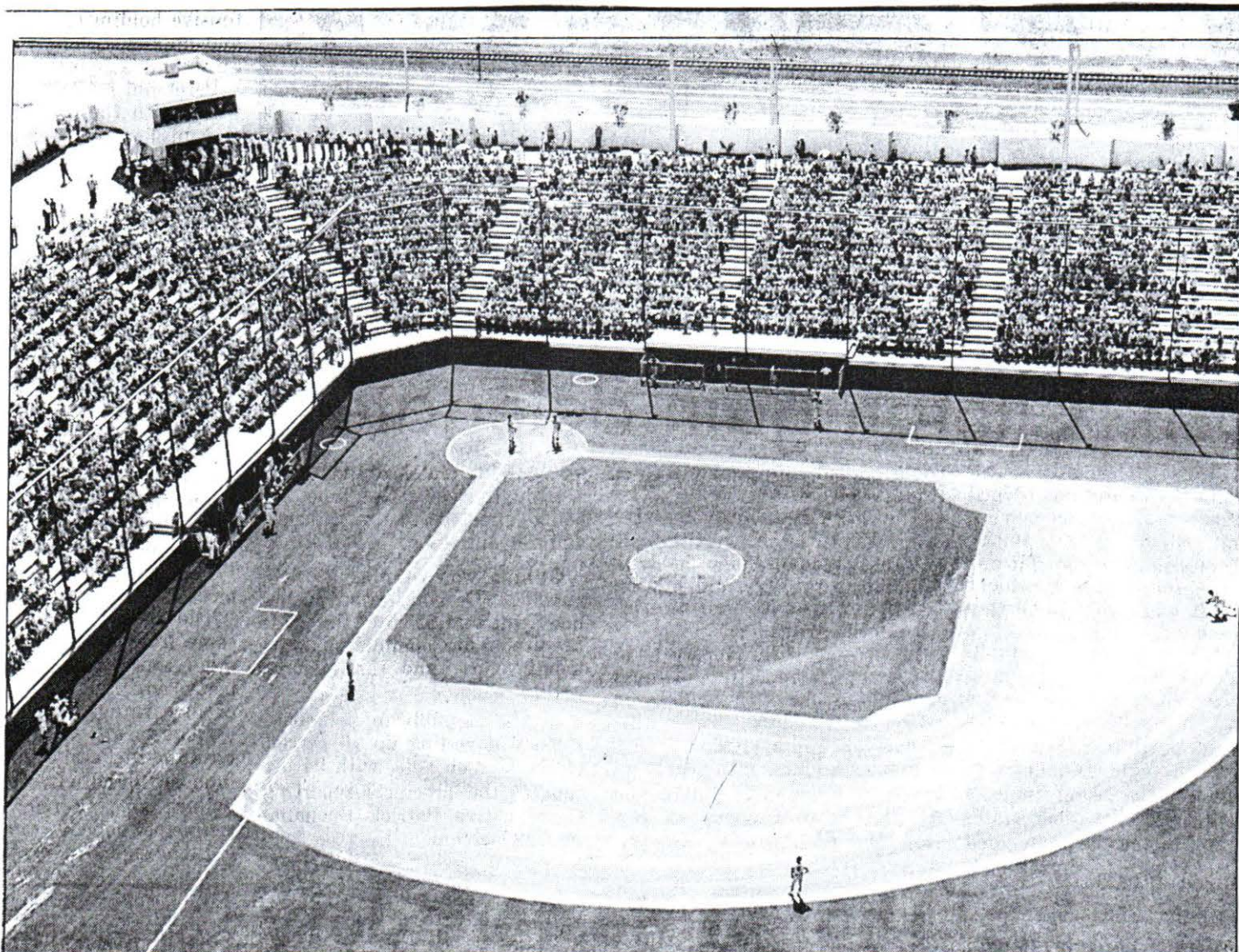
Kimmell said he and his partners have spent about \$150,000 in time, labor and equipment doing major repairs to improve lighting, sprinklers and the aesthetics at the stadium.

But the bills must be paid and Kimmell has leased the stadium to other vendors to help generate some money.

A benefit concert by a Latino band on Feb. 22 at the stadium prompted many complaints from local residents who said the event was too noisy. The stadium is zoned to hold such events.

The concert attracted more than 1,000 people — more than the combined total of Sun Citizens who have attended baseball games in recent years, Kimmell said.

"We have done so much to bring baseball out here to the people in Sun City but we have gotten no support," Kimmell said. "Now we are battling to get the Seattle Mariners and we need to get the people behind us if anything is going to happen. If they don't, this stadium is going to turn into a dust bowl or hundreds of apartment complexes in the future."



Sun Cities Area Historical Society

The Milwaukee Brewers played their first spring training games in the Sun City Stadium in 1973,

packing the bleachers for most games. The Brewers' last game in Sun City was in 1985.

Baseball fan breathes life into SC Stadium

By JONATHAN DALTON
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Here is Craig Kimmell, leaning on outstretched arms against a railing at Sun Cities Stadium.

Tonight, the Athletics are facing the Reds in a Men's Senior Baseball League game. Kimmell is kibitzing with the league's regular patrons, occasionally pouring a soft drink at the refreshment stand. He is one of Sun Cities Stadium's tri-owners. Kimmell's appearance would guarantee victory on "To Tell The Truth" — a chain smoker in an untucked royal blue button-down shirt and jeans, his flowing brown hair pulled taut into a ponytail.

This is one of the three men longing to bring spring training back to the Northwest Valley?

"I don't think it's the appearance that counts," Kimmell said. "It's the knowledge. People's first impression is here's this hippie from the '60s. Hell, I'm

proud of that. But I'm also knowledgeable about the facts behind the situation."

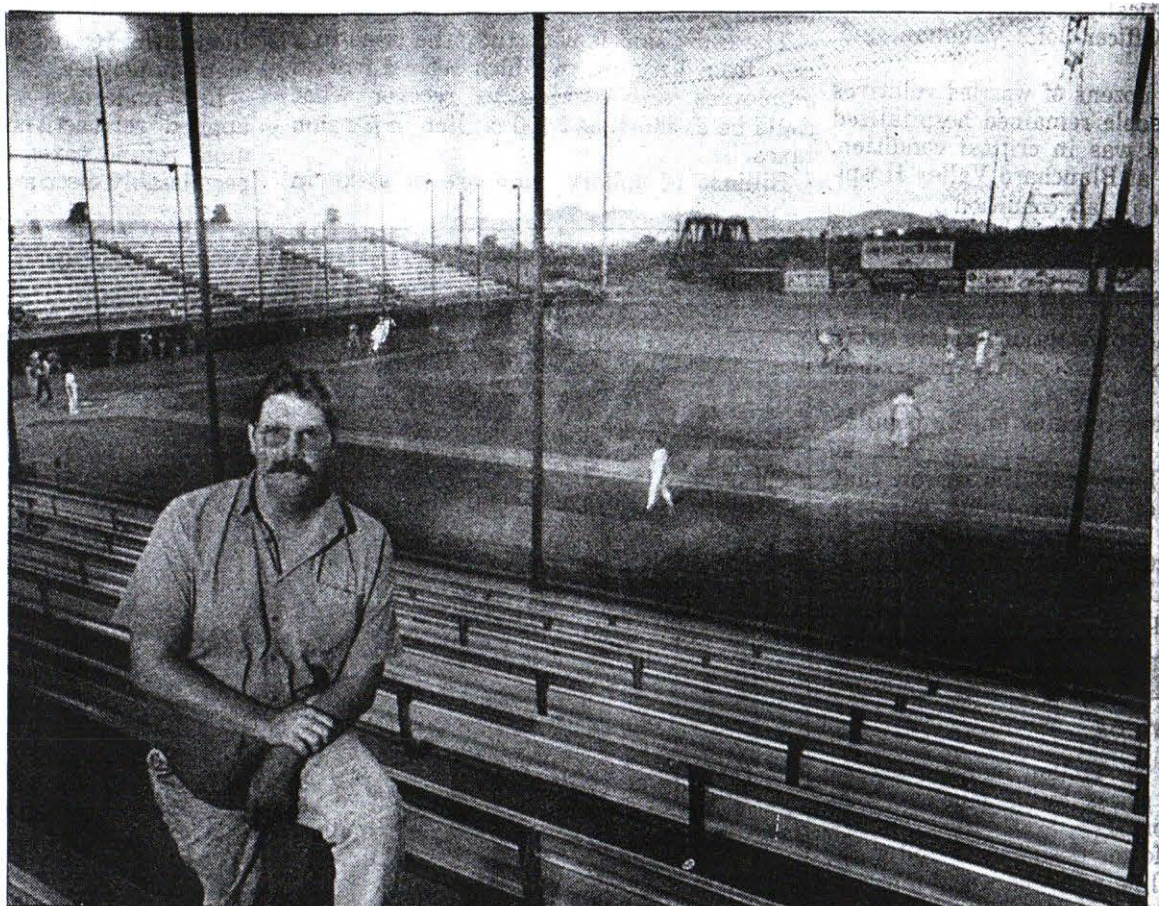
In January 1991, Kimmell and his two partners, Terry Van Gundy and Bill Dugan, purchased the lease to Sun Cities Stadium. The field had been used by the Sun City Rays of the Senior Professional Baseball Association until the league's demise in December of 1990.

After several months of renovations, Sun Cities Stadium reopened for the MSBL, a 16-team nationally-affiliated amateur league.

A couple hundred people floated through the stadium through the opening evening, many wondering why the lights of the once-dormant facility were now on.

"I guess the only word you could put on it is relief," Kimmell said. "We took early possession in late February, and up until the night of May 10 (open-

See Stadium operator, A5



Rick D'Elia/Daily News-Sun

Craig Kimmell, president of Field of Dreams, Inc., operators of Sun Cities Stadium, wonders what he and his supporters have to do to get a Major League Baseball team to train at the stadium.

OVER

Stadium operator lives out baseball fantasy

—From A1

ing night) we were still painting this place.

"We had problems with the landlord, and we didn't actually have legal possession of this place until two hours before the grand opening.

"It was overwhelming. It was probably, next to meeting my better half (Babette) and the birth of my son, the most exciting thing that's ever happened to me."

Attendance waned after that first night, peaking once again with a July 4 fireworks extravaganza.

But Kimmell and his partners had plans beyond creating a home for the MSBL.

■ ■ ■

Here is Craig Kimmell, baseball fan, watching the MSBL action from an office window. Even engrossed in conversation, his gaze is transfixed upon the tiny figurines running across the green velvet carpet outside.

"I think it takes a group like us to bring the game back into perspective," Kimmell said. "Didn't you ever see 'Field of Dreams'? We don't need any corn, we have a green field."

Like Ray Kinsella, the fictional architect of the corn-born baseball diamond, Kimmell is a farm boy. Kimmell was born and raised in Boise, Idaho and was a fair baseball player. At one point, he was playing both Connie Mack and Babe Ruth baseball simultaneously.

Then the real world inter-

vened, ending Kimmell's playing days.

"I had to give up all of my extracurricular activities to help support my family," said Kimmell. "I grew up milking cows."

He also spent time following the New York Yankees. In the 1960s, the "Game of the Week" was dominated by the Yankees, a perennial powerhouse. Kimmell left home when he was 14, and spent several years living throughout the Pacific Northwest.

In 1979, following a divorce, Kimmell moved to Parker to be closer to his family.

Since that time, he met Babette, and fathered two sons Nathan, 11, and Chad, 7.

At 38, Kimmell is living a Walter Mitty fantasy with the Padres in the MSBL.

"Call it stupidity," Kimmell said of his current career as a first baseman. "I'd say it's still an abiding love for the game and childness at heart."

It was through the MSBL that Kimmell met his current partners.

The MSBL, headed by Van Gundy and Dugan, was having an organizational meeting at the Westcourt in 1988. Kimmell was the manager of the Astros team. But his involvement with the league soon grew.

"I got to be the squeaky wheel," Kimmell said. "I wanted to know who, what, when, where and why. Eventually, I was placed on the board of the league."

■ ■ ■

Here is Craig Kimmell, salesman, espousing the virtues of having a major-league team hold spring training in Sun Cities Stadium.

At one point, Kimmell was working the graveyard shift in a pancake house. He went into sales, first as a food and drink distributor, then in the ornamental-iron business.

Kimmell has worked his way up to general manager in his latter field, and has brought his sales experience with him to the trio's baseball ventures.

"You've got to be able to sell yourself, sell the facility and sell the public on the idea," Kimmell said. "I don't know if the people out here don't care, don't read the newspapers or what, but we've still got people telling us they didn't know the stadium was open."

It is open, and it's calendar of events is growing. In addition to the MSBL, Kimmell and partners landed a franchise in the

Arizona Fall League, which will begin play this October.

"We knew that in order to make this thing work, we would have to have more than the MSBL," Kimmell said. "We started negotiating with those people (the Fall League's organizers) over a year ago, and there was a lot of back-and-forth."

Apparently, it at no point occurred to the trio that what they were doing — crashing baseball's exclusive party — couldn't be done.

"These people, so far, have been real good to work with," Kimmell said. "People have told us that they admire what we're doing, and that we've got a lot of guts. They appreciate what we're doing."

The trio is now trying to land a team for spring training. So far, the Mariners and Padres have listened to the group's sales pitch.

"We feel we could do just as good a job as any county or municipality," Kimmell said.

Ones to watch ...**Chet Laskin, outfield, Sun Cities 70's.****Dick Martin, infield, Amazing 65's.****Jake Kropp, outfield and infield, Amazing 65's.****Ralph Synder, designated hitter, Amazing 65's.****The Del Webb Amazing 60's.****Play ball!!****Annual Webb softball event features top senior teams**

The seventh annual Del E. Webb Senior Invitational Softball Tournament will be held this weekend and will feature some of the best senior softball teams in the country.

The tournament, scheduled for March 12-15, will be played at three fields in the Northwest Valley. Championship games, however, will be played at the Del Webb Field at the Kuentz Recreation Center in Sun City West.

Twenty-six teams — 21 from outside Arizona — will battle for the championship in three divisions: 60 and over, 65 and over and, new for this year, a 70-and-over age bracket.

Twelve of the teams participating in the tournament qualified for last year's Senior World Series, the national championships of senior softball.

The Del Webb Amazing 65's will be attempting to capture their own tournament for the second straight year, having won the title in 1991.

Among the more notable teams participating in the three divisions:

■ The 70 and over division will feature the nation's top two teams. The Arizona 70's,

See **SOFTBALL**, Page B2

**Del Webb Amazing 65's.****Local teams: 'Ready to play'**
Amazing 65's try to make it two in a row

By **RICK GONZALEZ**
Sun Cities Independent

The three Sun City senior softball teams competing in the Del Webb Senior Invitational Softball Tournament are poised and ready to head into battle.

According to Bob Vosbrinck, tournament director, all three Sun City teams are "looking good."

The Amazing 60's have several new players on this year's team, he says, due to the fact that some members of last year's team now play on Del Webb's Amazing 65's team.

"Competition (in the tournament) in the 60's group is extremely strong," says Mr. Vosbrinck.

The Amazing 60's are managed by Tait Douglas, who is a "pretty potent hitter," according to Mr. Vosbrinck. Another player to watch is third baseman Spud Miller, "a real long-ball hitter."

The 65 and over division is also tough, Mr. Vosbrinck says, but Del Webb's Amazing 65's "should be a favorite to win. They're a strong team."

Connie Vitale, new to the 65's, is "a strong power hitter. He's a very fine player."

Mr. Vosbrinck normally manages the 65's. However, while he serves as tournament director, infielder Dick Martin will take care of

See **TOURNAMENT**, Page B2

■ TOURNAMENT

From Page B1

the managerial duties.

"This year's 65's team is better than last year's," Mr. Vosbrinck says, due in part to the addition of four new players.

"They (65's) should be able to win the tournament if they play like they are capable of playing."

Players to watch include Mr. Martin and newcomer Charles McKasson, both "very fine" players.

The Del Webb Sun Cities 70's will be competing in the tournament for the first time, since this is the first year the event features a 70 and over division.

Webb's 70's "look to be pretty

good," Mr. Vosbrinck says. "They have some potential."

Players to watch include shortstop Chet Lasken and left fielder Jim Wagner, both "outstanding long-ball hitters."

Mr. Vosbrinck says participation in the tournament continues to grow every year.

Last year, about 18 teams took part in the event.

This year, 26 teams from around the country will be battling for the championship.

"The people (fans) were excellent last year. The ballparks filled up. This year, I think we'll have a great turnout again."

■ SOFTBALL

From Page B1

from Scottsdale, 1991 World Series champions, and the San Juan (Calif.) Capistrano Angels, World Series runners-up, will compete along with the Del Webb Sun Cities 70's, the Colorado 70's and others.

■ In the 60 and over division, the home team — Del Webb Amazing 60's, managed by Tait Douglas — will do battle against such national powers as the California Jets, Mesa (Ariz.) Seniors and the Class of 49 from Palm Springs, Calif.

■ Eight teams, three of which competed in the 1991 World Series, will participate in the 65 and over division. Among those attempting to take the title away from the Sun

Cities Amazing 65's will be the Mesa (Ariz.) 65's, Colorado Seniors, and a strong team from San Diego, Calif.

All games begin 8 a.m. each day. Preliminary games will be played Friday and Saturday at the Del Webb Field in Sun City West, Varney Park in Peoria and Nash Field in Surprise.

The first game for Sun Cities teams: The Sun Cities 70's play 8 a.m. March 12 at Del Webb Field; Del Webb Amazing 65's play 8 a.m. March 13 at Varney Park (Field No. 1); Amazing 60's play 9:10 a.m. March 13 at Varney Park (Field No. 2).

Admission to all games is free.

Amazing 65s finish 3-3 in World Series

Del Webb's Amazing 65s senior softball team recently competed in the Third Annual Senior Softball World Series in West Palm Beach, finishing with a record of 3-3, capturing a consolation trophy.

Opening up with a 14-8 victory over Tampa Bay, Fla., the 65s then lost to Fort Myers, Fla., by a score of 12-4; to Mesa, Ariz., by a score of 10-0 and Fort Worth, Texas, 6-5.

The loss to the Fort Worth team knocked the 65s out of the championship round.

The 65s then defeated teams from Sacramento, Calif., and Syracuse, N.Y., to win the consolation championship.

According to Manager Vosbrinck, "Playing under adverse weather conditions (rain and muddy fields) did not help our cause. However, the main culprit was inconsistency in hitting. When the team hit, they won easily."

Leading batters for the 65s were Don Goble, batting .857; Morrie Lane, .545; Larry Sullivan, .533; Dick Martin, .500.

Sun Cities Stadium to host benefit for St. Vincent de Paul

Valley media personalities, former Major League players and community leaders will compete against members of the Phoenix men's senior baseball league 7:30 p.m. Oct. 4 during the Sun Cities Stadium Charity Baseball Game.

The game will raise funds for St. Vincent de Paul Society and St. Mary's Food Bank.

Admission to the game is \$1 and two cans of food or \$3 per person without a food contribution. Volunteers from both charities will receive admission contributions beginning at 6 p.m.

The stadium is located at 13440 N. 111th Ave., Sun City.

Maricopa County Supervisor Carole Carpenter will throw out the first pitch. Celebrity teams include former Major League ballplayers Alan Bannister, Ken Rudolph, Ron Davis and Elias Sosa.

Joining the retired ballplayers will be C.E. "Pep" Cooney, general manager of KPNX television; Joe Garagiola, county baseball advocate; Frank Kush, former NFL coach; sportscasters Tim Healey, Bill Denney, Greg Schulte and Steve Pascente.

Concessions will be open throughout the game. No coolers will be allowed.

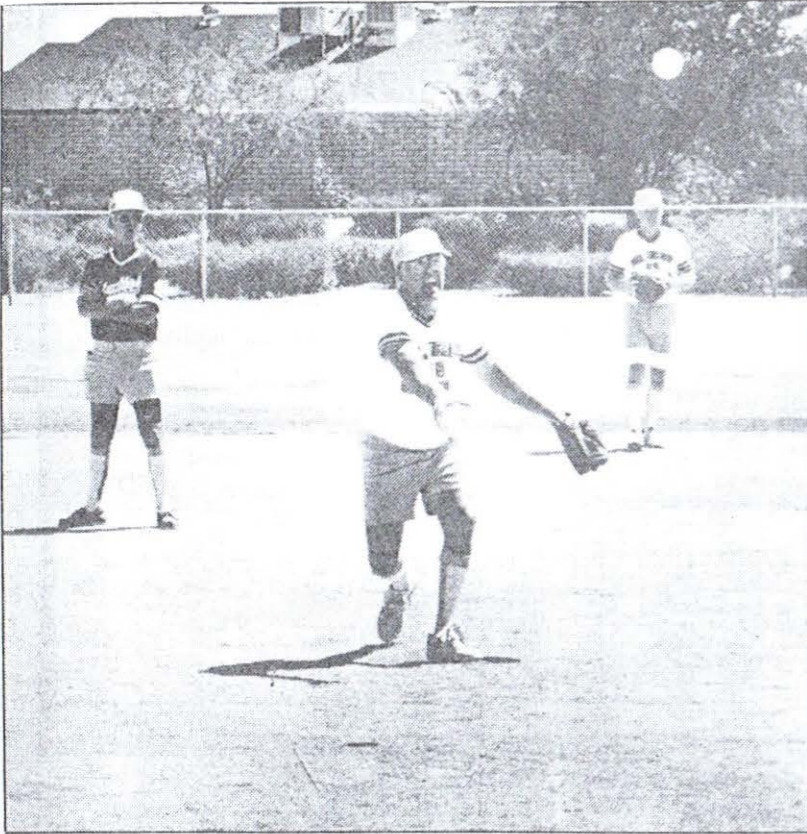


Photo by TYSON KUHRT/Sun Cities Independent

In preparation for next week's senior softball world series in Florida, the Amazing 65's played two exhibition games with the Del Webb 55's Sept. 13 at the Kuntz Recreation Center softball diamond in Sun City West.

Amazing 65's prepare for softball world series

Sun Citians finished second in national tournament in 1990

By RICK GONZALEZ
Sun Cities Independent

The Del Webb Amazing 65's senior softball team hopes to improve upon its second-place finish of last year and win a national title when it travels next week to Florida to compete in the 1991 Senior Softball World Series.

"We have the personnel to do it. We have a very excellent defense, we can out-hit anybody and we're very fast," says team manager Bob Vosbrinck.

Mr. Vosbrinck says the team's speed was evident at the recent Northern Virginia Senior Softball Classic, where the Amazing 65's placed second, thus qualifying for the world series.

"We shook them up with our speed. They couldn't believe 65-



year-olds could run that fast."

While the team's chances do look good, there is one major setback that may play a role in the team's performance.

Left center fielder Dick Herzer, who Mr. Vosbrinck calls "one of the team's best players," is recovering from a recent hand operation.

"He's a good hitter, he has a good arm and he's fast. He may make the series, depending on how well he heals up."

On the positive side, there are some newcomers to this year's team who could help overcome potential obstacles, says Mr. Vosbrinck. Those players are shortstop Roy Burgess, Tiny Paulson, who can play second and third base, pitcher Bill Honaker, and Buddy Herren, who plays both outfield and infield and can also pitch.

"We need his (Mr. Herren's) speed," Manager Vosbrinck says.

In order to win the world series, Mr. Vosbrinck says the team as a whole will have to hit the ball well.

"In the Virginia qualifying tournament we had five players who hit over .500. But, you've got to have at least seven or eight players hitting .500 for this type of game."

However, he adds, the team's defensive performance continues to stand out.

"In the Virginia tournament we gave up four runs in five games. That's defense!

This year's Senior Softball World Series is the third annual event. The Amazing 65's did not participate at all in the first year. In last year's tournament, which was held in Scottsdale, the 65's finished with a record of 2-2, losing the championship to the Toby's, a team from New York, also participating in this year's event.

In this year's series, the Amazing 65's is one of 90 of senior softball teams from throughout the country vying for the championship and the gold rings that go to each member of the winning team.

Teams will be competing in the 50 and over age, 55 and over, 60 and over, 65 and over and 70 and over divisions.

Besides the Amazing 65's, other Arizona teams participating in the event are the Mesa 65's, the Mesa Seniors, the Scottsdale 70's and the Arizona Seniors.



Daily News-Sun photo by Stephen Cherne

GETTING IN SHAPE — Sprinklers water the field at Sun City Stadium, 13440 N. 111th Ave., Sun City. The stadium is being purchased from the Resolution Trust Corp. by a group of Phoenix businessmen.

Baseball returns to SC

By MIKE GARRETT
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — The sights and sounds of Sun City Stadium will again be heard this summer under new ownership.

The crack of bat against ball will be heard for some 160 Men's Senior Baseball League games from May 10 to October.

A contract is expected to be signed today between the Resolution Trust Corp. and three Phoenix-based limited partners to purchase Sun City Stadium at 111th and Grand Avenue.

The new owners, Bill Dugan, Craig Kimmell and Terry Van Gundy, have already signed a letter of intent with the RTC to purchase the stadium.

The three new owners will sign a year's lease while they try to get their financing in place to purchase the stadium from the RTC.

The owners have formed a corporation, called "Field of Dreams," based on the popular movie. Kimmell said they have been negotiating with RTC and the senior league the past five months.

They will operate the four-year-old Men's Senior Baseball League for players 30 and older. Dugan is league

president, Kimmell vice president and Van Gundy commissioner.

The Valley Men's Senior Baseball league is part of a nationwide organization that held its World Series in Tempe and Mesa last Oct. 29-Nov. 3.

Tom McCanna, executive director of the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce, said the chamber will be involved in promoting events at the stadium.

The new owners are negotiating for a series of concerts appealing to Sun City residents, starting with a free open house concert to acquaint residents with the new owners at 7 p.m. Thursday, May 9.

McCanna said Thursday's open house will feature a 90-piece high school concert band from Flagstaff and the Sun City-based Christopher Girls, who appeared at the recent Metropolitan Life Willard Scott program at the Sundome Center for the Performing Arts.

McCanna said the owners and chamber are also negotiating to get other local entertainment acts to perform at the show.

"We'll try to have all kinds of different events," said Kimmell. "We're looking at having a 4th of July fire-

works show and RV and car shows there and we'd like to have the Sun City Saints back out here.

"We're going to cater to the people out here," he said. "We won't have rock and roll concerts but rather big band and country and western acts."

But the prime entertainment will still be baseball.

"We're going to have 16 teams playing out here," said Kimmell. "We'll play one game every night on weekdays starting at 7:30 p.m. On weekends we'll play three games per day, morning, afternoon and early evening."

Kimmell said the players, including some in their 50s, come from all walks of life — lawyers, doctors, accountants, business entrepreneurs, retail sales people and laborers. Each team will have a roster of 18, up from 15 in previous seasons. Major league rules and format, including the use of a designated hitter, will apply.

"We have players who haven't played any professional ball and haven't played since high school," said Kimmell. "We also have some with major league, Triple A (minor league) and college experience, including some former Sun City Rays — Guy Sularz,

See Seniors, A5

Seniors to begin May 10

—From A1

Bob Owchinko and Ron Davis." He said each team plays a 25-game schedule with all but a handful of those games scheduled for Sun City Stadium, which the owners plan to rename, Sun Cities Stadium.

Kimmell said they're hoping each of the Northwest Valley communities will adopt one of the teams as its own.

In previous years the league has played its games at Compadre Stadium in Chandler, HoHoKam Park in Mesa, Phoenix College, Carl Hayden High School and Apache Junction High School.

As when the defunct Sun City Rays took over last November, the stadium needs repairs and refurbishment. Kimmell and McCanna say they're looking for the volunteers the Sun Cities are famous for to come out and help with concessions, general cleanup and to prepare the field.

Volunteers should call the chamber office at 583-0692 until the stadium phone is hooked up this weekend.

Kimmell said the owners haven't decided prices for the games. But it will be nominal because league players are not paid professionals.

Marching out

Sounds of Saints softball team are only memories at stadium

By Julia Jones
Staff writer

The grass is sprouting in the dirt along the base line in Sun City Stadium at 111th and Grand avenues.

No one runs the bases anymore. Jack Falerni, groundskeeper, goes occasionally to check on the property and equipment, but he doesn't turn on the sprinklers to water the field. No one is there to care if it's green. A couple of weeks ago, he helped Alice

Messick move 27 trophies, won by the 1979 world champion Sun City Saints, a womens' fast-pitch softball team, from Sun City Historical Society headquarters on Oakmont Drive.

The home team's trophies are big, glittering masterpieces of brightly colored metal and polished wood, tributes to an excess of design with fluted columns, spheres and plaques in abundance. Most have a tiny batter poised, forever ready to knock one out of the park.

They mark the Saints' glory days,

between 1966 and 1984.

But after 18 seasons in the sun, the Saints were called out on a squeeze play: they lost to the money men.

"We have the trophies on display now, but there are too many for us to keep out all the time," said Les Merydith, Historical Society president. "They take up our whole meeting room."

Messick was president of the Saints booster club earlier this year when the team took another swing at a comeback, and missed.

But the game is over, Messick said; this

time, it's for good.

Messick, 81, and Falerni, 77, were more than fans.

Since Messick came back home to the Valley with her husband in 1971, she had been a part of the Saints, body and soul. The Saints were playing in a dirt field along Grand Avenue then, where a family restaurant now stands. They were making their own posters announcing their schedule, persuading area merchants to display them.

The team needed help with that, so See TROPHY, Page 6

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

Wed., March 13, 1991

TROPHY

From Page 1

that's what the Messicks did, she said. They had always been active volunteers, working for 40 years with the March of Dimes, for instance, and she had chaired Wyoming's 75th anniversary celebration of statehood.

And from then on, they helped the Saints wherever and whenever help was needed.

"We were just there to help expedite anything the girls did," she said, "any fund-raising, selling ads for the program or scorecard or whatever. It was really a pleasure for us. We were with them before there was a booster club.

"We probably averaged 1,000 or 1,200 fans in the stands in those days," Messick said. "These other teams would come in with their boosters, maybe 40 people, and I think it kind of scared them to see all these people in that pretty stadium. And then this year, we had 900 people there, and I thought that was pretty good, since a lot of our old-timers had passed away."

Falerni has his own set of memories.

"I took care of the place when the (Milwaukee) Brewers were there for spring training, too," Falerni said. The San Francisco Giants played there briefly, as did a legion of other teams, including Arizona State University and Grand Canyon University, and some Pop Warner boys.

The ballpark, built on 12.5 acres by the Del Webb company, opened July 4, 1971. Building permits still posted show the cost as \$300,000. It was the third field Webb had built in its Sun City development, and by far the most elaborate.

Falerni, who started out as a hooper in the Catskills and New York City's burlesque houses, learned pick-and-shovel work in his dad's construction business.

"I'm just the guy out there (at the Sun City Stadium) with the mower now," he said.

And the Saints are just part of Sun City history, Messick said.

Messick's eyes moved over the assembled trophies again to one she bought, the first big trophy commemorating the Del Webb Memorial Day Tournament, back in 1978, as a memorial to her husband, who died that year.

Another one, she pointed out was when the girls won the state championship, and one marked a trip to Australia.

A Japanese team came over here to play, she said. Then the Saints went to the Netherlands and Canada, down to Rhodesia. And everywhere they went, they held classes, to spread the word about their sport.

The team, most recently coached by Gerald Stapley of Mesa, never finished below fourth in the Amateur Softball Association National Tournament for eight straight years.

But in the mid-'80s, the property changed hands twice, and stadium rent soared to \$6,000. Now, the stadium is for sale, through the federal government's real estate office, Merydith said. The asking price for the property, in the Agua Fria River floodplain, is \$1.1 million.

The Saints tried a comeback last year, Messick said, at about the same time the Sun City Rays, senior league ball club, got rolling, but it seemed both clubs struck out.

Messick is not optimistic about another revival. It isn't just the rent, she said. There also is a matter of upkeep.

"People don't realize it cost about \$25,000 a year to maintain that field," Falerni said. Watering alone would cost about \$1,000 a month.

Some of the trophies will be on display at the Historical Society, Merydith said. They would like to loan others to Sun City agencies and firms with display space, she said. "People won't forget."

OVER



Community
Memorabilia and memories of the Sun City Saints are all that remain for Les Merydith (left), Historical Society president; Alice Messick, booster; and Jack Falerni, stadium groundskeeper.



James Garcia / Staff photographer

Sun Cities to host annual Del E. Webb senior softball tournament March 8-10

Nineteen teams to square off in 7th annual competition

Hundreds of softball players and fans from throughout the country will meet in the Sun Cities this weekend for the seventh annual Del E. Webb Senior Softball Invitational Tournament.

During the weekend of March 8-10, 19 teams — 15 of them from out of state — will vie for the two tournament championships — the 60 and over bracket and the 65 and over age division.

"This is going to be a super tournament," says Bob Vosbrinck, tournament director and manager of the Sun Cities Amazing 60s.

"We've got the best teams we could get for this event. All we need now is great weather," he adds.

On March 8 and 9, games will be played in Sun City West at the new Kuentz Recreation Center Field, on R.H. Johnson Boulevard. Games will also be played in Peoria at Varney Park, located on 81st Avenue just south of Cactus Road.

All championship games will be played March 10 at Kuentz Field.

The Sun Cities are represented by the Amazing 65s (in the 65 and over division) and the Amazing 60s (in the 60 and over division).

In addition to the Amazing 60s, the 60 and over division will include two teams that played in last year's senior softball World Series. One of those teams, the Mesa Seniors from Mesa, Ariz., won the World Series in 1990.

In the 65 and over division, there are four teams entered which competed in last year's senior softball World Series.

Mr. Vosbrinck is confident that his team will do well before the home crowd.

Senior Softball Tournament

When: March 8, 9, 10. Games begin at 8 a.m. each day.
Where: Kuentz Recreation Center, Stardust and Johnson boulevards, Sun City West, and Varney Park, 81st Avenue just south of Cactus, Peoria. Admission is free.
First game for the home team: Amazing 60s play 8 a.m. March 8 at Varney Park and 10:20 a.m. at Kuentz Field.
 Amazing 65s play 9:10 a.m. March 8 at Varney Park.

"We (the Amazing 60s) have beat all the teams in the tournament at one time or another," says Mr. Vosbrinck.

The Amazing 60s are seeded No. 2 in the event.

Also representing Arizona in the 60 and over division are the Mesa Seniors.

In the 65 and over bracket, the Chaparral Seniors from Scottsdale will also represent Arizona.

The Amazing 65s qualified in the 1990 Senior World Series and, according to manager Vosbrinck, "this team displays outstanding speed and a good, solid defense.

"They have great hitting potential and, if their bats perform

as they should, the Amazing 65s could easily be the champions of this division."

Admission to the games is free but seating is limited, therefore, it is suggested that spectators bring their own chairs. In past years, the tournament has always drawn large crowds.

A refreshment stand will be operated by the ladies of the Amazing 60's Softball Club.

On March 7, at Beardsley Park, the Del Webb Company, along with the members of the Amazing 60's Softball Club, will host a cookout for the 400 guests expected to converge on the Sun City and Sun City West area.

Sixties take 2nd in Palm Springs

Del Webb's Amazing 65s recently placed second in the Palm Springs, Calif., Senior Softball Tournament.

The 65s won seven games and lost one in round-robin play. The Mesa 65s also finished with a 7-1 record, their one loss being to the Amazing 65s by a score of 8-5.

The Amazing 65s, however, had to once again face the Mesa 65s for the championship and were soundly defeated, 18-2.

Amazing 65s Manager Bob Vosbrinck says he is "extremely proud and pleased with the outstanding performance of the team during the tournament."

The Amazing 65s lost to La Mesa, Calif., in the first game, 23-7, but then went on to win their next seven games.

Mr. Vosbrinck says that, "due to the fact that the championship game was the fourth game of the day for the team, and that so many players were hurting and extremely tired, it was almost impossible for the team to provide championship caliber play."

Leading batters for the Amazing 65s were Tiny Paulson, batting .667, Roy Burgess, with a .609 batting average, Bob Rehberg, batting .571 and Axel Olson, batting .522.

Del Webb Senior Invitational Softball Tournament March 8,9,10, 1991

60 & Over Division

NATIONAL

Mesa Seniors, Mesa, AZ
 Class of 49, Palm Springs, CA
 Roadrunners, Albuquerque, NM
 Vintage 60's, San Jose, CA
 State Farm, North Glenn, CO

AMERICAN

Del Webb's Amazing 60's, AZ
 Colorado Seniors, Lakewood, CO
 Sun City Tigers, Sun City, CA
 Glen Ivy Resorts, San Diego, CA
 Sacramento Braves, Sacramento, CA
 Albuquerque Dukes, Albuquerque, NM

65 & Over Division

NATIONAL

La Mesa Seniors, La Mesa, CA
 Chaparral Seniors, Scottsdale, AZ
 Lakewood Seniors, Lakewood, CO
 Ful Cam Capitals, Fair Oaks, CA

AMERICAN

Del Webb Amazing 65's, AZ
 Sacramento 65's, Sacramento, CA
 Motherlodes 49'ers, Nevada City, CA
 Houston 65's, Houston, TX

Good luck to the home team!



The Sun Cities Amazing 60s

Support the Amazing 60s and the Amazing 65s this weekend as they take on the country's best!

The 7th annual Del E. Webb Softball Tournament

March 8, 9 & 10

- Kuentz Recreation Center (Stardust & Johnson Boulevards, Sun City West)
 - Varney Park (81st Avenue just south of Cactus, Peoria)
- Games begin at 8 a.m. each day. Admission is free.

This message brought to you by the the merchants listed on this page and the Sun Cities Independent.



PHOTO COURTESY HOLLETT PHOTOGRAPHY BY GEORGE

Catch the RAYS!

THE SUN CITY RAYS bear (the team mascot) welcomes Ferguson Jenkins to the pitching staff of the newly formed team. Jenkins spent 19 years in the major leagues and is the National League's 1971 Cy Young Award Winner.

by Betty Latty

Raaaay Ball!
Baseball is alive and well, living in the nurturing enclaves of Sun City Stadium — and now we know where some of the national pastime has gone, after the boys of October and World Seriousness faded into the twilight.

Good to have it back. It's been a while.

The Sun City Rays, one of two expansion franchises awarded this past summer by the Senior Professional Baseball Association (SPBA) — San Bernardino, Calif., got the other — are making the stadium their home base for the league's winter-months play. Training camp, underway, is being followed with a 56-game schedule that will take the Rays in triple-state play from Florida to Arizona to Califor-

nia, beginning Nov. 23.

The Rays will have 28 home games during the season. Their first home-stand begins Nov. 30 when the Daytona Beach Explorers arrive for a five-game series.

The league's visiting teams will stay at the Windmill Inn at Sun City West, where General Manager Pamela Kish said, "We're naturally ecstatic about this." Windmill's Director of Sales, Anna Krzywiec, added that the upcoming league play is "exciting, something new, and a very much needed attraction in this area."

And for those readers who still can't believe they're going to see the likes of some erstwhile big leaguers again at the stadium where the Milwaukee Brewers once held forth in spring training and Cactus League exhibition — be it known that the Rays, while training this month,

also are having their photographs made for baseball cards. That should ice it.

And speaking of ice, stadium owner-manager Bob Atkinson advises that beer is now available (Dare we hope for a league-winning team and champagne?).

In further confirmation that there really is a baseball team at hand, fans will be able to purchase all kinds of souvenir items bearing the Rays' logo, "Catch the Rays," — tee shirts, caps, golf shirts, pennants, mugs, key chains, pens and the like.

Colors will be the same as those in the Rays' home uniforms: white with aqua and orange (some have called it peach) accents.

"We wanted to have colors that would go with the Southwest," said Jon Schneider of the Rays' executive staff.

(OVER)

The Sun City Rays have tapped the local Osco Drug store at 107th Avenue and Bell Road to take care of their pharmacy needs. And Manager Jack Smiley, a strong supporter of the community, said he's thrilled the Rays are coming. "I'm just delighted that Osco will serve the team, but what's important is that the Rays' coming will help bring us all closer together out here. It will be fun for everyone and we won't have to drive so far to see a real baseball game and eat a hot dog."

Smiley added that Osco also would carry any Rays' souvenir items made available to the store.

As for local residents, some can't wait for the games to begin. "You bet we're going to the Rays' games!" chorused Flo and Parnell Grina. "We're just elated," said the Sun Citians who have maintained their allegiance to baseball.

Some Northwest Valley readers watched SPBA games in Florida last year on cable TV. But they shouldn't confuse the players in this fledgling league with those "old-timers" and once-a-year games. SPBA players are only a head-first slide away from yesterday's sports headlines, with minimum age of 34 for all players, except catchers, who may start at age 32.

We all know age is relative. There's the Rays' recent acquisition, relief pitcher Rollie Fingers, best known for his years with the Oakland A's, who spent last season with SPBA's West Palm Beach Tropics. He's 44. Fans will be glad to know that Fingers, the 1981 American League Cy Young Award winner, still sports his trademark handlebar moustache. (And if you care for a bit of trivia, Fingers' 1969 rookie-year baseball card (TOPPS #597) is worth about \$65.

Another addition to the new team's pitching staff is Ferguson Jenkins, a Cy Young Award winner in the National League in 1971.

Right-hander Jenkins, 47, also has authorship among his credits. His *Inside Pitching*, now out of print, was published in 1972. And his rookie card fetches about \$70 these days.

The Rays' owner is Valley business executive and baseball buff Marc Kaplan, who has tapped this area for talent. Manager Jim Marshall is a Scottsdale resident, toting around 40 years of pro ball credits that include field manager

stints with the Chicago Cubs and the Oakland A's.

Fred Stanley, the Rays' director of player personnel, a 14-year veteran of the majors, mostly with the New York Yankees, also is a Valley resident. He played with the SPBA in Florida last year, and is happy about joining the Rays "because it's a lot closer to home for me."

Stanley, who also will serve as the Rays' third-base coach, said that the team's "strength is going

SUN CITY RAYS ROSTER

(as of Oct. 15, 1990)

	YEARS IN		BAT	THROW	LAST TEAM
	AGE	MAJORS			
PITCHERS					
Ferguson Jenkins	47	19	R	R	Chicago Cubs
Bill Campbell	42	15	R	R	Montreal Expos
Goose Gossage	39	18	R	R	New York Yankees
Rollie Fingers	44	17	R	R	Milwaukee Brewers
Ron Davis	35	11	R	R	San Francisco Giants
Ernie Camacho	35	9	R	R	San Francisco Giants
Roy Thomas	37	8	R	R	Seattle Mariners
Pete Falcone	37	10	L	L	Atlanta Braves
Bob Galasso	38	3	L	R	Seattle Mariners
Fernando Arroyo	38	8	R	R	Oakland Athletics
Lerrin LaGrow	42	10	R	R	Chicago White Sox
Bob Owchinko	35	10	L	L	Montreal Expos
Jim Umbarger	37	4	L	L	Texas Rangers
Jack Lazorko	34	5	R	R	California Angels
Bo McLaughlin	37	6	R	R	Oakland Athletics
Andy Hassler	39	14	L	L	St. Louis Cardinals
CATCHERS					
Ronn Reynolds	32	5	R	R	San Diego Padres
Bill Hayes	33	2	R	R	Chicago Cubs
Kevin Pasley	37	4	R	R	Seattle Mariners
INFIELDERS					
Bert Campaneris	48	19	R	R	New York Yankees
Jim Dwyer	40	17	L	L	Montreal Expos
Pete LaCock	38	9	L	L	Kansas City Royals
Rick Lancellotti	34	2	L	L	San Francisco Giants
Dave Hilton	40	4	R	R	San Diego Padres
Anthony "Razor" Shines	34	4	B	R	Montreal Expos
Mark Wagner	36	9	R	R	Oakland Athletics
Guy Sularz	35	4	R	R	San Francisco Giants
Alan Bannister	39	12	R	R	Texas Rangers
Lenny Randle	41	12	R	R	Seattle Mariners
OUTFIELDERS					
Bobby Bonds	44	14	R	R	Chicago Cubs
Tony Scott	39	11	B	R	Montreal Expos
Joe Charboneau	35	3	R	R	Cleveland Indians
Barry Bonnell	34	10	R	R	Seattle Mariners
Ricky Peters	35	5	B	R	Oakland Athletics
Joel Youngblood	39	15	R	R	San Francisco Giants

to be in our pitching staff; we've got some quality pitchers." He added that the Rays would have speed and defense "with some younger legs this year."

Also from Scottsdale comes former American League leading-base-stealer, Bert Campaneris, who held that record six times. Campaneris, 48, played in the senior league last year.

The Rays' early lineup includes the likes of pitchers "Goose" Gossage (his rookie card hefts at about \$10), Ron Davis and Pete Falcone. Among those catching them will be Ronn Reynolds, Bill Hayes and Kevin Pasley. Infielders include Pete LaCock, Anthony "Razor" Shines and Jim Dwyer, along with outfielders Bobby Bonds (that's his son, Barry, on the Pittsburgh Pirates' team) and Tony Scott.

While the community is rallying 'round the Rays, owner Kaplan has rallied 'round the community and announced a cut in season-ticket prices in September. Persons who earlier purchased those tickets are

SUN CITY RAYS GAME SCHEDULE

All Sun City Rays home games begin at 1:05 p.m. Their 1990-91 season schedule at Sun City Stadium is as follows:

Nov. 30-Dec. 4	Daytona Beach (Fla.) Explorers
Dec. 5-9	West Palm Beach Tropics
Dec. 27-31	San Bernardino (Calif.) Pride
Jan. 2-6 (1991)	St. Petersburg (Fla.) Pelicans
Jan. 11-14	Ft. Meyers (Fla.) Sun Sox *
Jan. 27-29	*Double-header Jan. 12 San Bernardino Pride

being given bonus books of additional tickets. Season-ticket holders receive priority parking and seat identification for box seats.

There's further community support for the Rays. Dimension Cable plans to telecast six of the team's home games here this season. Additionally, ASPN (Prime Ticket Network) plans to feature the team in two nationally televised games during the league's three months of play.

At Luke Air Force Base, active and retired military personnel may purchase tickets at the International Ticket and Tours desk in the base community center.

Mail orders may be sent to: Sun City Rays Tickets, 4545 E. Shea Blvd., Suite 160, Phoenix, AZ 85028.

Complete information may be obtained by phoning 977-RAYS or by stopping at the ticket office at Sun City Stadium, 13440 N. 111th Ave. ☉

Senior baseball league expands into Sun City

Rays to begin 1st season in late November

By **BRET McKEAND**
Sun Cities Independent

Professional baseball has returned to Sun City.

The Senior Professional Baseball Association announced last week that it has expanded its Florida-based league and will field teams in Sun City and San Bernardino during its 1990-91 season.

The league, which features professional baseball players 35 years of age and older, began last year with eight teams in Florida.

As part of a westward-expansion, league officials have added franchises in Sun City and San Bernardino for its second season. Additional California and Arizona teams are expected to be added next year.

"When I began pursuing this team last November, I knew there was only one place I wanted it to play," says Marc Kaplan, owner of the team.

The team, which will be called the Sun City Rays, has signed a five-year lease to play at the Sun City Stadium, 111th and Grand avenues, Sun City.

Mr. Kaplan, a resident of Paradise Valley and long-time Cleveland Indians fan, says he always enjoyed watching spring training at the stadium.

"I made many trips to Sun City to watch my beloved Indians play the Milwaukee Brewers," he recalls.

"I enjoyed the coziness of relaxing, kicking back and catching

the 'rays' in Sun City Stadium ... I've missed those days."

Mr. Kaplan says, "Sun City deserves high-quality professional baseball and it's back where it belongs -- Sun City Stadium."

The team will arrive in Sun City in early November and league play begins Nov. 28.

Team officials are hoping to attract 1,800 to 2,000 spectators per game. Sun City Stadium contains 5,000 seats.

The Rays will play a 56-game schedule, 28 of them at home in Sun City.

Bob Atkinson, owner of the stadium, says Sun City was up against "strong competition" when it came to convincing the senior league to expand.

"We worked very hard to bring them here," he says.

"Maybe we were successful in making them feel they were more

See RAYS, Page 7

Sun City Rays may boost local economy and image

"If you build it, they will come."

From the movie, "Field of Dreams."

When the Sun City Rays take to the field in November, club officials are hoping baseball fans from all over the country will come to Sun City to see their favorite stars of yesteryear perform once again.

The new team will not only "put Sun City on the map" as far as baseball fans are concerned, but the national attention could mean added dollars for the local economy, as well.

It was announced last week

that the Sun City Rays will join the Senior Professional Baseball Association and begin playing at Sun City Stadium this November.

Early response to the announcement has been extremely positive, especially from community leaders and Northwest Valley businesses.

"We're pumped up about it," says Tom McCanna, executive director of the Northwest Valley Chamber of Commerce. "We're real excited for the entire Northwest Valley."

Mr. McCanna feels the Rays will "put the Sun City

See BOOST, Page 7

• RAYS

From Page 1

welcome here than anywhere else," he adds.

Mr. Atkinson purchased the stadium last year. The facility was unused since the Milwaukee Brewers moved its spring training site from Sun City to Chandler in the mid-1980s.

The stadium presently serves as the home for the Sun City Sons, a semi-pro baseball team,

and the Sun City Saints, a women's softball team.

The Rays will be managed by Jim Marshall, manager of the Chicago Cubs from 1974 to 1976 and the Oakland Athletics in 1979.

It will be up to team officials to recruit its own players. No players have yet been signed.

Among the former players al-

ready competing in the league are Al Oliver, Gates Brown, Bill Madlock, Dock Ellis, Ferguson Jenkins, Bert Campaneris, Vida Blue and Rollie Fingers.

In addition to Sun City and San Bernardino, the league has Florida teams in St. Petersburg, Fort Myers, Daytona Beach and West Palm Beach.

Tickets will cost \$4 for general admission and \$6 for box seats. Senior citizen tickets will be \$5.50 for a box seat and \$3.50 for general admission.

Season tickets for seniors will be \$150 for box seats and \$98 for general admission.

Season tickets are now available. For information, call 977-RAYS.

• BOOST

From Page 1

name in front of everyone."

The team, he says, will "showcase" the positive aspects of the Sun Cities and the entire Northwest Valley.

"It's very beneficial -- nobody loses in a deal like this," he says.

Local businesses will benefit from home games, he says, because people from throughout the Valley will be coming to Sun City to see the team play.

"The businesses themselves will most definitely benefit because they will be pulling in a different clientele, people from Phoenix.

"The Rays will bring a tremendous amount of people out here," he adds.

Tom Nash, president of the Sun City Ambassadors, a group whose purpose is to promote Sun City on a national level, called the announcement a "very positive

development" for Sun City.

"This is another dimension of the celebration of life in Sun City," he says.

The timing for the league is "perfect," says Mr. Nash,

since the league plays its games during the winter months -- a time when tourism is at its peak in Arizona.

"I think the Rays and Sun City match up perfectly," he adds.

Mr. Nash says the senior baseball league holds a tremendous amount of "crowd appeal" for baseball fans in Sun City.

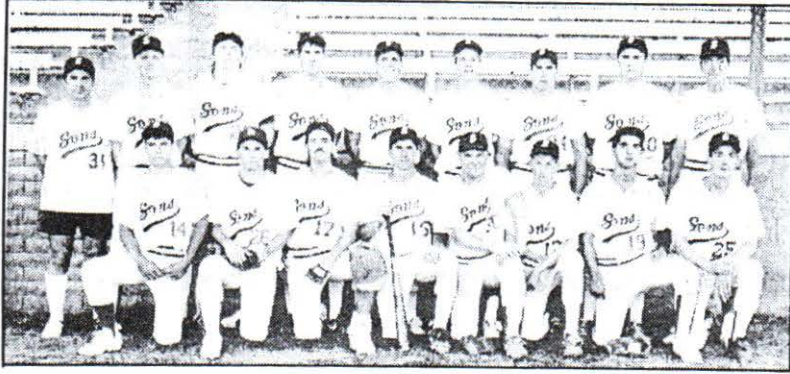
"We'll be bringing in the biggest names in baseball. These fans out here know these players and want to see them play again," he says.

The Ambassadors president feels the level and quality of play will be above that of Triple-A baseball since many of the players are still in their late 30s and early 40s.



Sun Cities Independent Aug 1-7, 1990

CONGRATULATIONS to the SUN CITY SONS



LEAGUE CHAMPIONS 1990

The Sun Cities Independent salutes the Sons on finishing first place in their division for 1990! The Sons go after the State Semi-Pro title during the state championships to be played August 1 - 3 at Sun City Stadium.

Show your support! Salute your champs! Attend the opening round of the tournament (6:00 and 8:00 pm August 1) at \$2.00 off the regular price by using the coupon below.

\$1

SUN CITIES
INDEPENDENT
SALUTES THE SONS!
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 1
Sun City Stadium
First Game Begins 6 pm
\$2.00 OFF Regular Admission Price

\$1

This ticket good for one general admission seat (Reg. price \$3)
A coupon is needed for each admission. No refund.

Monday, July 30, 1990

1W

Sun City ready to welcome senior baseball team

By Bob Petrie
Staff writer

SUN CITY — The boys down at the barber shop say they like the idea of baseball returning to Sun City Stadium — even if the players will be older and more rounded than when they played in the major leagues.

"It should go like the senior golf tour goes," said Emil Wenzlowski, who was getting a trim at the Arrowhead Barber Shop on west Peoria Ave. "I'll probably go to a

couple of games, try 'em out."

Folks at the Fairway Recreation Center also welcome the coming of the Sun City Rays, the newest members of the Senior Professional Baseball Association, who will play this winter at the stadium. The stadium has stood largely unused since the Milwaukee Brewers packed up and moved their spring training to Chandler in 1986.

"That's a darn good idea, bringing them here," said John Zolinski,

day monitor at the recreation center at 107th and Peoria avenues. "I love baseball. I never miss the games on the radio."

Team management is shooting for an average of at least 2,000 fans for the 28 home games of the season, which will be played between Nov. 23 and Feb. 1. The Rays will feature players 34 and older (catchers can be 32). Almost all of the players will have some major league experience.

Some fans look forward to

seeing some of their old favorites play. Others think the Rays will bring recognition to the Sun Cities.

"It'll be a big boost to the area," said Julian Mastrine, while crafting a bracelet in the silversmithing shop at the recreation center. "It'll be good for the city. It ought to bring some attention to us."

Mastrine, who says he followed the Yankees and Indians when he lived in the East, became a Brewers fan when they trained in Sun City. He's just glad baseball

will be back in the stadium. "I thought they'd be putting condos up there" on the stadium site at 111th and Grand avenues, he said.

He said the condition of some of the players may be questionable, though.

"It'll be a little slower, I'm sure. A lot of them are going to be kind of heavy, unless they run off some of it," he said.

Marge Benson, a clerk at Fashion Mart in the Arrowhead Shopping Center, said baseball will

bring back some of the liveliness to the area that was lost after the Brewers moved away because Chandler offered the team better facilities.

"It really seemed like a lot left when the Brewers took off," she said. "It was kind of dead around here."

Back at the barber shop, Harry Quigley said he's "100 percent for the senior league," although he'd rather still be playing baseball. See RAYS, Page 3

RAYS

From Page 1

himself, even at the age of 75.

"Like Mickey Mantle, I can't stand being a spectator," said Quigley, who played semi-pro baseball in the St. Louis area in the 1930s and softball until he was 55.

Most people interviewed said they thought \$6 was a fair price to pay for the best seats in the ball park, which has a capacity of about 5,000. Paul White, owner of the barber shop, said knocking a dollar off that price might help attract more fans.

Louis Meister, who was waiting for a haircut, said although he supports the idea of having the

Rays in Sun City, he doesn't watch much baseball.

"They're overpaid," he said. "I don't think anybody's worth \$3 million a year."

The name of the team — the Rays — raised some eyebrows. A woman lounging by the recreation center pool said she heard someone suggest "the codgers" might be a more appropriate name.

And Ed Chodorowski of Sun City West had an idea for a player the Rays should try to sign.

"Maybe they should go get Pete Rose — after he gets out of jail."

■ DAILY NEWS-SUN EDITORIAL

Something to cheer

Baseball fans in the Northwest Valley have something to cheer about — pro baseball is on its way. The Sun City Rays, a newly franchised Senior Professional Baseball Association team, will be playing a 56-game schedule beginning Nov. 23 in Sun City Stadium.

The Rays join a league that fielded eight teams in Florida during its first season, 1989-90, has a new franchise in San Bernardino, Calif., and expects to add Palm Springs, Calif., to its roster by November.

Senior Professional Baseball was founded by Jim Morley, its president, and the Rays are owned by Marc Kaplan, a Phoenix businessman. Jim Marshall, former manager of the Chicago Cubs and the Oakland A's, will manage the team. That's a power lineup already.

The teams are made up of players 34 years old and older. They bring professional experience, enthusiasm and "name" prestige to senior baseball and they play with the same intensity and heart that made them successful in the big leagues.

We have no doubt that the SPBA is on the cutting edge of a new national sports category, with seasoned veterans getting as much attention and enjoying as much popularity as senior golfers do today.

It is easy to be optimistic about the future of senior baseball in the West Valley. The Rays are getting wholehearted support from the Northwest Valley business community and we can see civic and community organizations getting behind the team with ticket sales and providing the volunteers who will be needed to make the Rays' first season a resounding success.

Tom Darmody of the Western Maricopa County Coalition says, "We have the population (750,000) to support a team like this. . . . Now we need to get behind it and support it." And Tom Lund of the Peoria Economic Development Group regards senior pro baseball as an image-enhancer for the entire West Valley. "I think it's going to take all of our organizations working together to make this a success," he said.

It will take spectators, too — great numbers of them. But with the season scheduled for the best weather months, and winter visitors here, our first pro baseball season should fill the stands at Sun City Stadium.

It's been a thrill to have the Saints women's softball team return to Sun City as well as the emergence of the Sun City Sons as a force in amateur baseball.

The Rays will add more enjoyment for baseball fans and who knows — maybe one day Sun City will become a spring training site for a National League team.

Welcome, Sun City Rays, we're glad to have you.

Sun City gains senior league baseball franchise

SUN CITY RAYS

WHAT: Sun City Rays, Senior Professional Baseball Association.

HOME: Sun City Stadium, capacity 5,000.

MANAGER: Jim Marshall, former Chicago Cubs and Oakland A's manager.

COLORS: Aqua, Peach, Gold.

TICKETS: Game-day box seats \$6, general admission \$4; season box seats \$168, season general admission \$112. Senior citizens and children receive discounts. For more information, call 977-RAYS.

By Larry Lynch
The Arizona Republic

The Senior Professional Baseball Association, for former major leaguers 35 and over, announced Tuesday it has expanded to include a franchise in Sun City.

The team, the Sun City Rays, joins the SPBA for the league's second season. The league runs from Nov. 23 through the first week in February, with all Rays home games to be played at Sun City Stadium.

Club and league officials said the expansion to Arizona is a part of the

process to bring the league to the national level. Last year, all eight clubs were based in Florida.

The Sun City expansion team, along with two others in California, hopes to add to a circuit peppered with former major league stars.

"It's anything but an old man's league," said Dick Williams, last year's SPBA manager of the year at league runner-up West Palm Beach and a league consultant.

"The brand of baseball we had at the end of the season was quite a bit higher than Triple-A ball today."

Among the SPBA's many former major league stars are Hal McRae, Ferguson Jenkins, Luis Tiant, Cesar Cedeno, George Foster and Bobby Bonds, as well as managers Earl Weaver, Williams and player/manager Graig Nettles.

Jim Morley, league founder and former University of Arizona outfielder, helped bring the franchise to his native Phoenix.

"We want to upgrade the quality of cities we play in," Morley said. "The biggest reason for coming West is it seems the farther away you get from

central Florida, the less people know about the SPBA."

An SPBA team works much like a minor league club, except with a television contract and better player salaries.

The league hopes to expand its deal with cable's Prime Network. Last year, 30 games were televised at a clip of two per week.

Salaries average \$7,000 per month, said Morley, with a \$2,000 minimum and \$15,000 maximum per month.

The team signed a five-year lease for Sun City Stadium.

Sun City gets senior league baseball team

By Leslie S. Polk
THE PHOENIX GAZETTE

Sun City will have a franchise when play begins in December in the revamped Senior Professional Baseball Association, the league announced this morning at news conferences in Sun City and Phoenix.

The Sun City Rays are part of a westward push by the Florida-based league, which has announced a new franchise in San Bernardino, Calif., and is expected to announce a third Western team in Palm Springs, Calif.

A second Valley franchise is possible next year.

Marc Kaplan, a Paradise Valley businessman, will own the Rays.

"I'm involved in business deals every day, and I guess this is a different twist," Kaplan said. "It's very special, very close to my heart. I just love baseball."

Senior baseball made its debut in Florida last year with an eight-team

See ■BASEBALL, Page A10

■ BASEBALL

From A1

league featuring players 35 and older. Catchers, however, could be 32.

Former major leaguers such as Rollie Fingers, Bill Campbell, Jon Matlack and Milt Wilcox attracted media attention to the league.

But business problems plagued the league in its first year, and the eight Florida teams have been consolidated into four teams in St. Petersburg, Fort Meyers, Daytona Beach and West Palm Beach.

The Rays will play a 56-game schedule, including 28 home games at 5,000-seat Sun City Stadium, beginning in early December. The team will open training camp Nov. 5.

The Rays will be managed by Jim Marshall, manager of the Chicago Cubs from 1974 to 1976 and the Oakland Athletics in 1979. He was a scout recently for a Japanese major league team.

Dave Hilton, former infielder for the San Diego Padres and a minor league hitting instructor for the Philadelphia Phillies, will be the team's top coach.

Kaplan also has hired Tom Kayser, recently a Cincinnati Reds executive, as a consultant.

Kayser has 15 years' experience in the business side of baseball. He said he thinks the league will succeed in the long run, describing the Florida cutbacks as a "natural winnowing-out process."

"Basically, it was bad business practices," he said. "The product is good."

Kayser said all home games will be played during the day, and the league will play a balanced schedule, with all teams playing each other the same number of times.

Officials have begun scouting to fill the Rays' roster of up to 24 players and preparing for the league's draft, to be held next month.

"We have to find and pay our own players," Kayser said.

Although the Sun City park hasn't been used regularly for several years, since the Milwaukee Brewers moved their spring training operations to Chandler, Kayser said it is being refurbished and will be an

exciting place for fans.

"Our product is going to sell itself," he said.

Local television and radio broadcasts are possible, but no deals have been made, Kayser said. The league has a contract with the Prime Ticket Network for nationally televised games. Prime Ticket is carried in the Valley on Dimension Cable.

Box seats will cost \$6 and general admission will be \$4, with a 50-cent discount for senior citizens and children. Season tickets will range from \$168 to \$112, or \$150 to \$98 with the discount, and will include a parking pass. Parking for individual games will cost \$1.

While officials hope to draw fans from across the Valley, they acknowledge that the northwest Valley — the Sun cities, Glendale and Peoria — will form the core of fan support.

Kaplan, 33, who owns Health and Nutrition Laboratories and several other marketing and real estate businesses, said it has been his dream to own a professional team.

A native of Cleveland, Kaplan has been in the Valley eight years. He said he expects to lose money the first year but expects success after that.

Kaplan says the team needs to draw 1,800 to 2,000 fans a game to break even.

While some games in Florida last year drew that many fans, many drew just a few hundred.

But Kaplan said the bad markets are gone, and the league only can improve.

"You don't look at this strictly as a business deal," he said. "It's a speculative venture. And Sun City deserves to have professional baseball. There's been a lot of excitement."

Kaplan, who vows to sign some big-name players, said Arizona has more former major league players as residents than any other state.

"There will be some very well-known players," he said.

SC softball player bound for Europe

By WALTER L. DOZIER
Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Charles McKasson, the second baseman for the Amazing 60's softball team from the Sun Cities, is on his way to Europe to play softball.

The 62-year-old Sun Citian has been selected to a seven-team Senior Softball-USA group that will play softball games against local teams from England, the Netherlands, Belgium and France.

The Softball-USA teams are made up of players 50 and older from Arizona, Hawaii, California, Texas, Washington, Oklahoma, Iowa, Michigan, Indiana, Colorado and Florida.

McKasson will play for the Southern California Rancheros team.

"I'm real excited about it," McKasson said of his selection. "I think the tour will be a fun thing."

McKasson, who has been to Europe on four other occasions, said he learned of the tour in Senior-USA's publication, "Senior Softball News."

He said he submitted his name last May to Bob Mitchell, Senior Softball-USA founder, at a senior softball tournament in Reno, Nev.

The purpose of the Senior Softball-USA tour is to promote

and demonstrate senior softball throughout the world. Last year Senior-USA softball teams competed against players in New Zealand.

"Every year I put on an international tournament," said Mitchell, who is vice-president of Senior Softball World Series Inc.

On Sept. 29 in Greensboro, N.C., Senior Softball World Series will be hosting its first World Series. Senior softball teams from across the country and Canada will participate in the series.

"We're promoting senior softball in other countries," Mitchell said.

"We select players from all over the United States. They're selected for their compatibility as well as their ability," Mitchell said. But, "I don't care how good a player is; we don't take any troublemakers."

Mitchell said he has already set up a softball tour for 1990 that will take U.S. teams to Australia and New Zealand.

The cost of this year's European tour is \$2,150 a person. Players and their spouses will fly to London on Oct. 2. A three-day tournament against seven French teams in Paris will be Oct. 14 through Oct. 16.



Daily News-Sun photo by Frances Guarino

WATCH OUT — Charles McKasson of Sun City avoids being hit by an oncoming softball while practicing earlier this week at Del Webb Field in Sun City West. McKasson, of the Amazing 60's softball team, will travel to Europe in October to play on an international team.

Sun City softball tourney draws 14 teams

Daily News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Fourteen teams from Sun City, Peoria, Surprise, El Mirage, Phoenix and Wick-enburg have entered the Men's Slow-Pitch Softball Classic, which starts tonight at Sun City Stadium, 13440 N. 111th Ave.

The tournament will be played under a double-elimination format and will last until Wednesday night, when the title game will be played.

Tonight's first game starts at

6 p.m.

Admission is free.

The 14 teams in the tournament are the El Mirage Thunderbirds, the Peoria Enforcers, Los Compadres of Phoenix, the El Mirage Bandits, the El Mirage Devils, the Phoenix Rics, Enterprise of El Mirage, the El Mirage/Surprise Dodgers, the Questionnaires, Team Ortiz, the Phoenix Sons of Thunder, Wick-enburg, the Sun City Fire Department and the Peoria Odds

and Ends, the only co-ed team in the tournament.

The first game is the El Mirage Thunderbirds vs. the Phoenix Sons of Thunder.

Trophies will be awarded to the top three finishers.

Original plans called for the teams to pay an entry fee of \$150 apiece, but Bob Atkinson, one of the three stadium owners, said Wednesday the group waived the cost on Monday to attract more teams to the tour-

nement.

Atkinson owns the stadium along with Marv Harper and Bill Bolick.

Atkinson said there will be three games played every night during the week and up to six games each on Saturday and Sunday. Games start at 6 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. on Saturday and noon on Sunday. Gates open one hour before game time.

Each game will be limited to seven innings, Atkinson said.

The three stadium owners last week announced plans to hold the tournament.

Atkinson said the group decided to take advantage of a 10-day break in the Men's Senior Baseball League to host the Classic.

The league is playing a 55-game schedule at the stadium, which was bought, refurbished and reopened earlier this year by Atkinson, Harper and Bolick.

Atkinson said the Classic is part of the owners' plans to bring different events to the stadium, which was once the spring training site of the Milwaukee Brewers baseball club.

"We intend to learn from this so the next tournament or event will be better," Atkinson said. "We intend to have a second men's fast-pitch tournament next year. And there are going to be other softball tournaments this year."

1989 Men's Senior Baseball League

July schedule

All games at Sun City Stadium

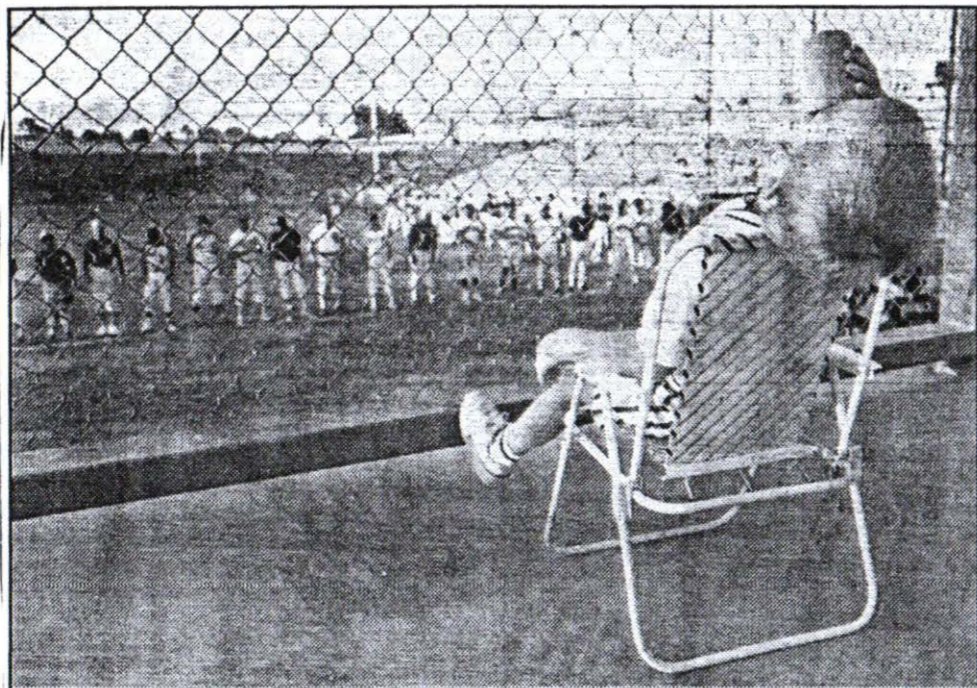
Cost \$1

- July 19: Twins vs. Tigers, 7 p.m.
- July 20: Mets vs. Dodgers, 7 p.m.
- July 23: Athletics vs. Twins, 9:30 a.m.
- July 24: Cubs vs. Giants, 7 p.m.
- July 25: Brewers vs. Twins, 7 p.m.
- July 26: Cubs vs. Cardinals, 7 p.m.
- July 27: Astros vs. Mets, 7 p.m.

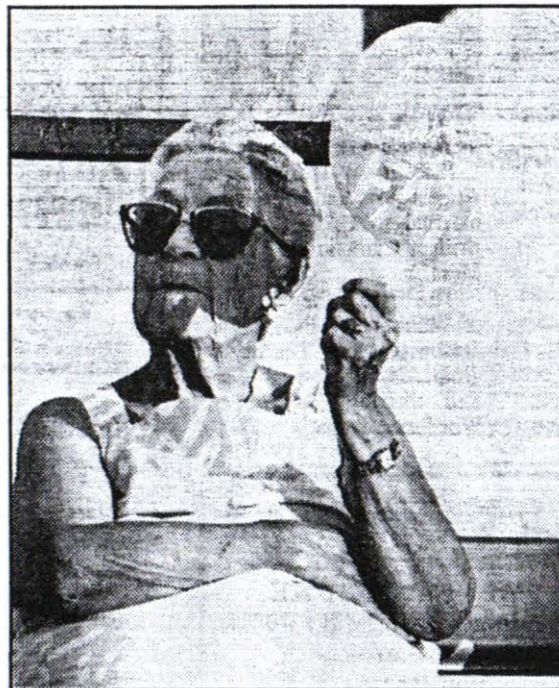
PLAY BALL! The sound of cracking bats, cheering crowds and hot dog vendors are once again filling the walls of the Sun City Stadium. Recently purchased by three Glendale businessmen, the stadium reopened earlier this month and for the remainder of summer will serve as the site for the Valley's Men's Senior Baseball League (players over the age of 30). The July 12 game featured a contest between the Red Sox and the Indians.

Bret McKeand/Independent





Taylor Saban, 4, of Phoenix enjoys a cool drink and a great seat. The July 4th heat drove spectators to the concession stand, where the refreshments flowed for the first time since 1985.



Perhaps the staunchest fan in the stadium, Alice Mesick stored all its trophies while the facility was closed.

Baseball returns to Sun City but in over-30 style

For more than four years, the return of baseball to Sun City Stadium seemed to be a dream that was out in left field.

The dream came true on the Fourth of July, when the Men's Senior League played its all-star game at the stadium at Grand and 111th avenues. The nationwide, recreational baseball league is composed of 800 teams whose players

are age 30 or older.

About 1,200 people turned out to watch the American League beat the National League, 17-11.

"We were extremely surprised at the turnout because of the temperature," said Bob Atkinson, one of three men who took over the stadium June 1 in a \$2 million lease-purchase agreement.

The temperature on July 4 was

almost hotter than a firecracker — 118 degrees officially recorded by the National Weather Service at Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix. The heat drove thirsty spectators to the concession stand, where the soda and lemonade flowed for the first time since 1985.

That year, the Milwaukee Brewers held their last spring training at Sun City Stadium, and then the

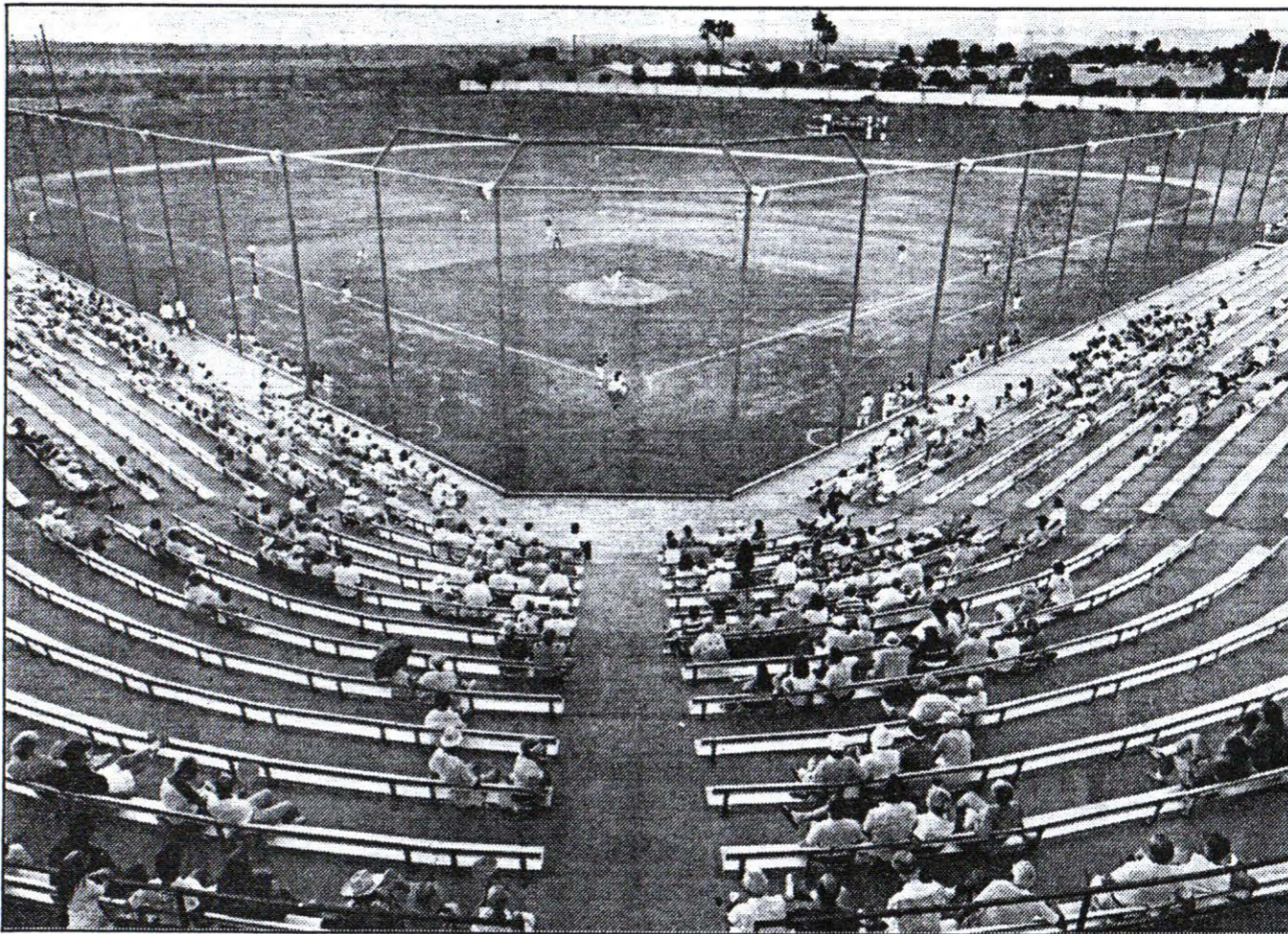
stadium was closed.

Atkinson and his partners, William Bolick and Marvin Harper, plan plenty of activity there.

A schedule of Men's Senior League games is expected to be available this week at the stadium and at area bank offices. The league's World Series is planned for Oct. 8-15 at the stadium.

*The Day Republic
July 19, 1989*

About 1,200
people turned
out to watch the
Men's Senior
League all-star
game as Sun City
Stadium
reopened on the
Fourth of July.



Barrett Stinson/The Arizona Republic

Seniors meet in slugfest

Catcher critical to All-Star victory

By VERONICA GREENWELL
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Bill Raney had only one hit in the 2nd Annual Men's Senior League All-Star Game Tuesday night at Sun City Stadium, but it was enough to help lift the American League All-Stars to a 19-11 victory over the National League All-Stars.

Raney, who plays for the Red Mountain Indians, hit a 3-run home run in the top of the sixth inning to break open the game for the American League squad. The American League team had a slim 9-7 lead before Raney blasted a 390-foot shot over the right-field wall.

— From B1
got here. I thought I would have an easy night."

The key inning for the American League actually came in the fifth, when the team scored seven runs to go up 9-7. The AL all-stars added one more run in the sixth after Raney's home run, four more in the seventh

The 33-year-old catcher also caught the entire 3-hour, 15-minute ballgame after the second American League all-star catcher, Randy Harper, pulled out of the game because of an injury.

For his defensive and offensive efforts, Raney was named the game's Most Valuable Player.

Raney's home run, which scored Kenny Williams and Sonny Santiago of the Sun City A's, came off of Dave Watson of the Peoria Padres, who took the loss.

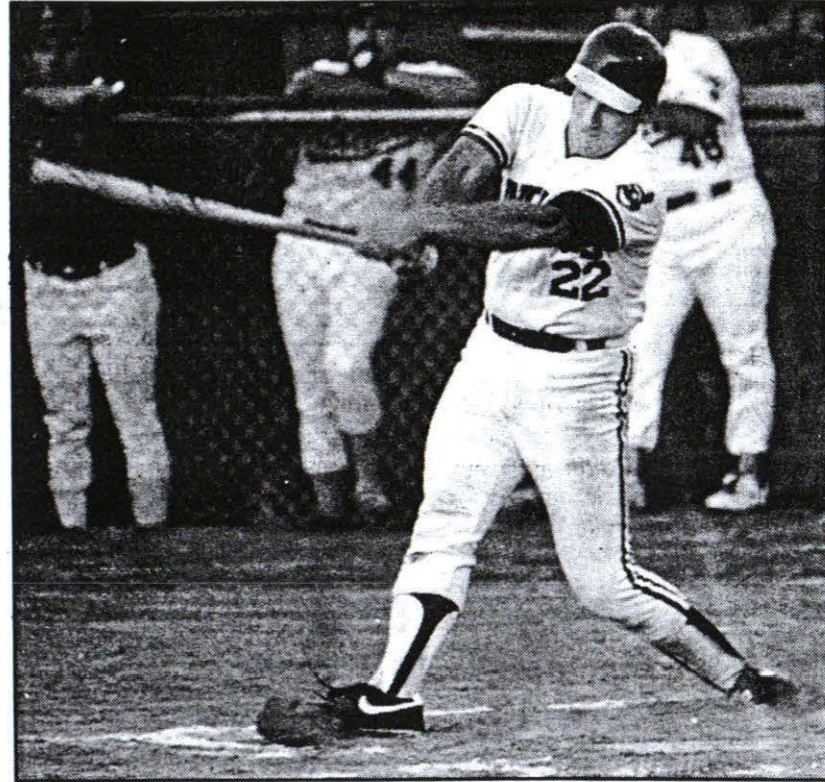
Raney said he didn't know he would have to catch the whole game until he got to the park.

"I anticipated catching only four innings," Raney said. "I didn't learn about Randy until I See Senior, B2

and two more in the ninth.

The winning pitcher was Brian Coveney of the Arizona Angels, who pitched from the third to the fifth innings.

A crowd of 1,200 people withstood temperatures near 120 degrees to watch the all-stars play at the newly renovated stadium.



News-Sun photo by Patrick Knight

ALL-STAR MVP — Bill Raney of Chandler was named the Most Valuable Player in Tuesday night's Men's Senior Baseball League All-Star Game. Raney was the catcher for the American League squad.

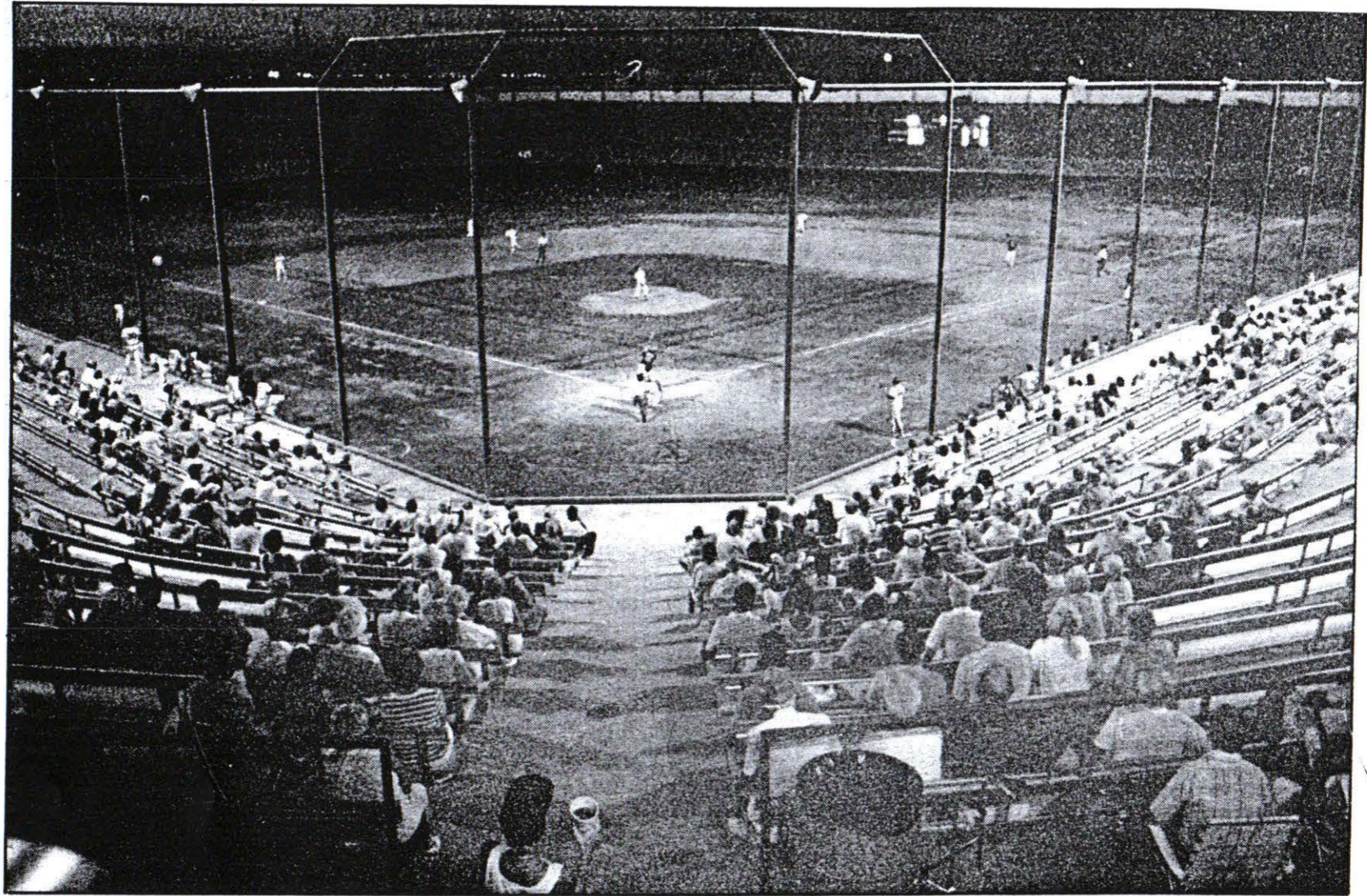
Terry Van Gundy, president of the Men's Senior Baseball League, said the players from both squads were "ecstatic" about the large crowd.

"It brought out the little kids in many of them," said Van Gundy, who also pitched one inning for the Cactus Cubs of the National League. "It was a

good turnout considering the hot weather."

Tuesday's game was the first of 56 games the Men's Senior Baseball League plans to play this year at the stadium, which was bought on June 1 by Bob Atkinson, Marvin Harper and Bill Bolick of Glendale.

OVER

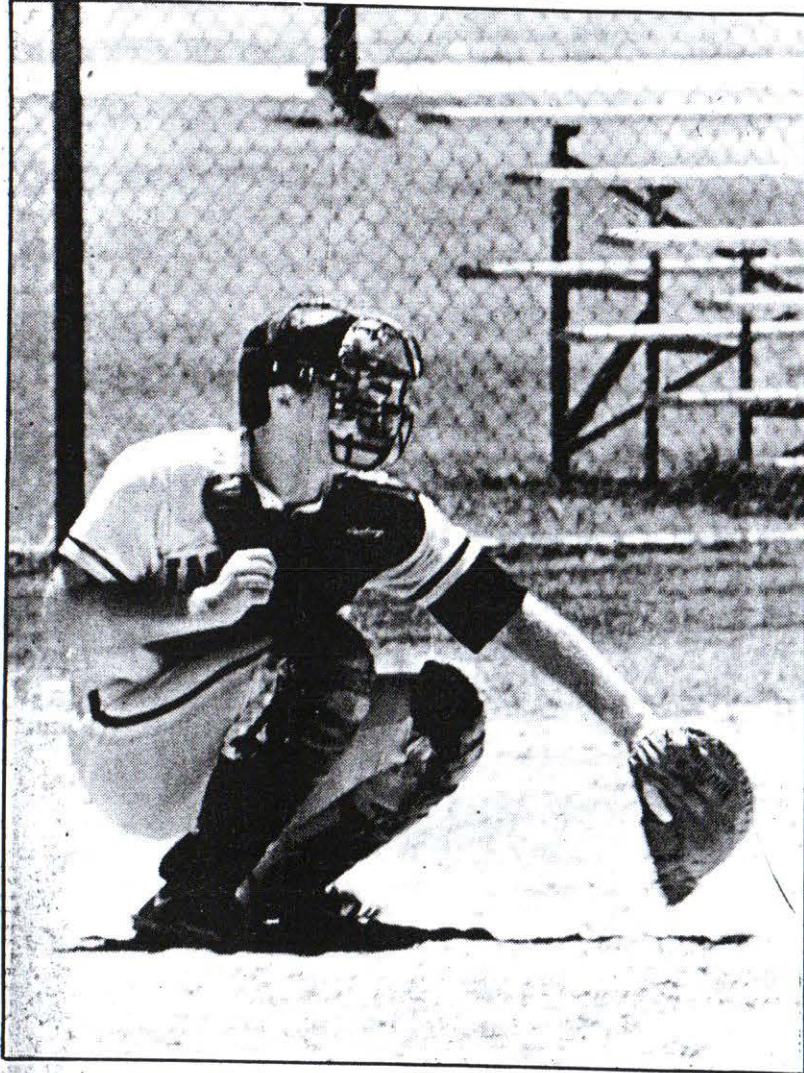


News-Sun photo by Patrick Knight

ALL-STAR CROWD — An estimated 1,200 fans turned out for the 2nd Annual All-Star Game of the Men's Senior Baseball League of Phoenix at Sun City Stadium Tuesday

night. The game marked the reopening of the stadium, which was recently bought and renovated by three Glendale businessmen.

All-Star game will be played in Sun City



BASEBALL ALL-STAR — Catcher Bill Rainey of Phoenix prevents a pitch from getting by him in a recent game of the Phoenix Men's Senior Baseball League. Rainey will play in the 1989 All-Star Game Tuesday night in Sun City.

By VERONICA GREENWELL
News-Sun staff

SUN CITY — Get a group of middle-aged men with an undying love for baseball together, give them some equipment and major-league uniforms to play in and a field to play on, and you've got the Men's Senior Baseball League.

You've also got a formula for success, as seen by the league's phenomenal growth in just two years.

Last year, the league, which was started in Long Island, N.Y., in 1987, went national and attracted 200 teams in 20 leagues. League figures indicate that this year, the league has almost quadrupled in size with more than 12,000 men playing on 700 teams in 77 cities across the United States, Canada, the Virgin Islands and the Dominican Republic.

One of the leagues is in Phoenix, and it will play its 1989 All-Star Game 7 p.m. Tuesday at the newly renovated Sun City Stadium, 111th and Grand avenues.

Like the other leagues across the country, the Phoenix league is growing at an incredible rate. The Phoenix organization was started last year with eight teams. There are 14 teams in the league this year and the number is expected to increase to 20 next year, says Bill Dugan of Phoenix, vice president of the Phoenix Men's Senior Baseball League.

Dugan, who plays for the Red Mountain Indians, said having a nationwide amateur baseball league for men older than 30 is "a can't-miss idea."

"Most males in America are raised and taught to think that baseball is the best game," Dugan said. "So when they learn they can play baseball again, they say, 'Great,' and they sign up."

But even Dugan, who along with Terry Van Gundy of Mesa started the Phoenix league in 1988, has been surprised by the league's popularity.

"I never expected the turnout we had last year or this year," Dugan said.

The league is open to any man who is at least 30 years old and interested in playing baseball. Each player pays a registration fee plus the cost of a uniform, which the player keeps. The uniforms are exactly like those worn by major-league ballplayers.

The team names, rules and field dimensions are also the same as those in Major League Baseball. There's even an off-season draft and trades are made.

The league ends its season with a national World Series.

The league, which is divided into a National League and an American League, uses the designated hitter.

The man who started the Men's Senior Baseball League is

Steve Sigler, a 40-year-old comptroller from Jericho, N.Y.

Even though he wasn't good enough for the major leagues, Sigler wanted to continue playing baseball. A few years ago, he began organizing a league in the Long Island area and encouraged others who felt like he did to join up.

Sigler's idea solicited an overwhelming response and in 1987, the Men's Senior Baseball League began official play with 17 teams in Long Island. The next year, leagues were being started across the country.

Dugan and Van Gundy launched a league in the Valley after getting in touch with Sigler through a newspaper advertisement.

At the Phoenix league's first organizational meeting a year ago, there were enough players to field eight teams.

Gary Goldberg of Phoenix was one of the first players to sign up. Goldberg, an outfielder for the Arrowhead Astros, has been chosen to play in Tuesday's All-Star game. He also played in the 1988 All-Star Game.

Goldberg, a 32-year old anesthesiologist, said he had last played baseball 13 years ago in high school. He said he was surprised how quickly he picked up the game when he resumed playing last year.

"I never imagined I would be playing baseball at this point in my life," said Goldberg, who had

been playing softball until he learned about the Men's Senior Baseball League. "The competition and the game itself have always been fun for me. I've made a ton of friends and it's also a good release from work."

Goldberg said he plans to play as long as he's physically capable.

"This has been a ton of fun for me. I plan to play into my late 40s," he said.

Watching Gary from the stands Tuesday night will be his parents, Marvin and Lee Goldberg of Sun City West.

For the 45-year-old Dugan, the Men's Senior Baseball League is an idea he's been waiting for for many years.

"I wish it had been around 15 years ago," said Dugan, who was once recruited as an infielder by the Detroit Tigers and the Houston Astros. "I had thought about forming a league like this for many years but I could never get it off the ground."

Now that he's playing baseball once more, Dugan said he'll play "until he drops."

"I have always loved baseball," Dugan said. "I played it in Little League and in junior college. I love the game and this is a chance to be a little kid again."

•••

Those interested in signing up to play in the Men's Senior Baseball League may call 464-9102.

Del E. Webb's

SENIOR SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT

Sun Cities Independent

• Special Supplement •

Page 1

Top teams gear up for senior softball tournament

The Sun Cities Amazing 60s will try to defend their title this week as they take to the field for the third annual Del E. Webb Senior Invitational Softball Tournament.

The tournament, under the sponsorship of Del E. Webb Communities, will be played March 11-13 in Sun City West and will include some of the finest senior softball teams in the nation.

Open to players 60 years of age and over, the tournament will be played at the Del E. Webb Softball Complex, located on Grand Avenue, just north of the Meeker Boulevard entrance to Sun City West. All games are open to the public and there is no admission charge.

Action begins 7:30 a.m. Friday, March 11. The Amazing 60s take to the field for the first time 12:10 p.m. that day against the Sacramento Gold.

Games are played Friday and Saturday and the finals will be played on Sunday. Semi-final berths are determined by records compiled Friday and Saturday.

The Amazing 60s is comprised of players from Sun City and Sun City West. Manager Bob Vosbrinck says his team, winners of last year's event, is geared up to face some of the toughest teams in the country.

"It should be a real good tournament," he says. "We've got some real good teams and

they're probably going to be probably going to us (the Amazing 60s)."

Included in this year's tournament are:

- the Sacramento Gold, winners of the Del Webb tournament in 1986 and second-place finishers in the 1987 Scottsdale Senior Softball Tournament.

- Renton Merchants, from Renton, Wash., who finished second in the 1987 Las Vegas Senior Softball Tournament.

- Sacramento Braves, who finished second in the 1987 Long Beach Softball Tournament and second in the 1987 World Invitational Tournament.

The Amazing 60s, however, are coming off one of their better years. In 1987 the team entered nine tournaments, winning two of them and finishing second twice and fourth twice.

"We should be in the top six," says Mr. Vosbrinck. "I'm expecting us to perform well in front of the home crowd."

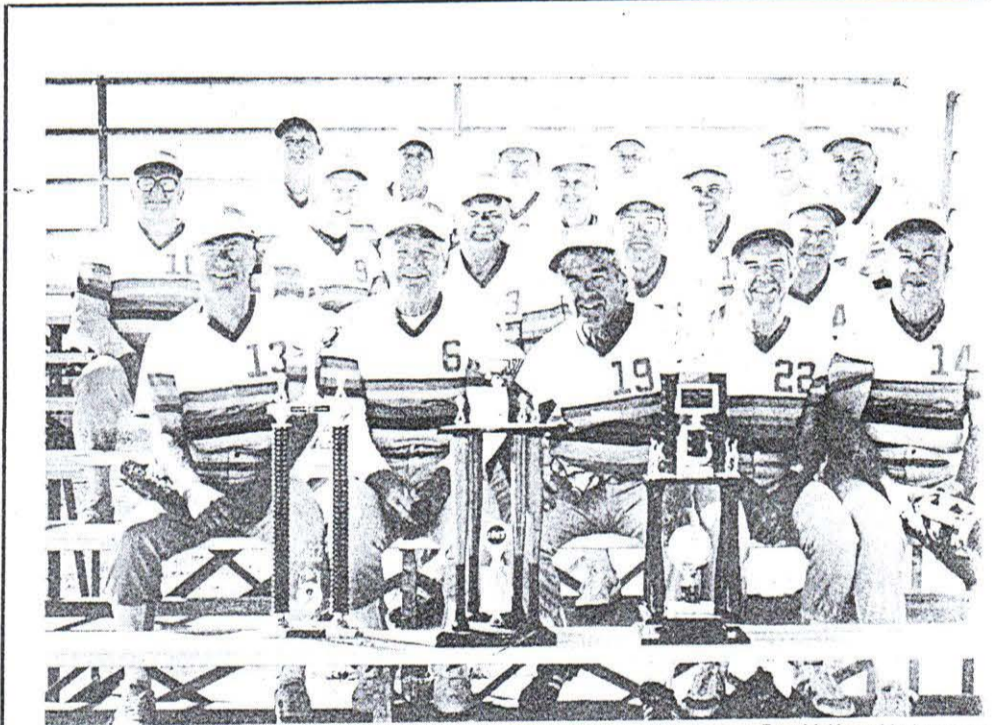
The Amazing 60s were formed in 1983 as an offshoot of the Sun Cities Senior Softball League. The team consists of 25 players and those who are not playing for the 60s often play for the Swiftly 60s, a sort of "back-up team" for the Amazing 60s.

During the tournament, the Swiftly 60s will play several exhibition games at

Three-Star Field in Surprise.

This year's version of the Amazing 60s should be a slight improvement over last year's, says Mr. Vosbrinck.

"We have four new players right at the age of 60 that give us some added power and speed," he says.



Bret McKeand/Independent

THE HOME TEAM -- the Sun Cities Amazing 60s: From left to right, front row: Bud Lerren, Al Dewhurst, Dick Martin, Larry Sullivan, Duncan Jewel; second row: Chet Lasken, Chuck McKasson, E. Millsagel; third row: Red Thomas, Joe Simmons, Axel Olson, Ev Kauffman, Bob Vosbrinck; back row: Don Goble, Gene Carara, Bob Rentner, Ray Keller, Ralph Snyder.

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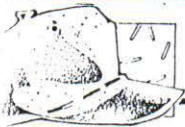
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National Division

1. Renton Merchants, Wash.
2. **Amazing 60s**
3. Sacramento, Calif., Gold
4. Houston, Texas, Reds
5. La Mesa, Calif., Seniors

American Division

1. Ellis Classics Chico, Calif., Seniors
2. Albuquerque, N.M., Dukes
3. San Diego, Calif., Seniors
4. Sacramento, Calif., Mavericks
5. Lakewood, Colo., Tigers

Tournament Schedule

FRIDAY, MARCH 11

- 7:30 a.m., Sacramento, Calif., Braves vs Lakewood, Colo.
- 8:40 a.m., Dukes, N.M., vs San Diego, Calif.
- 9:50 a.m., Renton, Wash., vs LaMesa, Calif.
- 11 a.m., San Diego, Calif. vs Chico, Calif.
- 12:10 p.m., Sun Cities 60s vs Sacramento, Calif. Gold
- 1:20 p.m., Renton, Wash. vs Houston, Texas
- 2:30 p.m., Lakewood, Colo. vs Chico, Calif.
- 3:40 p.m., Sacramento, Calif. Gold vs Houston, Texas

SATURDAY, MARCH 12

- 7:30 a.m., LaMesa vs Sacramento Gold
- 8:40 a.m., Dukes vs Lakewood
- 9:50 a.m., Sacramento Gold vs Renton
- 11 a.m., LaMesa vs Sun Cities 60s
- 12:10 p.m., Dukes vs Chico
- 1:20 p.m., Sacramento Braves vs San Diego
- 2:30 p.m., Sun Cities 60s vs Houston
- 3:40 p.m., Sacramento Braves vs Chico

SUNDAY, MARCH 13

- 7:30 a.m., Houston vs LaMesa
- 8:40 a.m., Renton vs Sun Cities 60s
- 9:50 a.m., Sacramento Braves vs Dukes
- 11 a.m., San Diego vs Lakewood
- 12:10 p.m., quarter finals
- 1:20 p.m., quarter finals
- 2:30 p.m., semi finals
- 3:40 p.m., semi finals
- 4:50 p.m., finals

Amazing 60s Team Roster

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 -- Vince Hoffman | 8 -- Norm Dermody | 15 -- Bob Vosbrinck |
| 2 -- Gene Carara | 9 -- Joe Simmons | 16 -- Axel Olson |
| 3 -- Chet Laskin | 10 -- Red Thomas | 17 -- Chuck Riffle |
| 4 -- Bob Millslagel | 11 -- Ev Kouffman | 18 -- Charles McKeasson |
| 5 -- Don Goble | 12 -- Roscoe Henry | 19 -- Dick Martin |
| 6 -- Allen Dewhurst | 13 -- Bud Herren | 20 -- Bob Rentnor |
| 7 -- Ray Keller | 14 -- Duncan Jewell | 21 -- Ralph Snyder |



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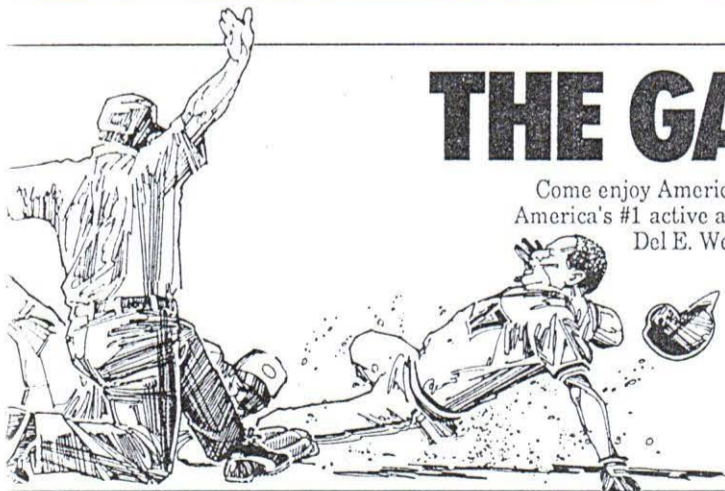
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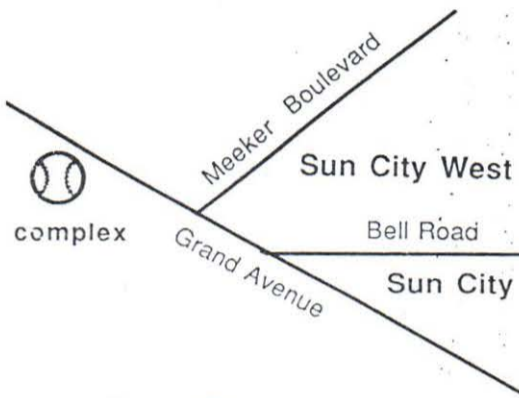


SENIOR SOFTBALL TOURNAMENT



Amazing 60s shortstop Ev Kauffman

Del E. Webb Softball Complex



Tournament: March 11-13

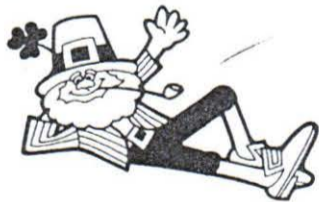
Admission: Free

Sponsor: Del E. Webb Communities, Inc.

Field Dimensions: Outfield fence is 240 feet from home plate.

Refreshments: A refreshment stand will be available. All proceeds will be used to purchase uniforms for the Amazing 60s.

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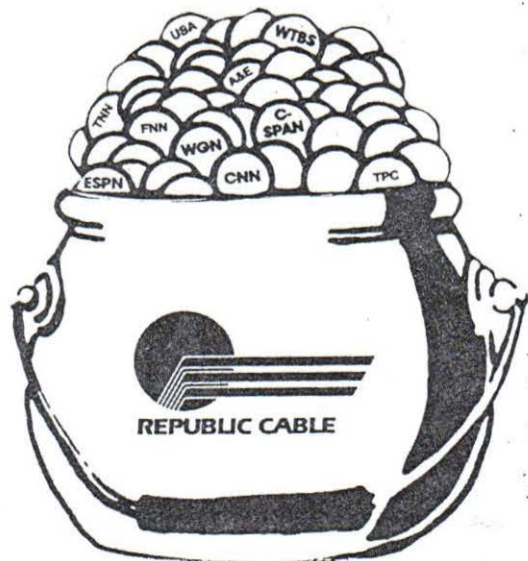


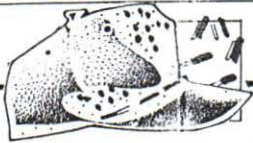
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- **California Angels** -- Angels Stadium, Sunrise Way at Berristo, Palm Springs, Calif. (714-999-8900). Training camp: Gene Autry Park, 4125 E. McKellips, Mesa (until March 16), (830-4137).
- **Chicago Cubs** -- 964-4467.
- **Cleveland Indians** -- Hi Corbett Field, 900 S. Randolph Way, Tucson (881-5710).
- **Milwaukee Brewers** -- 821-2200.
- **Oakland Athletics** -- 275-0500.
- **San Diego Padres** -- Desert Sun Stadium, Avenue A at 35th Avenue, Yuma (726-6040).
- **San Francisco Giants** -- 994-5123.
- **Seattle Mariners** -- 438-8900.

SCHEDULE

(All games 1 p.m. unless noted)

Wednesday, March 9

California at Chicago (NL), Oakland at San Francisco, San Diego at Milwaukee, Cleveland at Seattle.

Thursday, March 10

Chicago (NL) at San Francisco, San Diego at Oakland, Seattle at Milwaukee, California at Cleveland.

Friday, March 11

Oakland at Chicago (NL), San Francisco at Seattle, California at Milwaukee, San Diego at Cleveland.

Saturday, March 12

San Diego at San Francisco, Milwaukee at Chicago (NL) Cleveland (ss) at Oakland (ss), California at Seattle, Oakland (ss) at Cleveland (ss).

Sunday, March 13

Seattle at Chicago (NL), San Diego at Milwaukee, San Francisco at Oakland, California at Cleveland.

Monday, March 14

San Diego at San Francisco, Cleveland (ss) at Chicago (NL), Cleveland (ss) at Milwaukee, California at Seattle.

Tuesday, March 15

California at San Francisco, Chicago (NL) at Oakland, San Diego at Seattle, Cleveland at Milwaukee, Chicago (NL) at Seattle, 7 p.m.

Wednesday, March 16

San Diego at Chicago (NL), Milwaukee at San Francisco (ss), California at Oakland, San Francisco (ss) at Cleveland.

Thursday, March 17

Chicago (NL) (ss) at Milwaukee (ss), San Diego at Oakland, Milwaukee (ss) at Seattle, Chicago (NL)(ss) at Cleveland.

Friday, March 18

Oakland at Chicago (NL), San Francisco at Seattle, Milwaukee at California, Cleveland at San Diego, 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 19

Seattle at Chicago (NL), Cleveland at San Diego, Oakland (ss) at San Francisco (ss), Milwaukee at California, Chicago (NL) at Seattle, 7 p.m.

Sunday, March 20

Seattle at Chicago (NL), Milwaukee at San Diego, San Francisco (ss) at Oakland (ss), Oakland (ss) vs San Francisco (ss) at Denver, Cleveland at California.

Monday, March 21

San Francisco at Milwaukee (ss), Milwaukee (ss), at Seattle (ss), Seattle (ss) at Arizona State, Oakland at California, Chicago (NL) at San Diego, 7 p.m.

Tuesday, March 22

Chicago (NL) at San Diego, San Francisco at Seattle, Milwaukee at Cleveland, Oakland at California.

Wednesday, March 23

Oakland at San Diego, Milwaukee at San Francisco, Cleveland at Seattle, Chicago (NL) at California.

Thursday, March 24

Oakland at Chicago (NL), Milwaukee at Cleveland, San Francisco at California, Seattle at San Diego, 7 p.m.

Friday, March 25

Chicago (NL) at Milwaukee, Cleveland at Oakland, Seattle at San Diego, San Francisco at California.

Saturday, March 26

Chicago (NL) at Milwaukee, Oakland at Cleveland, San Francisco at San Diego, Seattle at California.

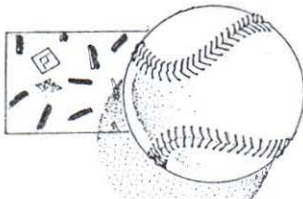
Sunday, March 27

Chicago (NL) at San Francisco, Cleveland at Milwaukee, Oakland at Seattle, San Diego at California.

Monday, March 28

Seattle at Milwaukee, Chicago (NL) at Cleveland, San Diego at California, San Francisco at Oakland, 6:30 p.m.

Amazing 60s pitcher Don Goble



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Sun City Extra

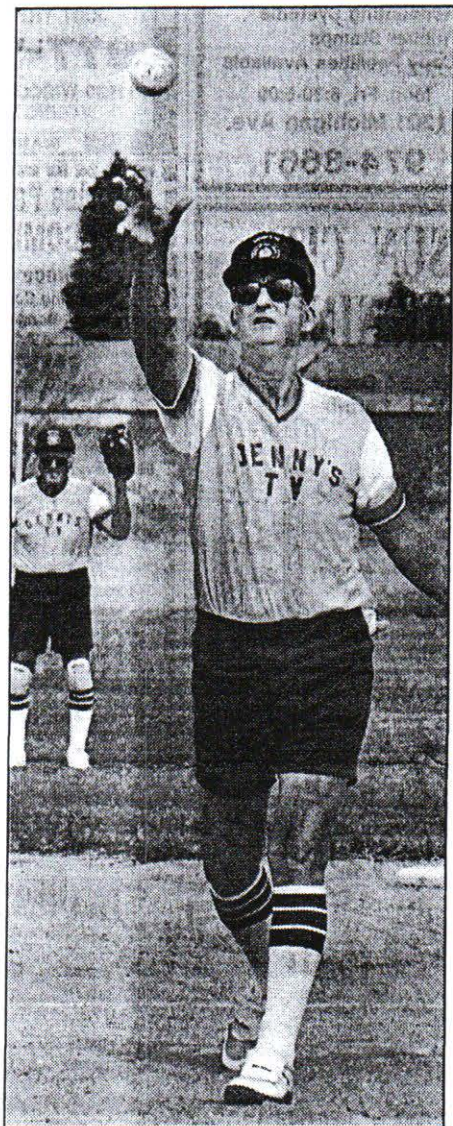
THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1987 NW



Charles Krejcsi/The Arizona Republic

Senior ball

John Berning of Thunderbird Travel (above) digs hard for a ground ball during a Sun City Senior Softball game in a 200-seat park at Grand Avenue and Meeker Boulevard. Nine teams are participating in the league's 10th season for players 50 and over. The 18-game fall league began Oct. 20. Pitcher Don Goble (right) of Denny's TV exhibits good form in his release. The 63-year-old, a five-year resident of Sun City West, has been pitching in the league for about six years. Taking a healthy swing is Don Kuchard of Thunderbird Travel. Because Sun City West is growing so fast, there's hope that a 10th team will be formed by next spring. By the start of the 1988 fall season, games will move to a new field being built at Stardust and R.H. Johnson.



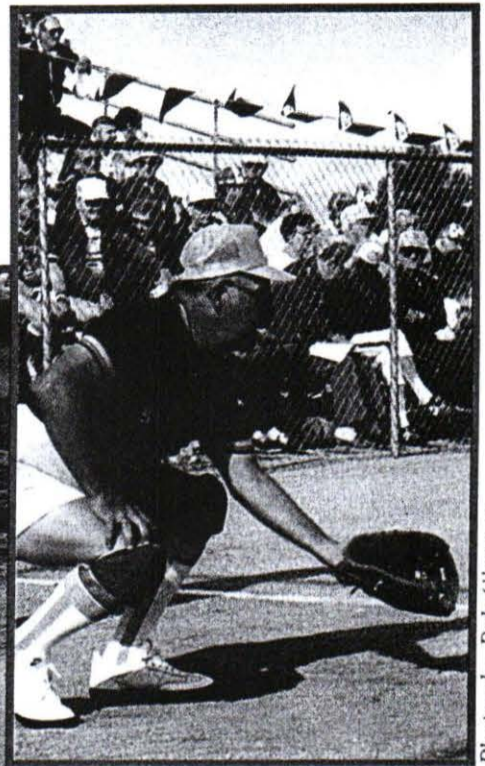


DICK HERZER up to bat.

**PLAY
BALL!**



AXEL OLSON hustling to third.



BOB MILLSLAGEL receiving.

Photos by Don Johnson

Sun Cities Senior Softball League

By Robert Vosbrinck

In spring, young boys' fancies turn to... that all-American favorite pastime, baseball!

But in the communities of Sun City and Sun City West, it is fall that brings out the boy in 112 retired men, ranging in age from 55 to 74. The years literally slip away as these members of the Sun Cities Senior Softball League condition themselves with running and stretching exercises in preparation for a vigorous 42-game season.

Not yet 10 years old, the League's auspicious beginnings were the result of a letter to then-vice president of public relations for the Webb firm, Jerry Svendsen (now publisher of *Sun Cities Life*). "Does Sun City have a senior softball team we could challenge?" inquired a Sacramento, California, league official. Svendsen responded that there wasn't, but at the same time requested information and assistance toward establishing one. Within months, PR associate Dave Samp and a resident organizing committee—Hank Anemone, Gene Downing, Tom Eastburn, Milt Radesky and Andy Wagner—had formed the Sun Cities

Senior Softball League.

Today, enthusiasts can watch the action taking place 9 a.m. Tuesdays and Thursdays at the beautiful Del E. Webb Field in Sun City West. What age has deprived these players in terms of speed, they more than make up for with drive, enthusiasm and desire. Few fans can deny the heady excitement of Ralph Snyder's home run "blasts"—like a rocket. Or the practiced knuckleball of pitcher Don Goble. Or the all-around good hitting, good arm, good fielding of Ev Kouffman.

The Amazing 60's Softball Team evolved out of the League specifically for seniors 60 and over who, like those mentioned above, wished to play softball at a higher level of competition. Amazing 60's members play in various softball tournaments throughout the country, including recent trips to Hawaii, Colorado and Las Vegas.

Despite this ready avenue for more spirited sport, special playing rules have been established to ensure that ALL League players be an integral member of the team. For instance, each player must both bat in his



THE SUN CITIES SENIOR SOFTBALL LEAGUE proves that age is no deterrant to stamina and enthusiasm.

regular turn and play a minimum of half a game on defense. Also, official rules of softball have been somewhat revised to provide maximum safety for players: sliding is prohibited; colliding with a fielder results in the runner being called out; and there is no tag at home plate (if the ball beats the runner to the plate, the runner is out).

The League is governed by a Board of Directors who diligently maintain its efficient and productive opera-

tion. Entering its ninth year, the League's eight teams are sponsored by local businesses and Del E. Webb Communities, Inc. Additionally, the League receives financial assistance through events generated by an active Ladies Auxiliary—fall and spring picnics, and an Awards Dinner Dance the night before the start of the season (October 19, this year).

But it's the second week in March that provides the height of interest and activity. Teams from throughout



OF THE MORE than 100 League members, 17 are over 70 years of age. Pictured above are 14 of them. the western states converge on Sun City West to participate in the Del E. Webb Invitational Senior Softball Tournament, with the Amazing 60's serving as hosts. Amid this flurry of balls and bats, League

members best live up to their slogan: "Enjoyment, Exercise, Comradship."

Anyone desiring further information about the League may contact President Don Goble, 584-4453.

Former Saints start new softball team

By **STEVEN SEXTON**
Sports Editor

PHOENIX—Starting in June, nine former members of the Sun City Saints will be playing against fast-pitch softball teams in the Copperstate League in Phoenix.

"We have a team and we are going to be playing," said Marilyn Rau, a veteran player from the once-thriving Saints' organization.

Rau says the team will assume a new name and play its games at Papago Park, Van Buren street and Galvin Parkway (off 56th street), in east Phoenix.

Besides Rau, one of the origi-



MARILYN RAU

nal Saints when the team was formed in 1966, Suzie Gaw is expected to play, with Karmen Booth assuming the coaching responsibilities. Rau declined to state the other players or the team's new name.

Rau's statement ends speculation regarding the status of some of the Saints' players and

the future of the team.

The Saints qualified for the 1985 Sports Festival in Baton Rouge, La., starting July 26 by placing fourth in the national tournament last year. The team was also eligible to compete in the national tournament in August.

Rau says the new team hopes to play in the national tournament and indicated the former Saints are excited about competition among Copperstate squads this summer.

Late last year and as recent as January, it appeared a trip to the 1985 national tournament would not materialize. The Saints had been priced out of

Sun City Stadium, forcing the Saints Booster Club to disband last fall.

In 1984 the Booster club had raised \$40,000 to field the team, but decided to end its support after the stadium's rent was increased from \$1 a year to \$6,000 a month. The rent increase was made by Bade Boyes Partnership of Glendale which bought the stadium from Del E. Webb Development Co. in 1983.

Without financial backing and a home, the Saints were in the process of regrouping.

Gerald Stapley, former Saints general manager and coach, had tried to find a new home and raise funds for the Saints,

but called it quits in late January.

Meanwhile, Booth and some other Saints were working on forming their own team. That effort was culminated this month with the announcement the former Saints would play in the Copperstate League.

During the time Stapley was trying to rebuild the Saints, he said he would have "little problem raising a team" but discovered difficulties in obtaining financial support and a place to play.

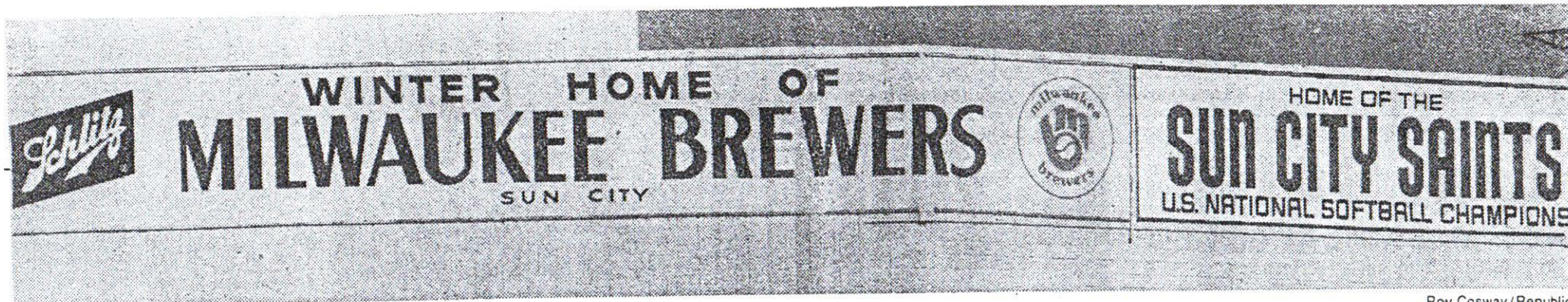
Consequently, Stapley resigned as general manager, adding that he wanted to spend time watching his daughter

play softball on the eastside of the Valley.

Under Stapley's leadership, the Saints had captured a national championship in 1979 and also claimed two runnerup trophies, four thirds and one fourth.

Now, after 18 years in Sun City, the Saints, a team created from the old Phoenix Ramblers, will not be back for another season at Sun City Stadium. A remnant of last year's team has returned to the big city which served as the Ramblers' home for 25 years.

Left behind for residents of the Sun Cities are memories of the past.



Roy Cosway/Republic

The Brewers will return to Sun City Stadium at Grand and 111th avenues in March for their last spring-training session before moving on to a new stadium in Chandler in 1985.

Bases empty: Brewers move to Chandler leaves loyal fans stranded

By Jim Walsh
Northwest Valley Bureau

SUN CITY — Gene Downing, a 65-year old retiree, started playing baseball as a small child with his father.

An injury ended his brief professional career in 1936, but Downing has stayed close to the sport he loves by being an umpire for 37 years.

Despite his age, Downing again will step behind the plate in March when the Milwaukee Brewers return for spring training here.

But Downing's long association with baseball probably will end involuntarily in March 1985, when the Brewers move to Chandler.

Downing is disappointed that he won't be umpiring anymore, but what's worse is that he won't even be able to see his favorite team very much because Chandler is a 100-mile round trip from Sun City.

During his 10 years as a spring-training umpire, Downing developed friendships with many of the Brewers players and coaches. So the distance between Sun City and Chandler also will separate Downing from his friends.

"I guess I'll just have to find something else to do with my time," he said with resignation.

Although most Sun City residents are not as attached to the Brewers as Downing, he said there are probably about 200 rabid fans, many of whom never

miss a game.

Les Hafemeister, "Uncle" John Poja, Joe Davisson and Don Shupe said they and many other Sun City residents also are disappointed about the Brewers' decision to leave.

Hafemeister and Poja are former Milwaukee residents.

"It was like someone stuck a knife in our back," Hafemeister said of the Milwaukee Braves' move to Atlanta for the 1966 season.

The Brewers arrival in Milwaukee for the 1970 season helped satisfy the beer city's baseball cravings, but now that Hafemeister lives in Sun City, he finds a Milwaukee team is leaving him again.

He is not pleased.

"We're all disappointed because we're loyal fans," Hafemeister said.

Poja goes to every Brewers spring-training game but does not get a chance to watch the action very frequently. He said he has more fun hawking souvenirs for the Sun Cities Lions Foundation.

"I don't need to work. I just enjoy the people. I love the people, and I meet lots of them," he said. "I don't like to see (the Brewers) go."

Davisson, manager of the United Bank branch in Sun City West, calls former Brewers manager Harvey Kuenn, a Sun City winter resident, "a long-time

— *Brewers, Extra 7*

Brewers

Continued from Extra 1

customer of mine and a long-time friend."

This will be the 11th year the Brewers will train in Sun City, and when the team moves to Chandler, it will break "the love affair between Sun City, Sun City West and the Brewers," he said. "They're part of our community."

Shupe, a former high school athletic director in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has managed Sun City Stadium for Del E. Webb Development Co. Midwesterners flock to the stadium each spring to spend their vacation with the Brewers, he said.

After it became known in March 1982 that the Brewers were talking with Chandler businessmen about a possible move, "about 50 people a day would ask me if the Brewers were coming back," Shupe said.

"They really look forward to it."

Harry Dalton, the Brewers general manager who is considered among the sharpest executives in the game, said his team has not betrayed its fans.

But while their interests are important, he said, "The primary purpose of spring training is to prepare our team for a 162-game schedule."

Sun City Stadium at Grand and 111th avenues was offered for sale to the Brewers by Webb, but Dalton said it would have been foolish for the team to invest in a facility it would use for only one month each year.

Because Webb was committed to selling the stadium and the new owner might want to use the property for purposes other than baseball, the Brewers started looking for a new training site, Dalton said.

"When your landlord tells you he's going to sell your house, you

"When your landlord tells you he's going to sell your house, you look for another place to live."

— Harry Dalton

look for another place to live," he said.

Chandler aggressively recruited the team and offered a 5- or 10-year lease, an arrangement far preferable to the Brewers than buying the Sun City facility. With Sun City Stadium's future still uncertain, the Brewers signed a letter of agreement with the Chandler group in September.

The Brewers have a contract through 1989 for their minor-league players to train at Peoria's Greenway Sports Complex, less than a mile from Sun City.

Jim Walker, Peoria city manager, said he asked Dalton if the Brewers would be interested in moving major-league spring training to Peoria, but Dalton said he decided against negotiating with Peoria to avoid a bidding match between the two cities, with the Brewers sandwiched between.

Fred Kuentz, president of the Webb firm, said, "We feel very bad about them (the Brewers) leaving, we really do."

Looking back on the events leading to the Brewers' intentions to move, Kuentz said, "I have second thoughts" about the way Webb dealt with the team.

Kuentz said the decision to sell the stadium was made by the company before he became president in April 1982. Webb had lost money on the facility for years, and it was the company's only remain-

ing holding in Sun City. Webb wanted to use all its money to develop Sun City West.

George Reave, who preceded Kuentz as president from April 1982 to April 1983, said the Brewers could have stayed in the stadium under a new owner and did not have to leave Sun City.

"If you sell an office building, it doesn't mean that all the tenants have to move out," he said.

But Reave said the trouble began when the Brewers asked Joe Aubin, Webb's interim president from September 1981 to April 1982, about future lease arrangements and received no response.

Dalton began looking for another stadium "when he didn't get the answers he needed" from Webb, Reave said. "I told Harry that I didn't blame him at all."

Although the company was committed to selling the stadium, Kuentz said he told the Brewers that Webb wanted them to stay. He named Dalton a price for the stadium, but he said it was not Webb's final offer and in the interest of keeping the Brewers in Sun City, would sell the stadium to the team for less than to any other buyer.

Despite Webb's stated intention of making concessions on the purchase price, the Brewers chose Chandler, Kuentz said.

Brewers probably in S.C. another year

By AL REZNIK

If the city of Peoria is to lure the Milwaukee Brewers to its community, it won't happen until 1984.

It might not happen at all, though the next 30 to 60 days will tell the tale.

It is, in fact, all but certain that the Brewers, champions of the American League and one of Major League baseball's outstanding attractions, will conduct spring training one year more than under the prescribed contract; that means the Brewers will be at Sun City Stadium through 1984.

According to George Reeve, president of Del E. Webb

Development Co., all Milwaukee has to do is say "yes" to 1984 and it will be settled. "Dalton (General Manager Harry) has requested a one year extension and I believe it will be honored," said the man who took over Webb reins less than a year ago. "There's nothing to say that we won't go beyond that either," Reeve added. "But whether we do isn't known today, though we aren't far away from settling that issue."

Added Reeve, "To tell you the truth, until recently, there hadn't been any consideration at all to the situation, to what might become of the stadium and clubhouse. And that was

only because Webb management, for whatever the reason, did not address the issue.

"Chances are the reason for that is that our company virtually has little or nothing left to speak of in Sun City. We've moved out, now working hard in Sun City West.

"Now the matter is alive and we have a decision to make. Do we continue to subsidize a facility and program that is a money-loser, especially at this time? Then, again, I believe that when the going is tough, the tough get going; so, the issue isn't settled."

The loss Reeve talks of

aproximates \$50,000 annually, and that's hard to take.

He indicated the annual loss is something that "greatly concerns" the company. "We are interested in finding a way to eliminate it, or to minimize it."

Reeve said the Webb company could charge the Brewers more for stadium rental, admitting he didn't know what the response to that would be, could sell the stadium — "If a buyer would come in, I'd consider it immediately" — secure a tax exemption similar to that enjoyed by other facilities that are municipally-owned —

"believe me, we've tried, but can't get anywhere at all" — secure a minor league franchise — "a Pacific Coast League team could play compatibly with a Major League franchise" — or deed the stadium over to the county.

The stadium, according to Reeve, is valued at about \$1.2 million and, while he could not report the amount of annual taxes, he said it was substantial.

Reeve indicated definite attraction to a Pacific Coast League franchise, further admitting that Albuquerque would be the ideal one. "I'd love to have it happen," he said, adding, "having Vince

Scully (Los Angeles Dodgers' announcer) talk about some young star doing this or that at Sun City would absolutely be great for business.

"I have heard, however," he said, "that Albuquerque has two or three years left on its contract. But, if I had a choice, they'd be it."

Reeve mentioned farm teams from Oakland, the Chicago Cubs, Chicago White Sox and Milwaukee also would be extremely attractive to his firm, the original developers of Sun City and, more recently, builders of Sun City West.

"I'm sure a minor league team would do well. And we

could have the Brewers here or any other team and still keep the Sun City Saints (world-famous women's fastpitch softball team) here."

Reeve said an agreement has been reached for the Saints to use the stadium for another year. "But we've told them that, if we're successful in attracting a PCL team, we'd have to do some schedule reshuffling."

He indicated that "while we have no set plans whatsoever for the next couple of years, we also have no plans to touch the stadium.

"I'm not certain what the Brewers want to do, but I can

tell you I would not be at all surprised that, if the Brewers chose to go to Chandler, or Peoria or any place else, another team would come knocking on the door. And we'd talk to them, just as we'd talk to a potential buyer.

"We certainly do not want that facility to stand empty."

From the sound of it, while the Webb president would not comment directly, it would appear that the ballgame is in the Brewers' park.

Peoria, meanwhile, waits to take over should that, or the game in Chandler, where a feasibility study into stadium construction is current, be canceled.



All-stars set for nationals

The Sun City-Sun City West Senior Softball League All-Stars will be competing in the Senior Citizen National Tournament in Las Vegas Sept. 15-18. The squad includes (front row, left to right) Hank Anemone, Mick McNeal, Milt Radesky (Mgr.).

Don Shupe, Bill Kulakowski, Noel Winfield, (second row) Jack Bowers, Herb Kreppel, Tom Eastburn, Ed Pinter, Ray Todd, Bo Burris, Ray Case, (third row) Dave Hanson, Gene Downing, Ollie Brown, Red Thomas, Carl Staack, Dunc Jewell.

YOU'RE OUT!

Eagle-eye Rose calls 'em behind home plate

By KIM SUE LIA PERKES
Emphasis Editor

Rose Sorace, all 5-feet, 1-inch of her, calls 'em like she sees 'em.

"They disagree with some of my decisions," says the 60-year-old Sun Citian. "I got a lot of teasing like 'kill the ump.'"

But Rose has a good sense of humor and takes all the criticism thrown at her in stride. "I just ignore them," she says.

ROSE NEVER missed umpiring a game during the senior Softball League season.

"I heard they were going to have softball teams," she says, explaining how she acquired her position. "Then I heard they were going to have lady umpires so I decided to be an umpire."

The league started with three women umpires but because two of the women had other commitments which conflicted with game times Rose became the only woman to stand behind the plate.



Rose Sorace

"I played practically all my life," Rose says of the game. "I knew all the rules."

MOTHER of four and grandmother of four, Rose says after each game the winning team would con-

gratulate her on a job well done and the losing team... well, everyone knows the kinds of things a losing team says.

No matter who disagreed with her, there's no disputing that Rose has a big edge over the National and American league umpires—she's popular.

"They (players) all thanked me for doing it," she says, adding that during tournament playoffs, the teams said they didn't want men behind the plate. "They wanted me behind the plate," she says with great pride.

Rose brought her own broom to sweep off the plate to every game and was given a counter to aid in keeping track of outs and the count on the batter.

ROSE MAINTAINS she was out there behind the plate for one reason and one reason alone—to have fun.

"Anybody that wasn't out there for fun should have stayed home. I had a

lot of fun... Everybody had a good time."

The teams made great strides for improvement throughout the season, she says. "It was fantastic how they improved their game from the first week up to the end of the season."

Rose umpired a total of 19 games. She was rewarded for efforts with a trophy given to her by Del E. Webb Development Co. The inscription read "Senior League umpire for your dedication, integrity and excellence."

ROSE SAYS she didn't expect to receive any kind of an award. "I was very surprised and pleased."

Concerning women umpires in the major leagues, Rose says, "I don't see why not; I think a woman could do just as good as a man umpire and I'm not a women's lib person."

It looks as though Rose will be back shoutin' 'em out next season due to popular demand.

"Well, they all told me to have myself available."



Rose Sorace sweeps off home plate with her broom. She umpired a total of 19 games for the Senior Softball League. Mother of four and grandmother of four, she

says she plans to take her place behind the plate again next season.

(News-Sun Photo by Rick Smith)

Senior softballers enjoying practice; six teams expected

By AL REZNIK
Sports Editor

They came in all sizes and shapes, mostly men, and they were enthusiastic.

They were Sun Citians and Sun City Westers, these some 65 men and eight to 10 women who carried gym shoes, sneakers, bats and baseball gloves to Sun City Stadium Monday, for the first practice session of the newly-formed senior softball league.

Forty-five of those who came to toss the ball around and hit a few plunked down their \$5 league membership charge and completed formal application to join up.

THAT brought the total to 81 who've indicated they definitely want to play organized senior softball.

"They've been an enthusiastic group," said program organizer Andy Wagner. "We expect more to show up before the week's practice sessions are over and we hope to be able to form six teams by the end of the week." (The next practice session is 6 p.m. Thursday.)

Wagner said preliminary plans call for 15-player teams with each to have a couple of women on the roster.

It is the hope of the league—the Del E. Webb Development Co. is lending support—that teams

will be of comparable ability. All players must be at least 50 years old.

"WE HAVE a group of people with softball backgrounds evaluating the players," Wagner said, "and it's our aim to make each team as competitive as any other."

Among those on hand this week was Joe Gitlin, one of the first residents of Sun City and who, at 80 years of age, says "I might just come out of 'retirement' to play in this league."

Gitlin, who moved to Sun City in 1960 and who lent his baseball background to a fledgling group which became the Sun City Saints, indicated, "Right now, I'm helping Andy (Wagner) but it looks like I might be able to play this kind of ball. Gitlin recalls he played baseball until he was well into his 50s.

Another who cavorted with some expertise on the stadium infield was 52-year-old former Iowan Lila Gilbert. "I'm having fun," she said. "I can still catch and maybe hit, so why not."

LILA, whose husband, Charles, also is planning to play, brought her baseball glove "that's at least 35 years old" with her. She said she used the same glove in the war years of the 40s when she played

organized hardball in Davenport, Ia. "You know," she said, "the men were away in the service, so we women played ball to

keep the leagues going. "I'm not as quick as I used to be and though I expect to have a few aches and pains, I think this will

be fun." All participants are being asked to sign a waiver holding the Webb Co. and the Sun City Senior Softball

Committee harmless in case of accident or injury. Additional information is available from Wagner at 933-0317.



Andy Wagner, center, discusses softball with an interested candidate as others await their turn to sign up for the new senior softball program. Wagner is one of the prime organizers of the league that hopes to field at

least six teams of 15 players each. Men and women residents of Sun City and Sun City West are urged to attend the 5:30 p.m. practice Thursday, at Sun City stadium. (News-Sun Photo)



John Rybak of Sun City indicates the importance of keeping one's eye on the ball. Rybak was among the some 75 would-be softball players who turned out for fielding and batting practice at Sun City Stadium this week during organization of the senior softball league for Sun City and Sun City West men and women at least 50 years of age. (News-Sun Photo)

Senior softball becomes SC reality

Senior softball is coming to Sun City ... again ... and to Sun City West.

Response to the suggestion that a new slow-pitch softball league for Sun City and SCW be formed has received enthusiastic endorsement, according to the Del E. Webb Development Co.

That suggestion first appeared in Sports Editor Al Reznik's column "This n Data" following conversation with Webb representatives.

IN THE DAYS since that published call to the diamond, more than 75 athletes have come forward to express interest in playing.

As a result, Webb helped form a softball committee which, in turn, has called an informal meeting of Sun City and Sun City West residents for 7 p.m. Monday, in Sun City Stadium.

Slow-pitch softball is what is planned and the meeting will include discussion of rules, equipment, field dimensions and, finally, team formation.

Sun City residents previously played in such a league several years ago. A lack of interest ultimately led to its demise.

ANDY WAGNER, a Sun City resident who worked

with Webb in laying the groundwork for such a league, will chair the meeting. He said he hopes to attract enough people for six to eight 10-player teams.

"The emphasis of the senior softball program will be participation," Wagner said. "Everyone who wants to play will play—and that includes women. The only requirement is that resident players be 50 years of age or older."

Wagner said that every effort will be made to insure that teams will be of comparable ability.

Application for participation will be distributed at the organizational meeting. There will be a \$5 membership

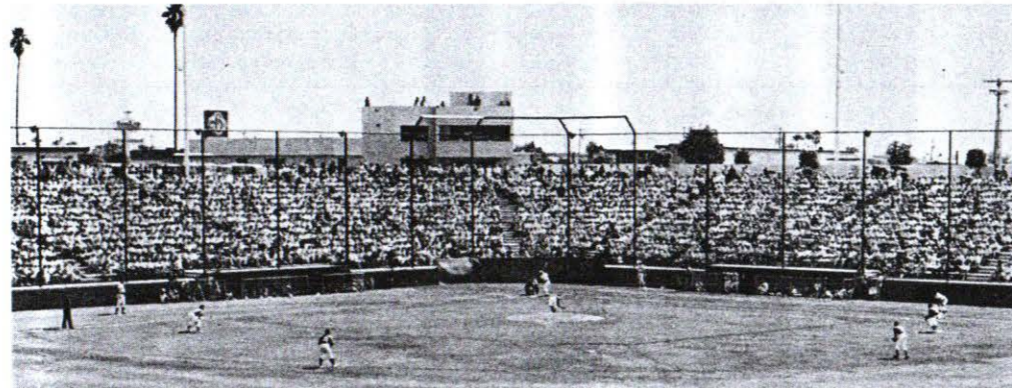
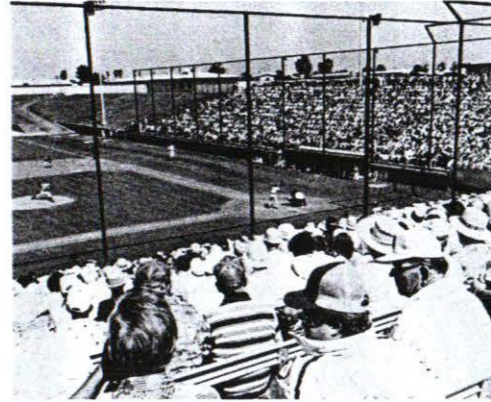
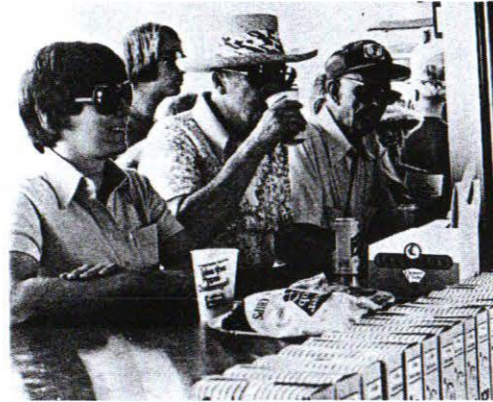
fee that will be used to defray the cost of equipment. Checks are to be made payable to "Sun City Senior Softball."

PLAYERS will be asked to sign a waiver holding the Webb company and the Sun City Senior Softball committee harmless in the event of accident or injury.

Assuming that a sufficient number of residents sign up for the league, initial practice sessions are planned for July 9, 10 and 12, from 6 p.m. to dark, in Sun City Stadium.

Additional information is available from Wagner at 933-0317.

SC STADIUM'S BREWIN'



The Milwaukee Brewers, the best hitting team in baseball last year, have been slugging their way through another spring training season at Sun City Stadium. Crowds have been the best ever averaging 2,300 fans through eight games.

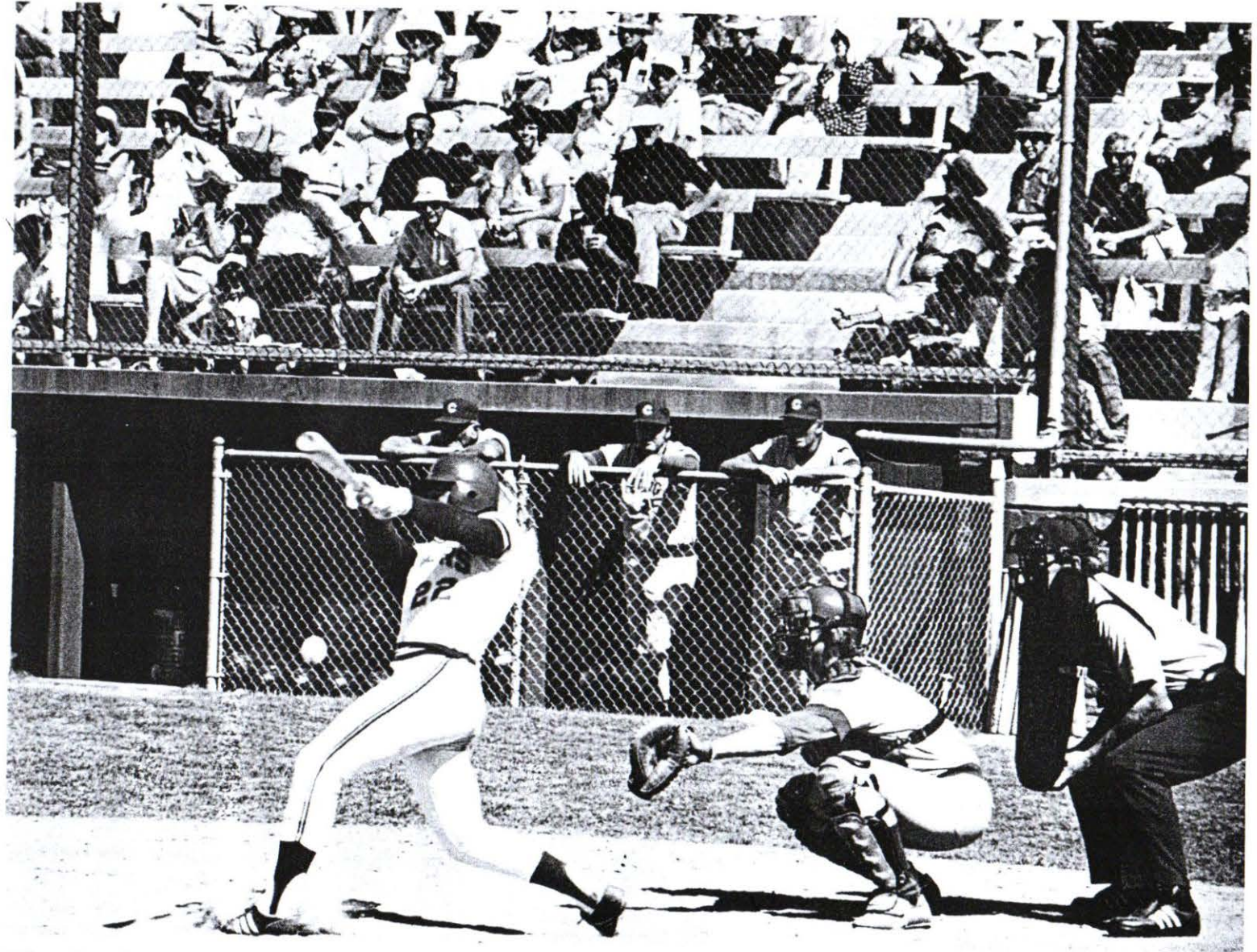
The March 10 game against the Chicago Cubs drew 4,301, a record crowd at the Stadium.

BREWERS TO OPEN 1979 SPRING SEASON MARCH 8 VS. GIANTS

COMPLETE MILWAUKEE BREWERS 1979 SPRING TRAINING SCHEDULE

DATE	OPPONENT	SITE
March 8	Giants	Sun City
March 9	Giants	Phoenix
March 10	Cubs	Sun City
March 11	Cubs	Mesa
March 12	Indians	Sun City
March 13	Indians	Tucson
March 14	Giants	Sun City
March 15	Angels	Sun City
March 16	Padres	Sun City
March 17	Angels	Palm Springs
March 18	Angels	Palm Springs
March 19	Mariners	Tempe
March 20	Mariners	Sun City
March 22	A's	Scottsdale
March 23	A's	Sun City
March 24	Cubs	Mesa
March 25	A's	Sun City
March 26	Giants	Sun City
March 27	Cubs	Sun City
March 28	Angels	Sun City
March 29	Padres	Sun City
March 30	Indians	Tucson (7 p.m.)
March 31	Mariners	Sun City
April 1	Giants	Phoenix
April 2	Cubs	Mesa

ALL GAMES AT 1 PM UNLESS INDICATED. BREWERS HOME GAMES AT SUN CITY STADIUM.



Milwaukee Brewers catcher Charlie Moore takes a cut during a spring training game last year against the Chicago Cubs. The Brewers will play 14 Cactus League games in Sun City Stadium this year, opening with the San Francisco Giants March 8. General admission tickets are \$3, with chil-

dren under 12 admitted for \$2. Tickets can be purchased at the Del E. Webb Administration Building any weekday from 7:30 AM-4:30 PM and at the Stadium ticket booth the day of the game. A complete Brewers spring training schedule is on Page 4.



SUN CITY SOFTBALL—Sun City Giant Team Manager Ted Berman, left, and Norman Siegman, a Sun City Yankee and the two-team league president, exchange a good luck handshake prior to a Sunday afternoon contest. Yank Team Manager Joe Gitlin is not shown.



BALL GAME DISPUTE—Giant players Harley Fulkerson and Ted Berman look on as Yank catcher Norm Siegman and pitcher Leland Cornell attempt to convince umpire Barney Ford a put out was made at first. Innings by the hour and runs by the bushel are among the usual "unusual" aspects of Sun City softball.

Paging Aging Athletes: Softball Anyone?

Softball will become another addition to the Sun City spectrum of

ANDY WAGNER
6-27-62



sports if sufficient interest is shown to get a team or two going.

Norman Siegman, known to all Sun Citians as the genial custodian of Civic Association offices at the Community Center, is attempting to organize a group which will undertake to form teams, obtain equipment, prepare a playing field, and find an umpire with the courage to yell "Play ball" and then not run for cover.

Anyone interested in softball should call Siegman at 933-2639.

Because softball is so popular with senior citizens all over the U. S., the sport has endless possibilities for Sun Citians. In addition to inter-town games between teams from the Town Hall and Community Center areas, a league might be formed including Youngtown and other retirement communities in the Phoenix area.

Beyond this, there is the possibility of a series with our sister Sun City towns in California. Finally, there is Sun City, Fla., to aim at.

6/62



Who knows? Those Russians might like to challenge us. After all, they recently admitted having invented baseball.

But first, before conquering the world, we need a team and a field of our own. Everybody call Norman Siegman.

SC CITIZEN 12/5/62

TIGHT

12-5-62

DESCRIBES FIRST SOFTBALL CLASH

Not Description Of Players' Condition

PITCHERS DUEL — 14-11

Webb Stadium (no seats yet, but give us time) was the scene Sunday of the opening of Sun City's softball season.

Attendance reached a record-breaking 27 (unpaid) spectators.

They saw an energetic band of athletes, 15 in all, meet in the first official softball game ever staged in Sun City.

In a very closely contested pitchers battle, the Sun City Senior Giants barely edged out the Sun City Senior Yankees by a score of 14 to 11, with the opposing pitchers holding each side to just 20 hits.

The officiating was done fearlessly by our good friend Jules Turner, who turned in a very fair and admirable job, not one pop bottle being thrown in his direction during the close play. (But wait till next time.)

Thoroughly pleased at having survived the ordeal of opening day, the official spokesman for the two-team league (but watch us grow), put out the following statement:

"The officers, players, umpires and all other personnel of the Sun City Senior Giants and Sun City Senior Yankees wish to express their gratitude for the cooperation and generosity of the Del E. Webb Co. in furnishing materials and labor to get the softball league started here in Sun City, also to the Valley National Bank and Western Savings & Loan Ass'n for sponsoring the Giants and Yanks and furnishing uniforms to these teams."

Box Score

Giants	Runs	Hits
Berman, Ted. c.	3	3
Kulow, Paul, lb.	4	4
Jackson, Chuck, p.	3	3
Wagner, Andy, l.f.	2	2
Fulkerson, Harley, 3b.	3	3
Hook, Mike, 2b.	3	3
Steel, Bob. r.f.	2	2
Totals	14	20
Yankees		
Siegman, Norman, c.	3	3
Rutz, Ted, p.-3b.	3	3
Cornell, Lee, lb.	3	3
Morrison, Harry, 2b.	3	3
Kiesling, Ed., p.-3b.	2	2
Wolf, Dick, r.f.	3	3
Madden, Charley, l.f.	2	2
Gitlin, Joe (pinch hit)	1	1
Totals	11	20

Official scorekeeper: Oscar Lipco.

Until further notice, there will be a regular league game every Sunday afternoon at 3 p.m., with practice on Mondays at 9:30 a.m. and on Thursdays at 3 p.m.