

2021 SUN LAKES SPLASH SOFTBALL ARTICLES



The Lakes Division Champs: Front Row, l-r: Frank Rouse, Tom Lorgan, Larry Maggard, Dennis Colbert and Player-Manager Tom Erpelding. Back, l-r: Dave Boone, Gene Granquist, Bob Hutchins, Joe Commisto, Doug Warwick and Tom Vitolo. Absent: Gary Brinkman (Courtesy of Masked Moments Studios)

January 2021

Core Photography Team Wins Lakes Division Title By Larry Wolfe

The Core Photography team, managed by Tom Erpelding, captured the Fall Softball Season pennant in the Lakes Division with a record of ten wins and four losses. They easily outpaced the second-place team, Wolfe & Associates, managed by Gary Hillabolt, which finished at .500 with an 8-8 ledger. Wild Bill McCoy's A-1 Golf Carts squad finished third with a 7-9 record while Vern Rodgers' Young Realty Team finished in the basement with a 5-9 record. Several games were canceled due to rain and wet grounds.

Five players hit for an average of .800 or better for the season, led by Dave Martin at .867. He was followed by Vern Rodgers (.810), Steve Schaidler (.806), Doug

Warwick (.804) and Tom Lorgan (.800). Doug Warwick and Dave Martin both had slugging percentages exceeding 1.000 with Doug at a robust 1.151 and Dave at 1.039. (Slugging percentage measures both batting average and power hitting.)

In other major offensive categories, Frank Rouse led the league in singles with 58 and tied with Bill Jacobson with 14 doubles each. Mike Durben and Dave Martin were the triples leaders with five each while Vern Rodgers and Bill Jacobson tied for the league lead in homers with three a piece. Reggie “I’ve Never Seen a Pitch I Liked” Reese led in bases on balls with 22.

As of press time, we’ve delayed the start of the Winter Season due to COVID concerns. Check our website (www.sunlakessoftball.com) for up-to-date news.

Lady Sluggers' Season is Underway
by Larry Wolfe

Our Lady Sluggers senior softball team was scheduled to open their season on January 18th at the Field of Dreams. They play against other teams in the Valley of the Sun League. This year the league was reduced to five teams due to the impact of COVID restrictions.

The Lady Sluggers were planning to play a 16-game schedule with all games taking place at our Field of Dreams. Doubleheaders were scheduled for every Monday and Wednesday from January 18th through March 10th. The first pitch will be at noon on each play date.

Given the uncertainties related to COVID-19, the schedule is subject to change. Check out the latest information on the Ladies Team Page on our website: www.sunlakessoftball.com. Come out to the field and cheer on our team!



Duck, Jim! Slugger Mark McKinnon rifles a line drive up the middle toward pitcher Jim Leckner (Courtesy of SkyView Digital Media)

February 2021

Spoooner PT Nine Edges Steinmann's Redeemed Team
By Larry Wolfe

Going into the final day of the Sun Division's Fall Season, Manager Randy Neumann's Spoooner Physical Therapy squad held a one game lead over the second place Redeemed Team, sponsored by Realtor Suzy Steinmann and managed by Dave Platt. The Redeemed Team needed to sweep a scheduled doubleheader from Spoooner to capture the title. They won the first game of the twin bill 25-24 in a slugfest. That meant that both teams sported 9-6 records going into the finale. The Therapists won that contest and the pennant in exciting fashion, eking out an 18-17 victory. Leckner Realty, managed by Mike Gloyd finished at 8-8 while Manager Ken Brenden's Brenden Financial Planners occupied the basement with a 5-11 record.

Steve Hilby led all batters with an average of .825. The remainder of the top five were: Bob Wicks (.814), Dave Platt (.794), Larry Kaufmann (.793) and Bobby Farmer (.791). Bobby Farmer also led the league in slugging percentage with an impressive 1.625 mark. To give you an idea of how good that is, Barry Bonds has Major League Baseball's highest single season slugging percentage at .863, set in his monster year of 2001. Of course, it's easier to hit a slow pitch softball than a 90 MPH baseball, but still..... Reyes Gonzales holds our all-time record at 1.634, set in 2019, so Bobby has a chance of topping that mark if he continues slugging the ball in our Winter and Spring Seasons.

League leaders in other major offensive categories were: Singles, Kim Whitney (63); Doubles, Bobby Farmer (18); Triples, Kelly Anderson and Jon Hendrikse (both with 3); and Homeruns, Bobby Farmer (17). Bob Wicks and Tom Bersano were close behind in long balls, hitting 16 and 15, respectively.

Our Winter Season was delayed by COVID concerns, but, hopefully, by the time you read this, we'll be back in action. Check our website, www.sunlakessoftball, for up-to-date information.



Lady Slugger Ann Hegney sprints toward first base.
(Courtesy of Pat's Pix, LLC)

March 2021

Lady Sluggers Nearing End of Season by Larry Wolfe

Our Lady Sluggers senior softball squad is nearing the end of its season. Doubleheaders are scheduled for every Monday and Wednesday through March 10th. The first pitch is at noon each day.

This has been a “different” year (I refuse to say “unprecedented!”) due to COVID implications. The number of teams in the Valley of the Sun League was reduced from the usual ten plus down to only five this year. All the teams other than ours were made up of combined teams, resulting, in effect, all-star teams. This put our gals at a competitive disadvantage; however, they more than held their own.

Come out to the Field of Dreams and support our team during these last few play dates! (Given the uncertainties related to COVID-19, the schedule is subject to change. Check out the latest information on the Ladies Team Page on our website:www.sunlakessoftball.com.)



Bill Maxwell prepares to unload a pitch while first baseman Wayne Newman (NOT Newton) intently looks on. (Photo by Perfect Pitch Studios)

March 2021

Spring Softball Sessions Start March 2nd By Larry Wolfe

The Spring Sessions for both the Lakes and Sun Divisions are about to begin. Play begins March 2nd and will continue through late April. As of press time, the Winter Sessions were still underway with the Brenden Financial Planning team leading the Lakes Division with a 7-3 record. In the Sun Division, the Redeemed Team, sponsored by Suzi Steinmann Realty, and the Spooner Physical Therapy squad were tied for first place with 7-5 records.

In the Lakes Division, there were seven active players with averages of over .700, led by Vern Rodgers at .793. The rest of the .700 Club were Tom Lorgan (.785),

Doug Warwick (.737), Frank Rouse (.725), Terry Zeltinger (.721) and Bob Montelione (.707). Vern Rodgers was also the leading homerun hitter with five.

Over in the Sun Division, Paul Gayer was leading the league with a robust .825 average. Other top hitters included Bobby Farmer (.801), Brad Wendt (.779), and Dave Platt and Larry Kaufmann (both at .761). Three sluggers had twenty or more homers: Bobby Farmer (29), Mike Lebet (25) and Tom Bersano (20).

We thank Dr. Matthew Hansen for renewing his advertising banner at the Field of Dreams. Dr. Hansen specializes in Othopaedic Surgery and Sports Medicine. Go to the Sponsors' Page on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com, to learn more about his practice and for links to all of our other advertising and team sponsors.

Tom Vitolo, a long-time member of our Association, recently had a serious heart-related incident at the Field of Dreams. A group of our players immediately stepped in to help until First Responders could arrive. They also took Tom's wife Mary to the hospital and provided other support. Members Ken Brenden, Joe Commisto, Evan Hansen, Tom Lorgan, Wayne Newman and Doug Warwick all deserve thanks and praise for their actions. Tom and Mary wish to thank these gentlemen and all the members who sent cards and prayers their way. Manager Tom Erpelding also delivered a giant get well card with scores of supportive messages for Tom and Mary. I'm happy to report that Tom is now doing well and is back playing the game he loves. This is just one of the things that makes our Association and our members so very special.

We were saddened to learn of the passing of Patti Delaney, wife of former playing member and head groundskeeper, Larry Delaney. Our thoughts and prayers are with Larry and his family.



The 2021 Lady Sluggers: Kneeling, l-r, Crissy Connors, Roseanne Kuefner, Ann Buckley and Lynn Casey. Back row, l-r, Coach Scott Steinmann, Suzy Steinmann, Ann Hegney, Sharon Bergan, Teresa Dorman, Manager Terry Finley, Sue Rodke and Mary Alka.

April 2021

Lady Sluggers Complete Season By Larry Wolfe

It was certainly a different type of season for our Lady Sluggers: The season started and ended earlier than scheduled due to COVID issues, the number of teams in the Valley of the Sun League was cut in half due to the fact the many of the teams had many snowbird and Canadian players, and our team played short-handed at times. But through it all, the Sluggers played competitive ball and had a great time.

The Sluggers would like to thank all the fans who came to the Field of Dreams to cheer them on. They also want to thank Coach Scott Steinmann for his patience and super coaching. In addition, the team had the support of many of the members of the Men's Program, including Ken Brenden and Jim Leckner (field preparation), Dennis LePore (umpire and scorers scheduling), Joe Byrne, Tom Erpelding, Randy Neumann and Larry Wolfe (umpires) and scorers Larry Maggard and Rick Thompson.

As the old Brooklyn Dodger fans always said, "Wait till next year!"



A photo from the Sun Division championship game: Dave Martin is on base as first basemen Dave Waibel awaits the next pitch.
(Photo courtesy of Captured Moments Pictures)

April 2021

Softball Winter League Wrap-up By Larry Wolfe

Both of our Winter League Divisions ended up with two teams tied for the league lead. In the Lakes Division, Manager Vern Rodgers' Brenden Financial Planners and Manager Tom Erpelding's Core Photographers both finished with 11-7 records, one game ahead of Manager Gary Hillbolt's Young Team Realtors. The Photographers started the season by losing six of their first eight games, but stormed back to win nine of their last ten to tie for the lead. Manager Bill McCoy's A-1 Golfers couldn't quite get things together, finishing with a woeful 4-14 mark.

In the closely-contested Sun Division, Manager Mike Gloyd's Redeemed Team Realtors and Manager Dave Platt's Spooner Physical Therapists both had 10-8 won-lost records, just two games ahead of Manager Randy Neumann's Leckner Realty squad and Manager Bobby Farmer's Wolfe & Associates Accountants. The Redeemed Team and the Spooner PT crew entered the final day of the season with identical 9-7 records and played a doubleheader to determine the division championship. In the first game, Spooner PT eked out a 19-16 win to put the pressure on the Redeemed Team. "What pressure?" asked Manager Gloyd, as his club exploded for a one-sided 31-11 win to tie for the Division championship.

Lakes Division batting leaders after the Fall and Winter Sessions included seven players with averages of .700 or better, led by Vern Rodgers at .761. Other members of the 700 Club were Tom Lorgan (.754), Doug Warwick (.736), Frank Rouse (.735), Bill Jacobson (.727) and Terry Zeltinger (.717). Vern Rodgers and Doug Warwick both had six homers to lead the Division, one more than Bill Jacobson.

In the Sun Division, ten players exceeded .700 in batting average with two of those exceeding .800. Paul Gayer led the Division with a .828 mark, followed by Bobby Farmer at .808. The remaining members of the 700 Club were Marty Hobby (.798), Mike Lebet (.772), Brad Wendt (.771), Larry Kaufmann (.765), Dave Platt (.763), Dan Melosi (.718), Tom Stephens (.707) and Dennis Dalton (.706). Bobby Farmer and Mike Lebet were tied for the Division lead in homers with a whopping 38 each. Both have a good chance to top Mark McKinnon's all-time record of 51 set during the 2017/2018 seasons.

Our Spring Seasons are now well underway and will continue through mid-April. Check our website (www.sunlakessoftball.com) for up-to-date news.

Thanks to Dan Schneider, President of Aluma-Line, Inc., for renewing the company's advertising banner at the Field of Dreams. Aluma-Line has supported our program since 2003. Links to Aluma-Line's website and all our other advertising and team sponsors may be found on the Sponsors Page of our website. SOS: Support Our Sponsors!



Slugger Mike Lebet prepares to swing at a recent Sun Division game. Catcher Dave Armstrong and Umpire Ken Brenden look on.
(Courtesy of Well Focused Fotos)

May 2021

A-1 Golf, Brenden Financial & Spooner PT are Spring Softball Champs By Larry Wolfe

The pennant races were extremely close in both the Lakes and Sun Divisions with A-1 Golf Carts, managed by Vern Rodgers, and Brenden Financial Planning, managed by Ken Brenden, tying for the Lakes Division lead with identical 10-8 marks. Manager Tom Erpelding's Core Photography squad was only one game off the pace, finishing at 9-9, while Manager Gary Hillbolt's Young Real Estate team had a 7-11 record.

In the Sun Division the Spooner Physical Therapy team, managed by Randy Neumann, were champions with a record of 11-7, just squeaking by the Leckner Realty team, managed by Dave Platt, which finished with a 10-8 record. Manager Bobby Farmer's Wolfe & Associates team was close behind at 9-9, while Mike Gloyd's Redeemed Team Realtors lagged behind at 6-12. The pennant race went down to the last day of the season with Spooner PT needing to win one of two games scheduled against the Redeemed Team. They did that in the first game of the

doubleheader, winning a hard-fought contest by the score of 16-13. Congratulations to all our Spring League champions.

Tom Lorgan won the Lakes Division batting title with a .744 average, just beating out Frank Rouse, who finished the season at .742. Tim Loeffler and Vern Rodgers each had seven homers to lead the division.

In the Sun Division, Bobby Farmer was the batting champs with a robust .823 average. He also led the division in long balls with 56, an all-time Sun Lakes record, but just one more than lefty slugger Mike Lebet's 55.

We'll recap all the 2020-21 statistics in a future edition of the *Splash*. If you can't stand the suspense, go to the Stats Page on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com. We also conducted seeded season-ending tournaments in both divisions which took place after the press deadline. We'll cover those tournament results in next month's *Splash*.

Additionally, we have a less formal Summer League. The schedules and rosters were not available at press time; however, they may also be found on our website.

Thanks to the following for renewing their advertising banners at the Field of Dreams:

A-1 Golf Carts & Owner Lowell Peterson (Advertisers since 2003)

Evangelista Orthopedic Clinic & Dr. Gregory Evangelista (2015)

Drs. Saba & Romanin Dental Associates (2000)

Young Home Team Realtors & Terry and Charlee Young (2011)

We also welcome Mickey Zarr, the Zarr of Real Estate, as a new sponsor.

Links to these and all our other sponsors' websites may be found on the Sponsors Page of our website. SOS!!: Support Our Sponsors!



The Lakes Champs: Front, kneeling, l-r: Jim Entwistle, Joe Giesinger, Tim Loeffler, Jim Dunn, “Super Fan” Janet Rodgers, Vern Rodgers & Mascot Charlie. Back, l-r: Larry Maggard, Mark Durben, Manny Versusco, Bill McCoy, Doug Warwick, Jerry Smith, Bill Maxwell & Joe Matra

June 2021

A-1 Golf Carts Win Spring Tourney By Larry Wolfe

The number one seeded A-1 Golf Carts team, managed by Vern Rodgers, fought their way back through the loser’s bracket to win the Lakes Division Spring Softball Tournament. Here’s a recap of the games:

In the opener, the Young Realty Team, managed by Gary Hillabolt, beat Manager Ken Brenden’s Financial Planning squad 17-10. Gene Granquist and Manager

Hillabolt led the winner's attack with four hits each. Mike Willits had four hits for the Planners. In game 2, Core Photography, managed by Tom Erpelding, upset A-1 Golf Carts by a 23-16 count. The Photographers banged out 26 hits, to go along with eleven walks, to coast to victory.

A-1 turned the tables on day 2, cruising to a 23-10 victory over Brenden Financial, eliminating the Planners. Tim Loeffler led the Golfers' offense with five hits including a homer. Doug Warwick also had five hits. They were supported by Vern Rodgers, David Boone and Jerry Giesinger with four hits each. Rodgers also homered.

In game four, Core Photography rolled to a 19-7 win over Young Realty. Ernie Flores and Paul Eskridge homered for the Photographers, who were greatly aided by 12 free passes. They also pounded out 17 hits.

On the final day of the tourney, A-1 steamrolled past Young Realty 22-10, eliminating the Realtors. Jim Entwistle, Manny Verduco and Larry Maggard had four hits each for the winners while Frank Rouse and Vern Rodgers added three each, with Rodgers homering. That set the stage for a rematch between A-1 and Core Photography in the Championship Game.

A-1 eked out a 12-9 win in the finale. It was a close contest with Core Photography having the tying run at the plate in the final inning; however, they couldn't score. Manager Rodgers led A-1 with three hits including another homer. Jerry Smith and Mark Durban also had three safeties each. Congratulations to the Golfers for battling their way back to capture the championship.



The Champs: Front, kneeling, l-r: Jon Hendrikse, Paul Gayer, Bob Reed and Rick Oien. Back, l-r: Sam Giordano, Tom Schneider, Dave Waibel, Randy Neumann, Marty Hobby & Kelly Anderson

June 2021

Spoooner PT Captures Sun Division Crown By Larry Wolfe

In the opening game of the Sun Division Softball Tournament, Manager Randy Neumann's Spooner PT team cruised to an easy 19-7 victory over Manager Mike Gloyd's Redeemed Team. Lead-off hitter Paul Gayer led the Therapists' attack, going 4 for 4, while Tom Schneider and Dan Melosi hit long balls for the winners. Tom Stephens homered for the Redeemers, while both Mike Lebet and John Castro doubled twice.

In the second contest the Wolfe & Associates squad, managed by Bobby Farmer, beat Manager Dave Platt's Leckner Realty team 23-16. Larry Kaufmann led the Wolves' attack, going 5 for 5. Both Bobby Farmer and Ron Carmichael went 4 for

4 with a walk, with Bobby adding a long homer. Manager Platt led his own Realtors team, going 4 for 5.

On day two, the Redeemed Team outslugged Leckner's Realtors by a 29-28 count, eliminating the Realtors from the tournament. The Field of Dreams became "Home Run Heaven" during this contest as each team slugged six homers. "Big Bob" Wicks went 5 for 6, homering in three consecutive innings, which must be a record of some type! Kelly Anderson and Bob Henning also had five hits apiece, while Dan Melosi, Steve Hilby and Henning added homers for the Realtors. Mike Lebet and Dick Bleich paced the winning Redeemers with five hits each with Lebet and Tom Stephens homering twice. John Castro and Bleich added single shots. In the second contest of the day, Spooner PT topped Wolfe & Associates in another slugfest by a 27-26 score. In the winners well-balanced attack, six players had four hits each (Marty Hobby, Tom Schneider, Rick Oien, Sam Giordano, Dave Waibel and Brad Wendt). Marty Hobby tied Bob Wicks' short-lived record with homers in the first three innings of the game. Bobby Farmer was four for four with a homer to lead the Wolves. Dave Lingen also had four hits, while Dave Armstrong homered twice and Larry Kaufmann added one homer, but it wasn't enough, as the Therapists came from behind with three runs in the final frame to top the Wolves. Kelly Anderson had the game-winning hit.

In the day three elimination game, the Redeemers topped the Wolves 31-24, sending the pack of Wolves back to their den. Four Redeemers tallied five hits each (Bill Corso, Tom Stephens, Dick Bleich, Brad Wendt and Mike Gloyd). Tom Stephens and Mike Lebet had two homers each while John Castro and Brad Wendt added single shots. The losing squad was led by Kim Whitney, who went 5 for 5 with a homer. Dan Melosi was 4 for 5 with two long balls while Larry Kaufmann and Bobby Farmer also homered. This victory sent the Redeemers to meet the Spooner PT team for the championship.

The Therapists played "small ball" to edge the Redeemers 19-17 for the championship win. Paul Gayer, Bob Reed, Sam Giordano and Dave Waibel each had four hits to lead the PT team. No one homered, but the team's timely clutch hitting beat the powerful Redeemers, who homered four times, two by Mike Lebet and one each by Brad Wendt and Bob Wicks. The Redeemers had the tying run at the plate in the final inning but couldn't come through in the clutch. Congratulations to Manager Randy Neumann and all the Spooner PT players for a hard-fought victory.



SW Champs: Front Row, l-r: John Castro, Chuck Schaan, Denny Davidson, Mike Gloyd, Rick Oien and Dave Platt. Back row, l-r: Bobby Farmer, Dennis Dalton, Steve Hilby, Bill Corso, Dan Melosi, Brad Wendt, Mike Lebet, Thom Stephens, Jon Hendrikse and Scorekeeper Cyndy Hilby. Not pictured: Billy Kee, Al Grefsheim & Reyes Gonzales

August 2021

Our Guys Are Southwest Senior Softball Champs
By Larry Wolfe

Nineteen members of our Sun Lakes Senior Softball Association were on championship teams in the Annual Southwest Tournament, sponsored by Senior Softball-USA. The tournament was held earlier this year, with over 250 teams from a dozen states participating. The event was conducted at eight different softball complexes in Las Vegas and surrounding communities. The teams are divided by age group and skill levels. Here's a listing of our championship players along with their team names and divisions:

Team: Hitmen, 60+ AAA Division

Sun Lakes Players: Dennis Dalton, Bobby Farmer, Jon Hendriske, Mike Lebet. Dan Melosi, Dave Platt, Thom Stephens and Brad Wendt

Team: Legacy Sports 60+ Major Plus Division
Sun Lakes Player: Reyes Gonzales

Team: AZ Scorpions, 65+ Major Division
Sun Lakes Players: Bill Corso, Bobby Farmer, Steve Hilby, Rick Oien, Chuck Schaan and Denny Davidson

Team: Ancients, 70+ Major Division
Sun Lakes Players: Mike Gloyd and John Castro

Team: Sidewinders, 80+ Division
Sun Lakes Players: Billy Kee and Al Grefsheim

In addition, we had three other players who were members of teams that finished second in their divisions: David Boone, Tim Loeffler and John Seigla

It was quite a showing by our guys and demonstrates the caliber of players we have in our Association. Congrats to all of our champions!

Our summer recreational program is in full swing with the Field of Dreams open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays for pick-up games. Game time is 8 AM with optional batting practice at 7:30 AM for those participating in the pick-up games. Batting and fielding practices are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays at 8 AM. If you're interested in getting involved in our program, now's the time to sharpen your skills for the upcoming league play. which will begin in late October. Just come by the field with your glove and bat and ask to talk to a Board member. Additional information is also available on our website:

www.sunlakessoftball.com.

Baseball Fun Fact: In his very first major league at bat, rookie pitcher Hoyt Wilhelm hit a homerun. The future Hall of Famer's career continued for 21 years, but he never hit another homerun!



Summer Softball Action: Marty Hobby, batter, and Larry Maggard, catcher, brave the heat! (Courtesy of Shutter Up Studios)

September 2021

Sizzlin' Summer Softball By Larry Wolfe

As we anxiously (and hopefully) look forward to cooler temperatures and our Fall Softball Season, quite a few brave souls play throughout the entire summer at the Field of Dreams. We have a recreational program that never shuts down, even during the sizzlin' days of our Arizona summers. The field is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for batting and fielding practice. Pick-up games are played every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Start times are at 8 AM in order to try to "beat the heat." If you're interested in getting in shape for the upcoming league play, now's the time.

Most of our guys and gals have been playing some type of baseball or softball since their childhood. And they've kept on playing. Many had breaks due to work requirements or other priorities, like raising a family, but they came back for more. Today it's estimated that over 1.5 MILLION seniors play in organized softball

leagues throughout the USA. What is it about the game that attracts so many senior participants? Well, there's a whole list of reasons. First, there are numerous health benefits, including total body conditioning, increasing flexibility and improving mental health and self-esteem. (Plus, there aren't many opportunities for seniors to get outside and play in the dirt and grass, just like when you were a kid!) Second, there's the competitive nature of the sport, both from a team standpoint, as well as from an individual perspective. Third, and probably most importantly, there's the camaraderie of the sport. Lifelong friendships are made on the softball field. And, lastly, it's lots of fun!

Baseball Fun Facts: Babe Ruth retired in 1935 with a record 714 homeruns and 2174 total runs scored. At the time of his retirement, Ruth's teammate, Lou Gehrig, was second in career homers with 378, a little more than half of the Babe's total. And guess who also finished his career with exactly 2174 runs scored? It was none other than the man who would break the Babe's HR record in 1974: Hammerin' Hank Aaron!

Check out our website, [www.sunlakessoftball](http://www.sunlakessoftball.com), for up-to-date news and more information about the Sun Lakes Senior Softball Association.



Summer play action: Mike Gloyd is ready to swing away (catcher Vern Rodgers)
(Courtesy of Flawless Fotos, Ink.)

October 2021

Softball League Play Starts Soon! By Larry Wolfe

As autumn weather returns, so will Sun Lakes softball league play. Our Sun and Lakes Divisions will both open their Fall Seasons on Tuesday, October 26. Sign-ups will begin on Tuesday, September 28 and continue through Thursday, October 14 at Snedigar Field on Alma School Road in Chandler. It is imperative that you sign-up by the deadline if you want to be eligible to play in the Fall League. We will be using Chandler's Snedigar Field as a practice facility while our Field of Dreams outfield grass is being over-seeded. Go to our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com, for current information and to view the complete schedules and team rosters, which will be available later in October.

Team managers for the Fall Season in the Lakes Division are Joe Commisto, Gary Hillabolt, Bill McCoy and Vern Rodgers. Managers in the Sun Division are Ron Carmichael, Mike Gloyd, Randy Neumann and Kim Whitney. Thanks for volunteering, guys!

We'll be welcoming a new team sponsor this year. Thanks to Skyview Digital Media for stepping up to the plate! Learn more about them and all our other team sponsors and advertisers by going to the Sponsors Page on our website.

Be sure to come by our booth at the IronOaks Activities Open House in the Oakwood Ballroom on Tuesday, October 19 from 12 to 4 PM to learn more about our program.

For those of you who have been missing our Player Profile articles, be assured that they'll return after the start of our regular season. Over the years a total of 150 members of our organization have been profiled. Number 151 is next!

Here's an interesting baseball fun fact: You probably had no idea that the "Take Me Out to the Ballgame" song was composed by Jack Norworth and Albert von Tilzer back in 1908. The song is the unofficial anthem of baseball and is traditionally sung in the middle of the 7th inning. But did you know that the song-writing duo never made it to a baseball game to hear their song!



During the off-season, a new scoreboard was installed at the Field of Dreams.
Looks great! (Courtesy of Zoom-In Photoshop)

November 2021

Play Ball! Fall Season is Underway!
By Larry Wolfe

The Lakes and Sun Divisions of our Senior Softball League both kicked off their Fall Seasons on October 26th. (Actually, kicked-off shouldn't apply to softball, should it? How about opened or began instead? Let's save "kick-offs" for football!) The Fall Season continues through December 17th with games scheduled for Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. There are a few "off days" for the Thanksgiving holiday and a major tournament, so check the Schedules Page on our website: www.sunlakessoftball.com. Team rosters may also be found on the Members & Rosters Page of the website. Additionally, we have a recreational program that includes batting and fielding practices on Mondays and Wednesdays and pick-up games on Saturdays.

Some of you have asked what's the difference between our Lakes and Sun Divisions. Well, we have players ranging in age from their 50s to early 80s participating in our programs. Obviously, in general, skill levels, running ability, etc. decline as we age. There are exceptions to that rule, but, by and large, the Sun Division's players are younger with fewer "artificial parts!" We have somewhat varying rules for the two divisions as well. For example, in the Lakes Division, we use a safety screen for pitchers and have eleven players in the field versus ten in the Sun Division. All in all, this set up allows for safer and more competitive play and allows players who want to continue playing the sport they love for as long as possible.

We have a total of eight teams, four in each division. This year's team sponsors are A-1 Golf Carts, Core Photography, Jim Leckner's Real Estate Agency, The Redeemed Team (Realtors Suzy Steinmann and Michelle Hudak), Skyview Digital Media (Alysa Chapman, Principal), Spooner Physical Therapy and Wolfe & Associates Tax & Accounting Services. Thanks to all these companies for supporting our program.

We also thank Right Away Disposal (RAD) and Wolfe & Associates for renewing their advertising banners at the Field of Dreams. This will be RAD's fourth year of advertising with us, while Wolfe & Associates has been an advertiser since 2007.

Go to the Sponsors Page on our website to learn more about all these companies, as well as our other advertising sponsors. Without the support from these companies, we'd need to charge much higher fees to keep our program the first-class operation that it has become. So, remember: **SOS, Support Our Sponsors!**

We were saddened to learn of the passing of former umpire Dick Petrogallo. Although Dick was a professional umpire, he did volunteer umpiring for us. He also conducted rules clinics for our other umpires. RIP, Dick.

This month's fun fact: There are thousands of sports leagues in the world, some dating from way back in time. However, Major League Baseball has been around the longest of any league still in operation. You might think that the Football League of England may have been around longer, but not so. MLB dates back to 1876 while England's Football League (soccer to us Americans) was founded in 1888.



Scorekeeper Reggie Reese (front) and scoreboard operator Larry Maggard watch the action in our scorer's booth. It's volunteers like them that make our program run smoothly. (Photo by Larry the Lensman)

December 2021

Fall Softball League's in Full Swing By Larry Wolfe

The Fall Sessions in both our Lakes and Sun Divisions began in late October and continue through December 17. Sun Division team managers and sponsors for this session are Kim Whitney (Leckner Realty), Bill Corso (The Redeemed Team), Randy Neumann (Spoooner Physical Therapy) and Ron Carmichael (Wolfe & Associates). Managers and sponsors in the Lakes Division are Joe Commisto (A-1 Golf Carts), Vern Rodgers (Core Photography), Bill McCoy (Skyview Digital Media) and Gary Hillabolt (Young Home Team Realtors).

At press time, A-1 Golf Carts were atop the standings in the Lakes Division with a 5-1 record. The top hitters were Mike Willits (.788), Ernie Flores (.784) and Dave Boone (.778). Rookie Brian Brockman was the homerun leader with five round-trippers.

Wolfe & Associates was in first place in the Sun Division with a 5-1 record. The top batters in that Division were Dan Melosi (.833), Dave Platt (.800) and Tom

Stephens (.789). There was a three-way tie for the lead in homers among Bobby Farmer, Larry Kaufmann and Tom Stephens, all with six. Go to the Stats Page on our website, www.sunlakessoftball.com, for up-to-date standings and batting statistics.

We thank the following long-time supporters of our program for renewing their advertising banners at the Field of Dreams:

360 Physical Therapy and owner Tresha Aschenbrener, advertisers since 2004; The Charles Company and Associates and President Alice Schroeder, advertisers since 2003; and,

Sun Devil Auto, advertisers since 2000.

Go to the Sponsors Page of our website for information about all our advertising and team sponsors.

October was a tough month for the Sun Lakes softball community. First, we lost long-time member Ron Brown. Ron played in our league for many years and didn't hang up his spikes until he was 83! He was a consistent .600 plus hitter and one of the best pitchers in our league for many years. In fact, he hit .658 as an 80-year-old in 2012! Back in the '70s, Ron was player-manager for the Chicago Storm, a professional softball team. He's also a member of the Illinois USSSA Softball Hall of Fame. Our condolences go out to his wife, Gay, and the rest of his family and many friends. Rest in peace, Ronnie.

Secondly, Steve Hilby, a current member, unexpectedly passed away at age 67 from COVID complications. Steve was one of the top hitters in our league for both average and power; but much more than that, he was a key member of our program and a true friend to us all. Steve served on our Board of Directors for six years and had stints as Secretary and President of our Association. His wife, Cyndy, is also a key member of our softball family, playing on the ladies' team, serving as scorer for our men's teams and is currently Secretary of our Board of Directors. Our heartfelt sympathies go out to Cyndy, son Matt (Sarah), daughter Kate (Neal), Steve's parents and all his other family members, friends and teammates. His passing leaves a mammoth hole in the heart of our program. He will be sorely missed.



Sharon Bergan is swinging for the fences in a game from last season. Umpire Tom Erpelding and the opposing catcher look on.
(Courtesy of Candid Clicks Photography)

December 2021

Lady Sluggers Training for New Season By Larry Wolfe

The Sun Lakes Lady Sluggers, our ladies' senior softball team, began training and practicing for the upcoming 2022 season in November. The Sluggers play in the Valley of the Sun League, which includes teams from throughout the Southeast Valley. Last year the schedule was cut short due to COVID issues, so the ladies are hoping "to get back to normal" and have a full season in 2022.

At press time, the schedule was not yet set, although it is expected that opening day will be during the first week of January. Go to the Ladies Page on our website to view the schedule and other information. Be sure to come by the Field of Dreams to cheer on our team.

Steve Hilby & The Field of Dreams

-Bill McCoy

"Shoeless" Joe Jackson said, "If you build it, he will come."

Ten years ago, Steve Hilby stepped out of the Iowa cornfields and onto our Sun Lakes Field of Dreams. In the movie "Field of Dreams," Archie said, "Sometimes we just don't recognize life's most significant moments when they're happening." That was one of them.

Steve may have asked, "Is this heaven?" Someone must've said, "No you're close, it's Arizona." Did Steve think, "Oh yeah...it's where dreams can come true."

On October 21st Steve walked into the cornfield in centerfield with Shoeless Joe Jackson. No more fighting COVID with his wife, Cyndy, doing all she could. Steve left us all behind.

He's now up there playing with those gone before him. Our Field of Dreams has attracted many great ball players. We shouldn't forget them.

Appreciate the friendships while enjoying the gift of playing this game.

This is our cornfield. We fantasize about playing and Steve Hilby reappearing from that cornfield. He says, "Go the distance." Relive your childhood dreams. Steve did. Did any of us think as kids we'd be playing now? We play our games and it's as if we dipped ourselves in magic waters.

To squint at a sky so blue it hurts your eyes. Is there magic in the sunlight that makes this dream come true? This is where it happens. If you want to play, we can take you there. When we're on the field, this is the most special place in the world. We bring each other together. We dream we're still very good and can still play! I've said many times, "As long as we're playing ball, we'll never get old."

Our field is more than grass and dirt. It's where we get to be kids again. Steve did. We know how he loved playing with friends and those he just met. He loved umpiring and playing shortstop. He always had an enthusiastic smile. Let's practice his enthusiastic good sportsmanship. We will miss his cheerful greetings. Steve was that special person that made it possible for others to enjoy this game. We need to be thankful for all the time and effort he put into making dreams happen.

So, enjoy those special moments...remember people like Steve that keep dreams going. Thank God for the blessings we have. Pray for each other: WE ARE "Living the Dream."