West View Valley

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View photo by Ray Thomas

JOE HORNBACK of Phoenix, second from right, and his cadre of fantasy league enthusiasts gather at the Goodyear Ballpark March 15 to make their fantasy picks during a spring training game between the Cincinnati Reds and the Arizona Diamondbacks. To see all photos from this shoot, go to www.westvalleyview.com/pictures.

Play (simulation) ball!

Lifelong baseball lover drafts players at Goodyear Ballpark

by Charity Yodis

staff writer

At 6 years of age, he swung his baseball bat for a Little League team in southern Illinois.

But that was only the start for lifelong baseball enthusiast and founder of the Southwest

Baseball Association, Joe Hornback.

He remembers, as a child, listening to Cardinals games on the radio while the adults played softball.

Hornback said he was a big Chicago Cubs fan in the days of player Ron Santo, but later

switched his loyalty to the Pittsburgh Pirates around the mid-'70s.

"I kind of fell in love with the Pittsburgh Pirates," he said.

(See Ball on Page 3)

Mystery solved

Who was that guy on the Vista cover? Powder River Jack, of course

by Frances Torrez staff writer

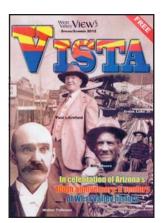
A two-year mystery has finally been solved thanks to the Litchfield Park Historical Society and Museum.

It all started when the *View* published its 2012 spring/summer *Vista*. To commemorate Arizona's centennial, the cover included photographs of prominent West Valley leaders.

One of those photographs was thought to be of Paul Litchfield, founder of Litchfield Park and an executive of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.

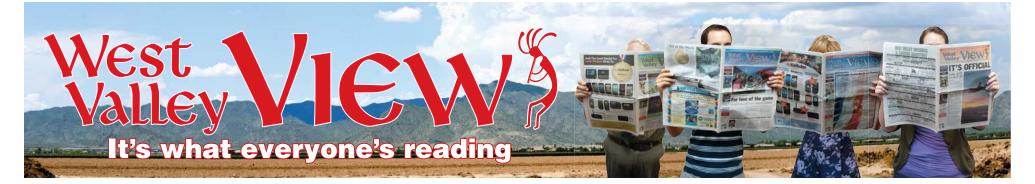
The *View* found the image in its archives of historical photos with the file name "Paul Litchfield." It was in a folder of old pictures of the Wigwam that had been scanned from

(See Mystery on Page 2)





POWDER RIVER JACK, an early entertainer at the Wigwam in Litchfield Park, was thought to be Paul Litchfield when he graced the cover of the spring/summer 2012 *Vista*. After *Vista* printed, several readers called the editor to say the man in the picture was not Litchfield. The *View* ran a correction but until recently still didn't know who the mystery man was.



Mystery

(From Page 1)

originals many years ago.

After Vista was published, many readers informed the editor that the man in the picture was not Litchfield.

The View later printed a correction titled "Who was that guy on the cover?" and apologized for the error.

For the next two years, View staffers and readers would remain baffled about the identity of the "guy on the

Well, the mystery is over.

The person is Powder River Jack, an early entertainer at the Wigwam, said Judy Cook, vice president of the Historical Society.

"I was so delighted to have a name," she said. "For two years, we have been trying to find out who this man was.'

While preparing for a new exhibit about the Wigwam, the Historical Society's research team was archiving newspaper articles about the resort.

That is when the team came across an article about the resort's 65th anniversary — written by the *View* in November 1994 — and included a photograph that labeled Powder River Jack as an entertainer, she said. In the photo, he is standing next to another entertainer, Pretty Kitty Lee, and a horse.

"It's such a great story to finally find a little piece," Cook said. "It's like putting a puzzle together up at the museum. Anytime we find any little piece of trivia, it's a big day.'

Cook believes Powder River Jack was perhaps a nickname or a stage name, and the photo was likely taken during the Great Depression era, she said.

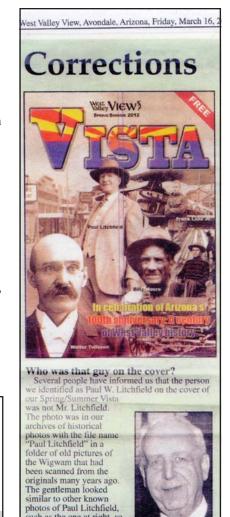
"These people, during the 1930s, would go from hotel to hotel entertaining," Cook said. "There was no TV or anything like that. I would suppose he was some sort of musician, maybe not. Maybe he was a storyteller.'

Entertainers would then "go north to those big old hotels" because the resort closed during the summers at that time, she said.

"They looked kinda like cowboys, and they had guitars and ... could ride horses," she said. "It was sort of an exotic thing in the 1930s, which was the Depression."

But solving this two-year mystery has created a new — who was Powder River Jack and Pretty Kitty Lee? "We don't know anything about either one, but we're going to keep looking," Cook said.

Frances Torrez can be reached by email at ftorrez@westvalleyview.com.



A correction that ran in the *View* on March 16, 2012, just after Vista printed, shows the similarity between Powder River Jack and Paul Litchfield.





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Paul W.



such as the one at right, s we assumed that's who it was. We were wrong, and apologize for the error.





(From Page 1)

The baseball fan continued playing the game all throughout his junior and senior years of high school, and also participated in

simulation games.

Originally, the simulation games were done in a board game fashion with dice and play cards. Later, the game was simulated by typing baseball plays on a floppy disk and mailing it to the other players.

Now, Hornback and the 23 other men in the Southwest Baseball Association use online software called Diamond Mind Baseball.

Baseball team."

Hornback, who works as a chiropractor, started the association in 1987, shortly after moving to Phoenix. The first simulation game his group played in was in 1988, starting with just 12 players.

One of the most exciting aspects of being a

chiropractor is having some baseball players see him as clients, Hornback said.

The way the simulation game works, essentially, is each participant drafts 40 ball players onto his team. He then picks moves that are based on last year's statistics

'It's the average man's way of owning his own Major League Baseball team," Hornback joked.

On March 15, Hornback and the rest of the baseball "It's the average man's way of owning his own Major League fans in his league drafted players for their simulation game while watching the Arizona Diamondbacks play against the Cleveland Indians from a luxury suite at the Goodyear Ballpark.

The event has been in

the works for about 10 years.

Southwest Baseball Association founder

— Joe Hornback

"I've always thought I would love [to have a draft] at a ballpark," Hornback said.

The group of men started drafting players at 9 a.m., and continued until around 4 p.m.

Some of the main rookies drafted were Gerrit Cole, Yasiel Puig and Jose Fernandez, he said.

The Goodyear Ballpark opened its doors earlier than

usual, and began the food services sooner as well for the

guys.
"The ballpark's been great," Hornback said. "They're letting us have our food and Internet early.

Hornback won his first game in 1990, and he was also awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2012 from the association he started.

Association members range from sports writers and lawyers to retired military and store owners. Only three of the original players are still in the association that started in the mid-'80s

Hornback had played in various other simulation associations before, but decided to start his own shortly after moving to Phoenix. He said he wanted to combine features from different groups.

"I decided that by combining all the different aspects, it would make it even better," he said.

At the March 15 game, eight of the 24 were able to participate. The rest joined in via an online forum.

What Hornback said he likes most about the group is the camaraderie.

"It's the camaraderie, being with a group of likeminded people. It's just fun and we have a blast," he said.

Charity Yodis can be reached by email at cyodis@westvalleyview.com or on Twitter @ckyodis.



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