

Phony DiMaggio

By Dan Coughlin

"Say it isn't so, Vince."

That was the reaction of many old time baseball fans who read the story in last Sunday's paper that Vince DiMaggio was now on tour as a burlesque comic.

So Vince DiMaggio, oldest brother of the



The DiMaggio brothers, Vince, Joe and Dom who will be together again Sunday in Los Angeles Old Timers Game.

one-time baseball starring trio that included Dominic and Joltin' Joe, said that it isn't so.

Reached at his home in Hollywood, Cal., where he lives with his wife of 44 years, DiMaggio said there's an impostor trafficking on one of the most famous names in baseball history.

The "Vince DiMaggio" who appeared all last week at the New Era Burlesk Theater in downtown Cleveland is a phony.

The surrogate performs as a comic and appears with a woman who claims to be his wife and performs under the name of Ezrulie Sabie, the Egyptian snake charmer. Actually, she's the former Joyce Caldwell from Alabama, with a drawl to prove it. The two performers sometimes travel with a child, presumably hers.

The real DiMaggio is 63, father of two grown daughters, grandfather of four, and he has worked the last five years as a Fuller Brush

salesman in southern California. DiMaggio and his wife, Lee, have lived in California since his 10-year major league baseball career ended in 1946.

DiMaggio was not happy to learn of the impostor's appearance here, but he wasn't surprised. He said the phony first surfaced in Dallas in 1969 or '70 when, posing as the ex-ballplayer, he opened a restaurant with a partner. He was exposed not long afterward and disappeared, but later he turned up on the burlesque circuit in small towns in the south, again using the DiMaggio name.

DiMaggio said the Dallas police made an effort to track down the fake but they failed and eventually lost interest.

"I don't know what law he's breaking, but I wish he'd stop," said DiMaggio. "I found out he was doing dirty shows, a burlesque-type deal.

That's an abomination to our Lord Jesus. It's 100% antagonistic to my nature.

"I was born and raised a Catholic. Four years ago the Lord spoke to me and now I'm a Born-Again Christian. We live through the Bible, we worship Him, we live for Him, we live through Him and He lives through us."

DiMaggio's wife, Lee, came to the phone and spoke against the faker.

"I understand he's very foul-mouthed. My husband isn't that," she said.

Nevertheless, the surrogate has fooled many people.

"I talked to him for two hours last Sunday and he had all the right answers. I thought he was Vince DiMaggio," said Cuyahoga County deputy sheriff Jim Dindia, whose parents and

Continued on Page 7-B



The Imposter



Brown pondering new options after ouster

By Dan Coughlin

Bob Brown confirmed Thursday that he will be replaced as president of the Coliseum following the takeover of Sanford D. Greenberg, the Washington investor who has purchased the entertainment palace from Nick Mileti.

"The agreement was that I would be on vacation," said Brown. "But I'm operating on the assumption that Sandy will bring

in his own man. If I were Sandy, that's what I'd do."

Greenberg said that he won't make any announcements regarding personnel changes until the legal and accounting work is completed to finalize the sale, which he said would take about 30 days.

Tom Embrescia, vice-president in charge of sales, said he will be acting president in the interim.

Continued on Page 4-B

Veeck Night opens series

By Russell Schneider

Phil Seghi and Rocky Colavito spent much of Thursday on the telephone, working on two unrelated projects, while the rest of the Indians enjoyed an open date with the hope that better things are just around the corner.

The Chicago White Sox are in town for a four-game weekend set, with Bill Veeck to be "welcomed" back to baseball in a behind-the-fence party tonight before Jackie Brown takes the mound against Pete Vuckovich.

Seghi, uptight because of what he calls "premature publicity," continued his quest for a trade

that would bring Joe Rudi, or another hard-hitting outfielder to the Wigwam to bolster the Tribe's sagging offense.

As reported here Thursday, Rudi is available to the Indians, though Oakland A's owner Charlie Finley is asking for outfielder George Hendrick and catcher Alan Ashby in return.

Seghi and manager Frank Robinson won't part with Ashby, but are willing to add another player of lesser stature to a package that would include Hendrick.

That's what Seghi discussed with Finley Thursday, though the Tribe general manager, piqued

about The Plain Dealer learning of the efforts to acquire Rudi, was very noncommittal later.

"Everybody is trying to play general manager... from now on, I'm not saying anything to you guys except no comment," grumbled Seghi between his calls to Finley.

Seghi also has discussed some other players, including George Scott of the Milwaukee Brewers, Toby Solaita of the Kansas City Royals, and Tom Paciorek of the Atlanta Braves.

However, Rudi remains the Indians' primary target — and rightfully so.

Because he is a first baseman the acquisition of Scott would only complicate Robinson's chores when Boog Powell returns from the disabled list later this month.

Solaita and Paciorek are considered only "fringe" players at best.

In fact, as reported here two weeks ago, the Braves turned down the Indians' offer of Fritz Peterson even-up for Paciorek in what would have been a waiver deal.

That was before Seghi gave Peterson to the Texas Rangers for practically nothing, mainly to get out from under Fritz's \$72,000

Continued on Page 2-B

Pitch on Fitch

By Bill Nichols

As Bill Fitch left for Japan for a series of all-star games on Thursday, he submitted to a series of questions to crystalize his position in reference to his association with Nick Mileti and the Cavaliers.

Q. When did the break come between you and Nick Mileti?

A. The break was not a sudden thing. I came through the year. You can't put it on any one thing. He had done things throughout the year I didn't agree with. I just wanted to know the policies. My contract says I work in conjunction with the presi-

Cavs' coach takes the stand

dent. That means we work together. But, if there was a breaking point, it probably came after the Washington playoff opener when we lost. That's when he said I was campaigning in the newspapers about how I was underpaid. The break might have come sooner, but during years four and five he wasn't around.

Q. Would you comment on Mileti's statement that he carried you as Cavaliers' coach through the losing years?

A. If that's what he said, that's okay. But the deals I

made that year are a matter of record.

On the deal for Campy Russell and Dick Snyder for the rights to Tom Burleson we also got \$219,000. We got \$25,000 for McCoy McLemore the first year, more than \$100,000 for Steve Hawes and nearly that much for Luther Rackley. None of that money came back in my salary. It went back to keep us going. If that's carrying me there is nothing I can do about it. If Nick would have come to me during those days and said we can't work it out I would have gone.

Now, he has made it impossible for me to do a job effectively.

Q. Did you ask for a new contract last year?

A. Yes I did. I wanted to make damn sure I wouldn't be dropped in the middle of the stream. His own man (Bob Brown) was one of the people he said worked without a contract and now with the new owners of the Coliseum he's out.

Q. Will you come back?

A. I don't like the man as a human being.

Continued on Page 6-B



Fitch

NHL future here clouded

San Jose enters Seals picture

By Rich Passan

Mel Swig, owner of the National Hockey League California Seals, met with city officials of San Jose, Calif., Thursday in an effort to keep the club in northern California.

Swig, whose club is being sought by interests in Denver and Cleveland, is seeking a guarantee from San Jose to build a 16,000-seat arena for his club.

Next week, Swig will be in Denver to talk with sportscaster Bud Palmer, who is heading a group interested in buying and moving the Seals.

George Gund III, former Cleveland and one-third owner of the Seals, is trying to put together a package that would see the Seals move to Cleveland. It has been reported in an Oakland paper, however, that Gund is willing to sell his share of the Seals.

If so, that probably would end Cleveland's chances for an NHL club this season unless someone suddenly becomes interested in the financially and artistically weak Kansas City Scouts.

Swig, who has placed a \$7.5 million price tag on the Seals, has been given until June 25 by the NHL to determine what he will do with his team.

The owner, however, insists he has set a personal deadline of July 1. "I have so many things to consider that it will take a little more time to make a decision," he said.

Swig, rebuffed in his efforts to

build an arena in San Francisco, said the Seals cannot break even in the 12,000-seat Oakland Coliseum.

If he can be assured by San Jose that an arena will be built, he most likely will stay in Oakland and take the losses. If not, the Seals will land in Denver or Cleveland.

Crusaders' owner Jay Moore, meanwhile, is still that. The expected sale of the World Hockey Association club for \$1.4 million to Bill Putnam of Atlanta is being held up by legal technicalities.

Continued on Page 11-B

'Zaharias' eyes TV

By Bill Nichols

National television rights are in the future for the Babe Zaharias LPGA Invitational Classic now that the tournament has a purse of \$100,000.

Ed Haddad, organizing the LPGA event to be played at Tanglewood the week after next, announced Thursday the tournament prize money has increased from \$76,000 to \$100,000 making it the third richest event on the LPGA American tour.

This increase assures the 20 tournament sponsors will own na-

tional television rights and are free to complete their own negotiations for network coverage. It's hoped this year there will be pickups on the tube and in 1977 it is televised like other tourneys.

"This TV agreement is vital to our long range goal of building a \$50 million cancer research hospital in the Cleveland area in the Babe's name," said Haddad.

"Ownership of these rights will enable us to offer a more attractive rate to participating corporate sponsors and still retain posts

Continued on Page 11-B

Firms 'buy' Zaharias golf holes

Greater Cleveland companies are among the cosponsors of a Ladies Professional Golf Association tournament to be held at Tanglewood Country Club June 21-27.

Each bought a hole at \$3,500. They are Republic Steel Corp., Eaton Corp., Diamond Shamrock Corp., Prescott, Ball & Turben, Stouffer Corp., True Temper

Corp., Modulus Corp., Mid-Continent Telephone Co. and Tenna Corp.

Society National Bank, the Lincoln-Mercury Dealers Association and the Oldsmobile Dealers' Association also purchased holes.

Prize money for the Babe Zaharias Invitational Classic is \$100,000.

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