

MORE SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS

Vic Zoldy implored us to have fun playing softball in this league. There is no better medicine in life than laughter. If we can't laugh at ourselves playing softball as if we were still kids, then it isn't fun. Here are some of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh.

1. **Senior Softball Snippet:** The enraptured pitcher... Al Hessa's reputation as a ladies man was legendary. Al always had his cell phone handy and was always talking to the ladies, even during the games. Focusing on softball doesn't always avert senior moments. Al once took the mound but forgot to put on his pants. But what the hell, Al pitched anyway wearing only his long johns, complete with button-ups to cover up his butt. The game must go on. The league was co-ed at the time.
2. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Senior moment events even take place during batting practice. Ted Wiekowski had a classic one. Backing up trying to catch a popup near first base, Ted missed it and fell down. Ted was still on the ground with his butt facing home plate as the next ball was being pitched. Manny London put the next pitch square in the middle of Ted's butt. Manny, of course, denies that Ted's butt was the target he was aiming for and said he was just going with the pitch. Manny has never let Ted forget it, though.
3. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Angelo Malizia used to give career and romance advice to kids who played on his teams over the years. The league still wonders if it was Angelo who gave advice to Al Hessa on what proper attire to wear when pitching to the ladies.
4. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Angelo Malizia isn't a Satchel Paige. But he's got a classic line just as good... "I pitch to get guys out, not to pitch strikes."
5. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Stan Schwartz was the league's second commissioner. His wonderful wife, Ellen, was the moving force behind many of Stan's accomplishments,

which included codifying the rules, setting up a database, establishing management by consensus, establishing the weather hotline, and organizing the current protocols of the Travel Team and the Winter League. Stan, the consummate perfectionist, admits only to Ellen's helping out. That's exactly why most guys in the league admit that Stan's frequent errors have always helped them to record them as frequent hits.

6. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Stan Schwartz's first year in the league was memorable. By his own admission he was, "...used as a catcher and worked my way down from there." His team mates are still much appreciative of Stan's performance ever since, and often reflect upon how he has improved over the years. "He carries one mean ball bucket, packs a good supply of crying towels, performs spectacular as a water boy, and oh, yeah... he's great at bat monitoring, too!"
7. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Shot from cannons: Almost everyone in the league by now has experienced a Bob Gaugler cannon shot go over their heads or one of his throws getting them out at any base. Wherever they put him, he catches the ball. Where would opposing players like to see him positioned the most? It's unanimous... on the bench.
8. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Ever notice why Manny London always seems to be talking to himself when Bob Morris is around? Goes way back. Bob came home from Florida, and the first game he played, Manny was pitching. On Bob's first trip up to the plate, on Manny's first pitch, Bob put a ball over the left field fence. Bad enough. The next time the two teams met, Manny was pitching again. Only this time Bob put a ball over the right field fence. If you listen closely, Manny is mumbling something about never having given up a homer to Bob over the center field fence.
9. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Infield Fly Rule? We don't need no stinking Infield Fly Rule! Mark Rosen nailed it right on the head... what we need in this league is an *Outfield Fly Rule!* Jim Marple is currently handling the wording of the newly proposed rule... "*Any*

fly ball that has not previously touched any portion of the playing field, but is touched in the air on its initial descent from the upper atmosphere by the leather (faux leather or real) glove of the fielder who is in a position whereby such fielder could potentially catch the ball if such fielder was thirty or forty (or greater) years younger, but who is also in that portion of the outfield that is not normally covered by another player who has been positioned at the time of the pitch in a location that normally would be considered to be an infield position (with the exception of the floating short-fielder position), and assuming that the ball, if left to drop, would strike a portion of the playing field that is covered by grass and not infield dirt, and that location is also in the arc of grass beyond the top of the key normally covered in dirt... is automatically out!" Jim suggests the rule still isn't clear enough. (Note: This rule change is pending and will be brought up for vote prior to the start-up of the 25th Silver Season.)

10. **Senior Softball Snippet:** I got it, You got it, He, She, or It got it, We got it, You got it, They got it... remember your schoolboy English class? Whenever there is a pop up or fly ball, you always wonder who the heck is really going to get it!
11. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Team mascots have recently come into vogue. A movement is afoot to have one or two members of each team be the designated person to don the team's new mascot uniform. The Mustangs are still debating who is going to wear the horse's posterior, but John McCann, as usual, will figure it out in the end.
12. **Senior Softball Snippet:** *Season Ticket Holder Program...* Charlie Gerth enjoys the privilege of being the very first season ticket holder of the MCSSL. Charlie is seen at almost every game and is recognized as the league's number one fan and official Mustangs scorekeeper. Now all fans, too, can join Charlie each and every game behind home plate and cheer on their favorite team! Season tickets are on sale now...just \$3.99 for all 250+ scheduled summer games and \$2.99 for 80+ winter games! But wait...for a limited time we are offering a summer/winter unlimited "All-Seasons" ticket package for just \$1.99 (plus tax.) Tell your friends and family to hurry! Offer expires at the close of

the 2023 Silver Anniversary Season. The next lucky fan to call can get to hold Season Ticket Number 2!

13. **Senior Softball Snippet:** What's in a name? Everything in the MCSSL! John Frantz periodically receives suggestions for 'M' names to be considered for the next expansion team, like these posted here: the *Moon-pies*, the *Marshmallows*, the *Muffins*, the *Macaroons*, the *Macaronis*... sounds like too many lunch trips to Zoto's Diner after the games.
14. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Here's another list of suggested 'M' team names John Frantz recently received: the *Micro-Brewers*, the *Moonshiners*, the *Moochers*, the *Mulligans*, the *Mallozzi-ites*... hm-m-m-m, we can't seem to figure who submitted this list.
15. **Senior Softball Snippet:** *Umpiring By the Thumb*... in an effort to eliminate the "spirited discussion" between managers that often ensues following a questionable call by the batting team's coach / umpire, a new umpiring process is being considered. All non-participants watching the game (including fans, players waiting for the next game, or players who are just hanging around after their own game or just hanging around in general) will give a thumbs up or thumbs down after every call. No ties. After all, it worked in gladiatorial Rome and look where it got them!
16. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday mornings during the summer league, players show up at the Hatfield home field facility to play ball starting at 9:00 a.m. You'd think the prevailing sentiment would be, "... take me out to the ball game..." It's not. The prevailing sentiment is, "... I'm glad I woke up this morning on the green side of the grass!"
17. **Senior Softball Snippet:** And yet another list of suggested 'M' team names recently received by John Frantz: the *Mouseketeers*, the *Muensters*, the *Munchkins*, the *Merry*

Melodies, the *Meatheads*, the *Moops*... somebody watches too much afternoon cable repeats on TV after the games when he should be napping!

18. **Senior Softball Snippet:** *The Scoreboard*... unlike professional baseball where the scoreboard is an integral part of the park's legacy and history, the Hatfield ballpark facility assumes every league will supply its own scoreboard. The MCSSL is a work in progress. Sometimes an old chalk board (generously donated by Bob Schuettler, who stole the board and some chalk from Pottsville High School during senior week in 1962) serves the purpose. Once, a scoreboard was used that was built by master carpenter Jim Corrigan (Jim's time batting over .300 lasted longer than the scoreboard!) Doesn't seem to matter much about scoreboards anyway. Nobody can see it ten feet past home plate. Besides, players can't remember the score regardless of whether they when they can see it or not.

19. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Hammies and quadies and groins, oh my! Recognizing the importance of safety to players and in an effort to reduce injuries, the league officers have approved the new rule proposal that a new position be created for league play – *Permanent Runner*. By unanimous agreement, the following five league members (you only need four, but like a car, we've included a spare) – Tommy Corcoran, Bruce Williams, Joe Davis, Timmy Smith, and Ron Clemens – have been re-assigned to permanently run the bases for each and every player on each and every team at each and every game. In the event any one of these five players blows out his own hammie, quad, or groin during a game, the rule stipulates that the game will be temporarily suspended until a run-off race is conducted between the two opposing teams (managers are excluded) to determine a temporary Permanent Runner spare, who shall remain in that capacity until he injures himself. If a game runs out of players after the process is repeated, managers may arrange a race between any fans present at the game. But then again, there won't be any players left to continue the game, so why bother?

20. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Ever wonder why the senior softball league uses yellow balls instead of white ones? Here's the scientific explanation: "As age progresses, the human eye, due to degeneration, develops a condition called presbyopia in which it loses both the ability to quickly focus and maximize the gathering of light that enters through the cornea, thus creating the inability of the eye to clearly define objects, particularly at the opposite ends of the light spectrum where everything on the periphery is either black or white, but does not as critically affect the transitional blending of colors in the middle of the spectrum, particularly in the range of yellows." Here's the non-scientific explanation: "You can see them better, duh..."
21. **Senior Softball Snippet:** This is rumored to be John Frantz's favorite list of suggested 'M' team names received so far: the *Male-o-Pausers*, the *Medicares*, the *Maaloxes*, the *Metamuesels*, the *Mueslis*... must have been one of the senior seniors who submitted this, John figures.
22. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Tom Musselman of the Mustangs fashioned a new MCSSL dress code in his very first game by wearing powder blue pants to coordinate the colors of the Royal Blue team shirt. Fans and players alike were impressed at how cute he looked. Tom is a real trend-setter. Before showcasing the new Mustangs look, Tom first conducted market research wearing his new uniform in New Hope and Lambertville to get crowd feedback. He apparently was well received. Tom is hoping the league moves forward to develop a similar dress code for all the teams.
23. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Ever wonder why the Mongrels have to sit in the visitor's dugout even when they are home team? Because the township posted a sign along the right field fence near the dugout that reads, "NO DOGS ALLOWED."
24. **Senior Softball Snippet:** At a recent game, the Mustangs John McCann was playing short field and to no one's surprise dropped a routine fly ball trying to one-hand the catch. John Lancaster of the Mongrels was watching the game and queried John after the inning, suggesting McCann use two hands to catch fly balls. McCann, of course, made up

some excuse about the ball hitting his bare hand. Lancaster smiled and held out his two arms and replied, “That’s why you use two hands. I always do.” Very funny.

25. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Remember the old hidden ball trick when you were a kid?

Here’s the senior version ...At a recent game, third baseman Matt Lynch fielded what looked like a routine ground ball. The ball suddenly disappeared from sight. Matt frantically searched for the ball to make the play. As it was later discovered, the ball had somehow gotten lost in his nether region. What is even harder to believe is that Matt not only couldn’t find it, he couldn’t feel it! After about fifteen seconds the ball finally fell from the nether region and landed on the ground between his legs. By then the runner was safe at second base. Matt insists the real story was somewhat different and that he almost got the runner at first after recovering the ball. We like our version better.

26. **Senior Softball Snippet:** One of the hardest things to accomplish in the indoor winter league is hitting a home run at the BuxMont facility. An automatic homer is a helluva line drive shot that hits the back wall above the designated line. A few guys have done that. Inside-the-park homers are all but impossible. Ironically, Tommy Corcoran and Bob Gaugler hit the back wall on the same day but in different games. Must have been the “rarified” air lingering in the facility that day.

27. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Anyone who has ever been a baseball fan is familiar with the iconic image of Willie Mays’ patented “Basket” catch of fly balls in the outfield. Few of us can emulate the athletic prowess or grace of Willie catching a ball. Here in the MCSSL, fans and players alike are frequently entertained by the “Billy Belly Button” catch frequently seen when Billy Mallozzi fields a fly ball. Believe us when we tell you, there isn’t anybody who can emulate that athletic process or grace!

28. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Dilemma: what to do with the league’s abundant supply of used balls... One proposal came from the Maulers Stan Walters who suggested that the league commission a local artist to design and construct a “softball sculpture” made up

entirely of used balls and put on permanent display near the dugouts. The sculpture could be of a senior posed in his favorite position. Stan offered to be the model to sit for the artist. The league, however, declined his offer when it was discovered that Stan's favorite sitting pose was on the throne.

29. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Dilemma: what to do with the league's abundant supply of used balls... Another proposal came from Bud Hyndman who suggested the league construct a play-bin next to the dugouts like they have at McDonalds for the kids. The bin could be filled with the used balls. Bud said he can't wait to dive in and re-acquaint himself with all those balls he dropped out there on the field during the past several seasons.
30. **Senior Softball Snippet:** A great rule application in the league is the method of picking up additional players from other teams when the competing team rosters come up short of players to start a game. One such instance arose where the team manager was confronted with choosing only a single player from two who wanted to play. The manager sized up the contenders – Tommy Corcoran and John Packel – and asked them who the better player was. John looked over at Tommy, who hadn't responded. Then John replied, "Pick me, pick me." The manager pointed back at Tommy and asked, "Why pick you and not him?" Packel quickly responded back, "I can hear better than he can."
31. **Senior Softball Snippet:** The popularity of the MCSSL is such that each season there is a waiting list to get into the league simply because the rosters are maxed out. As the season progresses, openings routinely result for a plethora of reasons, like injuries, vacations, etc. One gentleman on the list (whom we never got to know) was yet another awaiting senior anxious to get assigned to a team. His big chance came midway through the 2014 summer season. At last, he got called up and made his senior league debut with the Minutemen. On his very first at bat, he hit the ball, commenced running down the line to first base, got halfway there, and fell flat on his face, tumbling along the line. The resulting injury took him out of the game. By game, we mean career. He never came back after that. We trust he recovered from the physical injury, and we hope he recovered from

his embarrassing debut. We ALL have had similar moments in this league, and we ALL have eaten dirt or grass somewhere on the field after we tumbled. It's part of the initiation to welcome all newcomers into the senior league! We hope he comes back.

32. Senior Softball Snippet: At a recent Majors-Mauler game, a screaming line drive was hit at Maulers Jim Young in the outfield. As the ball zipped by at an incredible speed, Jim tried to get his glove up, but the ball hit his forearm and caromed off into left field. Jim's response was to throw his glove on the ground and curse, followed by a quick series of interesting oaths. Stan Walters was backing up the play, fell to the ground (he does that a lot!) and retrieved the ball. With as much mustard as he could muster from his standard fielding prone position (which wasn't much mustard at all,) Stan fired it back toward the infield. Jim was still throwing a temper tantrum, bent over, his back toward Stan. The relay throw was intercepted by Jim's behind. We figure Stan was throwing at the largest target in sight.

33. Senior Softball Snippet: Dilemma: what to do with the league's abundant supply of used balls... Yet another proposal came from Tom Dougherty who suggested that each player in the league autograph a ball, after which the autographed supply can be taken to a sports memorabilia show and sold to collectors. Profits could then be used to offset the cost of next year's supply of new balls for the season. Mike Destefano said he can't wait to see how the league is going to fend with only enough profit to buy one new ball to be used for a few hundred games.

34. Senior Softball Snippet: During the hot and humid days of summer, most of the competition that can be seen in the league doesn't happen on the field. It happens in the official MCSSL Peanut Gallery. You know, that cool area in the shade directly behind home plate. That's where awaiting and finished players and fans alike congregate to compete for the prime seats on the Vic Zoldy commemorative bench to watch a game. Competition can get pretty intense at times back there. Thank goodness for Bill Standen, the league's resident Peanut Gallery umpire, who makes all the right calls.

35. Senior Softball Snippet: Dilemma: what to do with the league's abundant supply of used balls... And yet another interesting proposal came from Tom Lane who suggested that we have a promotional give-away for all fans like they have at the Phillies games. All fans ninety-nine and under will receive a commemorative used ball, compliments of Summer League Director, Dave Speelhoffer. Dave especially likes Tom's idea. Projecting the number of fans anticipated to show up for a free ball, Dave figures we could finally clean out the shed of used balls by the league's 150th Anniversary.

36. Senior Softball Snippet: Those balls are outta here! ...The most exciting play in all of baseball is the home run. Here in the senior softball league, just getting one over the fence is a Herculean feat. In a recent game between the Majors and the Marvels, Bill Ambrulavage of the Majors put three consecutive shots over the fence and came up just short of the fourth on his last at bat. Nobody has ever done that before. Bill's feat showed us that no matter how old we become playing this game, no matter how much we think we've seen it all, no matter that we think we'll never achieve anything as exciting as this again at our age, suddenly somebody does something and we have a new hero. Bill reminded us why it's worth sticking around this league, because we ain't seen it all yet.

37. Senior Softball Snippet: Dilemma: what to do with the league's abundant supply of used balls... Still another interesting proposal came from Wayne Bailey who thought we could hold a Home Run Derby like they do at the MLB All Star game. We gather Bill Ambrulavage, Bob Gaugler, Rich Server, Joe Kelly, Ron Geib, and Tom Musselman to compete for a winner. We pitch the whole supply of balls to them until all the balls are over the fence, then simply don't retrieve them. That way the supply is exhausted, we no longer have to store used balls in the shed, and we've re-cycled them back to nature. The only problem, as Joe Juba pointed out, is that the heavy concentrated layers of balls that would accumulate beyond the fence would probably wipe out the township trees and shrubbery, and Hatfield might not go for this. (Good idea, though, Wayne.)

38. Senior Softball Snippet: Throwing an old-timer's game... We got a lot of responses to this proposal regarding the league holding an old-timer's game. Bob Sweeney came up

with the best response yet. Bob pointed out that the league already has old-timer games. Ninety-six are scheduled during the winter indoor league and about two hundred and fifty are scheduled during the summer outdoor league. This one was so obvious, we've got to give Bob an "Atta boy!" Oh well, so much for that idea...

39. **Senior Softball Snippet:** *The Greatest Show on Earth...* boy, do we love the circus! One came to Hatfield this past summer, camping out in the field right next to our ball park. What a treat to see the animals along the driveway on our way to and from the parking lot. Everyone thought it was so cute seeing the small herd of goats! The wives of the ball players, however, weren't so enthralled. One wife (who shall go unnamed) was quoted as saying, "What's the big deal with the goats? Every game we come to there are at least twenty five old ones out there trying to play softball!"
40. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Everybody knows John Frantz as the consummate baseball / softball enthusiast. So, apparently, is John's wife, who has watched her husband play baseball for years. Shortly after John joined the league in his first season, he convinced her to come out to watch him play a softball game for a change. John was thrilled and thought the Minutemen played a spectacular game that day. After it was over, John asked what she thought of this great bunch of senior guys playing softball. Her response is a classic. "It's like watching kids play T-Ball."
41. **Senior Softball Snippet:** *MCSSL All Star Game...* Ben Modica came up with this great idea to put on a show for the fans with the league's All Stars. Balloting would mirror what major league baseball does... a combination of managers' selections and fan voting to pick their favorite players. Seems, however, that we've incurred a slight problem with the process. So far, each manager has selected ALL his own players and we haven't had one fan cast a vote yet. Oh, well... maybe next year.
42. **Senior Softball Snippet:** *Senior Run-the-Bases Day...* The Marshals George Hart came up with this other great idea to promote the league's exposure. If the Phillies can attract kids from all over the tri-state area, why can't the MCSSL attract seniors from all over

the Hatfield area? We had a surprisingly good response from a gaggle of fans from senior communities all around. Seniors eagerly signed up to run the bases (...well, actually they signed up with the stipulation that they could walk the bases instead of run as long they could bring their walkers.) The league agreed. The activity would start following the conclusion of a final Thursday afternoon game around 3:00 p.m. Unfortunately, the idea had to be nixed when Treasurer Stan Schwartz pointed out that the league no longer makes provision to pay the township for the electric bill to light up the field until after midnight.

43. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Our favorite senior moments... Since Angelo Malizia is number one in seniority, it seems only appropriate that we should highlight Angelo in one of our favorite classic senior moments. It happened during a Wednesday game between the Maulers and the Mavericks when Angelo was pitching. With runners on base, the next batter hit a fly ball to left field for the first out. Angelo turned to his players before pitching to the next batter to remind his fielders that there were two outs. "One out, Angelo," came the response from fielders and runners alike. "No. Two outs," Angelo replied. "No. One," everyone maintained. Angelo was adamant. "No. Two," he insisted, holding up two fingers. "Where's the second out?" Mike DeStefano yelled from second base. Angelo responded, "Fly ball to left field, ground out to short fielder." Angelo's players replied, "Angelo... that ground ball out happened on Tuesday. This is Wednesday." Angelo thought about it for a moment. "I knew that." Angelo went back to the mound, turned to his fielders and said, "One down," then threw the next pitch. Gotta love those senior moments.

44. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Probably the most iconic scene in the history of all of baseball is when Babe Ruth came up to the plate in Chicago and pointed to where he was going to go. Georgie Schreder made history this past summer when he came up to the plate and let the fans who were sitting around on the Vic Zoldy bench know where HE was going to go. The fans were disappointed, though... Georgie pointed to the township's new restroom facility.

45. **Senior Softball Snippet:** A little bit of league history – more on the origin of the Corcoran Rule. Here’s the history behind the origin of codifying the general rule that addresses playing in multiple games on one day: In the interest of maintaining the safety and health of any individual player, the league officers determined that playing two games in a single day was more than enough. In this manner, it would not jeopardize an individual’s well-being by allowing him to pull off another “stupid man trick” [wives’ terminology, not ours] through excessive strenuous activity that could result in over-exertion and possible use of the defibrillator, which, by the way, costs a lot of money to replace the battery and medical packets. Tommy Corcoran was pretty slick back in those earlier days... pretended not to hear the edict when it was just a verbal understanding. So, since Tommy doesn’t read lips, the league had to put it in writing. Thus, the clause was added to the MCSSL League Information and Rules document and became affectionately known as “The Corcoran Rule.”

46. **Senior Softball Snippet:** *The Bylaws...* once again, we have Mark Rosen to thank for putting it all into perspective with his humorous “prop” at last summer’s picnic that parodied the ObamaCare act. At all our ages, the last thing we needed was another set of “edicts” formulated to conduct our lives. But John Frantz did oh, so well for us... he put it all together in a set of bylaws so we could easily understand the basic things that form the structure of our devotion to this league of oldsters. Mark, in his very special humorous way, made us all aware that this league is not as complicated as it seems. It is fortified on simple old-fashioned trust. We trusted John to construct for us a set of understandable bylaws that we can all abide by, and Mark reinforced why we should have faith in that through his indelible humor. Hats off to Mark, our very special soothsayer!

47. **Senior Softball Snippet:** *Bad Medicine Water...* Many moons ago, the Minutemen team appointed Butch Fisher to be the team’s official “water boy” to ensure the guys had a communal container of water at every game to maximize health and safety concerns. Butch did a great job maintaining a fresh water supply for every game that first season, making sure the team cooler was always filled. Then came the following season. Butch

filled up the cooler again. But nobody told Butch that he was supposed to throw out the leftover water from last season before adding more water. As the story goes, Dave Speelhoffer was the very first to fall victim to one of the many reported diseases when Dave contracted malaria after the opening spring game. Dave's case was the first reported in Montgomery County since WWII. The county reportedly had a tough time procuring a supply of quinine. The good news is that the county finally managed to locate a supply in the Philippine Islands, enough to sustain Dave's continued well-being for a limited time. The bad news is that at the 2014 end-of-season picnic, Dave reported that he was down to his very last quinine tablet...

48. **Senior Softball Snippet:** The history behind eliminating the Infield Fly Rule...

Everybody knows the rule. Multiple runners on base in a force situation, ball popped up, etc. But the key to it is that the ball must be, "... easily catchable..." Therein lay the problem. In the MCSSL, there is no such thing as an easily catchable ball. Not only that, when it occurred, there were at least twenty-five umpires making the call! So since the league wasn't able to comply with the true spirit of the rule or agree on who should make the call, they said, "What the hell... let's just eliminate it!" Hasn't been a problem since.

49. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Here's a snippet worth its weight in gold... During a winter game last season, John McCann committed a few costly errors late in the game. John was discouraged and bearing his soul after the game ended, but fellow comrade John Packel, watching from the bench and waiting to play the next game, comforted his friend. Packel used all the skills he had earned from a career dedicated to the legal profession. "Making an error is not all that bad," Packel assured McCann, with a consoling courtroom shrewdness that would make Perry Mason look like an amateur. McCann was assuaged. (That's a Packel legal term that means, "relieved.") Ray Forlano, also waiting to play the next game, was sitting nearby. Ray doesn't mince legalese. He told McCann, "What Packel is trying to tell you, McCann, is that he's seen you do a whole lot worse!" So much for senior solace.

50. **Senior Softball Snippet:** Speaking of the Peanut Gallery... everybody loves the two old wise-cracking geezers Statler & Waldorf from the Muppets Show. Seems we have our own loveable designated MCSSL Midnights Muppets behind home plate on the Vic Zoldy bench. You know them as Hunsberger & Ryan... or Vern & Bud... (We're keeping an eye out for Kermit the Frog and Miss Piggy to show up...) There's a whole lot more to come from these two, that's for sure, so stay tuned!

Do you have a favorite story from the league that you'd like to see in a Senior Softball Snippet? If you do, contact George Schreader or John McCann and let them know.

EVEN MORE SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS...

Vic Zoldy implored us to have fun playing softball in this league. There is no better medicine in life than laughter. If we can't laugh at ourselves playing softball as if we were still kids, then it isn't fun. Here are more of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh.

51. Senior Softball Snippet: Meanwhile, back on the Vic Zoldy bench, another conversation overheard between our lovable Midnights Muppet team of Hunsberger & Ryan went something like this...

The boys were watching a game and discussing how all ten teams in the MCSSL load up their batting order by putting the “meat of the order” where it should be in the line-up.

Vern: What dy'a think about the meat in these two line-ups, Bud?

Bud: Most of this meat looks more like chicken wings!

(Interject a hearty “Heh-Heh-Heh” Muppet laugh here...)

52. Senior Softball Snippet: Another classic senior moment...The Maulers and the Mavericks engaged in a late afternoon game where both teams had to pick up outside players to field their respective teams. The Maulers sent all eight regular players to the plate in the first inning, scoring three runs. The Mavericks got shut out in the first. Inning two... Georgie Schreader led off the top of the second, the first of three pick-up players for the Maulers. After the count was one and one, Gordy Detweiler, who was catching for the Mavericks, suddenly yelled, “Time out! Stop the game!” Everyone turned, including the observers back on the Vic Zoldy bench. “You can't bat!” Gordy exclaimed, yelling at Georgie. “You guys have to bat at the bottom of the line-up! That's the league rules!” Georgie replied, dumfounded, “But we are.” Gordy was adamant. “You're leading off! You can't lead off! You have to bat at the bottom of the line-up!” Everyone looked askance. Gordy said, “All the Maulers have to bat first!” Everyone replied, including all

of Gordy's Maverick teammates, "They already did, Gordy. This is the second inning." There was a moment of revered silence while Gordy reflected, for after all, he is one of the league's tribal elders. "Oh... yeah... I knew that," he responded with that familiar impish grin. "Play ball. What's the count?" Georgie was so shook up he flied out on the next pitch. After the inning was over the Maverick players all applauded Gordy for using such a masterful managerial tactic to get an out.

53. Senior Softball Snippet: Almost the longest summer game... John Scholly of the Mustangs finally got his first career hit since joining the league, ripping a rifle shot down the left field line. John insisted the game be stopped so he could be presented the ball. When the laughter finally ceased a considerable time later, the game resumed after a significant delay that almost made league history for becoming the longest seven inning game ever.

54. Senior Softball Snippet: Book & movie project... we're tossing around the idea of writing a funny book that could be made into a movie about the senior softball league, and are looking for some title suggestions. Bobby Sipes gave us the first one: "Senior Softballers – Old Men Wearing Cups." Anybody have any more?

55. Senior Softball Snippet: Meanwhile, back on the Vic Zoldy bench, another conversation overheard between our lovable Midnights Muppet team of Hunsberger & Ryan went something like this...

The boys were discussing the annual players' picnic and photo session, where team pictures were taken and individual player portraits were optionally available.

Bud: Hey, Vern... did you hear that Rich Hanauer ordered a thousand baseball trading cards of himself posing with a bat?

Vern: No! What's going to do with all those cards?

Bud: I heard he plans to sign ‘em and put ‘em on the collector’s market.

Vern: Which one? Antiques Road Show?

(Interject a hearty “Heh-Heh-Heh” Muppet laugh here...)

56. Senior Softball Snippet: The Right Regulation Ball... In a game last summer season between the Mongrels and the Majors, shortstop Dale Bishop of the Mongrels fielded a hard hit grounder, only to reach for the ball in his glove and find it wasn’t there! Dale spun around, thinking he had somehow missed it and it had gotten through to the outfield. The outfielders had not a clue. Nobody could find the ball for a few brief moments until Dale suddenly realized it had somehow skirted up the pant leg of his shorts and was wedged... well, you know where it got wedged. The runner by that time was safe before Dale retrieved the ball and returned it to play. When the game resumed, players on both teams were ever so grateful that Dale had returned the right regulation ball. (“Right,” of course, meaning “correct.”)

57. Senior Softball Snippet: More on the book/movie project... Sam Myers thought of a good title for the senior version of “The Sandlot” when he suggested we title the book, “Blazing Jock Straps.” We thought about it. Problem is, not many people anymore even know what a jock strap is, and we figured we couldn’t get away with naming it, “Blazing Athletic Supporters.”

58. Senior Softball Snippet: Most Valuable Player award... after almost every baseball and softball season is over, the respective league usually recognizes a MVP. Here in the MCSSL, however, the honor is a slight bit different. We decided this year to recognize a “Most un-Valuable Player” (MunVP.)The award goes to the player who has demonstrated the inability to play up to the level of expectation for his age that his teammates expect, taking into consideration that the player’s talents and proficiencies may have diminished because he’s gotten too damn old. We haven’t yet picked the player to honor, as we’re still sorting through over one hundred and fifty names that have been nominated.

59. Senior Softball Snippet: Gold Glove award... in keeping with the tradition, after almost every baseball and softball season is over, the respective league also recognizes those players who deserve a Gold Glove award. Here in the MCSSL, however, these awards are also slightly warped. We call them, “Tin Glove” awards, and they go to the players who have demonstrated the most ungainly, contorted, awkward, inelegant, uncoordinated, and just plain dumb and funny looking method to catch a ball without dropping it. We haven’t yet picked which players to honor, as we’re still sorting through the names. Again, we’ve had over one hundred and fifty nominees...

60. Senior Softball Snippet: Softball and golf have both been compared in this regard... both are sports that at any given moment in time, the individual’s momentary performance is judged by the result of his execution of the play. In golf you hit the ball and it lands somewhere closer to the hole (well, supposedly...) You’re on your own. In softball, you hit the ball and it lands ... holy crap! You may be on your own, but a dozen other guys are watching what you just did! They’re just glad it wasn’t them who hit it where it wasn’t supposed to go and they don’t have to take a penalty stroke. Maybe we need that in the MCSSL... a penalty stroke! We’ll call it a “penalty swing.” Jim Marple... new rule proposal coming at you...!

61. Senior Softball Snippet: Meanwhile, back on the Vic Zoldy bench, another conversation overheard between our lovable Midnights Muppet team of Hunsberger & Ryan went something like this...

The boys continued discussing the annual players’ picnic and photo session, where team pictures were taken and individual player portraits were optionally available.

Vern: Hey, Bud... and did you hear that Donnie Petrille is having that photo guy make up an action shot of him fielding a ball?

Bud: No! What for?

Vern: Says he's gonna submit it to that cereal company and see if he can get it put on a Wheaties box.

Bud: I think he'll have better luck getting it put on a package of Depends!

(Interject a hearty "Heh-Heh-Heh" Muppet laugh here...)

62. Senior Softball Snippet: You gotta love this one suggested for the book/movie project... ALL of us will forever love the movie, "Sandlot." Tom Lane suggested we title ours, "Hard-as-hell-on-the-infield-dirt-when-it-doesn't-rain-in-Hatfield Lot." Not bad. Long title, though. Don't think Hollywood would go for it. Ken Burns, either.

63. Senior Softball Snippet: Meanwhile, back on the Vic Zoldy bench, another conversation overheard between our lovable Midnights Muppet team of Hunsberger & Ryan went something like this...

The boys were watching a game between the Majors and the Mavericks. Bob Weaver was up and took a mighty swing, missed the ball, twisted around, groaned, and lost the bat as it flew out of his hand.

Vern: Hey, Weaver! You oughta try a little pine tar. Maybe you can hold onto the bat for a change!

Bud: Yeah! And while you're at it, Weaver, a little Ben Gay wouldn't hurt either!

(Interject a hearty "Heh-Heh-Heh" Muppet laugh here...)

64. Senior Softball Snippet: In a winter indoor game last season, Tom Musselman of the Mustangs, known for his lusty and hearty swings, swung so hard at a pitch (he missed it!) that he spun himself around and landed on his butt on top of home plate. Tom, not one to be discouraged

and certainly not one to be embarrassed, merely commented, “Just dusting off the plate, guys.” Good come back... that carpet gets mighty dirty.

65. Senior Softball Snippet: And even still more on the book/movie project... Joe Gennerelli thought up a real good one. We could call it, “The Bad News Papa-Bears.” Then, if we do a sequel, the title would be a no-brainer. We’d call that one, “The Bad News Papa-Bears in Breaking Wind.” We’d be on a roll for the third sequel! “The Bad News Papa-Bears Go to the Senior Center.”

AND EVEN MORE SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS...

Vic Zoldy implored us to have fun playing softball in this league. There is no better medicine in life than laughter. If we can't laugh at ourselves playing softball as if we were still kids, then it isn't fun. Here are more of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh.

66. Senior Softball Snippet: Nobody ever accused Tommy Corcoran of playing chicken or trying to be a shortstop. That is, until a game over the winter changed everyone's opinion. Opening game of the season, Purple team Majors vs. Green team Mustangs... the Majors took a big chance and put Tommy at shortstop. Ground ball... easy double play... Tommy fumbled the pick-up and lost his balance while trying to run to tag second base then fire to first... Tommy slid into second, but the runner was safe. Tommy became the first defensive player in MCSSL history to be declared out at second for sliding. Even Jimmy Rollins couldn't do that. As far as playing chicken goes... to make matters worse, after Tommy slid, he couldn't find the ball. It wasn't until his teammates pointed out that the ball was located where mother hens warm their eggs.

67. Senior Softball Snippet: And more on the book/movie project... Will Fausett loves and watches all the classic baseball movies on TV, and thought of this title... "Field of Daydreams." We figured it might be just a little too bland and the title might get lost in the suggestion. It's probably more accurate if we called it, "Field of Hallucinations."

68. Senior Softball Snippet: Meanwhile, back on the Bux/Mont cold and uncomfortable aluminum bench, another conversation overheard between our lovable Midnights Muppet team of Hunsberger & Ryan went something like this...

The boys came out to watch a winter league game and noticed a lot of the guys were sporting new gloves.

Vern: Hey Bud, Gordy Detweiler says his new glove comes with a lifetime guarantee.

Bud: What's the big deal? At his age, EVERYTHING he buys has a lifetime guarantee!

(Interject a hearty "Heh-Heh-Heh" Muppet laugh here...)

69. Senior Softball Snippet: Speaking of gloves... the MCSSL held its Annual Winter Ugly Glove Contest mid-season. The only criteria for nomination: the glove must be as old and ugly as its owner, and the older and uglier the better. We had over fifty nominees vying for the coveted prize. Here are the final results.

3rd Place went to Jim Corrigan and his sickly, black whatever it is whose pocket looks like it was attacked by Ebola virus or some other unknown form of jungle rot.

2nd Place went to Tommy Corcoran, whose... whatever it is and almost didn't qualify... at this point looks more like a mish-mash of electrical tape than a glove, although it would probably be welcomed as a fine piece of sporting equipment on the sandlots of most third world Caribbean islands.

1st Place Grand Prize Winner goes to Chas Wegand! His entry received the top combined score of player/glove age, ugly face, ugly glove, and historical significance. Judges were enthralled by the fact that the glove was actually manufactured before Chas was born, but is still being held together with plastic string handcuffs. In his acceptance speech, Chas was quoted as revealing, "... I was at the farm animal show in Harrisburg and got the idea from watching the farmers tie up the legs of barn mice before waterboarding them. It was a WOW moment for me!"

By the way, the coveted prize? A gift basket containing an assortment of third world ointments & salves, a dozen rolls of black electrical tape, a large container of assorted cable and wire ties donated by Lowe's, and an assortment of plastic handcuffs donated by Fredericks of Hollywood. Congratulations Chas!

70. Senior Softball Snippet: We all know how quiet Tom Dougherty can be. But until this past winter season, we didn't know that it's because of how religious he is. You see, Tom was once a Buddhist. Story goes way back to his days in Vietnam. Tom had this mean old sergeant who was always giving him dip-sh-h-h... duty (you know, latrine type, honey-dipping, etc.) Being the wiley army specialist that Tom was, he sized up the situation, then applied to change his religion from Roman Catholic to Buddhism. Once the papers were processed, he was issued new dog tags that showed name, blood type, and Tom's new found religion. From then on, whenever the sergeant tried to give Tom any "crappy" duty, Tom would only smile, flash his new dog tags, and remind the sergeant it was against his religion to touch that kind of stuff. Fortunately for Tom, when he returned home, his mom converted him back. But some things never change, though. Tom still gets away with it. He brought along his old Buddhist dog tags to all the winter Orange team Mavericks games and waved them at Gordy Detweiler whenever he didn't want to play a "crappy" position. (Thank goodness the summer field maintenance team doesn't have to spread manure on the field!)

71. Senior Softball Snippet: ALMOST is almost...Joe Gennarelli of the Red team Magics coined a new meaning of the word, "almost." Prior to a winter league game between the Red team Magics and the Sand team Marshals, Joe was voicing his performance of the previous week's game against the previous team. Joe said he almost had four hits... he almost had a hit the first time up, but grounded out to third, almost had a hit the second time up, but grounded out to short, almost had a hit the third time up but grounded out to second, and almost had a hit the fourth time up but... Joe didn't want to talk about the fourth time at bat. Claims it was a bad call...

72. Senior Softball Snippet: Jeff Jordan is a star player for the Green team Mustangs, and one of the league's favorite sons! Over the winter months, Jeff had cause to "take a break" from game activities and get some routine maintenance done. (We ALL can relate to this!) Successful, as expected! Jeff is the best trooper there is, and his eye surgery went well. The doctor ordered

him to take a break from softball before resuming play, the reason being, the doctor didn't want Jeff to "stress or strain" his eyesight playing softball. Softball is Jeff's greatest love, but he complied, and agreed to only come out to watch the games, not participate. However... a month later, Jeff recanted on the doctor's orders. Seems it wasn't the right prescription. Jeff's comment says it all: "There was nothing worse for a guy recovering from eye surgery than WATCHING these guys play ball! It would have been a less painful recovery to just play instead of watch!"

73. Senior Softball Snippet: "STRIKEOUT OF THE CENTURY..." is what the newspaper headlines read all around Montgomery County. The Green team Mustangs' soft-spoken pitcher, John McCann, finally recorded a called strike out on that historic day, Thursday, January 29th, 2015, a full four years after joining the MCSSL. Probable nobody will ever remember that it was the Purple team Majors' own Don Petrille (interim manager for Bob Weaver, who was vacationing) who took the called third strike right down the middle, and who was quoted mumbling under his breath, "... nobody's gonna believe this... McCann pitched a strike..." John was quoted as replying back, through tears of exultation, "I changed the height! It was an accident! All my pitches are accidents!" Stunned beyond belief, Don was unable to offer any further explanation. As were all the fans, who gazed in stunned silence...

74. Senior Softball Snippet: "McCANN'S HISTORIC STRIKEOUT IGNITES ALLEGATIONS." The headlines, only one day after the history-making event, were scathing. Immediately following the game, the lovable Midnights Muppet team of Hunsberger & Ryan reported that the ball pitched by John McCann – the very ball that struck out Don Petrille – had been altered. Manager Bob Weaver, vacationing in Maui at the time of the strikeout, received a text message and right away texted back for his teammates to confiscate the ball. Upon further examination of the softball in question (the game ball was provided by manager John McCann himself!) the league officers who were present at the scene quickly discovered that the ball stitching had been slit open, an inflation needle had been inserted deep into the core, and the seam was amateurishly re-sewn. It was the bulge in the ball's seam stitching, caused by the protruding inflation needle that brought attention to the unlikely strikeout accomplishment. John

McCann denied the allegations that he had attempted to deflate the ball prior to tossing the third strike to Petrille. The investigation is on-going...

75. Senior Softball Snippet: “McCANN CONTINUES TO DENY CHARGES IN BALL DEFLATION CONTROVERSY.” Just one day after the Super Bowl and Tom Brady’s redemptive victory, the Green team Mustangs’ John McCann continued to deny that he altered the softball that struck out Don Petrille. “Look. If I’ve said it once, I’ve said it a hundred times already. The pitch was an accident. I don’t throw called strikes. Everybody in the league knows that and respects that.” The Purple team Majors’ manager, Bob Weaver, was unavailable for comment, at the time still lost somewhere in transit thirty-five thousand feet out over the Pacific.

76. Senior Softball Snippet: “McCANN CAUGHT IN ‘DEFLATE-GATE’ FABRICATION... FESSES UP TO ALLEGATIONS... RECEIVES MCSSL DISCIPLINARY ACTION.” The Green team Mustangs’ ubiquitous pitcher, John McCann, finally fessed up to having attempted to alter the softball that struck out Don Petrille earlier this season. When league officers directly confronted McCann, accusing him of trying to “deflate” the softball – pointing out that it is impossible to deflate a softball – McCann suddenly broke down and confessed. Observers said John looked like a deer caught in the headlights. “You can’t?” he responded. “No, John,” Assistant Commissioner Mike DeStefano replied. “Softballs aren’t filled with air.” A disbelieving McCann responded, “They’re not?” It was reported that John McCann unexpectedly lay prostrate at DeStefano’s feet and begged for mercy. The league has decided to allow McCann to continue as a senior softballer (he’s forgivingly old), but with a senior caveat. The league is taking punitive action against John by expunging the strike out against Don Petrille. In addition, the league has declared that if John McCann ever again throws a called third strike, it will be deemed a walk instead, and the batter will be automatically awarded first base. Later, John McCann was less than repentant. “No big deal. I’ll probably never throw another called third strike again anyway.”

77. Senior Softball Snippet: A survey was recently taken of indoor Winter League players, asking the simple question, “What pitcher do you personally feel is the most effective and intimidating?” We had some interesting responses. Here, in no particular order, are the top eight comebacks:

“John Packel. Every time I bat against him, my swing thought is, ‘I wonder if he’s ever washed those red socks?’”

“Joe Kline. It’s the only time he stops talking, and that always throws me a curve.”

“Bill Bogel. Instead of ‘staring’ me down, he ‘smiles’ me down. Very intimidating.”

“Wayne Bailey. When he goes into his wind-up, I can’t help but thinking, ‘He doesn’t look anything like Beetle Bailey in the cartoons.’”

“Ron Clemens. I’m always expecting him to throw me out somewhere even when he’s pitching.”

“Angelo Malizia. Instead of concentrating on the pitch, in my mind I keep asking, ‘What’s his secret? I must have been in diapers when he started pitching.’”

“Manny London. I keep thinking that if I get a hit, Manny is going to call time and yell at me.”

“Tony Flor. I guess the Green team has finally decided they might want to win a game for a change. That’s intimidating by itself!”

(NOTE: We decided to keep the names of all those responding confidential. We didn’t want to give the above mentioned pitchers any advantage over some hitters.)

78. Senior Softball Snippet: The “MCSSL ‘DEFLATE-GATE’ BALL SCANDAL CONTINUES.” It just won’t go away. New allegations by several other teams have surfaced that now accuses the Gold team Midnights of intentionally deflating the game ball when they come to bat as part of the “Beetle-Ball” philosophy of their manager, Wayne “Beetle” Bailey. The claims are that it enables them to run faster on the base paths (we think this is more of an optical illusion because of the lighting at the Bux/Mont facility.) The allegations came to light (no additional pun intended) when numerous Midnight players uncharacteristically reached first base safely after

striking the ball mush-ily (new word coined by the scandal.) The league is now looking into the possibility that it actually might be possible to deflate a softball after all. The league has hired an outside equipment consultant, a Mr. Butch Fisher (claims are that this is NOT the same Butch Fisher who is a MCSSL roster player), to conduct the internal investigation. Manager Bailey, of course, has denied the allegations, also stating that this suspicious Fisher character has the reputation of not being the brightest bulb in the pack, purportedly having a filament or two missing. Due to the seriousness of the allegation, Commissioner John Frantz has named an outside consultant to head Mr. Fisher's investigation, a gentleman named Mr. Tom Brady, who hails from somewhere in New England and is purported to be the world's leading expert in deflated balls.

79. Senior Softball Snippet: Another Religious Conversion... the MCSSL is strictly a non-denominational organization. But, after the conversion of Tom Dougherty to Buddhism, it seems only appropriate that we showcase ALL other religiosity. It was a catharsis for another of our favorite sons... Ken Moyer. At a Green team Mustangs' game, we bore witness to Ken's application to join the Catholic Church. Ken was playing first base. A hard grounder was hit at him. He knelt down what seemed forever... he prayed for the ball that was stuck under his leg to appear like a miracle before the runner reached first base... the miracle didn't happen. The runner was safe. Still, Ken kept hoping that the recorded tape of the event that was sent to the Vatican for authentication would be reviewed in the "positive light." If Ken's application is approved (based upon this faux-pas "miracle"), it will be the first time in history a religious conversion was approved because of an "error." Ken commented after the game that he was hoping for sainthood. He was advised that it takes two miracles before sainthood can ever be considered. The MCSSL reminded Ken that if he ever cleanly fielded even ONE grounder at first base for a routine put-out, it would certainly be the first miracle that would go down in the league history annals.

80. Senior Softball Snippet: Meanwhile, back on the Bux/Mont cold and uncomfortable aluminum bench, another conversation overheard between our lovable Midnights Muppet team of Hunsberger & Ryan went something like this...

The boys came out to watch a game between the Orange team Mavericks and the Sand team Marshals. The stands were abuzz over the marvels of modern medical miracles...

Vern: These guys are awful! They can't even field a ball when it's hit right at them!

Bud: Looks like they can't even see the balls!

Vern: Maybe the whole team needs eye surgery!

Bud: I think what this whole team needs is ERROR surgery!

(Interject a hearty "Heh-Heh-Heh" Muppet laugh here...)

EVEN MORE SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS

Vic Zoldy implored us to have fun playing softball in this league. There is no better medicine in life than laughter. If we can't laugh at ourselves playing softball as if we were still kids, then it isn't fun. Here are some of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh.

81. Senior Softball Snippet: *A Shortage of Afternoon Players...* Did any of you ever notice that players on all eight teams were most consistently and conspicuously absent this past winter season when the games started at one-thirty in the afternoon? Did you ever wonder why? (You all know the real reason why, but none of you will admit to it!) Just for the heck of it, we've compiled the top five excuses for missing the last afternoon game: 1) grandfatherly duties, 2) afternoon job, 3) wife/girlfriend needs me to pick her up (wherever...), 4) doctor's appointment (whatever), and 5) "Afternoon Delight!" (Really... number five made the list, but we think it was the Fantasy Island list!) The REAL reason is... ready for this? One-thirty in the afternoon is NORMAL NAP TIME for most of the seniors in the MCSSL. (Don't even deny it...)

82. Senior Softball Snippet: Jeff Jordan's recovery from eye surgery was going slower than expected, and he resolved himself that he might miss the remainder of the winter season, but assured all that he would be ready for summer. Jeff was asked by his loquacious manager if he was going to come out to the rest of the winter games anyway and cheer on his team, wearing his green shirt as a show of support. Jeff replied, "Well... yes and no..." Jeff was asked, "Well, what is it, 'yes' or 'no'?" Jeff responded, "Well... yes and no..." To which his garrulous manager inquired back, "Are you saying 'yes' or are you saying 'no'?" Jeff answered, "Well... yes and no..." At this point, we were beginning to wonder if Jeff had gotten it wrong and had actually needed hearing surgery instead.

83. Senior Softball Snippet: Oh, no... not another one on the book/movie project... Barry Bintliff suggested this one (actually, if you think about it, it ain't that bad)... "Wishful-Thinking-Bull Durham." Where have all the cows gone, Barry? They ain't in any of our back yards.

84. Senior Softball Snippet: *Talk about classic senior moments...* It was a tightly contested game between the Maroon team Maulers and the Red team Magics. With two outs and nobody on in the top of the sixth, a hard grounder was hit at third baseman, Mike DeStefano. Mike scooped it up like the vacuum cleaner he is, pivoted, planted his feet... and fired a strike to Jim Corrigan approaching second base... who was caught completely by surprise! (Interviewed later, Jim testified he was in the process of walking off the field after the sure third out at first base, instead catching the ball in self-defense, but tagging second just in case it was himself having a senior moment.) "What are 'ya doing?" his fellow infielders all yelled at Mike, as the batter, of course, was safe at first. "There's nobody on base!" There was a moment of embarrassing silence, followed by a pause for reflection... for after all, Mike is the league's Assistant Commissioner. Mike replied in true coal region twang without missing a beat, "Yeah, but if there had 'a been a guy on first, I'd 'a had him out!" Fortunately, the next batter made the third out thanks to the masterful defensive recovery efforts of Mike's teammates, who covered up for his classic senior moment.

85. Senior Softball Snippet: *Reverse Double Play Coupled With Yet Another Senior Moment...* not too common (reverse double plays, not senior moments), but occasionally you see one. In a mid-season game between the Green team Mustangs and the Royal Blue team Minutemen, the Mustangs pulled one off (we know, hard to believe.) With runners on first and second, Ken Moyer started the play when he fielded a grounder to first base. Ken threw to second baseman, Chas Wegand, who, instead of firing back to first base, spun and threw to Bryan Wood at third to complete the reverse double play. Unique, you say? Not in this instance. The only reason they pulled it off was because John Packel, the runner on second, initially forgot to run to third when the grounder was hit to Ken, then decided he'd better run after all. Another classic senior moment... many thought John's red socks might have been too tight and clouded his thinking.

86. Senior Softball Snippet: Sitting out the winter indoor season to allow his injury to heal, the summer Minutemen team's Steve Alligood has been a familiar and welcome fixture all winter at the BucksMont indoor facility. Steve rarely ever missed watching a game, and kudos to Steve! He is known for his unique insightfulness, his ability to analyze and evaluate team weaknesses, and then his ability to accurately compile meaningful scouting reports. Steve was interviewed by the league historian at the close of the season, who asked him to assess each of the teams. Following are Steve's candid responses regarding each of the eight teams.

MCSSL: Steve, using the "twenty-five-words-or-less" method of analysis, how would you evaluate the performance of each of this year's winter teams?

Steve: That's such a loaded question. I'll run through each team individually...

Sand team Marshals – Played with far too much youthful fervor considering their advanced ages. Won far too many games. Very suspect. A case in point for mandatory drug testing following every victory.

Orange team Mavericks – Listen. What else can you say? Any team that continually dresses itself up to look like a Halloween pumpkin deserves to lose all those games.

Purple team Majors – Every time I watched one of their games it was like watching dyed eggs rolling across the lawn at an annual Easter egg hunt.

Gold team Midnights – I was constantly reminded of one of my grandkid's favorite toys. You know, the little yellow bus? Weebles waddle but they don't fall down?

Royal Blue team Minutemen – Any team that has the two Mallozzi brothers and a powerhouse line-up like that should win every game. They didn't even come close. Disheartening.

Red team Magic – Just look at the pitching and that power-hitting line-up. This team should have been RED HOT! They weren't. They should have worn PINK shirts instead of red.

Maroon team Maulers – Look. This team had both the league's Commissioner AND the Assistant Commissioner on the roster. Duh. You would have thought the other seven teams

would have gotten the message and let them win a few more games. They didn't get it. A disappointing bunch ... the Maulers, that is...

Green team Mustangs – A no brainer. They can't win because that manager needs to be traded. Problem is, no other team in this league wants him. Worse than the Phillies Ryan Howard dilemma.

(Steve's full interview can be seen on ESPN. Check your local listings for scheduled date and time.)

87. Senior Softball Snippet: Even more on the book/movie project... Nick Silveri, who is a devout Yankees fan (most of the league's Phillies fan players are sorry to hear that), thinks a good title would be, "Pride of the Geezers." This would be a tough sell, though, for whoever writes the book. Picking which geezer in the league to portray the main character is next to impossible.

88. Senior Softball Snippet: The Green team Mustangs showed that they would try anything to get a win. At a game against the Maroon team Maulers, lo and behold, the first inning saw the Mustangs' Jeff Jordan back in action. Or so everybody initially thought. Now, let's recap what was going on. As you may recall, Jeff at the time was recovering from eye surgery and was expected to miss the remainder of the winter season. But there was Jeff... of all things, umpiring first base! They made a coach/umpire out of guy who couldn't see! The Maroons initially balked, but then recanted, continuing to play the game anyway. It was because Howie Schwartz managed to calm down his teammates by reminding them, "What's the difference? There's hardly anybody in the league who umpires over there at first who gets a call right anyway." By the way... it didn't help the Mustangs one bit. The Maroons won handily anyway.

89. Senior Softball Snippet: *The FBI's MOST WANTED LIST...* The MCSSL made notorious history this past winter season when the Purple team Majors manager Bob Weaver and the Royal

Blue team Minutemen manager Billy Mallozzi were taken into custody in handcuffs right before a 9:00 a.m. game in early March. It was really a big misunderstanding, but it's oh, so hard to convince law enforcement of that. (Thanks to Jim Binsberger for keeping the two boys out of jail!) Both teams showed up at the usual time on Tuesday morning for the first game. The doors of the BucksMont facility were still locked, except for one door. Naturally, the boys entered the open door (who of us wouldn't?) That's when the alarm went off. Seems the daytime facility manager hadn't shown up yet for work, but how could the boys know that? The nighttime manager evidently forgot to lock the door the night before. The Purple and Royal Blue boys entered the facility... as usual. The ever-vigilant and competent Hatfield police, responding to a burglary call, stormed the facility with sirens blaring, guns drawn, and excitement blazing! When they arrived, the "would-be burglars" – gang leaders Weaver and Mallozzi – were quickly handcuffed, strip –searched (as anticipated, they found NOTHING at all in their under-garments!), and were quickly booked as suspected terrorists. It took the assuaging of Safety Director Binsberger to convince the police that it was all a misunderstanding. After the dust settled and everything was straightened out, the games went on... as usual. Unfortunately, Mallozzi and Weaver had already made the *FBI's Most Wanted List* thanks to today's high-speed technology, and the league continues endeavoring to have their criminal records expunged and their photographs removed from the internet and the Hatfield Police Station bulletin board.

90. Senior Softball Snippet: *A milestone in a great career...* the Green team Mustangs Jim "Hondo" Lech reached an impressive milestone this past winter season by simply being in the right place at the right time. Hondo was umpiring first base (he usually does that so he doesn't have to walk too far to the outfield at the end of the inning.) Sam "The Stoneman" Myers uncharacteristically ripped a single off the mesh screen, then asked for a pinch runner. With The Stoneman on first and Hondo still umpiring, the sign came from the bench that they should switch places. The Stoneman was summarily simultaneously startled and stunned! "But I can run faster than Hondo on one leg carrying a bag of bricks!" Nevertheless, the managerial decision stood. Hondo was overjoyed! It was the first time in his senior career that he had been assigned as a pinch runner, a true career milestone. The epic event was short-lived, however. The next batter, Ken Moyer, promptly hit a grounder that quickly forced out Hondo at second base before

he could even get started. The inning was over. To everyone's surprise, this time Hondo slowly trotted to the bench, announcing to his teammates, "I saw that second base was about two traffic lights away. Glad I didn't have to run that far." They reminded him that now he had to walk twice the distance to get back to the outfield.

91. Senior Softball Snippet: Hondo's milestone moment was later brought into question... After the game, the move made by the Green team Mustangs to use Jim "Hondo" Lech as a pinch runner was questioned by the winning Royal Blue team Minutemen player, Dan Brady. The response (it was the general consensus among the Mustangs players) seemed to justify the move. Steve Czyzewicz summed it up by saying, "... Are you kidding? We got one guy with one good eye, one who can't see balls hit at him, one who sees shadows, two guys coming off knee replacement surgery, and collectively we only have five good knees on the whole team! Besides, we knew Ken Moyer wasn't going to hit the ball far enough to make Hondo run." Nevertheless, Sam "The Stoneman" Myers was still seething after the game, ranting and raving, "From now on, I'm only going to hit doubles!"

92. Senior Softball Snippet: We came up with a new league statistic this year: *FWTWP's* (pronounced "*Fwha-Tweep's*") – *Forgot What Time We Played*. Like all baseball/softball percentages, the statistic is calculated from instances of players showing up late after their game was already over. Unfortunately, we couldn't verify the instances of each team as accurately as we had anticipated, and therefore weren't able to post league statistics. Some of the guys were observed sneaking back out the door when they realized they had "FWTWP'ed" and went back home. How did we know this? Easy... once outside, you could always hear the telltale evidence echoing across the parking lot: "Oh, she-e-e-e-t-t-t-t..."

93. Senior Softball Snippet: *A Mutiny Full of Bounty... Finally!* The Green team Mustangs were tired of constantly losing, and finally got the attention of their finicky tenacious manager. They mutinied! It was a historic winter game against the Red team Magics. Before the Mustangs

came to bat, manager John McCann announced he had to tinkle (most of us can relate to that), then jogged (jogged... really?) off to the men's room a short distance away. Several of his players followed behind and locked him in. It was long enough by the time he escaped. The mutineers had changed the lineup and had already scored two runs before their captain returned from his tinkle. Realizing what had happened, McCann attempted to re-assert his managerial authority. The players responded, "You're lucky we kept you in the line-up!" The Mustangs went on that day to score an historic 5-0 victory over the Magics. Historic in the sense that they finally won a game, by a shut-out, no less! We know, hard to believe... the victory, that is, not the successful tinkle...

94. Senior Softball Snippet: Somebody came up with the alternative notion that we should use different names for the winter teams instead of confusing everyone by using the same summer names. Jim Marple thought it so ridiculous that he facetiously exclaimed, "Yeah, right. Why don't we just name each team after a fruit or vegetable instead?" Good idea! So we polled each team based upon the shirt color and Jim's suggestion. Here are the results:

Ray Forlano's team would become the "*Spuds*" (a brown, baked version of a baked potato; somebody also suggested they should instead change the shirt color to Peach...) Billy Mallozzi's team, naturally, would be the "*Blueberries*." Manny London's team would then, of course, become the "*Raspberries*." Wayne Bailey's team becomes the "*Lemons*," and John McCann's team becomes the "*Limes*." Mike DeStefano's team would be the "*Prunes*." (They actually wanted to be the "Plums" but a shriveled prune seemed more appropriate.) Bob Weaver's team would become the "*Eggplants*" (what other vegetable or fruit could they be?) And, of course, why don't we just call it like it is for dear Gordy Detweiler? The "*Pumpkins*" are already near and dear to our hearts forever, and what is this senior league without our iconic pumpkin team?

(Somehow we don't think this re-naming suggestion is going to make it through the league's process, but we're going to try to run it past Jim Marple anyway.)

95. Senior Softball Snippet: *Assisted Senior Softball Living...* the MCSSL had a first this past winter season, thanks to a special arrangement made by the Bux/Mont facility. On a balmy Thursday morning late in the season, the league members were graced with the presence of Dr. C (her full name is being withheld to preserve her good reputation) of **Total Performance Physical Therapy**. Dr. C graciously donated her time by offering a free presentation after each game. Following each, the doctor made herself available for free individual injury assessments and to give guidance in proper treatment and prevention. As typical of most seniors, all they did was gripe. Most of the complaints and maladies described by the boys went something like this:

“It hurts when I run down to first base, and I’ve pulled my hamstrings and quads and groin so many times... what can I do to stop it?”

“I can’t see the friggin’ ball in the outfield anymore...”

“When I swing at a pitch and miss it... oh, boy! Does that ever hurt! How can I stop it from hurting?”

“I can’t seem to bend down far enough anymore to pick up that grounder...”

“When I throw, it doesn’t seem to matter whether I throw hard or soft. It goes the same speed. When I’m able to throw, that is...”

“I keep forgetting what inning it is... how many outs there are... what the score is... whether it’s Tuesday or Thursday...”

“Is my E.D. caused by playing too much softball?”

“Who are you again? You somebody’s daughter who plays in the league?”

The good doctor was last seen out in the parking lot banging her head against the car, throwing her arms into the air, and mumbling something about, “... *I’m outta here... I can’t take anymore... sexagenarians, septuagenarians, and even one octogenarian... the whining... they all sound the same...*”

AND STILL MORE SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS

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96. Senior Softball Snippet: *History in the making...* Another MCSSL colossal historical event occurred even before the summer season began. It happened during the annual league kick-off meeting in early April. Commissioner John Frantz introduced the next speaker, John McCann (about a hundred and fifty groans echoed throughout the meeting room), then prepared to go out for some coffee, anticipating the loquacious John M. to pontificate ad infinitum in his usual manner. To the absolute amazement of all present (including the Commissioner, who never even got to add his cream and sugar), John M. only spoke for a minute or so, thanked everyone, then left the podium. The room erupted! It was the first time in MCSSL history (probably the first time in all human history) that John McCann got a standing ovation for not talking.

97. Senior Softball Snippet: *A classic senior close encounter of the common kind... Baker's Dozen, MCSSL Style!* The summer season had just only begun. It was the Marvels first game and they were playing the Marshals. Top of the third inning. Suddenly, there was an uproar from the Marvels bench. "Stop the game!" someone yelled. "You've got thirteen men on the field!" The whole Marshals team stood aghast as the game came to an abrupt halt, everyone scanning the fielding positions. The benches cleared (well, actually, only the Marvels players came out of the dugout, mostly to see what all the fuss was about.) "No we don't," one of the Marshal players replied. "We only have twelve." The response came back, "No you don't. Thirteen!" The reply was, "No. Only twelve!" More shouts came back, "You have thirteen! Count 'em!" And so the counting started. For the next five minutes, chaos reigned supreme as all the players on both teams (including players awaiting the next game along with everybody else in the stands) came up with their own tally of how many players the Marshals actually had on the field. The scene that morning, many agreed, was more chaotic than tax day at the local Senior Center. At the end

of the interruption, it was an overwhelming majority of counters who assured the Marvels that the Marshals really only had twelve players on the field, not thirteen. The Marvels retreated back into the dugout, their tails between their legs, with no harm done other than a few bruised egos.

98. Senior Softball Snippet: *70 & Over Division Opening Day Sweepstakes...* The winner had to correctly predict the result in each of the seven “over and under” categories. Congratulations goes out to Bruce Williams of the Mongrels, who got all the categories right. (Bruce admitted he is a real fan of watching “old-timers” play.) Here are the “over and under” times for each category and the final results predicted by our winner:

1. The length of Jim Binsberger’s pre-game safety instruction lecture (15 minutes) – OVER
2. Length of time before the first error (5 minutes) – UNDER
3. Length of time before a batter claimed an error was actually a hit (5 minutes) - UNDER
4. Length of time before the actual first legitimate hit (45 minutes) – OVER
5. Length of the first legitimate hit (50 feet) – UNDER
6. Length of time before the first bad call & argument (10 minutes) - UNDER
7. Length of time before the second bad call & argument (15 minutes) – UNDER

For correctly predicting all categories, Bruce will receive a season ticket to all of the 70 & Over Division games PLUS a commemorative signature-series “Billy Mallozzi Lawn Chair.”

99. Senior Softball Snippet: *MCSSL’s Resident Hitting Instructor...* We all know that Henry Sellers of the Minutemen has one of the sweetest swings we’ve ever seen, and watching him hit a ball is pure poetry in motion. Henry is often consulted by league players who ask him to evaluate their swing and offer suggestions for improvement. Recently, Maulers Manager Mike DeStefano asked for Henry’s help, requesting he evaluate the entire Maulers starting line-up. Henry watched during pre-game batting practice while Mike’s hitters laid out several swings, most all of which more closely resembled lollipops being tossed out to the kiddies. “How’re the boys doing, Henry?” Manager Mike asked. Henry replied, “Their swings are fine, Mike, but you need to work on their ability.”

100. Senior Softball Snippet: *Inaugural Worst Swing Award...* One of our league's most honorable elders, Manny London of the Magics, has been trying for some time to enhance the picnic program. During opening week of the summer season, Manny had a brainstorm! Realizing that he – presumably along with everyone else in the league – was tired of getting sore hands constantly clapping for the Field Maintenance Team, Manny came up with a new idea. “Let’s recognize the guy with the worst swing...” Manny formed a review committee, arranged for Georgie Schreader to turn his video camera loose to capture batters in action, and then had the review committee screen all contenders over a few Yuengling beers. Here is what the committee was looking for in particular:

1. Which moves more slowly, the player’s bat or his feet.
2. If you could make a trip to the restroom before the bat gets around.
3. Having that “hitter-ish” look... until the player swings.
4. Any batter who could make Tom Musselman stop talking when at the plate.
5. Looking like a natural right-handed hitter, but hitting from the left side.
6. Looking like a natural left-handed hitter, but hitting from the right side.
7. Making a “swing-and-a-miss” without letting out a groan (doesn’t swing hard enough for it to hurt.)

While the review committee is still “out to lunch” debating the winner (they’ve already downed several cases of Yuenglings, since it seems everybody Georgie video-taped qualified for the worst swing), Manny’s committee did decide on the prize to be given out at the annual end-of-season picnic: a genuine autographed “Big Bill Ambrulavage Bent Bat.”

101. Senior Softball Snippet: *Three Blind Mice...* Talk about blown calls... that is according to the sixteen bench-riding umpires on the Mustangs. The Marshals and Mustangs were slugging it out as usual. The Marshals had the bases loaded. Long fly ball to left field. Here’s what the Mustangs claimed happened next: Barry Bintliff, the runner on third, trotted off the base toward home before the ball was caught (allegedly.) Barry initially turned back toward third (presumably to tag up... allegedly...), probably thought it was too far to go, then thought (allegedly), “What the hell, maybe nobody will see it!” Barry continued toward home plate. The

sixteen Mustang umpires began yelling to get the ball to the third baseman to double up Barry, who left too soon (allegedly.) In the confusion, Barry still headed for home... tagging the wrong home plate! Pretty obvious, everybody thought, including all the spectators. Barry was called safe at home, scoring the run. The Mustang bench erupted. The first appeal went to the Marshals third base coach/umpire. "I didn't see it. I was watching the fly ball." The next appeal went to the Marshals first base coach/umpire. "I didn't see it. I was watching the fly ball." The next appeal went to the Marshals on-deck batter/umpire. "I didn't see it. I was choosing my bat." The Mustangs were livid, arguing what they said was an obvious out! When the melee finally ended, Barry was declared safe by consensus of the three umpiring Marshals. The Mustangs were adamant that Barry had not only committed ONE out, but TWO, leaving early and then tagging the wrong home plate! Barry was interviewed after the game. "Hey, I can't help it if the umpires are blind."

102. Senior Softball Snippet: *Why we all love Tony Galli so much...* It was a typical see-saw game between the Marvels and the Marshals with a lot of runs being scored. There were chit marks all over the scoreboard. At the end of the fourth inning, the Marvels had three more marks on the board. Since nobody had yet tallied the inning score, Tony grabbed the grease pencil and recorded a big "4" in the inning box for the Marvels. Somebody on the Marshals noticed the discrepancy. "Yo!" came the retort from the Marshals dugout. "You guys only got three runs that inning, not four! Can't you count?" Tony looked back at the scoreboard. His reply was an instant classic. "Hey. Gimme a break. I only finished the third grade." And that's why we love him so much.

103. Senior Softball Snippet: *Three reasons why NOT to have instant replay in the senior league...* Major League Baseball seems to be having some success, but maybe it's not such a good idea here in the senior league. Reason one: Too high tech... nobody is competent enough to videotape the plays, as most league members are still learning how to work their Brownie cameras. Reason two: Even if the plays could be videotaped, every play would result in the manager asking for a replay, thus delaying play 40 plus times every game. And reason three:

Doesn't matter what the videotape would reveal, the managers would still continue to argue that the decision was wrong anyway!

104. Senior Softball Snippet: *Another incredible statistic...* According to Mustang bench management, Tom Walsh set some kind of a record the first week of the season. Tom made six outs in a single game while only batting four times. How is this possible, you ask? Again, according to Mustang bench management, Tom went 0 for 4 at the plate and was tagged out twice as a pinch runner. However, Tom alleges that it wasn't actually him, but rather another guy on the team who was too embarrassed to admit it just because he's the manager.

105. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over, "Tinkers-to-Evers-to-Chance"...we make our own legends here in the MCSSL!* The mighty Majors were on an early season roll, winning game after game. But as every student of the game knows, any team can beat another team on any given day. The marvelous Mavericks were somehow holding onto a one run lead going into the bottom of the seventh. They got the first batter out. But suddenly the Majors erupted and when the dust settled, they had runners hugging the corners. The situation couldn't have been better for the Majors or worse for the Mavericks. Perilous Pete Perez was advancing to the plate. It would take a small miracle for the Pumpkins to hold onto victory. But miracles are made by miraculous men. What happened next is the stuff of legends. Pete hit a bullet one hopper to second baseman, Jim "The Chase Man" Binsberger. Realizing the ball was traveling a thousand miles per hour and he couldn't catch it, Jim threw himself into the path of the ball, knocking it down with his massive barrel chest. Jim picked up the ball, pivoted, and fired a strike toward second base. The fleet-footed Bob "The Ripken Man" Schuettler snagged the ball out of thin air, and with a quickness that would have made Bobby Sipes gasp in awe, fired the ball back across the infield toward first base. Stretching out longer than he is old, Gordy "The Gehrig Man" Detweiler picked the ball out of the dusty air to complete a game ending double play! Legends are myths that have come into being. And thus, MCSSL history has recorded for all time the legendary Pumpkin double-play combo of... *"Binsberger-to-Schuettler-to-Detweiler."*

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106. Senior Softball Snippet: What a spectacular game to watch to ward off the summertime blues! Despite a commendable fielding and batting performance by the entire roster of the Mustangs, including a worthy pitching performance by Jim Fisher, the Blue Pony Boys came up short and lost an exciting game to the Minutemen. The whole team was commiserating after the game. John McCann, the Mustangs most punctilious manager (yes, he's in the headlines yet again), took blame for the loss (and rightly so!) John's teammate and often battery-mate, Ben Modica, put it into perfect perspective: "Look on the bright side, John. The best thing you did today was not pitch!"

107. Senior Softball Snippet: *Movin' on up...* The Marshals George Hart has spent more time playing in the senior league than most professional baseball players spend in their entire careers. George's timely hitting in clutch situations is the stuff of legends here in the MCSSL. In a recent game between the Magics and the Marshals, George advanced to the plate with the bases loaded. The Magics field generals, Jim Marple and Billy Mallozzi, quickly began re-positioning the defense, strategically moving outfielders in and tightening up the short field locations. Andrew Bommentre, one of George's long time teammates, jumped up from the bench and loudly whispered through the screen, "George! George! Look what they're doing. They're moving everybody in on you. Hit it over their heads. You can run forever!" George backed out of the batter's box, turned to Andrew and said, "Where the heck have you been? They've been moving in on me for years!"

108. Senior Softball Snippet: *He doesn't look "runner-ish"...* The Mongrels were beating up on the Marshals. Everybody was getting in on the act. Sam O'Brien steps up to the plate and rips a line shot out to right center that rolls all the way to the fence. With blazing speed not seen since the days of Maury Wills, Sam chugs his way to third for his first triple of the year! Huffing and puffing, standing on the base trying to catch his breath, Sam hears the calls coming from the bench. "Sam! Sam! You want a runner?" Sam waves them off, inhales deeply, lets out a slow deliberate breath... "No. Oxygen."

109. Senior Softball Snippet: The Travel Team Marauders invaded Harrisburg in late May to play yet another double-header against their longtime cross-state rivals, the "Burger Boys." One of the memorable highlights of the game that day... well, maybe more of a "lowlight" ... came when the Midnights Donnie Petrille was up at the plate. Donnie set himself in the batter's box, waiting patiently for the next pitch. In it came. Donnie took a mighty swing, missing the ball by at least 8 to 12 inches, twisting around and torquing his body, letting out an even mightier painful groan. Donnie's Midnights manager Wayne Bailey started the jeering that emanated from the Marauders bench. Donnie stepped back from the plate, facing his antagonist. "Come on, Beetle. He threw me a fastball. You know I can't hit fastballs!"

110. Senior Softball Snippet: *A senior moment for all time...* Talk about a senior moment en masse. This one is hard to believe, but it really happened. Magics versus Mavericks, first game of the morning. The game was afoot! The Magics had already scored two runs before anyone on both teams suddenly realized that there was no secondary home plate to tag! Stealthily, the Magics Tom Lane came sneaking out of the dugout with the plate behind his back, dropped it down, and feigned lining it up as if it had always been there. Of course, right away the totally embarrassed players from both teams decided to blame Tom for not putting out the home plate when he had prepared the field earlier that morning, even though it wasn't Tom who had prepped the field. There was more to come, however...

111. Senior Softball Snippet: *Another MCSSL scandal brews over the missing home plate...*

You knew it was bound to happen. The MCSSL's distortive investigative reporter, Felskie O'Neill (his true identity remains known only to a select few), made the accusation that the Magics Manny London was to blame for the missing home plate. Felskie claims that Manny was observed picking it up before the game started and hiding it in the Magics dugout, hoping to force any Mavericks players to search for the plate if they attempted to score, thereby making for an easier out. When the Pumpkins didn't score in the first inning, Manny decided to keep the plate in hiding when the Magics came to bat, mysteriously scoring two runs. Mum was the word from the bench. Manny decided not to push his luck and ordered the plate returned the next inning when the Magics came up to bat. That's when Tom Lane (Manny's anointed scapegoat) was busted when he was caught bringing back the home plate.

112. Senior Softball Snippet: *Another MCSSL statistic we've managed to "skew up" ...* Leave it to the Mustangs official scorer to log this one. The Minutemen's Art Moyer hit a routine high fly ball to Mustangs left-center fielder Bob Carnahan, who called for the ball. Down it came on its usual earthly trajectory. Just as Bob was about to put the squeeze on the ball, his feet went out from under him. (The grass was perfectly dry; Bob later blamed his new autographed "Pie Traynor" baseball shoes for the slip, stating that he had recently purchased the used shoes at the Army/Navy store.) Anyway... the ball banged off Bob's glove, bouncing high back upward into the air. Bob ended up flat on his back, looking skyward. The ball came down again (gravity dictates that.) Bob thrust out his glove arm into the air. Bob squeezed again, but this time too soon. The ball thumped against the closed leather, falling to the ground. The Mustangs' manager was so mad at Bob for missing an easy out that he ordered the scorekeeper to record a double error on the botched play. For those of you into baseball statistics, the scorebook would look something like, " $E - 7 \times 2$ "... whatever that means.

113. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Battle of the Patriarchs... err, Clash of the Titans...* It was destined to happen sooner or later this summer. The pitching duel we've all been waiting for. Ray Forlano was on the mound for the Marshals versus Angelo Malizia on the mound for the Mavericks. Somewhere around the third inning Angelo came up to the plate. Someone from the Pumpkins bench recognized the historical significance of the moment, and they yelled something about the two remaining original league players facing each other. Naturally, it brought a smile to the faces of both titans. "Yo, Angelo," Ray said, pausing before throwing the first pitch. "Two years ago, did you ever think we'd both still be here?" Someone from the Pumpkins bench quickly quipped back, "We knew Angelo would be here, Ray. We weren't sure about you, though."

114. Senior Softball Snippet: *I got it! I got it!* Rich Server of the Mongrels, one of the most feared and respected hitters in the league, hit a rare routine pop up near second base. Two of the Mustangs fielders converged on the ball, each calling off the other. Matt Lynch called loudest for the ball. In the news yet gain, the ubiquitous John McCann drifted over, trying to call off Matt so *he* could catch the ball. When the dust settled, the ball was caught for the out. After the inning, Rich inquired as to who really caught the ball for the out. "Did McCann actually catch that?" Rich asked. The whole Mustangs bench responded. "No! We wouldn't let him! Why do you think you were out?"

115. Senior Softball Snippet: *A game of statistics...* or so it is said of baseball and softball. Not too far into the season this year, we noticed that Brian McCleary of the Minutemen was frequently volunteering to pinch run, an action he has *never* volunteered to do since joining the league. The gang on the Vic Zoldy bench was somewhat astounded, and asked Brian to explain why, since he's not the fastest wildebeest in the herd. He answered that this year he was starting to keep a record of his personal statistics to give to the league historian. That way when people read the league history someday in the future, they'll probably make a legend out of his many feats. "Makes sense... but why pinch run?" someone asked. Brian replied, "Pinch running is

really boosting my on-base percentage, and besides, it's probably only seniors who'll read this anyway, and they won't know the difference." Ah, gotta love statistics.

116. Senior Softball Snippet: *It was cute when you were five... it's a senior moment when you're sixty-five...* Bobby Zolad of the Mustangs had already played a whole inning before he ran in from the outfield, by-passed the dugout, and went to his equipment bag stashed on the bleachers. The Magics Jimmy Flynn was sitting nearby, having just finished the previous game. Bobby asked Jimmy, "Is there a shoe rule in the league?" Jimmy wasn't sure of the question, and replied, "No. I don't think so. Why?" Bobby looked down at his own feet. He was wearing a baseball cleat on one foot and a sneaker on the other. Now totally embarrassed, Bobby tried to make light of it and pretended that it wasn't that big of a deal. But you don't get anything past Jimmy Flynn, who quipped, "You know what, Bobby? I 'd bet anything that you have another pair just like those in your softball equipment bag!" Gotta love those classic senior moments.

117. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Legend of Billy's Lawn Chair...* As everybody in the MCSSL already knows, Billy Mallozzi and his "garage-sale-fifty-cent-lawn-chair" are already legendary icons. Seems one game this summer, Mrs. Mallozzi came out to watch Billy and the Magics play, and she was looking for a place to sit down in the shade and enjoy Billy and the boys pretending they were still youngsters playing backyard ball. Being the gentlemen they always are, several nearby league members, who were also watching the game, graciously pointed out to Mrs. Mallozzi that Billy had left his lawn chair available for her to sit and enjoy the game. Mrs. Mallozzi took one glance at Billy's chair, and commented, "You don't REALLY expect me to sit in THAT thing, do you?" Made all of us wonder about quality control.

118. Senior Softball Snippet: *Out of the mouths of babes...* The annual One-Pitch Tournament has become a popular event here in the MCSSL. We seem to attract a lot of fans... well, mostly family members, but that's okay. Take Rich Cubbage of the Marshals, for instance. Rich's beautiful wife, beautiful daughter, and three beautiful little granddaughters came out to watch

Pop play ball. Rich's little six-year old granddaughter, who was also enjoying her first year in T-Ball, was enthralled watching the senior boys play. She got a bit confused, however. After the game she asked Pop why the batters were always out when they swung at a single pitch and missed it. "Well," Pop tried to explain, "that's because in this tournament we only get one pitch to swing at, and if we miss it, we're out." Rich's little cherub was quick to reply. "In our league, if you miss the ball, we get to put it back up on a tee, and you get to hit it again!" Hm-m-m... there were so many strike-outs this year, maybe the MCSSL next year should consider holding a "T-Ball Tournament" instead of a "One-Pitch Tournament."

119. Senior Softball Snippet: *A League of Our Own... err, something like that...* One of the most highly anticipated social events of the summer season is the annual MCSSL Family Picnic. What a wonderful time for one and all! Why, the boys even stage a volunteer pick-up game so all the family members can watch the senior gang at play. The game this year was tied after four innings, when suddenly from across the expanse of the School Road Park facility, the thunderous voice of social director extraordinaire Manny London commanded one and all to come to the MCSSL table under the pavilion to join in the feast of plenty! Wayne Bailey, who was already on the mound warming up for the start of the next inning, balked at the sudden termination of the contest. From the dugout, Stan Schwartz announced, "Game's over! Tie score! Let's go eat!" Wayne responded in a loud bellow, "*Tying? We're tying?? There's no TYING in softball!*" Beetle, however, was last seen leading the charge of players and spectators across the picnic grove and muscling his way to the head of the buffet line under the pavilion.

120. Senior Softball Snippet: *MCSSL Bobble-Head Giveaway...* It was another spectacular Family Picnic, thoroughly enjoyed by one and all! Always a highlight of the evening is the giving away of prizes donated by sponsors, supporters, and friends. This year, Tom and Mrs. Dougherty generously donated a small collection of minor league baseball bobble-head dolls (three, to be exact, found in the attic.) Claimed they were real collector items, some retired guy named Mike Schmidt. Manny London bellowed out the three winners' names! In the background, the Doughertys were snickering. Before any of the winners could return to their

picnic tables after accepting their prize, the broken heads had already fallen off the dolls (we think they may have been Tom's bath tub toys.) Too embarrassed to say anything, none of the winners wanted to create a scene, so each pretended to cherish the generous prize. "See? I told you it would work," Tom whispered aside to Mrs. Dougherty. "These guys don't know the difference. Next picnic we'll clean out the *garage* and bring along ALL the junk."

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121. Senior Softball Snippet: *Filet of Sole, MCSSL style...* Bill Standen of the Minutemen was playing his usual spectacular left field position when suddenly the entire cleated sole of one of his baseball shoes came off. Bill decided to seize the humor of the moment at the end of the inning when he got back to the dugout. Bill announced to his teammates, displaying the flapping cleated sole, "Look, you guys! I run so hard playing for this team I burned the sole right off of my shoe!" Bill played the remainder of the game flat-footed from one side. Enough time for Bill's teammates to come up with a few yuk-yuks of their own. Like these:

- "If you run so hard, Bill, how come the short fielder threw you out twice?"
- "That's what you get for buying baseball shoes at Dollar General."
- "Hey, Bill, were you the 'SOLE' owner of those shoes?"
- "Did Billy Mallozzi buy those for you at a yard sale?"
- "Those shoes look just like the ones you wore playing baseball back in your college days at West Chester last century... why, holy cow, those are the same shoes!"
- "Look, Bill, the bottom of your shoe is still smoking. Wait... that's not smoke. It's visible foot fog."
- "With that sole gone, Bill, now you can hobble around the outfield just like the rest of us."
- "Hey, Bill... remember 'Gunsmoke' on TV? Mr. Dillon, Mr. Dillon..."

Word had it that after the game Bill was heard muttering to himself about whether to take his favorite shoes in for repair to the shoemaker, or just break down and spend the money for another pair. He was also heard mumbling, "I could also wait until Christmas and ask Santa for a new pair..."

122. Senior Softball Snippet: *The emperor's new clothes...* Ray Forlano of the Marshals pulled into the parking lot, donned his shirt and other gear, and proceeded to schmooze with the boys as usual near the Vic Zoldy bench. Probably out of respect for Ray's tenure in the league (he's been here longer than Ruth Ginsberg has been on the Supreme Court), no one told Ray that he had his Marshals shirt on backwards with "Ray Forlano" proudly displayed under his chin. Somebody must have gotten up the chutzpa, however. Come game time, Ray had his shirt on correctly. (We think it must have been Angelo, who is probably the only guy who could point this out and get away with it.)

123. Senior Softball Snippet: *Mighty as an oak tree...* One of the league's favorite sons, "Mighty" George Hart of the Marshals, became a celebrity of sorts this past summer. Nothing to do with softball, however. One fine day George graced the feature page of a local newspaper, the North Penn Reporter. Seems that the giant oak tree in George's front yard was officially recognized as the oldest tree in the area, dating back to the Revolutionary War times. There was a photograph of George standing proudly next to the mighty oak! Of course, you know this couldn't escape the boys of the MCSSL. The next time George came up to bat, someone from back on the Vic Zoldy bench yelled, "Hey, Georgie! How old were you when you planted that tree?"

124. Senior Softball Snippet: *Cooperstown, move over! We got us the MCSSL Hall of Fame!* Okay... the time has finally come for the league to start thinking about making plans for the establishment of the future MCSSL Hall of Fame. Among the most anticipated popular attractions will be the memorabilia accumulated from the legends of the league. (Forget the individual and team accomplishments, because there hasn't been enough to mention.) But, WOW, do we have the stuff to put on display! Following is the initial list of "stuff" that the committee will be looking to acquire to place in the future Hall of Fame. (Keep in mind that these items may one day become priceless works of art and American sports collectibles!) In no particular order, the following prizes are highly sought by the Hall of Fame committee:

- Billy Mallozzi's fifty-cent lawn chair.
- John Packel's red baseball stockings (Note: John MUST wash them first before acceptance by the committee.)
- The Mavericks inflatable orange pumpkin.
- Jimmy Corrigan's dangling scoreboard.
- The "Home of the Montgomery County Senior Softball League" sign.
- Ben Modica's catcher's "kneeling pad."

The committee is only beginning to compile suggestions for MCSSL memorabilia, so if anyone has any other items noteworthy, please do not hesitate to advise the league officers. So much more to come...

125. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Commissioner who got confused...* Well, first of all, he's multi-tasking, which isn't something a senior should be doing anymore. It seems that our very own Mike DeStefano has recently gotten his game priorities confused. Have you noticed this past summer how Mike very often threw the ball underhanded? He tried to slough it off by telling everyone about his ailing shoulder. Yeah, right! Here's the truth of the matter. Mike's highest rank in the senior sports world isn't *Assistant Commissioner of the MCSSL* like everyone thinks. You see, Mike has an even higher ranking... the *Commissioner of Bocce* of his local senior Legacy Oaks Bocce League! You know... bocce? That's the old fart's game of rolling a bunch of balls underhanded down some court at some other target ball until they knock the rest of the accumulated balls away from it and we're all still confused as to why. We'll have to forgive Mike, though. He sometimes forgets which game he's playing, and often fields a softball and tosses it as if it was a bocce ball.

126. Senior Softball Snippet: *Myth Busters...right here at the MCSSL...* There is always a thin line between that which is legend and that which is myth, especially here in the MCSSL. For sure we have a real genuine legend in the Pumpkin's *Binsberger-to-Schuettler-to-Detweiler* double-play combo. But now we have to deal with a real myth. It started during a game between

the Marvels and the Mustangs. The Marvels manager Timmy Smith was asked by a spectator why his hitters were avoiding hitting the ball to the right side of the field. Of course, the Marvels players already knew that all the pitches to right handed hitters were inside and left handed hitters outside, duh! Tim was being totally lighthearted when he responded, “Why, with the legion of leather they have covering that right side of the field, we’d never get a hit!” There you have it. That’s all it takes here in the MCSSL. Now we have to deal with the Mustangs self-proclaimed *Legion of Leather* myth, whoever those guys are supposed to be...

127. Senior Softball Snippet: *The MCSSL Hall of Fame... compiling more stuff than a neighborhood garage sale!* The suggestions for memorabilia started coming in right away.

Following is another short list of the items that could become a part of the future Hall of Fame:

- Tommy Corcoran’s glove (It’s so rotted that the committee will probably “bronze” it like Tommy’s baby shoes at home on the mantle.)
- The Vic Zoldy bench.
- The MCSSL lawn tractor.
- 10,000 used senior softballs.
- The One-Pitch Tournament Trophy.
- Tommy Corcoran’s bicycle (Note: The Smithsonian has first right of refusal.)

128. Senior Softball Snippet: *A Home Run by any other name...* As you all know, when we were kids, a home run was any time you rounded the bases and scored the run without being thrown out. We were ALL home run champions of the neighborhood! That’s how Bob Weaver of the Majors felt during a game against the Marshals. Bob hit a memorable back-alley home run! Well, sort of. Here’s how it went down ... Bob rips a hard one-hopper ground ball to third. Third baseman snags the ball, throws across the diamond. First baseman stretches as far as he can stretch... not quite enough... misses the throw, but in the process falls down re-injuring his already-damaged right hand finger, writhes in pain as his teammates watch and commiserate with the obvious painful injury. The ball rolls around somewhere behind first base toward the

outfield. All play comes to a stop as the Marshals players surround their damaged first baseman. In the meantime, Bob keeps on running... and running... and running, while all the fielders, for some reason, think that somebody called time. Nobody did. Bob rounds the bases and scores! When the dust finally settles, Bob has recorded an inside-the-park home run! Just like in the old days back in the neighborhood.

129. Senior Softball Snippet: *Gotta love senior snipping...* At a recent Monday morning “70’s & Over” game, we couldn’t help but overhearing two of our favorite super seniors snipping at each other. Of course, we aren’t going to mention who they are, but we certainly are going to offer their light-hearted exchange for a classic Senior Softball Snippet. It went like this... Senior No.1 was advancing to the plate and stood ready in the batter’s box. Senior No.2, playing somewhere out in the field, hurled a barb right before the first pitch was thrown. “What was it like playing ball back during the Depression?” Senior No.1 backed off as the first pitch was thrown for a called strike. Without missing a beat, stepping back into the box, Senior No.1 responded, “Not so bad. Probably better than it was for you playing during Prohibition.” The next pitch was ripped right at Senior No.2 for a single... well, maybe not “ripped,” but a single nonetheless... well, maybe it was an error...

130. Senior Softball Snippet: *The MCSSL Hall of Fame... compiling still more stuff than a local flea market!* The suggestions for memorabilia keep on piling up... Following is yet another short list of the items that could become a part of the future Hall of Fame:

- Home Plate... versions 1.0.0 through 9.9.0.
- 10,000 used (or, rather, no-longer-used) bats.
- Bobby Sipes’ “reddish” baseball rag that he wears as a shirt (Note: The committee suspects that this “shirt” was once white, and thinks Bobby washes it with the darks.)
- Gordy Detweiler’s Travel Team clip board.
- Felskie O’Neill’s true identity.

- Steve Alligood's head-wrap (Note: Steve MUST wash it first before acceptance by the committee.)

131. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Senior Community Center Van...* In case anyone hasn't ever noticed (we doubt it), the van makes routine daily stops in the parking lot right next to the ball field during games. In case anyone hasn't ever noticed (we doubt it), almost every player sitting around the Vic Zoldy bench routinely casts a cursory glance over their shoulders. You know why? One of these days, one of the MCSSL players is going to get off that bus because he can't drive anymore! But think about that... he'd still be playing softball! It doesn't get any better than this.

132. Senior Softball Snippet: *Why we read the comics...* We recently saw a cute cartoon on the comics page of the local newspaper. Seems a group of seniors were headed for some senior event and stopped to read the wayside sign. It kind of looked like the assemblage of guys we see every Monday morning before an MCSSL softball game. You gotta love the caption on the cartoon's sign. Maybe we could adopt it and add it to our own league sign hanging on the fence near the Vic Zoldy bench. The cartoon sign said, "*Leaving Your Athletic Prime, Thank You for Visiting!*"

133. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Man in the Iron Mask...* Remember that timeless story from your schoolboy days? This one is a better version of it... Mustangs versus Marshals, another classic rivalry. The Mustangs loveable catcher Ben Modica, during warm-ups before the game, asked longtime buddy Bobby Tunstall of the Marshals if he was pitching today. Bobby said yes. Play ball! The seventh inning rolls around... Bobby came up to bat for the third time, and Ben asked him, "How come you didn't pitch today? I thought you said you were pitching." Bobby stepped out of the batter's box, looked at Ben and said, "I am pitching." Ben thought for a moment, then replied, "You are?" Bobby responded, "You batted three times against me already today." Ben responded back, "I did?" Bobby replied back, "Yes. You did." Ben cogitated once more and said, "I guess I didn't notice you with that mask on."

134. Senior Softball Snippet: *The MCSSL Hall of Fame... compiling even more stuff than the consignment store!* More suggestions for memorabilia ... Following is yet another list of the items that could become a part of the future Hall of Fame:

- The Mustangs Mustang mascot.
- Nate Lentz's jewelry (The Majors always appreciated this, as Nate was the team's lightening rod in case of sudden thunderstorms.)
- Angelo Malizia's shin guards.
- Joe Kline's shin guards.
- Bill Standen's "Sole-less Shoe."
- Gordy Detweiler's original "Marauders" gray & red Travel Team shirt.

135. Senior Softball Snippet: *And on the seventh day, it rested...* One recent Friday morning this summer, a conspicuous group of senior softballers from the MCSSL were seen congregating around the bleacher area along the left field line. Initially, local residents recreating in the park were wondering why, since the Township had recently prohibited the seniors from playing ball there on Fridays. The boys all sat in silence just staring out at the field. Finally, an official from the Township office appeared (obviously somebody jogging around the track must have dropped a dime), approached the boys, and authoritatively pronounced, "Hope you guys aren't planning on getting in a game. The field is off limits on Fridays." There was a moment of continued silence. Then one of the boys raised a finger to his lips and whispered, "Sshh-h-h-h... never too old to learn...we thought we'd come out this morning to watch how grass rests..."

YET EVEN STILL MORE SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS

Vic Zoldy implored us to have fun playing softball in this league. There is no better medicine in life than laughter. If we can't laugh at ourselves playing softball as if we were still kids, then it isn't fun. Here are some of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh.

136. Senior Softball Snippet: *We're not in Kansas anymore, Toto...* The MCSSL Hall of Fame is slowly coming to fruition. Everybody is so excited about it! We only have one problem. Where in the heck are we gonna put it? Instead of doing an engineering study (league officers unanimously agreed we can't afford it), we instead decided to solicit suggestions from the league members. Here is the feedback so far on the suggested locations for the erection (oops, sorry, poor choice of words, let's use "establishment") of the display cases for the MCSSL Hall of Fame, including the PROS and CONS on each location:

- ***The Field Maintenance Shed.*** The PRO... it's right there at the field, which affords easy access for everyone to visit. The CON... it would never hold all the stuff we'll be accumulating. Besides, the visiting hours would be limited to the early morning hours when Joe Juba's field maintenance team has it open.
- ***Tommy Corcoran's house garage.*** The PRO... its right near the field, which affords easy access for everyone to visit. The CON... Tommy would have to give up his bike, since that's the space where he parks it, and Mrs. Corcoran says that's where the stuff would have to be put, so Tommy's bike would have to go, then Tommy wouldn't be able to get to his ball games.
- ***Outside the new Hatfield Township restroom facility.*** Don't laugh. The PRO... *Everybody* in the league (plus most of the senior spectators) visits it at least once during every game. The CON... female softball fans would miss out on a lot of neat stuff, since they never need to go.

137. Senior Softball Snippet: *Quotes from the “MCSSL Legends of the Game”...* We’ve got a new “Snippet Headliner” to add to our senior repertoire. This first one comes from John Packel, legendary pitcher for the “mangy” Mongrels, but also the league’s equipment manager, who was requested to come up with a better method for sorting out the bats... *“Asking the guys to maintain the array of bats in ANY kind of orderly arrangement would be like asking cats to cue up nicely to get their nails cut.”*

138. Senior Softball Snippet: *“Just singing in the rain... singing in the rain...”* The weather prediction of passing thundershowers came to pass. The Mustangs were on the field when the skies opened up. Down came the rain in torrents. Bobby Zolad, out in right field, suddenly dropped to his knees in grief, raising his arms to the heavens, crying out louder than a baby whose bottle had just been taken away. Bobby’s wails were heard throughout the township. “No-o-o-o-o-o-o-o!! Not the Mustang... wet... no-o-o-o-o-o-o...” Bobby’s teammates rushed to his side through the rain, consoling him as best they could. “Bobby! It’s all right. Really. Come on into the dugout with us and get dry.” Bobby looked up with startled eyes, and said, “No. You don’t understand...” but his teammates cut him off. “Yes. We do, Bobby. It’s all right if the Mustang mascot gets wet. It’s part of the game. Ben will dry it off later.” Bobby rose to his feet in total disbelief. “You knuckleheads!” Bobby exclaimed. “I wasn’t talking about the mascot! I was talking about my car getting wet out there in the parking lot!”

139. Senior Softball Snippet: *Not only are MCSSL umpires blind as a bat...* Bob Carnahan of the Mustangs held teammate Joe Kelly to what is probably the longest single in MCSSL history, certainly one of the highlights of the season! Bob was on first base when Joe hit a towering shot to left center that instead of clearing the fence, hit the top crossbar and bounced back toward the field, right into the glove of Lou Hoffman. Bob trotted back to first base. “What’re you doing?” Joe screamed at Bob, almost running him over. “Going back to first before they throw me out,” Bob replied. Joe yelled back, “The ball’s in play!” Bob looked like a deer caught in the headlights. “I know. He caught it, didn’t he?” It took a moment to convince Bob that the ball bounced off the fence and wasn’t caught for an out. Fortunately, the incoming throw went wide of second and Bob arrived safely. “We’re just glad of one thing, Bob,” Joe yelled from first base when the play ended. “That you’re not umpiring at the moment!”

140. Senior Softball Snippet: *There’s no place like home, there’s no place like home...* Okay, Toto. Here are a few more suggestions on the proposed location where we can put the display cases for the new MCSSL Hall of Fame. How about these proposals:

- ***The Hatfield Township Municipal Building.*** The PRO... its right near the field, which affords easy access for everyone to visit. The CON... fans may not be able to visit it on Fridays, since the “stuff” might have to “rest” along with the grass.
- ***Joe Juba’s house.*** The PRO... its right near the field, which affords easy access for everyone to visit. The CON... Joe has a huge golf simulator and expansive indoor putting green set up in his basement and living room, and there probably wouldn’t be enough space for all the “stuff” we’d set up there.
- ***The Hatfield School Road Park Picnic Pavilion.*** The PRO... its right near the field, which affords easy access for everyone to visit. The CON... people picnicking in the pavilion might think the “stuff” has been put there for use as complimentary napkins, substitute charcoal fuel, and extra BBQ tools.

141. Senior Softball Snippet: *Quotes from the “MCSSL Legends of the Game”...* We’ve got another “Snippet Headliner” to add to our senior repertoire. This one comes from Ben Modica, legendary catcher for the “mischievous” Mustangs. Ben was quoted as saying, “*There are only two things that bother me anymore when I come up to bat ... righties and lefties.*”

142. Senior Softball Snippet: *Who you calling OLD?...* The Marshals team was having a dreadful season. But occasionally, like everybody who plays this game knows, even the worst team can suddenly erupt. As did the Marshals one bright and sunny summer day, scoring more runs than anyone in the league thought possible of this team. After scoring the fifteenth run, Andrew Bommentre came into the dugout, smiling from ear to ear. “That’s the old Marshals team I know!” he exclaimed. Not used to such dugout enthusiasm, Steve Desirey shot back, “Who are you calling *old*?” Jerry Kratz quickly jumped in, adding, “Yeah. Like *you’re* not *old*!” Andrew replied, “Guys. That’s not what I meant...” but by now the whole bench was chirping in. “You got some gall calling *us* old!” Fred Walker exclaimed, “You look *ancient* the way *you* play!” Not to be out-insulted, Jack Leaming bellowed, “You play left field like an *old* lady when you’re next to me! I ever tell you that?” The smile had gone from Andrew’s face. “But, guys... I meant...” Joe Gennarelli cut him off. “How can you insult your teammates like that, Andrew? That’s not right. You’re *older* than the pyramids yourself!” And so it went on and on. When the inning was over, Andrew slowly trotted back into left field, alone, abandoned, crushed. He was last heard muttering to himself, “I didn’t mean that they were *old*, I just meant that it was like the *team* of old, or...now I don’t even know *what* I meant...”

143. Senior Softball Snippet: *How to beat the Mustangs in one easy step...* “Play ball!” echoed across the Hatfield diamond. The game was ready to start between the Midnights and the Mustangs. The leadoff hitter for the Midnights was approaching the batter’s box when unexpectedly the team was stunned to see John McCann, of all things, catching! The batter quickly retreated back to the dugout. The whole Midnight team suddenly huddled up. The Mustangs immediately protested. “Let’s go! You’re delaying the game!” The Midnights players responded, “Give us a minute,” while they all continued to huddle. “What’re ya doing? Let’s get started,” the Mustangs players retorted. Jeff Jordan yelled back from the dugout, pointing at McCann. “We have to change our game plan,” Jeff said. “We can’t all hit it to him if he’s back there catching.”

144. Senior Softball Snippet: *Follow the Yellow Brick Road, follow the Yellow Brick Road...*

All right, Straw Man. Here are even more suggestions on the proposed location where we can put the display cases for the new MCSSL Hall of Fame. How about these latest proposals:

- ***The Hatfield School Road Park Picnic Grove near the swing set.*** The PRO... its right near the field, which affords easy access for everyone to visit. The CON... too many young mothers would think it’s just another play set for their kids to destroy.
- ***A New Structure*** erected (there goes that word again) behind the Vic Zoldy bench. The PRO... it’s right there at the field, which affords easy access for everyone to visit. The CON... it would probably block out the cool breeze that all the non-playing seniors and spectators are used to experiencing.
- ***The Hatfield School Road Park Band Shell.*** The PRO... its right near the field, which affords easy access for everyone to visit. The CON... visiting musicians might get the idea that the township put the stuff there to be utilized for “dressing up” their bands.

145. Senior Softball Snippet: *Thank goodness the league historian is good at something...*

Georgie Schreader of the Marshals was in a real slump. After making yet another error and grounding out for the umpteenth time, Georgie came back into the dugout, head hung low in embarrassment and disgrace. “I really stink at this game,” he said. “I’m no good at fielding, no good at hitting, no good at running, no good at coaching, no good at umpiring...” Teammate Dan Brady was quick to respond. “Yeah, everybody knows that. We only keep you around because you’re good at writing snippets.”

AND YET EVEN STILL MORE SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS

Vic Zoldy implored us to have fun playing softball in this league. There is no better medicine in life than laughter. If we can't laugh at ourselves playing softball as if we were still kids, then it isn't fun. Here are some of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh.

146. Senior Softball Snippet: *The MCSSL Bobblehead Giveaway Doll...* What a great promotional idea to draw more fans to next year's summer season opener! The only dilemma facing the league was... who were we going to choose to model the first bobblehead doll? To give us enough time to get a thousand dolls made up over the winter, we asked around the league near the end of the 2015 season for nominations and *WHY* that senior softballer should be chosen. The winner won hands down! Nominated to become the initial official MCSSL Bobblehead Doll is (and you're surprised by this?)... **JOHN McCANN. WHY?** John's teammates pointed out that on most occasions he has "bobbled" the ball when hit to him, "bobbled" the ball when trying to throw it, "bobbled" many attempts to run the bases, "bobbled" many chances to get a timely hit, and "bobbled" almost every attempt to put together a meaningful lineup. Congratulations to John!

147. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Land of Lost Gloves...* It is absolutely mind-boggling just how many senior softballers leave their gloves behind after the game is over. Or is it? In case you haven't noticed, almost every glove that ends up in the MCSSL Job Box at the field facility looks like the family dog has been using it for bone-chewing practice. But even more noticeable than that... there is NEVER a name on it! (Can the School Road Park be a senior depository for deliberate insurance claims? Those seniors sure are slippery!)

148. Senior Softball Snippet: *The MCSSL Bobblehead Giveaway Doll...* Uh-oh... opened up a can of worms...complaints are starting to come in from some league members who are protesting the selection of John McCann. The Marshals Barry Bintliff suggested *he* be the model. *Why?* we asked him. Barry said, “Think about it. The *Barry Bintliff Bobblehead* ... fans will just love the sound of the way it rolls off the tongue.” The Mustangs Bill Bogel also protested, suggesting *he* become the model. Again, we asked why. Bill said, “Because... the *Bill Bogel Bobblehead* just sounds... supercalifragilisticexpialidocious!” (Can’t argue with that logic!) The Marvels Bill Bott juxtaposed his argument. “I could’a been a contender... no, wait... I *am* a contender... the *Bill Bott Bobblehead*...” However, the Midnights Wayne “Beetle” Bailey made the most convincing argument of all. Think about it... the *Beetle Bailey Bobblehead*. Wayne said, “In addition to ‘bobbling’ my head when I run the bases, I also ‘bobble’ when I play second base, play short field, play any position, pitch, coach and umpire the bases, manage the team, and return to my car in the parking lot when the games are over.” (Logic prevails!)

149. Senior Softball Snippet: *The scouting report, senior style...* The Marshals were at bat in the third inning against the Majors. The Marshals gang was sitting in the dugout when they noticed Tony Galli of the Marvels occupying center bench. “Hey, Tony,” one of the Marshals pointed out. “You guys play the next game.” Tony replied, “Yeah. I know.” Another Marshal pointed out, “We play you guys tomorrow, not today.” Tony again replied, “Yeah. I know.” The Marshals teammates were perplexed. “Then what are you doing here?” someone else asked. Tony grinned with that indelible smile. “Scouting.”

150. Senior Softball Snippet: *Forget “Who’s On First?” We got a better classic... “Where’s My Glove?”* Don’t know how many of you have noticed this, but how many times this past season, after the third out has been made and the team re-takes the field, have you heard someone asking out loud, “Where the hell’s my glove?” Now, medically analyzing exactly what is at issue here, we are attributing this forgetfulness to a very common senior malady identified by AARP as *CRS Syndrome*. You know... “*Can’t Remember Sh...t!*” It’s not terminal, so not to worry! But just like a flabby middle, it ain’t gonna go away. But look on the bright side. At the

worst, the games are only delayed a minute or so while fielders attempt to remember where they laid down their gloves at the end of the previous inning.

151. Senior Softball Snippet: *Quotes from the “MCSSL Legends of the Game” ...* We’ve got another “Snippet Headliner” to add to our senior repertoire. This one comes from Stan Schwartz, legendary luminary for the “misanthropic” Maulers, who commented on the proposal to erect (there goes that word again!) an MCSSL Hall of Fame... *“This is great excuse to start an MCSSL museum building fund. At \$10 per head, we should have enough money for ground breaking by Star Date 7136.4168.”*

152. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Case of the Missing Lawn Chair...* Even Sherlock Holmes wouldn’t take on this case. Seems Billy Mallozzi was at the field watching a game from his usual location around home plate. Billy got up for a few minutes to take care of some business. He returned only to find that his lawn chair was missing. Billy looked right and left. No chair. Steve Alligood and Bill Standen were sitting nearby in their own chairs. “Hey, guys,” Billy inquired. “Where’s my chair?” Steve and Bill innocently looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders. “I don’t know,” Steve replied. “Are you sure you had it?” Billy responded, “I had it right here.” Bill replied, “I don’t remember you sitting here. Maybe you were sitting over by first base.” Billy thought a moment, shrugged his shoulders, and then walked over to look for his chair. A short while later, Billy came back. “Not there,” he declared. “Try the third base side,” Steve suggested. Billy walked over, returning a minute later. “Not there either,” Billy affirmed. “Maybe you left it in your car,” Bill proposed. So Billy walked out to the parking lot, returning a few minutes later. “It’s not there either,” Billy said, perplexed. “I could have sworn I had it right here.” Steve and Bill both cast their eyes upward, and you could see that the look in their eyes said it all: *Elementary, my dear Watson...* Sure enough, there was Billy’s lawn chair hanging in the tree above the Vic Zoldy bench. Steve and Bill, of course, denied any wrong doing, suggesting that Billy must have hanged it there for safe keeping until he returned so nobody would sit in his chair.

153. Senior Softball Snippet: *The MCSSL Bobblehead Giveaway Doll...* Uh-oh... opened up a case of worms... we're starting to compile requests from league members to reserve a doll before they're even distributed. For heaven's sake, *WHY?* we had to ask. The Minutemen's Mark Rosen told us that all his bath tub toys are worn out and this is a great replacement for his rubber ducky. The Midnights Jim Albrecht said in all his years in the medical profession, he's never seen a more promising therapeutic device as the MCSSL Bobblehead doll. The Pumpkins' Gordy Detweiler wants one to replace the plastic *Dutchboy* doll he keeps on the dashboard of his paint truck (the only other one in existence is in the Smithsonian.) Al Keffer reports that the C.I.A. has been inquiring about the doll to potentially use at the Guantanamo facility ... you know, "*Achmed the Scared-Straight Terrorist.*"

154. Senior Softball Snippet: *This year's top Halloween mask...* The Marshals Georgie Hart was pitching batting practice when somebody on the Midnights team pointed out that Georgie wasn't wearing the required mask for safety. Somebody on the Marshals team quickly countered that it wasn't Georgie pitching at all, but rather Bobby Tunstall. "He *is* wearing a mask!" there came the counter call. "That's Bobby wearing a Georgie Hart Halloween mask!" Looks like Hilary and The Donald are going to get out-sold in the Halloween costume stores this year.

155. Senior Softball Snippet: *It's five o'clock somewhere...* It was the beginning of Fall, and the Maulers manager, Mike DeStefano huddled up his team in the dugout before their game with the Mustangs. "Fellas," Mike said. "I have some *good* news, but I also have some *bad* news." A cacophony of moans and groans emanated from the bench. Mike continued, holding up his hands to calm down the boys. "First, the *bad* news," Mike started. "We've just gone from the first day of the summer season to the first day of the autumn season without having one single win..." The whines and whimpers echoed throughout the dugout. "Now, now..." Mike continued, mimicking his best pontiff pose, the Maulers now stirring like a restless herd of wildebeest on the Serengeti Plain. "And now the *good* news!" Mike exclaimed. Rejoicing instantly replaced the moans & groans and whines & whimpers throughout the dugout. "No team in the league has ever done that before," Mike jubilantly proclaimed. "We're now in the MCSSL record book!"*

(*League Historian's Note: The Maulers miraculously won their game against the Mustangs just hours before the actual occurrence of the Autumnal Equinox here in the Western Hemisphere. However, the MCSSL recognizes the international date line for official record-keeping, thus the Maulers unbelievable losing streak will go into the records book since it was officially the first day of fall down-under in Australia.)

156. Senior Softball Snippet: *More on the Maulers historic win...* It wasn't the game winning hit, but rather the game winning "show-up" that tipped the scales for the Maulers. His teammates were astoundingly astonished when Bob Sweeny (who lives right down the street, by the way) arrived a full twenty-five minutes before game start up, of all things driving his antique car instead of walking! Even Manager Mike DeStefano was almost speechless, and was heard to mutter, "Its better when he's late. At least there's hope he won't show up." When he took the plate for some batting practice, Bob was quoted as saying, "I'm unable to give a cogent explanation for this aberrant behavior other than I need to practice a bit." It was all the inspiration his Maulers teammates needed as they ripped into the Mustangs for the Autumn Miracle at School Road Park. Oh, by the way, Bob had a hit and claimed credit for the game winning show-up.

157. Senior Softball Snippet: *Quotes from the "MCSSL Legends of the Game"...* We've got another "Snippet Headliner" to add to our senior repertoire. This one comes from Bob Sweeny, legendary paterfamilias for the "miraculous" Maulers, commenting about his role in the Autumn Miracle at School Road Park ... *"Jealousy leads to complete devastation plus a personality disorder."* What??

158. Senior Softball Snippet: *The MCSSL Bobblehead Giveaway Doll...* Good grief! Now we're starting to compile requests from league members to reserve a whole case of dolls! Again, we asked *WHY?* The Magics Jim Marple wants them for team batting practice. Says he plans to place them around the short field areas to give the guys targets to hit at. The Minutemen's Curt

Fields wants to start a new awards program since the league doesn't currently recognize team or individual achievements. Instead of trophies, we'll give out bobbleheads at the end of year picnic! Neat idea. Hatfield Township wants two cases to use as scarecrows to place around the grassy areas of the field on Fridays to keep the birds off while the grass is resting.

159. Senior Softball Snippet: *The School Yard Rules...* Remember those days back in the school yard when we all had our own collection of local rules? Like, there was only one bat in the whole neighborhood, so if you carried it to first base you were out. Well, seems Tom Dougherty of the Midnights almost got called out for it. Tom hit one of those all too familiar "senior slugger shots," you know... one of those awkward swings when the ball spins out in front of the plate, never makes it to the pitcher's mound, but is staying fair long enough to make you run to first base just in case. Tom, being the tough competitor he is, devotedly legged it out to first base... just in case. Seems Tom carried the bat along with him all the way to the bag. Right away, somebody on the opposing team called for the umpire to declare Tom out for carrying the bat. You gotta give a lot of credit to teammate Jeff Jordan for diffusing the potential controversial school yard call. "That's not a bat!" Jeff declared. "That's Tom's walking cane." Seems that everyone was all right with that explanation, and Tom wasn't called out for carrying the bat. Oh, by the way... the ball went foul, so it didn't matter anyway.

160. Senior Softball Snippet: *More on solving the league dilemma of losing gloves between innings...* It took an old time school teacher to come up with the best suggestion yet to minimize the delay between innings while players look for their gloves. Don Dennis of the Majors remembers his teaching days during the last century long before lockers were invented when kids used to hang their "wraps" in the schoolroom closet. Teachers would assign a hook to each kid, then label their name on it. What a great idea here at the ball park! Don suggested, "We'll install personalized coat hooks on the fences along first and third bases with players' names. It'll take a few games before everyone remembers where his personal hook is located, but even Pavlov's dog got conditioned. No different than a senior." We're so fortunate to have great educators here in the MCSSL. Way to go, Don!

161. Senior Softball Snippet: *Valuable rare coin found at School Road Park softball field...*

The Marshals and Majors were midway through the game when the Majors Bill Ambrulavage found a coin beneath his feet at the shortstop position. Thinking it may belong to the Marshals shortstop, Georgie Schreder, he tossed it toward the Marshals dugout, taunting, “Hey, Georgie! Here’s your lucky quarter you dropped!” Georgie made an error trying to catch the coin (as expected, of course), but immediately noticed that it wasn’t a quarter at all, but rather a Sacajawea dollar coin. “Not mine, Bill,” Georgie replied. “But it’s a dollar, not a quarter. How can you make an error looking at money, but never make an error fielding a ground ball?” Georgie asked. Bill just shrugged his shoulders and said, “Donate it to the MCSSL Hall of Fame if you don’t want it.” Just for the heck of it, Georgie decided to check out the coin after the game, so he contacted a local numismatist (that’s a coin guy.) After getting the initial appraisal, Georgie decided to keep it. As of the time of this writing, the coin’s appraisal value is still skyrocketing. “Enough to put two of my grandkids through college!” Georgie proclaimed. “I was going to show my appreciation to Bill by buying him a beer at the next picnic, but then I remembered ‘no beer allowed’ in the Hatfield Township park. So, I decided to thank him instead by writing a snippet in his honor.”

162. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Phillie Phanatic... What a great idea the whole Marauders team came up with after playing the charity game! As we all know, our games are often delayed retrieving foul balls outside the fence. The catcher throws in the back-up ball, only to have the pitcher wait until somebody finally throws back the primary ball. Well... why not have a team of our own ball girls to retrieve the foul balls? We’ll call them *The MCSSL Ball Broads*. We’ll advertise at the local senior centers and have tryouts over the winter at the indoor facility. The criteria will be similar to the league’s player criteria with a few extras – minimum of 60 years old; must be able to run, throw, and hit; must be willing to wear the assigned ball broads uniform (TBD); must still look like a twenty-five year old in a two-piece bathing suit. After all candidates have been evaluated by the managers (how, TBD), the ball broads team will be set up on a rotating schedule at the field by Joe Juba just like he sets up the grounds crew. Can’t wait, how about you?*

163. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Phillie Ball Girls, the Sequel...* All right, all right, we need to tone down the ball girls idea. The Commissioner, the Assistant Commissioner, and all the rest of the board of directors strongly suggest a change, since both the name and the criteria may be a bit too offensive to the ladies who apply for the team. So, it looks like we need to be a bit more politically correct. How about we call them *The MCSSL Silver Streakers*? We'll also lighten up on the criteria. We'll drop the requirement that they need to hit. They're not going to be batting anyway, right?

164. Senior Softball Snippet: *The 1927 New York Yankees vs. the 2015 MCSSL Mustangs...* We all know and love John McCann. His passion for this game is unparalleled. So much that he writes about each and every game experience. Like the first game of the summer season (which they uncharacteristically won, by the way) when John compared his team to the *1927 New York Yankees*. Well, let's take a look at some of the statistics of both these notable teams: The '27 *Yankees* LOST 44 games, John couldn't even *win* 44 games... the '27 *Yankees* gave up 599 runs, about as many as John's team gave up... the '27 *Yankees* drew 1,164,015 fans to the ball park; John drew five fans (rumored to be distant relatives who were paid to attend)... all five starting pitchers from the '27 *Yankees* had double-digit WINS; John's pitchers couldn't figure out WHO had a win... the team fielding percentage of the '27 *Yankees* was .969%; John's team looked about .069%... the '27 *Yankees* hit 158 home runs, while John's boys hit ONE... the '27 *Yankees* won the World Series (4-0)... well, we don't have playoffs, thank goodness, or else we'd have yet another statistic to compare. But John was right to compare his team, because today, the *2015 MCSSL Mustangs* indeed are just like the '27 *Yankees*. Mostly forgotten and all catatonic.

165. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Phillie Phanatic...* Did we open up a can of worms! The MCSSL Bobblehead Doll wasn't enough. Now the league members want to see an official league mascot next year. So... we asked around the league for suggestions to describe what the MCSSL mascot should look like and what to name it. Here are a few of those suggestions:

- *The Senior Softball Slug* – it should be brown and “earthy” looking, and slither around the infield when it runs the bases just like most of the Mongrels team.
- *The Hatfield Humbug* – it should look like Ebenezer Scrooge wearing a worn-out top hat, and cavort like Stan Walters when he occupies the left-short fielder position.
- *The Juba Jitterbug* – obviously, dressed in an all-orange outfit with springs attached to his legs, and gamboling around the infield area like a disoriented grounds crew member.
- *The Gordy Grasshopper* – all right... dressed in an all-orange outfit, BUT with a long, GREEN proboscis hanging out his face that “schmoozes” easily with the fans.
- *The Wobbly Weeble* – it should resemble most of the Midnights team when it runs down to first base, but thereafter look like most of the Maulers team when it tries to score from second with nobody out.
- *The Second Base Sycophant* – now don’t laugh... should look like the actual bag – dirty, mis-shaped, and trod-upon – and projecting the notion that not many league members have visited here.
- *The Hard-of-Hearing Aide* – should resemble a large ear with a mega-phone permanently implanted in the passage center; cavorts in dugouts between innings listening to the whining.
- *M&M&M&M&M&M&M&M&M&M&M’s* – what else? ... rolls around the field, stands and dugouts covered in a thick candy shell.

ENOUGH SUMMER SNIPPETS ALREADY!