

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 as we move forward into Calendar Year 2016.

SOME SUMMER LEFTOVERS...

166. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Rumor Mill MCSSL style...* John McCann was conspicuously absent last October at the end-of-season picnic. As expected, right away the rumors started flying. Some claimed that John's selection as the model for the MCSSL Bobblehead Doll finally brought about the result that no one thought could ever happen – John rendered speechless. Now, some claim that John was so overcome with emotion that he couldn't find the words to thank the league for such an honor, so he absented himself from the picnic. However, others claim that John was finally embarrassed to the point that he couldn't make an appearance in front of his peers and suffer more jeers. Then somebody made the claim that John was actually on vacation. Yeah, right! Vacation. What *knucklehead* – especially a team manager – would schedule a vacation during the last week of the season and miss the picnic?

167. 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 Tom Musselman, legendary prevaricator for the "mal-adjusted" Mustangs, commenting on being called safe after tagging up when one of the Midnights tried to throw him out at home plate ...
"A stone coming from his throwing arm couldn't even break wind."

168. Senior Softball Snippet: *Taking advantage of the local ground rules, and why not?* Somebody pointed out that every time there are MCSSL games scheduled at the Hatfield School Road Park field, the handicap parking spaces seem to always be filled with cars. Even when

there is nary a local resident to be seen cavorting anywhere around the park. Hm-m-m... they all must be getting lost in the woods or are having a secret rendezvous.

169. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Weathervane Umpire...* Autumn leaves were falling down and cool breezes were blowing all around the field when the Magics and the Mustangs played their final game against each other. Jim Hagopian of the Magics was coaching and umpiring first base. With Jim Marple on first, Steve Mallozzi ripped a signature line shot down the right field line. Jim, the pervasive umpire, assumed a rigid pose and pointed his finger indicating fair ball. But there must have been a sudden gust of that autumn breeze. Still holding the same rigid pointing pose, Jim abruptly rotated on his axis like a weather vane, pointing to indicate that the ball was really foul. Steve had already stopped, of course, and was returning to the batter's box. The right fielder, John McCann, trotted in with the ball, stepped on first base, declared the batter out, and shouted that the initial call was "fair ball," then waited for the argument to start. Gentleman Jim Marple (who, by the way, had made it safely to third) just shrugged his shoulders. Steve was declared out, losing the argument that he was the victim of some "weathervane umpiring," but the call stood.

170. Senior Softball Snippet: *Weathervane Umpiring, the Sequel...* What another can of worms this play opened up! Further booth review (actually, wasn't in a booth, but rather on the Vic Zoldy bench) of this controversial play uncovered some unanticipated revelations. At the center of every league controversy this past 2015 season was that rascally John McCann of the Mustangs, who always seems to get center snippet stage! After careful scrutiny reviewing the controversial play, league gallery officials determined that it was NOT the Autumn breeze that spun Jim Hagopian around like a weathervane, but rather that blowhard John McCann acting like some kind of woeful wayward wind yelling at the poor guy to reverse his call. Jim is just too nice of a mild-mannered gentleman to argue, and simply cow-towed to John's bellowing reprimand! But wait... there's more to the story. The reason for John's impromptu intimidation tactic was because Manny London was NOT at the game! If Manny had been there, we probably would not

have had the great end-of-season picnic last October that we all enjoyed, because John and Manny would probably still be out there on the field arguing the call!

171. Senior Softball Snippet: *New rule in the making... "Catcher Taunting" to be prohibited...*

Ben Modica of the Mustangs is famous for his repertoire of "Modica-isms" that are obviously intended to taunt batters at the plate with a "modicum" of subtlety. He's so good at it that the league finally proposed a rule to stop it. The proverbial straw that broke the camel's back came in a game against the Mavericks near the end of the season when Ben began taunting our loveable Gordy Detweiler. Gordy was ready for the pitch when Ben chanted, "Hey, batta, batta, batta... you're the big jock, right?" Gordy stepped out of the box. "What d'ya mean?" Ben replied, "You like this senior league, don't you?" Gordy responded, "Of course I do." Ben taunted back, "I thought so. You look like a big supporter! From now on I'll call you 'jockey'."

172. Senior Softball Snippet: *Terminator 6: Rise of the MCSSL Machine...* By the time the end-of-year picnic rolled around, it seemed like a given fact that the league's favorite elder was heading for certain retirement. Everyone thought it was going to be Manny London's last hurrah as Social Director Extraordinaire, Player par Excellence, Manager de Magnifico! The tribute was tear-jerking, the praise and adoration overwhelming (except for Mark Rosen's singing, which left a lot to be desired), the admiration and idolization beyond reproach! It was as if a page from the MCSSL history book was about to be torn and shredded! At the end of the picnic as everyone was leaving the pavilion with a shroud of sadness draped upon their shoulders, it was only the league historian who happened to overhear the whispering prophetic incantation of Manny the Machine... *"I'LL BE BACK!"*

AND NOW ON TO THE WINTER OF 2016...

173. 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 Don Petrille, sometimes pretending to be a pitcher for the “electric-orange” Orange-shirt Team... *“I know I can win on Wednesdays in the winter league if we play good defense and the other team doesn’t show up.”*

174. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Phillie Ball Girls, Part Three...* So far this winter, we haven’t had any applications for *The MCSSL Silver Streakers*. We’re guessing that the criteria we put out last fall may still be a bit too harsh, so we’re going to try again to attract some ladies to the new team. We’ve already dropped the requirement to hit, so we decided to also drop the requirement that team members be able to run. Walking to get the ball probably won’t delay the games any longer, since you can’t tell the difference anyway whether a senior is actually running or walking. We’ll keep you tuned to the results...

175. 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 Ken Moyer, virgin manager for the “yikes!” Yellow-shirt Team after losing yet another game... *“I don’t know if the problem is that we have too many summer Mustangs on the team, or just the wrong ones.”*

176. Senior Softball Snippet: *The “Sacrifice” Hit...* Early in the winter season, the Black-shirt Team was short a player and picked up John Packer to fill in the open position. The score was close when John came up to bat late in the game. Knowing lead-off hitter Georgie Schreder was on deck, John pulled off one of the great strategic sacrifice plays of the game. He singled off the left side wall, but the normally fleet-footed John merely trotted down the first base line only to be thrown out at first for the second out. Georgie, the next batter, ripped one far into the outfield that rolled around, and circled the bases for another run to seal the victory for the Black-shirts.

John was quick to point out his ingenious strategic move. *“You know, Georgie, I sacrificed myself that last time at-bat, because I knew you were due to hit one out there and I didn’t want to get in your way because I knew you’d catch me. Good move, huh?”* Better than a sacrifice bunt!

177. Senior Softball Snippet: *Another case of CRS...* The season had only begun. The Purple-shirt Team was playing a tight game against the Red-shirt Team. Around the sixth inning, the Purple-shirts came in off the field. “Who’s up? Who made last out?” somebody asked. There was no response as everybody looked around. Finally, somebody declared, “Ronnie Clemens made last out.” Ronnie was quick to reply, “No I didn’t.” Everybody looked around at each other in a brief moment of silence before somebody again said, “Yeah. I think that’s right. Ronnie made last out.” Ronnie insisted, “I did not!” Somebody from the other team chimed in, “Ronnie Clemens made last out. Popped it up.” It was like a big lightbulb suddenly flashed. “Oh... yeah. Now I remember,” Ronnie reflected. “Man, you can’t remember sh...” one of his teammates chided. “Gimme a break,” Ronnie retorted. “That was more than five minutes ago.”

178. Senior Softball Snippet: *Quality Control Controversy...* The latest hullabaloo to rock the MCSSL has focused on the quality of the softballs being used in this year’s winter competition. No one can remember as many errors being committed in the first two weeks of the season as there already has been thus far. *(Historian Note: errors are not recorded, though, since we don’t keep stats, so we can only go by what’s been gossiped in the men’s room and around the benches and bleachers, so we’ll have to rely on that.)* Anyway, players are blaming the “mushiness” of the balls for the reason why grounders and fly balls are popping in and out of gloves at an unprecedented rate. The conspiracy theorists in the league are blaming the economic downturn in China and the drop in the price of oil in the Mid-East as the primary culprit for the low-quality supply of softballs being delivered to Hatfield. Nobody in the league attributes the errors to low-quality gamesmanship or declining reflexes. “Why should we? We’re all as young as we’ve always been.” Gordy Detweiler was quoted as saying. “Gotta be the balls!”

179. Senior Softball Snippet: *A newly proposed competition category...* The controversy surrounding the high increase of league errors this season has ignited some interest in creating a parallel category of competition. When two teams play head-to-head, we all know to tally up runs to see who scores the *most*. It has now been suggested that we also tally team errors to see which team committed the *least* number of them. That way, a team that has won in the runs category has a good chance of losing in the error category thereby giving the other team a win, thus ensuring that all the players can leave the Bucks/Mont facility at the end of the day knowing they have an increased chance of bragging that they at least won something, even if it's in the error category. Make good sense? Not a bad idea. What d'ya all think?

180. Senior Softball Snippet: *He's finally figuring it out...* For the first time in MCSSL history, the ubiquitous John McCann has abandoned his managerial duties (in addition to having already abandoned his talents), citing a number of reasons not worth mentioning. However, we had to give him the benefit of the doubt, even if it means supporting him like we do all the seniors in the league. After all, we're here to have fun. We thought it was a whole lot of fun to take a video of John playing softball and then show it to him. Upon seeing the video of his playing and managing performance, John's comment was, "*This confirms what I'm doing wrong at the plate, in the field, on the mound, and in the dugout... showing up!*" Like we said... he's finally figuring it out.

THERE ARE NO WINTER DOLDRUMS IN THIS LEAGUE...

181. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Phillie Phanatic Ball Girls, Part Four...* Didn't seem to work. As much as we are against it, we'll have to revise the criteria even more. The next advertisement for *The MCSSL Silver Streakers* will drop the additional requirement that applicants must be able to throw. Not throwing the ball back onto the field probably won't delay the games any longer, since most senior ladies can't reach the foul lines anyway. They can walk it back and just drop it next to the dugout and the players will take it from there. Now we gotta get some applicants! As always, we'll keep you tuned to the results...

182. Senior Softball Snippet: *A ray of hope (that's a "ray" of sunshine, NOT to be confused with Ray Forlano...* The Yellow-Shirt Team of Ken Moyer was playing the Maroon-Shirt Team of Ray Forlano, and as usual, the yellow guys were getting beat up by Ray's guys. Then something extraordinary suddenly happened. John McCann (yeah, of all people) actually got a hit. Ken smelled a rare run. Without hesitation, he manipulated a pinch runner for McCann. The fleet-footed Jimmy Flynn trotted down to first base. By all accounts that day, he looked "runner-ish." A hard hit ground ball... Jimmy also trotted down to second base like he was dancing a slow waltz and was easily thrown out. On his way back to the bench, Ken went berserk (there is a lot of peer pressure in this league to win), yelling at poor Jimmy, who is also a big fan of *Dancing with the Stars*. Ken bellowed, "You're supposed to be a 'pinch runner', Flynn. NOT a 'pinch walker'!"

183. Senior Softball Snippet: A wise old sage (wasn't anybody from this league, we don't have anybody wise enough to be a sage) once said, "*Be careful what you ask for. You might just get it.*" Gordy Detweiler once again asked for orange pumpkin-esque shirts for his winter team. He got 'em. These shirts are beyond vivid. They actually glow. So much that it distracts opposing players. These shirts are military grade emergency visual signaling devices. But according to Gordy, that's a good thing. "Well... you know... if we can't seem to have a winning record year after year, we can at least razzle-dazzle the other team this year and maybe win a few games. And if any of us breaks down on the way home, we can always use our shirt to flag down a tow truck!" You gotta love Gordy, though. Guess he knew what he was asking for after all.

184. Senior Softball Snippet: *Continuing challenges for first-year manager Ken Moyer of the Yellow-Shirt Team as Jimmy Flynn sets a dubious "first" in the MCSSL...* As the next batter advanced to the plate, the call went out for a pinch runner. The formerly fleet-footed Flynn with fluid finesse feebly fumbled into position behind home plate. But before the first pitch was thrown, a desperate cry emanated from the bench. It was manager Moyer. "TIME OUT! STOP THE GAME!" Ken yelled. "Flynn... back to the bench. You're not running this time." Another

of Ken's players took position. The league historian noted that it was the first time in the recorded history of the MCSSL that a pinch runner was brought in for the pinch runner before the original pinch runner was allowed to pinch run.

185. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Tom-Tom Phenomenon...* Our two "Toms" (that would be Corcoran and Lane), have embarked on the path to set a new MCSSL winter indoor record by playing as many substitute games as they can. So far this season, both players have maxed out their playing time. Shades of Mantle and Maris! As of the time of this writing, however, the competition has gotten so intense that it has ignited some controversy. Tom Lane has filed a formal complaint with Commissioner John Frantz, citing Corcoran has accepted contraband materials to enhance his pick-up potential. Lane claims Corcoran has deviously improved his chances of playing by expanding his wardrobe, "mooching" a team shirt from the other eight managers. It seems Tom Corcoran now has the slight edge over Tom Lane, since he's managed to procure a shirt of each color for all nine teams in the league. Lane asserts Corcoran's unscrupulous move has cost the league additional money, since he did indeed mooch the shirts from each of the new unsuspecting managers without paying an additional fee. We're going to follow this race closely, so stay tuned.

186. Senior Softball Snippet: *Tell it like it is...* According to manager Billy Mallozzi, so far this year his Gray-Shirt Team has a disappointing record. Billy was recently on a local Sports Talk Radio Show, and was asked what he thought the problem was. Billy's response: "The problem with this team is that everybody always shows up!"

187. Senior Softball Snippet: *Salary arbitration, MCSSL style...* Any time a team is short of a player, especially a pitcher, the manager is always happy and grateful when John Packel makes himself available to pitch. So it was recently when the Black-Shirt Team came in desperate need of a pitcher to start the game. "I do this so often, I should start demanding some pay for my services," John exclaimed as he took the mound (well, took the pitcher's blue line, whatever you

want to call it indoors.) Manager Barry Bintliff replied, “John. We do pay you.” John responded back, “You do? With what?” Barry’s teammates erupted into a familiar chorus. “R-E-S-P-E-C-T, John. Lots of it!” To which John only gloated.

188. Senior Softball Snippet: *Who’s on first, er-r, Who’s on second?...* It was a tight game between the Orange-Shirt Team and the Black-Shirt Team, which was at bat with one out. With a runner on first base, the batter hit a hard grounder to the right side, a sure chance for an inning-ending double play. The second baseman, Joe Gennerelli, fielded the ball cleanly, pivoted, and fired a perfect throw to second base. The ball sailed past the bag and the runner was safe. Nobody was covering. Joe Nappi the shortstop and Donnie Petrille the middle fielder both looked at each other, then shrugged their shoulders. Pitcher Gordy Detweiler exclaimed, “What’s the matter with you guys? You gotta talk.” Both Joe and Donnie replied, “We did.” Gordy snapped back, “What did you say to each other?” Both Joe and Donnie responded, “YOU got the bag.” Seems nobody knows, “... *Who’s on second?*”

189. Senior Softball Snippet: *A new proposed memory jogger...* One of the most noticeable “senior moments” that more than frequently occurs is trying to remember who made the last out last inning. How many times have ALL of us experienced arriving back at the bench and asking, “*Who’s up? Who made last out?*” ... only to be confronted with a team-glare that looks like a herd of deer caught in the headlights? Well, we’ve got some good suggestions from around the league to help improve memory... without drugs, even! Here goes...

- Bob Weaver suggested that whoever made last out must wear his hat backwards, so that next inning everybody can look to see who it was. Problem: not everybody always wears a hat.
- Wayne “Beetle” Bailey suggested that we construct a colorful armband that is embroidered with “*I made the last out,*” and the guilty player must wear it on his sleeve

through the next inning. Problem: the armband would probably get forgotten to be passed around inning by inning, and the same guy would always be making the last out.

- Tim Smith suggested we erect a grease board next to the scoreboard to record the guilty batter. Problem: Most times teams can't remember to record the score, let alone who made last out... plus the dry-erase marker always seems to get lost.
- Bryan Wood suggested that as the last out is made, all the players on the field join in a mass-chant, pointing to the guilty batter intoning, "HIM... HIM... HIM..." Problem: By the time the next inning rolls around, in all probability nobody would remember who "HIM" was anyway.
- Then we thought Joe Laskowski had the best idea – assign a "Designated Remember-er." Team managers would assign a player to each inning to be the Designated Remember-er. The Travel Team tried it out. Problem: Teammates couldn't remember what inning they were assigned to be the Designated Remember-er.

Solution: THERE IS NO SOLUTION.

190. Senior Softball Snippet: *Flynn's problems continue with Yellow-Shirt Team*

management... Same game against the Black-Shirt Team. Despite Jimmy Flynn's stellar batting performance at the plate (three for three in the game contributing to a solid lead), manager Ken Moyer still seemed to be having confidence problems with his franchise player, Jimmy Flynn. Another MCSSL first occurred in the last inning. Jimmy sauntered down to coach at third base. Again, that by-now familiar desperate call emanated from the bench. It was manager Moyer bellowing once again. "TIME OUT! STOP THE GAME!" Ken yelled. "Flynn... back to the bench. You're not running, coaching OR umpiring." That was embarrassing enough for the team. But Ken topped it. You'll never believe WHO was sent down to "pinch coach" for Jimmy Flynn. Talk about going full circle. Ready for this? None other than... John McCann!

AND YET STILL 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.

191. Senior Softball Snippet: *Did you make the last out again?* The Black-Shirt Team came in off the field to bat. Someone voiced, "Who's up?" There came a reply, "Stan Walters made last out." Somebody else asked, "Who follows him?" It was a unanimous reply from the rest of Stan's teammates. "Usually the other team."

192. Senior Softball Snippet: *Must be the glare from the fluorescent-green shirts...* Steve "Rocket Man" Parente, erstwhile catcher for the Yellow-Shirt Team, tore out from behind the plate to field a ball that had died rather than spin foul. After initially getting untangled with the batter, who was trying to run to first base and escape the miss-hit, Steve pounced upon the ball with such tenacity that it would have made Johnny Bench look like an amateur. Steve speared the ball into the floor, reared back, and attempted to fire a throw to second base. However, there was no one covering second base since there was no one on first base when the play started. Realizing his error, Steve then spun around and fired to first base. Too late. Runner safe. Steve's defense: "I thought there was a runner on first." His fielding teammates: "Well, there is now."

193. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Headhunter*"... Gordy Detweiler of the Orange-Shirt Team was handling the pitching duties against the Gray-Shirt Team when the batter hit a screaming line drive up the middle that almost tore off Gordy's head. "Whew... that was close!" Gordy was heard to exclaim. "Almost hit me in the head." First baseman Jim Binsberger, not one to mince words, replied back, "That would have been the first time you used your head this whole game."

194. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Baseball Dictionary, MCSSL style...* What a game, baseball. Over the decades it has evolved so elegantly that it has developed its own unique vocabulary. Take for instance, a “Can of Corn” or a “Merkle’s Boner,” terms that every student of the game inherently understands without having to look it up. Here in the MCSSL we’re expanding the definition of “Inning-Eater”, which is the baseball term that refers to a pitcher who is good enough to consistently pitch a lot. In the MCSSL it also refers to a player who consistently makes at least three outs every game. One of our very favorite players in the league, Bill Bogel of the Yellow-Shirt Team, is unique among players. His teammates claim he consistently does both.

195. Senior Softball Snippet: *You had to ask, didn’t you?* Bobby Schuettler, catching for the Red-Shirt Team, was warming up his pitcher, Manny London, prior to the start of the game. The leadoff batter moseyed up to plate, and in keeping with the league philosophy of having fun and promoting good-natured play, lightheartedly asked Bobby what Manny was throwing today. Bobby’s quick-witted taunting reply: “What do you think? Balls and strikes. He alternates.”

196. Senior Softball Snippet: *Batting .300 will get you into the Hall of Fame...* It was halfway through the season and the boys were mulling around the metal bleacher stands waiting for the next game to start. The conversation, as expected, quickly faded from sex and cars and instead focused on individual “performance” in the league indoor games. Dan Brady of the Gold-Shirt Team was asked, “How are you hitting in the games so far this year?” Dan replied, “Awful. Just awful. So far I’m only four for twelve.” The boys on the bench seemed to nod approval. “That’s not so bad. It’s over three hundred.” Dan clarified his statement by responding, “Yeah. Except I meant I’ve only had four hits in the first twelve games.”

197. Senior Softball Snippet: *Happy Days... MCSSL style...* We all know that as we continue to get older, we have a tendency to reminisce about those halcyon days of our youth and all the fun we had when we were kids playing in the schoolyard. We had two incidents during games a

few weeks ago that brought to mind our schoolyard days. The first incident, Jimmy Kotz of the Green-Shirt Team was batting. The pitcher threw an errant pitch that came bouncing toward Jimmy's feet. Jimmy unshouldered the bat, turned, and kicked the ball back to the pitcher. The second incident, Ray Forlano was playing shortstop when a hard hit ground ball came scooting to his left. Ray booted the ball, but it fell right in front of him. Ray kicked it to the second baseman covering, who picked it up in time to force the runner out. Those of us in the stands watching those two games that week thought right away that both Jimmy and Ray had senior flashbacks and thought they were playing kickball back in the schoolyard again. Both men denied it, of course. Both Jimmy and Ray claimed they didn't want to strain their backs bending over too far to pick up the ball, so they kicked it instead. Sure... if they say so.

198. Senior Softball Snippet: *Batting slump...* Bobby Sipes, ubiquitous second baseman for the Purple-Shirt Team, was in a real batting slump. Bobby was getting very frustrated, hitting foul ball after foul ball, and even when he hit the ball hard, it seemed it was right at somebody. Adding insult to injury, Bobby hit a weak grounder with men in scoring position, only to record the third out of the inning. On his way back to the bench, Bobby was heard muttering, "This team needs to move me down to the eleventh spot." Several of his teammates were overheard replying, "We would if we could, Bobby. But unfortunately we can't. We're only playing with ten."

199. Senior Softball Snippet: *Clearing the air, MCSSL style...* Your typical game. The Gray-Shirt Team was battling it out with the Black-Shirt Team. Mid way through the game, Steve Mallozzi of the Gray-Shirted guys ripped a single and stood occupying first base. Manager, teammate, and brother Billy Mallozzi was coaching first base. All of a sudden, Steve and first baseman Roger Rinker both called time out and rather quickly headed toward second base, clearing the area around Billy. It was like a scene out of *Blazing Saddles* around the campfire when all the cowboys were eating beans. Steve was flailing his arms to get some air. Roger almost passed out. Somebody from the bench called out, "Was he like that growing up, Steve?" Steve could only nod affirmative, unable to speak as he gasped for air. After an estimated three

minute stoppage of the game, the atmosphere surrounding first base was finally declared suitable for human habitation and the game resumed. The next two batters allegedly struck out intentionally rather than run the risk of occupying first base.

200. Senior Softball Snippet: *This year's MCSSL's Empty Glove Award goes to...* It was unanimous – Wayne “Beetle” Bailey has won the coveted award for the 2016 winter season. The Green-Shirts were against the Yellow-Shirts. Beetle took off from first base on a routine grounder hit at the second baseman. The bad news... the ball hit Beetle and he was declared out. The good news... he broke up the double play. The Green-Shirt Team commented after the game that, “... we had a sure double play but didn't anticipate anybody could run that slow.” Regardless, Wayne's performance was enough for him to get nominated by Manager Ken Moyer and ultimately selected for the *2016 MCSSL Empty Glove Award* for making the best defensive play in a winter league game.

201. Senior Softball Snippet: *Size certainly does matter!* The league historian was simply flabbergasted when he came in off the field and sat down on the bench in the middle of a conversation that two other players were having about size. Their names are not being used here to protect their innocence, so we'll just refer to them as Black-Shirt Team Player #1 (who usually plays shortstop, bats left-handed), and Green-Shirt Player #1 (who pitches and always wears red socks.) The conversation was going something like this...

BST#1: “I always thought mine was too small, too! It would have been nice to have a bigger one. Guess that's why I dropped so many easy “honey-ies” over the years that I could have had.”

GST#1: “I gave in a few years ago and got a larger one. It made all the difference in my performance out there in the field. Even at my age!”

BST#1: “No kidding? Did it take much to break yours in?”

GST#1: “Not at all! Used it right from the start. Had to get a better grip on it, though. Some of them have a break-in period, so you have to pound it a while.”

BST#1: “I’m excited! This old one I’ve got just doesn’t work anymore. I need a new big one like you guys have so I can enhance my performance.”

When you get down to it, we guess size really does matter after all. It seems the bigger a glove is in size, at least for a senior softballer, the better is the fielding performance. It seems you really can scoop up more “honey-ied” grounders and fly balls with a thirteen inch or fourteen inch glove than you can with a twelve incher. Whew-w-w-w...

202. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Hall of Famer, Shag Crawford... this umpire is in charge now!* It was a tight game. Gentle Joe Laskowski of the Maroon-Shirt Team was on deck, calling the balls and strikes. In came the next pitch, and by most accounts that morning (well, some accounts, anyway), a distinctive dull “plunk” was heard throughout the Bucks/Mont facility. “BALL!” Joe announced loudly. There was a sudden uproar from the field, as the ten opposing “umpires” disagreed with the call. “That hit the plate! It was a strike!” Joe stood firm, responding, “It was a ball!” The jeers started from the outfield. “We could hear it hit the plate way out here!” What happened that day is now the stuff of legend. Gentle Joe stopped the game and thundered so loudly that the motorists could hear him all the way out on 309. “THEN WHAT AM I DOING HERE? THE LEAGUE SAYS I’M THE UMPIRE! I SAID IT WAS A BALL, SO IT’S A BALL! NOW BATTER UP!” The stunned players immediately tucked their tails between their legs and play resumed. Afterward, though, the boys all agreed that if ever there was a bench-clearing brawl in the MCSSL, they wanted Joe to be the umpire in charge.

ENOUGH WINTER SNIPPETS ALREADY!

AND NOW ON TO THE SUMMER FOR MORE FUN AND ANTICS IN THE SUN...

203. Senior Softball Snippet: *Quotes from the "MCSSL Legends of the Game...* We've got another "Snippet Headliner" to add to our senior repertoire. John McCann (oh, no... not him again!), the Mustangs garrulous skipper, is back to managing again now that the summer season has started. As we all know, John took the winter off from managing his indoor team and had turned the helm over to teammate Ken Moyer. John's only comment on why he temporarily stepped aside ... *"I wanted to have someone who could embarrass me besides ME."*

204. Senior Softball Snippet: *From the MCSSL Complaint Department...* It might have been early in the season, but already Joe Hackman of the Marvels was vociferously complaining that none of the league's new bats had "thick handles." Someone on the opposing team suggested that Joe should try to lose some weight in his hands so they would fit better when wrapped around the bat. The last we heard, Joe was inquiring of Marie Osmond what she would recommend for putting his hands on a diet.

205. Senior Softball Snippet: *MCSSL oil change, good for another ten thousand...* The boys were mingling around the Vic Zoldy bench the other day shooting the breeze as usual. Ray Forlano of the Marshals was applauding the fact that he was still playing decent ball for his age, considering he was nearing his seventy-ninth birthday. "Why, just the other day I went to my cardiologist for a check-up and got some great news," Ray bragged. Someone asked, "What did he say?" Ray replied, "He said I was good for another ten." The boys all nodded approval. Someone else asked, "Do you think you'll be able to play for ten more years?" Ray shook his head, smiling, "He meant *minutes*, not *years*. He said you never know at our age."

206. Senior Softball Snippet: *What a way to go...* Our very own John Packel of the Mongrels, along with his lovely wife, was driving home the other day simply enjoying life. As all of us seniors occasionally do, the two began talking about growing old. John's wife mentioned that

when her time comes and she has to be taken care of, she'd prefer being in home hospice. "Not me," John replied. "When my time comes, I want to keel over when running from second to third after smacking a triple." Her response: "Well, I guess that will never happen."

207. Senior Softball Snippet: *"In & Out, In & Out, In & Out"...* Butch Fisher complained, as the Midnights' strategic game plan to beat the Marshals was to confuse them and keep shuffling players around each inning into different positions. The next inning was about to start, but the Midnights had no first baseman. It was Butch's turn over there, but he was still sitting on the bench. Butch was more confused than the Marshals, and finally had enough and loudly voiced his discontent to no one in particular as he trotted into position. "That's it! Gimme a place to stay permanently!" To which Jeff Jordan quickly responded, "How about in your car out in the parking lot?"

208. Senior Softball Snippet: *Player of the Weak...* The Maulers had an uncharacteristic week by winning all two of their games, setting a new team record in the process. Manager Mike DeStefano was elated, and explicitly singled out several players who contributed most to the victories. Among them was Jim Young, who made some spectacular (so we're told) plays, catching an un-catchable line drive (so we're told), and gunning down a runner at the plate (so we're told.) By virtue of Jim's stellar performance, Mike has named him the Maulers' "Player of the Weak." (NOTE: Since the publication of this snippet, the league historian has received several e-mails criticizing his non-usage of "Spell-Check" before publishing the snippets; the historian has since run "Spell-Check" several times and cannot come up with any spelling errors.)

209. Senior Softball Snippet: *There's a science to playing senior softball...* Remember when we were all kids more than a half century ago sitting in science class (yuk!) and listening to the teacher boring us with all those scientific terms? Well, it seems teacher really did get through to us after all. Over one hundred and sixty members of the MCSSL at each and every game

demonstrate the true meaning of the term “Conservation of Energy.” Just watch how efficiently they all conserve their energy coming on and off the field between every inning. They ain’t “Charlie Hustles,” that’s for sure. More like, “Weebles waddle but they don’t fall down.”

210. Senior Softball Snippet: *Speaking of Weebles waddling and not falling down...* Stan Walters of the Maulers set some sort of a personal record last week when he didn’t fall down while catching a ball for one whole game in a row. Again, Manager Mike DeStefano took up the campaign to recognize his players for their outstanding individual performance. Mike has established a team recognition award, which this week goes to Stan. The award, a *Certificate of Participation*, also includes the current revised edition of an autographed copy of women’s Hall-of-Famer Jennie Finch’s book, *“Introduction to Basic Softball.”*

211. Senior Softball Snippet: *Player to be named later...* One of the Marshals’ newest team members, Ed Spiegle, came up short in the team uniform department. Seems Ed got added to the team after the shirts had already been ordered for the new incoming players. No problem. Shirt back-ordered. In the meantime, Ed was given a leftover shirt with another guy’s name until his shirt arrives. Just so the league players don’t get used to calling Ed by the wrong name, he craftily taped over the incorrect name tag, blocking it out. Of course, nothing escapes the world of Senior Softball Snippets. Ed’s teammates affectionately refer to him as, “The player to be named later.” Dan Brady couldn’t let this one go, adding. “He’s just a player who wants to be *named.*”

212. Senior Softball Snippet: *A classic trip to the mound...* Ever wonder what the pitcher and the catcher talk about when they conference at the mound? The other day in a Marvels game, Tony Galli marched out to the mound where Bob Wellington waited, somewhat surprised. They were seen conferring for a few moments, then play resumed after Tony went back behind the plate. Later, we were able to get the gist of the conversation at the mound, which went something like this...

Bob: What do you want, Tony?

Tony: I don't want anything. You called *me* out here.

Bob: No I didn't. *You* called time and came out here.

Tony: No I didn't.

Bob: (*either embarrassed or perturbed, we couldn't tell the difference*) Tony. Listen. We gotta pretend. I'm putting my glove up to my mouth like this (*Bob demonstrates*), like we're discussing something. You nod your head and go back. Okay?

Tony: Got it! (*Tony nods head, goes back, smiles all the way.*)

Play resumed. The next batter ripped a double into the gap. The last we saw Bob and Tony, they had resumed communicating using senior grunts and groans.

AND THE SEASON HAS JUST STARTED...

MORE FUN AND ANTICS IN THE MID-SUMMER SUN...

213. Senior Softball Snippet: *The strike-out heard 'round the county...* Georgie Schreader of the Marshals was in an early season batting slump. The Marshals were already starting to get shellacked by the Midnights when Georgie came up to bat against leftie Tom Holland with RISP (that's "runners-in-scoring-position" for you non-softball geeks.) First pitch... PLUNK! Strike one. Georgie thought it was going to be short. Oh, well. No big deal. Second pitch... PLUNK! No way that pitch reaches the board, Georgie thought... but it did. Strike two. Oh, well. No big deal. Georgie reared back, the adrenalin pumping, eyes on fire... third pitch. Way outside... a freak wind gust came through the Hatfield softball complex and curved the ball back toward the plate before Georgie realized that it was headed for the very edge of the home plate board that Georgie himself had constructed for the league. PLUNK! Strike three. The jeers emanated from the stands! There was no joy in Hatfield... mighty Georgie had struck out!

214. Senior Softball Snippet: *Pre-requisite to... the strike-out heard 'round the county...* "Patience is a virtue," quoth the sage, but in Georgie Schreader's world, it turned into a disaster. Georgie's Marshals teammates were trying to help him in his batting slump. Joe Gross observed, "Patience. You need to be more patient at the plate. Wait for the perfect pitch, and then hit it!" Georgie took the good advice to heart. (*See snippet #213 above for the result of this advice.*) As Georgie walked back to the dugout in complete disgrace (never having seen the perfect pitch by the way,) teammate Steve Desirey said, "Not THAT patient, you knucklehead! You only get three strikes!"

215. Senior Softball Snippet: *More on... the strike-out heard 'round the county...* Hatfield Township Police Department and Emergency Response Services were suddenly called to the scene at School Road Park circa 11:30 a.m. when calls came in from local residents of a possible riot going on in the vicinity of the softball field. The riot squad immediately took up a defensive position several hundred yards from the Vic Zoldy bench, which seemed to be the epicenter of the disturbance. Fortunately before things got out of hand, MCSSL league member and spectator,

Alex Stanish, saw what was going on and approached the squad commander waving a white flag (actually Billy Mallozzi's undershirt). "It's okay! It's okay!" Alex declared. The commander inquired, "What's the ruckus about?" Alex replied, "Georgie Schreader took three called strikes!" The commander promptly ordered his troops to stand down. As the township battalion was leaving the parking lot, the commander was overheard saying, "Hard to believe. Took three strikes. Of all things...in a slow-pitch senior league..."

216. Senior Softball Snippet: *Even more on... the strike-out heard 'round the county...*

Tommy Corcoran of the Midnights was playing left-center field when teammate Tom Holland recorded his historic three-pitch strikeout of Georgie Schreader. Tommy, who we all know hears very little, thought that he was hearing a woodpecker in the trees behind the center field fence. Now, Tommy is no ornithologist (that's a bird geek), but he knows a woodpecker when he hears one. PLUNK... PLUNK...PLUNK... Tommy kept turning around between pitches looking for the little pecker. It wasn't until the inning was over that Tommy learned what he was actually hearing was Georgie taking three pitches for strikes. Tommy said, "And here I thought I was going to add a red-headed pecker to my bird-watching list. Instead, I added a bald-headed Marshal." (At least Tommy didn't call Georgie a "bald-headed pecker.")

217. Senior Softball Snippet: *Aside from... the strike-out heard 'round the county...* The Marshals Dan Brady was on the disabled list and was forced to watch his teammates getting creamed by the Midnights on the very day when Georgie Schreader took three called strikes. All the league supplemental de facto umpires sitting around the Vic Zoldy bench were not only getting on the Marshals team, but on poor Dan as well. Dan's only defense: "The only thing worse than *watching* this team is *playing* on it."

218. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Babe, I've got a name!* The Mustangs are always trying to come up with a new angle, this year attaching monikers to their players that suggest individual performance behaviors. Bob McBride has been dubbed by his manager as "Almost

McBride.” We inquired about the source of this dubious nickname. His teammates responded, “Because he *almost* makes terrific catches every time a ball is hit to him.”

219. Senior Softball Snippet: *Fashionably late...* Umpiring in the MCSSL, as we all know, is not an exact science. It’s not even an exact *anything*. Like the other day when the game commenced between the Maulers and the Mavericks. Leadoff batter for the Maulers, Joe Davis, whacked a hard grounder to second base, a bam-bam play, runner Davis obviously thrown out at first base. Everybody respectfully awaited the call. A moment of silence. The Maulers’ first base coach/umpire, Dave Carson, was seen to be engaged in a through-the-fence conversation with somebody in the bleachers, obviously unaware the game had started. “Dave!” someone yelled out. “What’s the call?” Dave looked like a deer caught in the headlights. “What call?” he asked. Someone replied, “We just had a play at first base. What’s the call?” By that time, about thirty umpires occupying both benches began voicing their opinions of whether the runner was safe or out. Dave recovered nicely, however, putting on his best Shag Crawford impression. “He’s out-t-t-t-t-t-t...” Nobody seemed to want to argue the somewhat fashionably late call.

220. Senior Softball Snippet: *Another first for the legendary John McCann...* We can’t seem to get away from the antics of the Mustangs maladjusted mentor. In a game earlier this season, the Marvels came up short of players, including a pitcher. So, out of the goodness of fair play, John volunteered to pitch for the Marvels. Now, here is where it gets vintage McCann. When the dust settled, the final score was 12 to 1 in favor of the Mustangs. McCann claimed that his surrogate team, the Marvels, outscored the Mustangs 1 to 0 in the final three innings, thus claiming a relief pitching victory of sorts, and since he’s the Mustangs’ manager, and the fact that the Mustangs won the game, he claimed a starting pitching victory for the Mustangs since he allowed the Mustangs to win the game solely on his overall pitching. Confused? So are we. This is the first time in MCSSL history that a pitcher claimed victory by losing the game. Only McCann.

221. Senior Softball Snippet: *Caravans & Lemmings... the MCSSL version...* This is one senior brain fart you're going to find hard to believe, but it actually happened. The RED Division's Marksmen team members are poster children for promoting the league's camaraderie creed. The boys were getting together after the game at Tom Lane's house for a few beers and doggies, even though they had just lost the game to Barry Bintliff's Mariners. Being this was the first time in the young season that the boys were going to socialize after a game, nobody had yet been to Tom's house. So, they decided to caravan and follow Tom home. Tom left first followed by Jimmy Flynn, who already knew the way to Tom's house. When Tom pulled out of the lot, the caravan was right behind – Wayne Bailey, followed by Mike DeStefano, followed by Joe Nappi, followed by Jeff Griffiths. However, when pulling out of the lot, somehow Barry Bintliff got behind Jimmy Flynn, right in front of Wayne. Talk about lemmings in the desert. En route through Hatfield, a short distance ahead, Jimmy turned right toward Tom's house. Barry went straight. Wayne, thinking he was following Tom's car, kept right on going. And going... and going... The caravan of lemmings, of course, followed their leader. Barry had no idea and paid no attention in the rear view mirror. Sometime later that afternoon, Barry pulled into his driveway a thousand miles away from Hatfield only to be followed by a caravan of cars. When Barry saw some of the Marksmen team members getting out of their cars and walking up his driveway, it scared the hell out of him. Barry thought the guys were so mad about losing to the Mariners that they were there to gang up on him and take him out! Well, the dust finally settled and things got sorted out. The caravan had to backtrack to Hatfield, where they eventually found Tom's house. But by the time the boys finally made it back, the sun was setting. The hot dogs were all shriveled up and Jimmy Flynn had already downed all the brewskies.

222. Senior Softball Snippet: *"Who are you calling 'old'?"* Ray Forlano of the Marshals was playing first base when the Mongrels Georgie Russel ripped a hard grounder that tore past Ray like a rifle shot. Somebody on the Mongrels dugout yelled out, "The *old* Ray would have caught that one!" Ray, not one to be intimidated by the bench, yelled back, "The *young* Ray would have caught it, that's for sure!"

223. Senior Softball Snippet: *Out of the mouths of seniors...* Our good friend and league colleague, Ben Modica of the Mustangs, is back at it again. Catcher taunting. Ben was warned last season to knock it off, but like most seniors, he just ignores it when anybody tells him not to do something. They were playing the Pumpkins the other day when Ben started picking on Gordy Detweiler again. Gordy came up to the plate and just in passing, mentioned to Ben that this was going to be his last year as a player for the Mavericks. “Too many young guys in this league,” Gordy said. “I’m getting too old for this.” Ben quipped back, “It’s about time, wouldn’t you say? I heard you were a waiter at the Last Supper.”

224. Senior Softball Snippet: *What a play!* The Midnights and the Magics played a back-and-forth game recently that was highlighted by some spectacular plays in the field by both sides. Among the best during the game that had everybody talking was when Rich Hanauer of the Midnights turned in three dazzling back-to-back-to-back catches in one inning to put out the sides. On the way back to the dugout, his teammates were all echoing, “Way to go, Richie! Nice catch!” Richie, of course, was just being Richie when he responded, “Which one?”

225. Senior Softball Snippet: *Cock-a-doodle-doo...down on the farm...* Few people in the MCSSL are more dedicated to their team than Sam Myers of the Midnights. Just the other day Sam’s teammates grew concerned when it was almost game time and he hadn’t shown up yet. Right before the game was about to start, however, Sam came screeching into the parking lot before the first pitch was thrown. It wasn’t until after the game that the story came out. It seems that Sam works on a farm when he isn’t playing softball. Sam went to the farm early that morning (his first chore is to wake up the rooster) and later when finishing all the rest of his chores, went to leave with plenty of time to make batting practice. Sam reached into his pocket for his truck keys only to find they weren’t there. Sam went into a panic. Lost keys! It was too late to start searching the barnyard. Sam decided the best course of action was to scoot home for his spare set of keys. Now, what happened next is a bit confusing. Sam claims he borrowed the farmer’s pick-up truck, hurried home, retrieved his spare set of keys, and hurried back to the farm. Eyewitness accounts, however, differ. Numerous residents had placed calls to 911 claiming

that some “madman”, described as an old guy dressed up like a softball player, was speeding through town on a John Deere tractor. Then he came back again going the other way. Local police were unable to substantiate the claims. Sam, as we told you earlier, managed to make the start-up of the Midnights game. Oh... just as a sidebar note... when Sam returned the tractor to the farm and jumped into his truck, he found that he hadn't lost his original keys after all. They were still hanging in the ignition.

AND WE'RE ONLY HALFWAY THROUGH THE SEASON...

WE JUST COULDN'T WAIT TO GET THESE OUT THERE...

226. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Elvis and Fraser... Billy has left the building...* It was a rare occurrence the other day when the Magic team couldn't muster enough of its roster players to field a team in their game against the Minutemen. Most of the key Magic players were among the missing, and the gang had to pick up whatever league players were available mulling around the field waiting for the next game. A very forlorn Billy Mallozzi was quoted as saying, "It will be a *miracle* if we win this game. I'd hang up my glove and spikes and retire if *that* happened!" Well, you know what they say in the world of sports. Any team on any given day can beat another team. The "miracle" happened (actually, it was probably more like "magic" that happened!) Billy's gang won! After the game, all the boys were sitting around the Vic Zoldy bench area, including Billy, who was situated in his usual spot on his lawn chair. Billy was getting the silent treatment from the boys, who were ignoring him. After a while, Billy asked, "Why isn't anybody talking to me?" All the boys just glared at Billy, silent. Then Steve Allgood finally replied, "Because you're not here, Billy. You retired, remember?"

227. Senior Softball Snippet: *Named in honor of...* The prayers of the MCSSL membership were all answered when Alex Stanish of the Mavericks pulled through the awful experience of an unexpected heart operation. Alex was back on his feet in no time, and after a short recovery period at home, Alex was back there at the field to the applause and well wishes of all his fellow senior comrades. Like all seniors, everybody wanted Alex to fill them in on the details of his experience. Alex might have had his body beaten up a bit, but certainly not his wonderful sense of humor. Alex told us he had a thing removed that the doctor called a "McCann tumor." The ever-inquisitive Alex asked his doctor, "Why do they call it that?" His doctor replied, "I'm not quite sure, but I think these types of maladies are always named after people who have some association with the medical field." Alex pondered a moment, and then said, "I know a guy by that name who lives up in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He was a medic in the military. He plays softball with us." The doctor nodded, "Might be him," and continued, "I was surprised, however, to see that it manifested itself in your heart area." Alex asked, "Really? Where do they usually grow?" The doctor replied, "On the rectum." Alex could only nod again. "Ah-h-h... then that

confirms it. I happen to *know* the original pain-in-the-ass it was named for!” (*Historian’s Note: This message approved by Alex.*)

228. Senior Softball Snippet: *Talk about being hard-headed...* The Magic and the Marshals were doing battle in the usual fashion. Nothing to write home about, no outstanding plays (most games are like this anyway), no rhubarbs, the usual number of wrong calls, the usual number of right calls, close score ... all in all, a typical game. Dan Brady of the Marshals finally broke the game open, ripping a shot to the gap. Dan came roaring into second, arriving safely. The throw from the outfield hit Dan right in the head and ricocheted halfway into earth orbit. Again, as usual, Dan didn’t feel a thing. The ball was tossed back to pitcher Jimmy Flynn. Jimmy went to throw the next pitch, but halted halfway into his motion. “Time out!” Jimmy declared. He suddenly tossed the game ball into the dugout, exclaiming, “Trash that ball. Gimme the back-up ball.” The Marshals team all starting shouting, “What’s the problem? You can’t trash the game ball.” Jimmy Flynn wasn’t intimidated. “Yes, I can. That ball’s got a damn dent in it! Brady broke the ball!” The Marshals team could only respond, as usual, “Way to go, Dan.”

229. Senior Softball Snippet: *The next great trend in senior softball...* In the world of golf, one of the latest trends is the Magnetic Copper Wrist Bracelet, which is purported to ease the pains associated with the sport. Whether it works or not is pure conjecture. Here in the MCSSL, our very own Alex Stanish of the Mavericks has started the next trend in senior softball. Alex’s recent medical experience sparked his hidden entrepreneurial spirit. Alex came up with a great new innovative idea. The proto type of the Senior “Fall Alert” Wrist Bracelet is now being tested in the MCSSL. The design closely resembles the yellow bracelet utilized in facilities throughout the medical world to alert others that the person wearing the bracelet is very prone to falling down on a continual basis. What better test subject is there in the MCSSL than our very own Stan Walters of the Maulers? So, for the remainder of the 2016 summer season, Stan is going to wear the yellow bracelet. Alex is asking all league members to keep an eye on Stan and let him know whenever Stan falls down. We’ll let you know at the end of the season how many times Stan actually hits the turf and whether the league plans to market the device for next year.

230. Senior Softball Snippet: *Tide was designed with the MCSSL in mind...* The Marshals feisty new rookie, Dave Linthicum, got a little too aggressive in a game against the Maulers. Dave ripped a liner into the right center field gap, thought about trying to stretch it into a double, but the throw came back in quickly. Dave tried to scurry back to first, but got a rude awakening to the MCSSL rookie world. Finding out the hard way that the legs don't work like they used to, Dave fell flat on his face, and then literally crawled through the dusty dirt back to first base. Dave may have been safe, but his green Marshals shirt and shorts looked like a pile of used brown burlap. Talk about dirty! Well, nothing gets by the boys in the MCSSL. His teammates later learned that when Dave got home, he was refused entry into the house and had to strip down in the driveway, where he was subsequently hosed down with a strong solution of Tide and Downey fabric softener. What a sight, we were told. The neighbors were speechless. So are the Marshals.

THE SUMMER HITS JUST KEEP COMING AND COMING...

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SPECIAL – A BACKPACK FULL OF SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS!

231. Senior Softball Snippet: *Arr-r-r-r-gh...* We're all familiar with the pirate chant. What's so amazing is that it sounds so familiar. We hear it each and every game here in the MCSSL. Just listen closely to the dugout chant that emanates approximately three to five seconds after the third out is made. The cacophony of moans and groans and creaks and squeaks and whines and whimpers – as the players all rise from the bench to resume their positions way out there on the field – fills the air like a choir anthem on an old pirate ship. As a matter of fact, the creaking of bones of the MCSSL players makes a pirate ship refrain sound like a Queen Mary children's chorus.

232. Senior Softball Snippet: *What's in a name...?* The boys on the Vic Zoldy bench were thrown a curve ball the other day when John McCann showed up to pitch a game for a team short a pitcher. John was wearing a Mustang shirt, but with somebody else's name imprinted on the back. The boys on the bench squinted to read the name. "Witt," Alex Stanish read. "The last name is Witt." Billy Mallozzi asked, "What's the first name?" Steve Alligood replied, "I don't know. He's too far away and the writing is too small to read from here." Bill Standen said, "Let's wait until he comes up to bat, then we can probably read it." Finally, John came up to the plate. Steve squinted, "Looks like... something... i...m." Billy also squinted, "He's moving around too much. It's hard to read from here." Alex said, "I can't see it either." Bill suggested, "Let's go through the alphabet." The boys started with the letter 'A'. John, as usual, quickly hit into an out and quickly returned to the bench. After searching through the alphabet, the boys had a number of possibilities. The first name could have been Aim, Dim, Him, Kim, Rim, Tim, or Vim. There wasn't even a doubt, as Alex, Billy, Steve, and Bill all instantly agreed on the mysterious first name that was imprinted on the back of John McCann's shirt. We guess John wanted to attribute the predictable pitching loss to some other "Dim-wit" in the league.

233. Senior Softball Snippet: *FOUL BALL, but only by inches...* In a game the other day, Maulers manager Mike DeStefano was short players and ended up having to ask Georgie Schreader of the Marshals to play third base for the Maulers in their game against the Mavericks. Talk about the coal region connection. Joe Juba was on second base, Bobby Schuettler was coaching third, Georgie was playing third base, and Mike was playing first base. In came the next pitch... a long, long shot to left field along the line. Bobby and Georgie closely eyed the trajectory of the uncatchable ball as it fell inches into foul territory. Bobby made the correct call, yelling, "Foul ball!" and pointed emphatically to foul territory. As usual, the Mavericks bench erupted, as the remaining umpires all declared that it had to be a fair ball. But the coal region boys' integrity was not to be compromised. Bobby stood his ground, and the ball was declared foul. Even Joe quietly returned to second base, knowing the call was correct. After the inning ended, Georgie came back to the bench. Mike asked Georgie, not even questioning the call, "How far was it foul?" Georgie replied, "It was foul by a good six inches!" Mike turned to the bench and said, "Listen up! I know Schreader. His six inches is more like three inches!" The Maulers all got a good laugh at the Marshals guy. But Georgie was not to be outgunned. "Oh, yeah? Maybe so, but whatever instrument I used to measure it, it was still a foul ball!"

234. 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 Butch Fisher of the Marksmen, lamenting over a devastating Red Division seventh inning loss to the Magnums: *"I went right to the emergency room after the last game suffering from severe depression. The doctor said the pain will last about a week or until the next win, whichever comes first."*

235. Senior Softball Snippet: *Pray for rain, or pray for something...* Right before the start of the game, the Midnights boys were discussing how hard the infield is during the summer months and how many "bad hops" the ball seems to take. Not intending to make any excuses, Don Petrille commented, "I pray every time that a ball is hit to *me* that I can field it cleanly." His teammates were every bit as prayerful. "So do we."

236. Senior Softball Snippet: *The MCSSL's version of the Hat Trick ...* How can that possibly happen in softball, you ask? Actually, our version happens more often than you think, even though it must be achieved in the same inning. Bob Weaver of the Majors was the most recent player to accomplish the feat in a game against the Mavericks. There were two outs in the bottom of the third, bases empty. Bob was playing shortstop (a fielding position where the MCSSL Hat Trick is very often achieved, by the way) when he booted a grounder that could have been the third out. Runner on first. Another grounder to shortstop... Bob booted that one, too. Runners on first and second. Another grounder to shortstop... Bob booted another one to complete the MCSSL Hat Trick – three errors in the same inning by the same guy. The Mavericks went on to score four runs before the third out was finally made. Roger Rosenberger was the first teammate to congratulate Bob, who declined to acknowledge the feat. “Those first two grounders were hits!” Bob declared. Roger replied, “Maybe in the school yard, Bob, but this is the MCSSL. They were *all* errors!” The MCSSL unofficial record book has thus recorded an all-time high 4-run natural Hat Trick, “natural” meaning were no other errors made by Bob’s teammates during the third inning, only those three by Bob.

(Historian’s note: During an indoor winter league game last season, Georgie Schreader accomplished the same feat at shortstop, but his natural Hat Trick only yielded two runs. Since these are summer snippets, you all can ignore this winter note and congratulate Bob for establishing a new MCSSL outdoor summer record.)

237. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Marshals batting lineup, default version ...* Georgie Schreader’s batting slump was improving somewhat, but apparently not enough. Ray Forlano was still keeping Georgie down in the sixth position in the batting order. In a recent game against the Midnights, two of the Marshals’ early power hitters missed the game. Ray crossed off their names, moving everybody up in the order. “I’m hitting clean-up!” Georgie declared! “Big deal,” Dan Brady responded. “If the other three didn’t show up either, you’d be leading off.” Georgie replied, “What’s wrong with that? I USED to lead off the charge!” Dan responded, “So did Pickett.”

238. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Sly Old Fox and the Indefatigable Rooster...* So you all think the Commissioner is indefatigable, don't you? (How's *that* for a word to look up in the thesaurus?) Mavericks vs. the Minutemen. John Frantz has been poised at his usual shortstop position, routinely sucking up ground balls more efficiently than a re-conditioned Hoover. The bottom of the lineup comes around and our beloved Angelo comes up to bat. John has been around long enough to know all the players. A break in the action, he thinks. Here's how the unexpected play unfolded over the next few seconds... John has a runny nose (claims it's from a mid-summer allergy to snippets), pauses to grab his Spiderman hankie from his shorts to swab his snout, tucks his Hoover glove attachment under his arm, anticipates Angelo will take a few more moments to reach the plate, turns his attention away from the crescendo of the game to sponge his schnozzola, doesn't bother to get the attention of his pitcher Steve Allgood to advise he isn't ready (after all this was Angelo, not Bill Ambrulavage), takes the pause that refreshes and mops his muzzle, then all of a sudden realizes Steve has thrown the next pitch. (Angelo has been around the hen house for more years than John ever knew he was a rooster!) Angelo whacks the pitch right to shortstop. John is caught completely by surprise, drops his favorite Spiderman hankie (YUK!) along with his pristine Hoover glove into the dirt, but somehow snags Angelo's hump-back liner with his bare hands! Everybody had a good laugh. Except of course, Angelo, who swore he'd get even with John the next at bat. It just goes to show that even the top young rooster can occasionally be almost out-foxed by the sly old fox, even though the top rooster is... *indefatigable??*

239. Senior Softball Snippet: *Bats in the belfry, or why can't I remember anybody's name?* The league's erstwhile equipment guru, John Packel, is about as accommodating as they get. During a recent game, one of the league's players inquired of John the whereabouts of a particular popular DiMarini bat that went missing from the inventory of MCSSL bats. John went home after the game, found the bat easily, and promised to return it to the field. However... because John is suffering from CRS syndrome (he claims his symptoms are even worse, admitting he's plagued by CRAFT syndrome), John just could not remember who asked him about the bat. Two players popped into John's belfry. John sent out an e-mail to the supposed two players – a George and a Bob – hoping one of the two might be the inquirer that his brain

was struggling to remember. The George replied it wasn't him, must have been the Bob. (The George was sympathetic enough to send John a get well card.) The Bob was a little more gracious, replying by e-mail that he was sliding John a break. The e-mail stated, "... but in your defense, we have at least 30 Bobs in the league!" John's malady, of course, is terminal. But at least the bat is back in the inventory.

240. Senior Softball Snippet: *The REAL key to the game...* All of us who watch major league baseball on TV know that all the sports commentators always analyze the "keys" to the game. Recently, Gordy Detweiler took the Marauders up to Allentown for a Friday evening doubleheader and recorded impressive victories in both games. The stands were packed with Allentown fans (Gordy counted at least twenty-five!) It was a combined shocking display of pitching, fielding, and hitting that stunned the Allentown gang, holding them to only one run in two games while Gordy's guys pounded out twenty-one runs! After the game, Gordy was interviewed by the local news media and was asked, "What was the key element to these games that enabled your Marauders to pull off two spectacular victories this evening?" Gordy's reply: "They all had their afternoon naps."

THIS IS WORSE THAN HOMEWORK!

END OF 2016 SUMMER SEASON SNIPPETS

241. Senior Softball Snippet: *An inning-ending double play that doesn't even happen in the Little League...* The Mustangs and the Maulers. One out, Mustangs runners Jim Fisher on third, Tom Mussleman on second. Ken Boyer hits a line shot to left, looks like a sure hit. Fisher and Mussleman start the trot... But wait! The ball gets miraculously caught, the throw comes streaming back into second base, where Tom is scurrying to get back. Jim has already started his home base trot. The incoming ball zooms past the second baseman, rolls all the way to the dugout. Jim continues prancing home to score. But wait! The Maulers third baseman, Bill Durso, a grown-up little-leaguer turned senior softballer, wasn't about to be duped. Seeing that neither runner had ever tagged up after the catch, Bill called for the ball, then walked over and tagged third base, declaring Jim Fisher out for not tagging up. It was an inning-ending double play. Jim Fisher was asked after the game why he didn't go back and tag up. "I didn't think anybody would notice. This is the senior league, not little league."

242. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Man of Steel and the Wonder Women...* Our beloved Angelo Malizia was the victim of some practical joking by his Pumpkins' teammates. They convinced him that his name was spelled wrong on the back of his shirt. Angelo took it off, and sure enough, the name was spelled correctly. Everybody got a laugh. However, there is more to the story. Seems some woman from the local senior center, who was walking around the track, got a quick glance of Angelo's physique. Word got out, and the next day a bus load of women showed up for the Mavericks game. One was even wearing a Wonder Woman costume inquiring where the Man of Steel was! Angelo was last seen in the parking lot signing autographs surrounded by a bevy of beauties. The rest of the Mavericks team was last seen removing their shirts. What an awful sight that was!

243. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Tortoise and the Hare... OR, an MCSSL Fractured Fairy Tale...* The Mustangs John McCann (a.k.a. “The Tortoise”) was occupying first base while Hugh Bray (a.k.a. “The Hare”) was on second. Tom Walsh ripped a gapper. The Tortoise and The Hare both took off, and all the animals in the nearby woods (including all the stallions on the Mustangs bench), began cheering on the two racers. The Hare reached third, running past the base, hesitating, looking for direction from the third base coach, Tom Mussleman, whose attention for some reason was diverted to home plate. Meanwhile, The Tortoise never broke stride, and was closing in on third base. Jim Flynn was heard to yell, “Go home! Go home!” So, The Tortoise, thinking the command was directed at him, kept steamrolling. The Hare, however, had failed to touch third base, so headed back, re-tagged the bag, and then took off towards home plate. The Tortoise, unable to slow his momentum, kept right on running, now inches from the heels of the speedy Hare. It was the first time in the life of The Tortoise that all the animals in the woods were yelling at him for going *too* fast! Good thing it was The Hare ahead! Hugh barely crossed home plate and got safely out of the way of The Tortoise, who was barreling across the plate like an oncoming freight train! The massive weight of The Tortoise’s shell (actually, it was McCann’s enormous epidermal layer), prevented him from slowing down, and the laws of inertial motion prevailed until the backstop fence ultimately stopped the human projectile. Even though The Hare won the race over The Tortoise in this MCSSL Fractured Fairy Tale, the good news was that The Tortoise’s scoring turned out to be the winning run.

244. Senior Softball Snippet: *Why I hit into a triple play, or how the game is definitely rigged against me ...* The Mustangs Bill Bogle was up at the plate with nobody out and runners on first and second. The Maulers were poised for what would later be called, “... an anticipated senior at-bat event.” And as anticipated, Bill hit into the classic 5-4-3 triple play to end the inning. Interviewed after the game, Bill offered the following ~~excuses~~ explanations: “I’m not used to hitting ninth in the batting order... It was a late game and the sun was in my eyes... My shin guards slowed me down running to first base... I forgot to remove my pitching mask and I couldn’t find the base path... I’m voting for Donald Trump and the game is rigged against me!”

245. Senior Softball Snippet: *Yet another MCSSL “first” for the record book ...* Don Petrille of the Midnights made MCSSL history against the Magics when he was called upon by Manager Wayne Bailey to pinch run for... are you all ready for this? Tommy Corcoran! What makes it even more “historical” (actually, “hysterical” is probably a better word) is that it occurred not once, but TWICE in the same game! Skeptical local sports reporters are still trying to verify that the two events actually took place, but an embarrassed Tommy has gone into seclusion and none of the Midnights are talking. They did, however, manage to interview Don, but remain unconvinced of the authenticity of *his* story. Especially since Don tried to convince the reporters that, “... it’s because I’m faster than him.”

246. Senior Softball Snippet: *Don’t we get a “Mulligan” in the MCSSL?* Stan Schwartz of the Maulers sauntered up to the plate to face the Mustangs pitcher, took his usual practice swings, and then stepped into the batter’s box to await the first pitch. In it came. Stan took a mighty swing and hit a hard grounder to shortstop. Stan watched as the ball ripped through the dirty infield, still standing in the box as usual. Because, you see, Stan of late has been getting a pinch runner-from-home. The Mustangs shortstop took his time throwing the ball to first to record the out, since there was nobody running down the line. A stunned Stan looked back at his dugout. “Where’s my runner?” he exclaimed. “I’m supposed to have a runner!” His Maulers teammates only shrugged their shoulders. “All right. Time out,” Stan declared. “I get a do-over.” The Mustangs, however, weren’t buying into it. “You’re out, Stan,” the whole infield declared. “But I’m the league Treasurer and Commissioner Emeritus!” The reply: “In this game you’re the first batter of the inning and you’re out!” A grumbling Stan returned to the bench, mumbling, “It isn’t fair how they treat me in this league. No respect for their elders.”

247. Senior Softball Snippet: *Yet another MCSSL “mass senior moment”...* It must have been getting too close to the end of the season. The “visiting” Mavericks, who were ahead by several runs, finished their turn at bat in the TOP of the seventh inning against the Maulers. As soon as the third out was made, the whole Mavericks team exited the dugout, got in line, and proceeded to commence with the traditional hand slaps and fist pumps with the Maulers. “What are you guys doing?” Manager Mike DeStefano yelled from the dugout in disbelief. “*We’re* the home team, not *you!* We still get a bat!” The whole Mavericks team looked like a herd of deer caught in the headlights. It took a moment or so before the mass senior moment ended and the boys sheepishly scurried back to get their gloves and re-take the field. Pity the poor Maulers, though. They were so shook up they couldn’t score any more runs. The Mavericks couldn’t remember what they had done only a half-inning before and wondered what the fuss was all about.

248. Senior Softball Snippet: *They’ll never make the Olympic sprinting team ...* The Mongrels were getting hammered by the Mavericks in the second to last day of the season. Runner after runner was easily getting thrown out, so often that the Mongrel bench was ablaze with bickering over which one of them was the slowest runner on the team. Finally, skipper Sam O’Brien had enough, declaring that immediately following the game, the question was going to be settled once and for all. Excusing the few “speedsters” on his team, Sam commanded the remaining dozen players (including himself!) to assemble in the picnic grove near the pavilion where they would compete in a simulated “sixty-foot dash to first base” to determine who was the slowest teammate. *On your marks... get set... BANG!* From afar, the league historian was closely observing the result of the race. And the dubious distinction of being branded the slowest Mongrel of the 2016 summer season goes to... from what the league historian could determine, it looked like a twelve-way tie. (Note: If anybody recorded a photo finish of this historical race, please contact the league historian immediately so it can be added to the end-of-season highlights before publication.)

249. Senior Softball Snippet: *A horse by any other color...* In a Blue Division game between the Miracles and the Masters, the Miracles were pounding the ball mercilessly and running around the bases like it was a horse race derby. By the fifth inning, everybody was getting tired. Rich Ianieri ripped yet another single. Before he could catch his breath, the next batted ball went way out into the gap. Rich took off, rounding the bases, and made it safely all the way home. After crossing the plate, he blurted out, huffing and puffing, “Man... that was a lot of running!” The boys on the Vic Zoldy bench weren’t buying that. John Packel blurted back, “You call that running? In horse racing they’d call it prancing!”

AND THE FINAL SNIPPET FOR THE 2016 SUMMER SEASON...

250. Senior Softball Snippet: *FIRSTS... and hopefully, some LASTS ...* This past summer season has seen its share of firsts, some for the better, and some for the worst. We figured it's better if YOU make the decision:

- The Marshals were showcased in more snippets and highlights than they had wins!
- The Maulers managed to pull off two triple plays over the summer, quite a feat!
- Tommy Corcoran of the Midnights needed a pinch runner on more than one occasion.
- Georgie Schreader of the Marshals struck out for the first time since joining the league in 2012 when Tom Holland of the Midnights plunked the plate for three called strikes.
- Mike Dent of the Minutemen set a record for catchers in 2016 by recording four put-outs in a game, three pops-ups and play at the play.
- Tony Galli of the Marvels set the record for hitting the pitching screen thirteen times in a single game when returning the ball back to his pitcher.
- John Packel became the first (and ONLY) pitcher to hit the pitching screen when pitching the ball.
- John McCann of the Mustangs was both shut out and shut up in a single game.