

## ***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 2017.***

### **SOME LEFTOVERS FROM LATE LAST FALL...**

*The boys' antics don't even stop when the season is over and we're all awaiting the start of the next. Here are a few "Between-the-Seasons" snippets while we waited for the start of the 2017 Winter League...*

**251. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Deceptively fleet-footed, that Flash Dougherty character ...* It was one of the last outdoor pick-up games of the season at School Road Park. Tom Dougherty of the old Midnights team, whose reputation around the league is known for his hitting prowess but not known for his excessive speed around the bases, ripped a gapper that found him standing safely on second base. Claiming some sort of injury, Tom immediately asked for a pinch runner. In keeping with the league rules, nobody questioned Tom's request, so a pinch runner was sent out to relieve Tom at second base. You had to be there to witness it. Tom vacated the base and ran so fast back to the dugout that it was nothing but a blur seen streaking across the diamond. The rest of the players, including those on Tom's pick-up team, were all shaking their heads in disbelief. He ran faster OFF the field than ON the bases! After the game, somebody revealed that last Halloween, Tom dressed up like the Marvel comic book character, *The Flash*. Apparently he's been trick or treating ever since in the MCSSL.

**252. Senior Softball Snippet:** *First error of the rapidly-approaching winter season ...* It didn't go unnoticed. Jim Marple of the old Magics team has the reputation for being as sure-handed as anybody in the league. Jim rarely makes an error, but like it always seems to happen, it cropped

up at the most inopportune time. It got the immediate attention of everybody in attendance. The scene was the 2016 MCSSL Holiday Party in front of a near-sold out crowd. It was in the top of the sixth hour in the evening, Table No.3 was up in the buffet line, a piled-high salad was in Jim's left hand while he balanced an entrée plate in his right hand. The rest of Table No.3 had already returned to their seats as Jim approached his chair. Nobody knows why or how it happened, but Jim booted the salad play and dumped the whole bowl onto the floor. Immediately the fans began chanting, "E-six! E-six!" The quick-handed Jim recovered as fast as anyone could imagine, scooping up the lettuce, tomatoes, onions, peppers, croutons, salad dressing – you name it – shoveling everything back into the bowl and resuming his seat at the table. Great recovery! As everybody who has ever played this game knows... when you make an error, you eat it.

**253. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Practice games are also for practicing umpiring calls ...* The boys were playing a practice pick-up game at the indoor facility prior to the start-up of the official winter season. Gary Krause was turning in his usual stellar performance at third base. Billy Mallozzi was coaching and umpiring third. It was somewhere in the middle innings of the second game. There was a runner on first with only one out. Billy and Gary were engaged in the usual conversation that goes on during the games (although it's unusual to know what the usual conversation is about.) The next pitch gets ripped down third, a hard grounder. Gary snags the ball like Mike Schmidt in his glory days, steps over and tags third, tosses the ball softly back towards the pitcher's area, all the while continuing his conversation with Billy uninterrupted. Billy, eye-balling the base to make sure Gary did indeed tag it, gestures the "out" sign, all the while continuing his conversation with Gary uninterrupted. Both Billy and Gary walk off the field. Gary's teammates start yelling, "What are you doing? There's only one out!" Talk about two deer caught in the headlights. The grins on their faces told it all, plus, "Yeah, but if there would have been two outs it still would have been one hell of a play."

*And now onto the 2017 indoor winter season, where the snippet hits keep coming and coming...*

**254. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Why senior league team photos all look disproportionate...* Bob Carnahan of the Black-Shirt team made a very astute observation about the team photos on the MCSSL website. Bob pointed out that usually when you look at any team photo (like little leaguers or high schoolers for instance,) the tallest guys are standing in the back row and the littlest guys are kneeling in the front row. Not in the senior league, however. The front row usually consists of whichever team members are capable of kneeling down and getting back up again. That's why the MCSSL webpage team photos look so disproportionate.

**255. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Blind as a bat with his glasses on...* The Red-Shirt team came up to bat against the Black-Shirt gang. Howie Schwartz took his position as on-deck batter. The first pitch came in... striking the back edge of the plate with the familiar, distinctive dull thunk. Howie called out, "BALL ONE." Immediately, eleven Black-Shirt umpires responded in unison, "What are YOU looking at? It hit the plate!" Howie looked over at his bench, pleading his case, somehow realizing he made a bad call. "All right, all right. Strike one. I didn't see it hit the plate, okay?" The reply came from the field, "And he's even wearing glasses!" Not to be out-gunned, Howie removed his spectacles, bent his head closer to the plate, squinted and replied, "There. That better?"

**256. Senior Softball Snippet:** *How to pull off a double play without ever touching the ball...* This could ONLY happen in the senior league, especially ours. Nobody in the recorded history of the MCSSL had ever seen this happen before. The Maroon-Shirt team had one out when the next two batters each ripped singles. (We're going to keep the names out of print so as not to embarrass the players about what happened next.) Runners on first and second. In came the next pitch, right down the middle, or so it looked... the batter reared back, stepped into the pitch, suddenly decided it wasn't the pitch he was looking for, stopped his swing. Nobody remembered if the pitch was a ball or strike. Both runners, anticipating a sure swing, broke for the next base. There was a moment of silent disbelief. Talk about two kids caught with their hands in the candy jar. All that was heard next was a simultaneous, "... Oh, sh.....!" Both runners were declared out

for leaving the base with no swing. A very unorthodox double play. End of inning. The Maroon-Shirts went on to lose the game by one run.

*There will be more, so stay tuned...*

**257. Senior Softball Snippet:** *A senior opponent by any other name...* Chas Weygand of the Blue-Shirt team took the field (well, actually the court) for the usual pre-game warm-up. Chas looked around at today's opponents, the mighty Green-Shirt Team, warming up side-by-side along with all of Chas's teammates. "Looks like we're playing against a bunch of old guys today," Chas was heard to say to no one in particular. Mike DeStefano from the Green-Shirt Team was heard to respond, "That's funny. So are we!"

**258. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Speaking the King's English in the MCSSL...* Joe Gross of the Purple-Shirt team was up at the plate. In came the pitch from Manny London of the Red-Shirt team. Joe stepped into it, rotated his shoulders, decided it wasn't quite the pitch he wanted, checked, and stepped back as the ball hit the floor. The on-deck batter, Ed Spiegle, called out, "BALL!" Right away, the Red-Shirt fielders started disagreeing. "Hey! That was a swing!" Another fielder agreed. "Yeah. He swang at it." Manny chimed in. "Come on. He swung at the ball!" The Purple-Shirt bench fired back. "He never swung at it!" The fielders responded back again. "He did. You swanged at the ball if the bat crosses the plate!" Ed Spiegle jumped back in. "I'm the umpire. He never swung the bat across the plate." Purple-Shirt manager Bob Gaugler stopped the game. "Wait a minute!" Bob bellowed out. "Let's get it right." Everyone agreed, nodding their heads in approval. Bob continued. "Is it *swing*, *swang*, or *swung*?" Everyone looked at each other. Nobody, it seemed, knew the proper answer. Manny continued, "Let's get some legal advice. John Packel... you're the league's legal eagle. What say you?" John Packel of the Red-Shirt team, who spent his entire career deciphering the nuances of rules, regulations, and the law, responded, "I think we need to have a sidebar on this." Manny replied, "Okay. Does anybody have a rule book?" suggesting they consult the official USSSA book. Nobody did. No sidebar. So Bob next suggested, "Then, if nobody has a rule book, and we can't determine if he

*swinged, swanged, or swunged*, then it was obviously a BALL.” Reluctantly, everybody had to agree to Bob’s logic so the game could continue.

**259. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Speaking the king’s English in the MCSSL, the sequel...* It gets better. Later, in the same game the very next inning, Gordy Detweiler of the Purple-Shirt team was about to throw the next pitch when he suddenly stopped and called, “Time out!” Gordy had everyone’s attention. “Before I throw the next pitch, I’d like to know if this guy is *up-at-bat*, a *batter*, or a *battee*.” Everybody thought about it for a brief moment, then deferred immediately to John Packel of the Red-Shirt team. John fluffed his eagle feathers and responded, “It depends.” John had everyone’s undivided attention. Gordy asked, “Depends on what?” John replied, “If he’s on-deck, then he’s considered a ‘*batter*’. If he’s in the physical process of preparing to, or in the motion of, or recoiling after the motion has been completed, then he’s considered ‘*up-at-bat*’. If he’s hit the ball fair and has commenced the physical process of the running motion toward the base, then he’s considered a ‘*battee*.’” There was a brief instant of deep thought, John’s legal erudition creating a moment of silent applause from everyone on the field. Gordy walked back to the mound. “I thought so. I just wanted to make sure.”

**260. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Speaking the king’s English in the MCSSL, another sequel...* It gets better still. Just when everybody thought the matter was resolved and the game was finally resuming, Gordy hesitated again as he was about to throw the next pitch. “Now, John...” Gordy said, stepping back. “If the guy who was ‘*up-at-bat*’ hits the ball fair and starts running to first base, isn’t he considered a ‘*runner*’?” John thought for a moment. “I cannot deny that he must indeed be declared a ‘*runner*’.” Gordy came back, “Then which one is he? A ‘*battee*’ or a ‘*runner*’?” The learned John Packel had a sudden flashback to his glorious days of courtroom drama. Drawing on what seemed like a thousand years of experience, John replied as the true legal scholar everyone knows he is. “Well, I can only answer that this way... Within the *jurisprudence* relating to the MCSSL, notwithstanding accepting *mea culpa* on my humble part, the initiation of the physical motion of any individual results in *non sui juris* and therefore that individual is *non vult contendere* and the comparative notion has become *non sequitur*.” There

was yet another pregnant moment of silent applause from everyone on the field. Gordy walked back to the mound again. "I thought so. I just wanted to make sure."

**261. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Babe Ruth wasn't the only one to have an asterisk in the annals of baseball history...* We've got a softball asterisk here in the MCSSL over the winter season. Well, maybe not officially. Our only asterisk is the result of a request by Manager Wayne Bailey of the Orange-Shirt Team. It was near the end of the season and Wayne's guys had gone eighteen straight games with a big "W". Nineteenth game. The Maroon-Shirt Team of Ray Forlano. Near the end of the season. Lotsa injuries throughout the league. Ray was short five guys and arranged for five substitute players from other teams. It was an awesome match-up that ended tied after seven innings. In the extra inning, the Maroon guys managed to squeak out the win, handing the Orange guys their first loss of the winter season. After the game, Wayne called foul, claiming that his Orangemen had just lost to a winter All Star Team. Wayne petitioned the league historian to add an asterisk to the league history. The league historian, wanting to maintain the peace and neutrality, compromised. He made it a "snippet" instead.

**262. Senior Softball Snippet:** *If only it was a Little League game...* The Black-Shirt Team was having a tough season, only squeaking out a few victories here and there. Near the end of the season, the boys were turning in a great defensive performance against the Maroon-Shirt Team. Top of the seventh, the score stood at 3-0 in favor of the Black-Shirts. All the boys needed were three easy outs. Oh, well. Yogi's words came back again. When the dust settled, the Maroon-Shirts came back and handed the Black-Shirts a 5-3 loss. After the game when both teams were passing through the traditional congratulatory gauntlet, the Black-Shirt boys reminded the victors, "... if this was a 6-inning little league game, we would'a won!"

**263. Senior Softball Snippet:** *A new twist to the 'leaving-the-base-with-no-swing' rule...* Most all of us have been caught once or twice leaning off the base and getting called out when the batter doesn't swing. We saw a new twist to that occurrence near the end of the season. The

Gray-Shirt Team runner (to save embarrassment, we won't name him) was on first base. In came the pitch. The runner (his initials are J.C.) started to lean. The batter didn't swing. The runner (he usually plays third base) tried to hold his balance. The laws of gravity took over, and the runner (he usually bats clean-up) couldn't hold his balance. Instead of perambulating off the base like most guys who get called out, the runner (know who it is now?) fell over like an uprooted tree. It was the first time the league ever saw a player "topple out."

**264. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Why don't they just call the 3-4-5 batters in the line-up order 'carnivores'?* The Gray-Shirt Team ran off the field coming up to bat (well, actually, they walked off the court). "Who's up?" somebody asked. Donnie Petrille responded, "The meat of the order." That's when the confusion started. "Who's a 'meat-head'?" a player asked. "No. 'Meat' in the line-up," came the reply from Donnie. "Meatloaf? My wife makes terrible meatloaf!" one of the other guys said. Donnie exclaimed, "I didn't say 'meatloaf', I said 'meat'!" Somebody else asked, "Where we gonna meet?" The rest of the team chimed in. "We having a meeting? What's it about?" Donnie responded, "You knuckleheads! I said the 'meat' of the line-up is up!" Somebody asked, "We're meeting about the line-up? What's wrong with it?" Donnie just shook his head. "All I know is... I'm not up! The 'meat' is up." By this time Steve Mallozzi jumped in. "Billy didn't call for any meeting." Donnie just shook his head. "Oh, brother..." As Donnie headed to coach first base, the last thing he heard was, "I know Billy's wife makes terrific cookies, but I didn't know she made meatloaf, too..."

*And the last snippet of winter...*

**265. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Whose call is it anyway?* There is one question that seems to arise in almost each and every game played at the indoor winter facility: Whose call is it to determine if the ball hit the ceiling or not? It should be pretty obvious, right? Why, the umpire, of course. The problem is that when a ball is launched at the overhead netting, at least twenty umpires make the call, not always agreeing. We asked around the league for some suggestions. We got everything from, "...the catcher (few of them are capable of seeing that far)... the on-deck batter (they never pay attention)... the pitcher (he'd ALWAYS claim it hit the ceiling)..."

base coach closest to the ball (we would need somebody to determine which coach is closest)... consensus of the two managers (yeah, right)... a committee specially appointed before each game consisting of three players from each bench (imagine that!)... consensus of the fans in the bleachers (like they really pay attention to the game)... and the list goes on and on. Finally, the winter league director, Gordy Detweiler, came up with the perfect suggestion, remembering how John Packel of the Red-Shirt Team earlier in the season litigated Swingate, Battergate, and Runnergate. Gordy declared, "I'm going to ask John Packel to juris-prudate this issue before the next season starts." Nobody knows what "juris-prudate" means, but they all agreed. But regardless, the league feels confident that John Packel will come up with the best *jurisdictional arbitrage* as to who should make the call. Stay tuned for the upcoming season...

*Here are a couple of teasers to start the 2017 summer snippet season...*

**266. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Perception is everything here in the MCSSL...* The 2017 summer season rolled around as usual with the annual early April "kick-off" meeting conducted under the generalship of the MCSSL's commissioner extraordinaire, John Frantz. About halfway through John's presentation of the league's upcoming business and highlights, however, John's lingering winter cold finally caught up with him. The old "frog-in-the-throat" interrupted his speaking, and several times John had to excuse himself for a few moments to recover his speech. Jim Binsberger came to the rescue once with a glass of water, which certainly helped. But it was Stan Walters who saved the day. Stan approached the podium handing John a blue throat lozenge. Of course, what everyone in the audience saw was Stan passing John a little blue pill. It seemed that in no time, John was up and running again, exhibiting a far greater oratory skill than earlier. Right away murmurs began zipping through the ranks of these highly perceptive senior softballers. By meeting's end, Stan Walters had become everybody's newest hero as he was inundated by at least a hundred attendees, all of them asking, "Hey, Stan! You got any more of those little blue pills you can give out?"

**267. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Howie's new excellent adventure, MCSSL style...* The league is populated by many talented individuals who unselfishly volunteer their time and expertise. At the annual 2017 summer "kick-off" meeting, it was announced that a new position had been created on the field maintenance team. Howie Schwartz, the latest volunteer, was named as the new maintenance mechanic for the league's aging tractor. Now, all that was needed was an official title for Howie. Tom Lane and the boys wracked their brains. After much deliberation, it was decided that Howie would become the league's *Technical Expert Repairer, Maintainer, Innovative Nut-torque-turner and Advanced Tractor Overhauling Researcher*. For short, Howie's new official title is the MCSSL's Chief TERMINATOR.

*And the summer hasn't even started yet...*

*The season wasn't even underway yet...*

**268. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Who said we ain't got no culture in the MCSSL?* In a pre-season practice game, Ray Forlano of the Mystics put on quite a display of how senior softball is a patron of the arts and sciences, so appropriately noted by opposing Maniacs manager Steve Czyzewicz and assistant Vince Torno. It was a high pop fly to short field. Ray called for it. It seemed forever for the ball to come down. Long enough for Steve and Vince to analyze the play. They marveled at the science being applied by Ray as he traversed the field by initially applying the Pythagorean Theorem, continuously adjusting his path to the ball using the cosine and co-tangent of the projected grid where the ball was anticipated to land, solved the equation and zeroed in on the trajectory by making what Steve and Vince later determined to be, "... *one marvelous parabolic catch!*" But the play didn't end with the science. Ray further demonstrated his skills in the arts by performing an awe-inspiring pirouette as he deftly danced across the field keeping himself upright while tightly clutching the ball in his glove! Steve and Vince were so impressed by Ray's overall performance that they wanted the league to recognize just how much culture this league exudes from its active seniors. They're also suggesting that the Summer League Director change Ray's team's name to the *Mathematicians*.

**269. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Casey Stengel he ain't...* It was their first practice game of the season, and all the players were anxiously awaiting the start-up of the game after a long winter's nap. Georgie Hart arrived at the field to make his managerial debut as the new skipper of the Blue Division Mavericks. Georgie breathlessly ran from his car into the dugout three minutes before the game was scheduled to start. He posted the line-up on the fence. All the players quickly gathered around to see where they were positioned and where they were going to bat. It only took a moment for someone to point out, "Uh... Georgie? These first four guys in the batting order? Uh...they're not on our team." Georgie re-examined his line-up. "Well, they should be!"

*And then the season officially started...*

**270. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Rain and other delays in the MCSSL...* The MCSSL's director of all things safety, Jim Binsberger, was on hand for the opening day game, which pitted two Blue Division teams ready to go at 9:00 a.m. sharp. As in all previous seasons since Jim has been in this most important position, his safety briefing again made league history. This year, his presentation only lasted four innings.

**271. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Better study hard since it's on the test...* Some team members of the Maniacs hadn't yet received their new shirts as of opening day, so the shirts were brought along by the team manager for distribution. The remaining shirts were in a bag on the dugout bench. Several of the players, anxiously waiting to receive their brand new team jersey, asked, "How do we know which shirt is ours?" Vern Hunsberger was quick to respond, "You have to take a reading test first."

*The Mavericks may be a new and different team, but the antics remain the same...*

**272. Senior Softball Snippet:** *He-e-e-e's back...like a bad TV commercial that won't go away...* The ubiquitous John McCann of the Mavericks introduced himself to the Blue Division

his first time up at bat by uncharacteristically ripping a screaming line drive through the infielder's legs. John left the batter's box, took only one step, and commenced to fall flat on his face. John, not known for his fleet-footedness, looked like that senior on TV who has fallen and can't get up. He was easily thrown out at first base. Just for the record, the scoring in the book went like this: 6-8-7-4-2-1-3.

**273. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Ricky Henderson or Maury Wills he ain't...* Jim Binsberger of the new Blue Division Mavericks was right back in the headlines of the young season. Jim hit a ball and started his trek to first base. Seeing it looked like a sure out, he stopped. The ball was muffed. Jim started to run again, then saw that he was still going to be thrown out, so stopped again. The ball was muffed a second time, so Jim commenced to run yet again. He was thrown out by, "... this much." A few innings later, Jim was on first and was called out for leaving the base too soon before the batter took a swing and missed. After the game, Jim's teammates were still debating which was worse – Jim being on first base or not being on first base. But they did agree that either way, the result was the same.

**274. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Do you have a square to spare?* Here's another episode from the Mavericks bench. Bill Bogel made a terrific running catch of a fly ball. Well, maybe not so terrific, but a catch nonetheless. The ball hit his glove, but Bill began to lose control as he juggled the ball up and down. Somehow, the ball ended up getting trapped between his legs all the way around toward his backside. Somehow, Bill managed to squeeze tight enough to keep the ball from falling to the ground as he reached around and grabbed it. The out was declared. When Bill returned to the dugout, his teammates tossed him a roll of toilet paper. Bill, of course, dropped it.

**275. Senior Softball Snippet:** *The Mavericks McCann just won't go away...* Here's one that could only happen to John McCann. Not knowing where to bury John next, team manager Georgie Hart decided to stick him in center field, rationalizing that he would at least be

surrounded by other players who could “pick him up”, not to mention that John wouldn’t be pitching. Well... a hard hit ground single came roaring up the middle. John proceeded to mis-play the ball as it went right through his legs. John scurried to retrieve the ball. By this time, of course, the batter was tearing around the bases. In his zeal to get the ball back to the cut-off man as quickly as possible, John’s pitching instincts kicked in. He “zinged” an underhand throw. It exceeded the twelve foot arc limit by at least thirty feet and ended up somewhere out in right field to the astonishment of everyone, especially the right fielder. When the play was over, John had set yet another scoring record in the MCSSL. The scorebook recorded “E-8 & E-1” on the same player on the same play.

**276. Senior Softball Snippet:** *It’s a Mavericks miracle!* Angelo Malizia is certainly a legend around the MCSSL, but on opening day of the 2017 summer season Angelo announced that he was a “miracle”. No explanation was sought and none was offered. But Angelo went on to prove it. Midway through the game with a runner on third, a slow grounder was hit back to mound. The runner broke for home. Pitcher Gordy Detweiler fielded the ball and flipped it underhanded to his catcher, Angelo, standing on home plate. Angelo caught the ball, dropped it, picked it up, but dropped it again, falling forward from the plate. The ball rolled outward, but Angelo performed a miracle by keeping his foot on the plate as he stretched beyond his limit to retrieve the ball in his hand. The runner was declared out. Maybe not Angelo, but certainly the out was declared a miracle.

*Enough of the Mavericks... here’s what else happened opening week...*

**277. Senior Softball Snippet:** *For better or for worse in the MCSSL...* The league for the very first time tried out a new uniform approach by ordering reversible shirts for the Red Division players. The shirts were pretty nifty, white on one side for the home team, blue on the other for the away team. It was a great idea, but there was just one minor problem. The shirt sizes ran small from the manufacturer. As everyone was trying on his new shirt, the comments were flying around like batting practice balls. Here are a few of the better ones:

*Gary Krause:* “I think they mixed up the order. These must be little leaguer’s shirts.”

*Don Petrille:* “It looks like these shirts came designed with sewn-in pot bellies.”

*Mike DeStefano:* “I must have put on some weight since I ordered this shirt size. Do I look it?”

*Jim Marple:* “Do I have to wear this? I can’t move my arms.”

*Bob Zolad:* “It’s choking me!” *Wayne Bailey:* “You have it on backwards, you dummy!”

*Steve Alligood:* “Good thing I ordered XXL or else I wouldn’t be able to get it over my head.”

**278. Senior Softball Snippet:** *If you won, you had fun...* The following letter-to-the-editor appeared in the local newspaper:

“TO THE EDITOR: In a closely fought Red Division game, the Musials were trailing the Mazeroskis by a run. In the top of the fifth, the Musials had a runner on first with nobody out. The next batter hit a sharp two hopper to third where the pride of Pottsville, PA, our own George Schreader, fielded the ball cleanly and then turned and took two steps toward third, intending to step on third for the force out. BUT, after the second step and most of his teammates yelling (cursing) at him, George realized there was no runner going to third. The agile third baseman then stopped on a dime, pivoted 180 degrees, threw out the runner at second, and damaged his hamstring muscle in the process. Everyone agreed that HAD there been a runner going to third, George would have made a great play. To the delight of the Musials, he did turn a sure 5 to 4 to 3 double play into a force at second. George gamely stayed in the game and limped to the parking lot after his Mazeroskis hung on for the win, determined to not let his wife know HOW he sustained another injury. A mind is a terrible thing to waste. SINCERELY, MIKE DESTEFANO, MCSSL ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER.”

**279. Senior Softball Snippet:** *MCSSL’s Snippetmaster considering harassment charges against multiple league members...* Following is my response to the above “letter-to-the-editor”:

“TO THE EDITOR: I would not have considered bringing harassment charges against certain members of this league had it not been for the fact that when I got home, a gaggle of reporters were in my driveway talking to my wife, who by this time, had learned about my re-injuring my hammie. As a result, I now also have a new injury in the form of a sore butt as a result of the chewing out. I tried my best to fill the shoes of our stellar third basemen, Gary Krause, who was temporarily sent off to the minors for re-habilitation in some senior tournament. During the entire game I was being harassed by individuals whom I will name here. They are Chuck Favata and Mike DeStefano (instigator-in-charge) of the opposing Musials team, and Jimmy Flynn, Alex Stanish, Ray Forlano, Steve Czyzewicz, and Bob Zolad, who were all in the stands waiting to play the next game. Their constant jeers, which were focused on my inability to fill Krause’s spikes, totally upset the rhythm and mental aspect of my game. By the fifth inning, I was a total wreck at third. I still don’t know how I managed to field that blazing hot grounder that started the whole thing. I am going out on a limb here. I believe this obvious harassment stems not from softball, but from golf, as all seven of the above named individuals are golfing buddies. Well, at least they used to be. They just can’t get over my getting another hole-in-one last week and they didn’t! RESPECTFULLY, THE SNIPPETMASTER.”

**280. Senior Softball Snippet:** *MCSSL Snippetmaster’s manager and teammate both speak out...* Following the flak instigated by Assistant Commissioner Mike DeStefano, the Red Division manager of the Mazerokis, Bob Weaver, was asked by reporters to comment about Schreader for the official record. Bob said, “Look... leave the guy alone. He’s old. He’s sixty-eight. He’s not a spring rooster anymore. He had a senior brain fart on the field. Someday *all* of us will experience that. I had to put somebody on third since Gary Krause left us hanging out to dry by gallivanting off to re-habilitate in some senior tournament. Hey... we won the game. A win is a win in the MCSSL, right? What more do you want me to say?” Reporters continued to badger Weaver for additional comments. Weaver was later overheard saying, “Look, we’re off the record here, right? What was I supposed to do? The guy is the Red Division Director. If I didn’t bury him somewhere on the field and instead benched him, he’d probably fire me as a manager. I can’t afford that sort of embarrassment. Besides, Krause will be back soon to vacuum up the rest of the balls down third for the rest of the season.” Bill Bott, the Mazerokis all-terrain

second baseman and fellow teammate (along with being implicated in the alleged hole-in-one the previous week), was also asked to comment. His comment was, “No comment.”

*Stick around, the season has only started; there is a whole lot more to come...*

### ***Some Mid-Summer Snippets Just for Fun...***

**281. Senior Softball Snippet:** *MCSSL retirement incentive program...* It was a momentous day here in the MCSSL. The league’s most amazing patriarchal elder, our very own Angelo Malizia, celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Before the game, the boys halted activities and sang Happy Birthday. Angelo was asked the same question for the umpteenth time about retiring from softball. As always, he just shook his head ‘no’. “But there has got to be *something* that will make you consider retiring,” his teammates inquired. The wiley Angelo thought for a moment, then responded, “Well... there may be one thing.” You could have heard a ball drop in the outfield. “What’s that?” they all asked. Angelo replied, “I’ll quit for sure if John McCann pops out of my birthday cake wearing pasties!” Not one to be called-out, right after the game, McCann was seen heading for the adult store down on Route 309.

**282. Senior Softball Snippet:** *For better or for worse in the MCSSL...* Tom Wuerstle of the White Division Mountaineers back-pedaled as the ball looked like a sure bloop hit right off the bat. Somehow, some way, Tom managed to stretch out his glove hand, getting leather on the ball before it dropped in for a hit. Tumbling to the turf, Tom lifted the “snow-coned” ball upward from the ground, where the ball came out of the web, seemed to float slowly into the air, just high enough for Tom to re-adjust his glove motion to re-snag the ball in the pocket of his glove to ensure (that’s “ensure”, not “Ensure”, which is the senior food supplement) that the ball was indeed held for the final put-out of the inning. When Tom returned to the bench, his teammates laughingly observed, “You almost dropped that ball.” Tom replied, “Yeah. But an ‘almost dropped ball’ is a whole lot better than an ‘almost caught ball’, isn’t it?”

**283. Senior Softball Snippet:** *If you had fun, you won, or you're OUT, or whatever...* Already one-third of the way into the summer season, Don Leatherman of the Blue Division Mavericks has already wrapped up the "Corcoran Award" as the Blue Division's worst 3rd base umpire: he has a 100% 'out' rate so far. Today, he called a runner out at second base even though the runner had touched 2nd base and was one-third of the way to 3rd. We found out why later. Asked what happened afterwards, Don replied "This is supposed to be a fun league. I can't tell you how much fun I had calling John McCann out."

**284. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Whose line is it anyway?* The league's new director of field operations, Tom Lane, got an early indoctrination into maintenance of the MCSSL Hotline. Tom found that the Hotline wasn't properly answering the calls, and soon discovered why. Too many logged-in calls, like e-mails, get things clogged up. So Tom began clearing them out. In the process, a call came into the Hotline. Not wanting to shirk his duties, Tom answered the incoming call. On the other end of the line, Jim Young of the Blue Division Magics was making a routine call to find out if the games were on for the day. "Hello?" Tom said. There was a stunned silence on the other end of the line. It was the first time in the history of the MCSSL that Jim Young was rendered speechless. After the dust settled, Tom promised Jim that it wouldn't ever happen again. Good thing. Jim thought that either he was getting to the point where he couldn't read the numbers anymore, or the speed-dial had malfunctioned on his cell phone.

**285. Senior Softball Snippet:** *We're supposed to keep politics out of the league...* MCSSL Hall-of-Famer Stan Schwartz of the Mavericks made the headlines a few weeks ago during a Blue Division game. Stan made one magnificent catch of a line drive down the left field line, and the very same inning ripped a line drive down the right field line for a key hit. Five innings and forty-five minutes later, the game was over. Now, Stan is not known for his political acumen. After the game, he was asked about his notable performance. You would have thought Stan was a White House spokesperson. Stan declared that, "... I have no knowledge of this event."

**286. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Does he or doesn't he? Only his head band supplier knows for sure...* Roger Rosenberger of the White Division Mountaineers is easily identifiable on the field as the handsome guy wearing the designer head band that keeps his youthful flowing locks from blocking out his vision. It's a sports function, right? Asked why he declines to get a haircut on a regular basis, Roger said he doesn't think he would look as good wearing head bands with short hair. "Besides," Roger commented further, "if I went with the 'bald look' like almost everyone else in the league, I'd lose my allure." Asked what he meant by that, Roger went on to explain, "My designer head bands act like a chick-magnet, so if I got my hair cut regularly, I'd lose my look." I guess we can't argue with that logic, as Roger's cell phone keeps ringing all game long and he keeps taking the calls in the corner of the dugout while everyone comments on female giggling in the background.

**287. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Lobbying for the 'Simultaneous Starter and Closer of the Year Award'...* The White Division Maniacs and the Mystics had played a tight game, and after seven innings the score remained tied. It was going to be an extra inning game. Starting pitcher Jimmy Flynn, after a heated argument in the dugout with Maniacs manager, Steve Czyzewicz (who wanted to remove him for a closing pitcher), stormed back out to the mound to start the top of the eighth inning. What happened next is sort of a legendary miracle (certainly not Flynn, who isn't any kind of a legend at all). In accordance with the league rule for extra innings, a runner occupied second base. It was the fleet-footed Dan "The Flash" Brady poised to head home with the go-ahead run. Jimmy threw the first pitch... a pop-up. One out. Up to the plate came the Maniacs own Stan Walters, on loan to the Mystics for the game. Jimmy threw the second pitch. A hard line drive almost knocked him off the mound (or so goes the claim). By some accounts, his glove got in the way and the ball stuck in the pocket. Stunned and stinging (somebody reported his hand was smarting), Jimmy flicked his wrist (the one that was attached to his glove hand) to rub his boo-boo, and the ball flew out, somehow launching airborne toward second base. Shortstop Steve caught the ball, tagged the base, and recorded a double play on Brady who had taken off to third. The inning was suddenly over, a historical first – a two-pitch/three out inning. The Maniacs went on to win the game in the bottom of the eighth. After the game, Flynn was already lobbying for the prestigious simultaneous starter/closer award. Some said that it was

a miracle win for the Maniacs. Some said it was a miracle that Jimmy Flynn caught the ball. Others said it was a miracle that Jimmy didn't get killed by the line drive. Most said there was no miracle at all, that Stan and Jimmy had actually colluded to double up Dan. Whether or not Jimmy Flynn is up for the year-end award is still under review. For sure, the biggest miracle will be if he actually gets it.

*(League Historian's personal note: This above episode was border-line between being a season highlight or just another snippet. Being that there remains an element of skepticism regarding the suspected collusion between Flynn and Walters, I have chosen to make this a snippet. Besides, I can outrun both Flynn and Walters if they decide to beat me up.)*

**288. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Chasing Ted Williams' batting record...* It was one of those hectic mornings for the field prep team as the boys scurried to recover from the overnight rains and get the field ready for play. Finally, Tommy Lane put the message on the hotline that the games were on. There was just a minor problem, though, that at first confused the guys calling in. Tommy voiced that it was Wednesday, when in fact it was only Tuesday. Later that morning he was reminded by almost everyone about the mistake. Tommy had a great retort, though. He responded, "I got the month and date right, didn't I? That's two for three. That's a .667 batting average. Anybody else in the league hitting that high?"

**289. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Another MCSSL tap-measured shot...* The Blue Division's Marvels and Mavericks were slugging it out. The Mavericks were behind with the bases loaded, two outs, when MCSSL Hall-of-Famer Jim Binsberger came up to the plate. Talk about a tape-measured shot that started the Mavericks' come-from-behind 13-7 win over the Marvels. According to the tape, Jim's memorable hit measured four feet from home plate.

**290. Senior Softball Snippet:** *I know there's one under here somewhere...* Jimmy Flynn again. He's making a lot of snippets this season, but then again he deserves to. The field prep team was really working their butts off to get the field ready after the overnight rains. Jimmy was seen

crawling on his hands and knees under the home side dugout bench looking for a receptacle to plug in the shop vacuum/pump to suck up the water. “I know there’s got to be one here somewhere...” Realizing that Jimmy was making a rookie mistake, Tommy Lane said, “Uh... Jimmy? Did you ever think to look out here where the soda machine is plugged in?” Jimmy’s response is classic. “Uh... no. I don’t drink soda. Only beer.”

*Stick Around... More to Come...*

### *Some Back-to-School Snippet Specials*

**291. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Mazeroskis Blame Red Division Loss to Mays on Fake News...*

This was the headline in the local paper that reported on Monday’s MCSSL game played during the historic solar eclipse. Mazeroskis manager, Bob Weaver, was asked about the sixth inning collapse when the Mays team scored four runs to take a commanding lead and secure the eventual win. Bob defended his team by saying, “Now wait just a darn minute!” Bob snapped. “I prepared my team for this game by purchasing a requisite supply of eclipse goggles out of my own pocket. The guys were wearing them during near-totality just in case there were any fly balls coming down in the sun. I can’t help it that my pitcher, Steve Alligood, threw all ground balls. The guys just couldn’t see ‘em let alone catch ‘em.” When asked why the opposing Mays team wasn’t wearing the protective goggles, Bob replied, “Look. The news media hyped up this event and we listened and we prepared for the inevitable. I don’t manage that team. Ask Barry Bintliff.” So we did. Barry replied, “Now I know how President Trump feels about fake news.”

**292. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Wants and Needs are two different things...* Dan Brady’s White Division Mystics were getting killed by the Missiles. They were down a gazillion runs when they came up to bat in the top of the seventh inning. Dan came up to the plate with a runner in scoring position. One of his teammates on the bench yelled, “Hey, Dan! Remember, it’s the seventh. We can score as many runs as we want.” Dan pondered the possibility. “Yeah...” he replied. “... but can we score as many as we need?” Oh, well. The Fairy Tale ended here.

**293. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Size really matters when you're a senior...* Georgie Hart of the Blue Division Mavericks never ceases to impress the fans watching senior softball at School Road Park. Georgie is quite the athlete, and like many ball players, enjoys the occasional game of golf. But back to softball. Georgie ripped a line shot into the left-center gap and tore into second base for a lead-off double. One of his many fans in the bleachers yelled, "Hey, Georgie? How come you can't hit a golf ball that far?" Georgie replied from the field, "It's all about size. When you're playing with bigger balls, you can drive them a lot further, especially when you slow your hips and don't hurry the thrust." We'll leave this one go at that...

**294. Senior Softball Snippet:** *The MCSSL 'Pine Tar' Incident...* The White Division's Musketeers and the Marathons were see-sawing back and forth. Joe Kline was pitching for the Marathons, and just when the present lead looked secure, the incident happened. Joe Laskowski, the Marathons sure-handed left center fielder, uncharacteristically dropped a fly ball that he usually always catches. The Musketeers re-took the lead. When the half inning ended and the Marathons retreated to their dugout, Joe K. was waiting for Joe L. and said, "You should get some pine tar for that glove of yours, Joe. You just cost us the lead." Joe L., without skipping a beat, replied, "Joe, why don't you just get some pine tar and put it on your lips."

**295. Senior Softball Snippet:** *King of the Prom...* John Roebas of the Blue Division Marvels ran hard after a pop fly in shallow center field. He came up short, the ball fell in for a hit, but he was greeted by a lot of encouraging shouts of "Great try, John!" from his teammates. To which John replied, "That's what my schoolmates said when they saw the blind date I brought to the prom."

**296. Senior Softball Snippet:** *It ain't rocket science...* The Red Division Mazeroskis were disappointed that they weren't winning more games than manager Bob Weaver had projected at the start of the season. Teammates Gary Krause and Georgie Schreader were discussing the predicament out in the parking lot before the next game, and both came up with the same

conclusion. "We need to agree to tell Bob what the problem is," Gary said. "Agreed," Georgie agreed. As the team was warming up prior to the start-up of the game, Gary and Georgie approached their fearless leader. "We figured out the number one reason why we're not winning more games," Gary said to Bob. "Let me guess," Bob replied. "We're not scoring enough runs." Georgie turned to Gary, absolutely stunned! "He's already figured it out! We should nominate him for manager of the year."

**297. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Hot Dog, Hot Dog, Hot Diggity Dog...* Barry Bintliff of the Red Division Mays was playing a spectacular defensive first base through the first half of the game. With a SROSBWSSOABH (that's senior slang for "Senior Runner On Second Base Who Should Score On A Base Hit), the next batter hit a laser shot down first. Barry "nonchalantly" made a back-hand stab to short-hop the ball, "nonchalantly" trotted to first to make the put-out, "nonchalantly" tossed the ball back to mound, then "nonchalantly" trotted toward the dugout. Barry's Musial's opponents, however, "nonchalantly" reminded him that, "... uh, Barry? We get three of those every inning. That's only one out." Barry nonchalantly replied, "I knew that. I was trying to dupe the runner." The runner wasn't duped. He made it to third.

**298. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Bench-clearing brawl avoided...* John Lancaster of the Blue Division Magics suffered a butt concussion after three of Gordy Detweiler's pitches hit him in the posterior during the same at bat. John motioned for his teammates to clear the benches and take on the Mavericks out on the mound. It never happened. Everybody was laughing too hard.

**299. Senior Softball Snippet:** *OOPS...* Kris Gigliotti of the Blue Division Mavericks has one incredible instinct playing softball. The Marshals Will Faucett was on second base. Kris was playing out in right field. A line single headed his way. Kris came charging in, snagged the ground ball making a terrific play. Will rounded third and broke for the plate, thinking the ball was still way in the outfield. When hearing the yelps from his teammates that the fielder was about to gun him down, Will stopped halfway to home, turned around, and started heading back to third base, then stopped again. Kris, seeing the confusion develop, kept charging in from the

field running toward Will. Caught like a deer in the headlights, Will broke for home. Ignoring the motions to throw the ball, Kris charged toward Will. Kris arrived there first, tagging the runner out. The call and sign from the on-deck umpire was, "... SAFE!" This ain't regular baseball or softball. This is the MCSSL. The league rule is you can't tag out a runner at home, the ball must be thrown to the catcher standing on the home plate while the runner heads to the other home plate. Bummer. Senior heads were shaking. You couldn't fault Kris for one terrific effort.

**300. Senior Softball Snippet:** *MCSSL Hall of Fame Wall of Ineptness...* We've got another real classic play to add. Blue Division Marshals vs. Mavericks. In the last inning, with his team down eleven runs and Clyde Beck on first base, John McCann uncharacteristically lined a hit down the left field line. Taking off like an Iditarod sled dog, John zipped down the base path and, without hesitation or looking up, continued on to second base, where he was met by a large group of players, including Clyde. All John could utter was, "Oh, ker-r-r-ap! Not again!" He immediately re-tagged second base and started back toward first when he felt Marshals' second baseman John Packel tag him in the back with his glove. So John stopped running. Despite the screaming all around him, John continued his embarrassed walk back to the dugout, unaware that when John Packel had tagged him, he didn't have the ball in his glove. The relay throw back to first base to record the actual out against McCann was way off line and had to be chased all around the infield. But by this time, John was already off the field heading for the dugout. After extensive discussion, John was "officially" called out for being out of the baseline by Blue League Commissioner Jim Binsberger. Interviewed after the game, all John could say was that he was glad Angelo was on vacation, adding, "Can you imagine what he'd say... and how often??"

*(Historian's Note: All the plays added to the Wall of Ineptness so far involve the ubiquitous John McCann, whose legacy continues to grow.)*

***Watch Here for End-of-Season Snippet Close-outs...***

**301. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Don't bother us with the facts...* Kris Gigliotti of the Blue Division Mavericks had three impressive hits his three times up at the plate: a single, a double, and an inside-the-park home run. Afterwards, third base coach Jim Binsberger said, "If I had it to do all over again, I would have held him at third base on that last at-bat so he could hit for the cycle." Jim was then reminded that Kris would have had to have a fourth plate appearance to accomplish the task anyway, so it really didn't matter. Jim responded, "I knew that. What's your point?"

**302. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Marathons voted Best Cheerleading Squad in MCSSL...* Despite the fact that the Mountaineers' middle infielder, Georgie Schreader, had already made several undeniable spectacular plays in the field, the Marathons' weren't about to let it be known. Paul Harvan, who usually rips the ball hard most every time he's up, hit a little senior-type dribbler out toward the middle. Georgie charged hard. Knowing it was going to be a close play at first, Georgie tried to bare hand the ball. He uncharacteristically dropped it. Safe at first. Right away the cacophony of catcalls started from the Marathons' bench, led by the head cheerleader, Mike DeStefano. Gary Krause twirled his pink towel and swiveled his hips, cheering, "Who ya tryin' to look like, Brooks Robinson?" Bobby Sipes, with his fuzzy fuchsia pom-poms flaring (they match his fuchsia glove), cheered, "He looks more like Brook Shields!" Alex Stanish broke into his jumping-jack rah-rah routine, cheering in rhythm, "Go Brooksie... Go Brooksie..." Well... the whole Marathons' cheerleading squad joined in the jeering. "Looks like a snippet to us!" But Georgie wasn't rattled at all. When the inning ended, as Georgie passed by the Marathons dugout, he was heard to warn, "Just remember one thing. I'm the master snippet writer. The pen is mightier than the softball!" The cheering instantly stopped. The look of fear on the faces of the Marathons said it all.

**303. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Worse than a bunch of Little Leaguers...* The Red Division Mazerokis' manager Bob Weaver gathered his team in the home dugout moments before the start of the game. "All right, guys. We've been playing all summer. You all know where you

play. So let's get out there at your best position." Bob turned and ran, leading his team out onto the field. When he turned around to look back, though, nobody was following behind.

**304. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Hit me if you can...* The White Division Mystics were locked in a tight game with the Magicians. The Mystics' Don Petrille was up at the plate with Ray Forlano on deck. Donnie hit a sharp liner to right for a hit, flipped the bat and hauled down toward first base. As Ray came up to the plate, he was rubbing his leg. It seemed that Donnie, when releasing the bat after his swing, flipped it right into Ray's leg. Catcher Jim Marple yelled down to Donnie, "Nice work, Don. You just hit Ray with your bat!" Donnie yelled back, "Yeah, so what? He's standing in the batter's box. He looks okay to me." Ray, with his familiar blend of sarcasm as he pounded the plate with the bat, replied back to Donnie, "Yeah? Batter up! Shows us how hard you can't swing the bat!"

**305. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Screenbot, the MCSSL's "Thirteenth Player", finally gets into the scorebook...* It was a roust-about game between the White Division Mystics and Magicians. The Mystics pitcher extraordinaire, Steve Alligood, had been faithfully using *Screenbot* for the entire season. Pause for a moment. Now, some students of the senior game consider *Screenbot* as a deterrent to the game, while others consider him (could be a "her", we'll never know) as an extra player. We guess it all depends upon the play. You be the judge. But anyway... The Magicians' Tom Walsh, who routinely contacts the ball sending line drives into the green pastures of School Road Park, instead ripped a ground shot up the middle that hit Steve's glove. The ball veered off and spun into the backside netting of the screen. Steve managed to retrieve the ball out of the netting and threw Tom out at first base. After the play was over – not that it really mattered – everyone was discussing HOW the play would have been recorded in the MCSSL's official scorebook. For several days thereafter, the bench discussion went on. It was finally resolved, at least for the MCSSL historical records. *Screenbot* was officially assigned as fielder number thirteen. The official MCSSL scorebook would have recorded the out as follows: "1-13-1-3", meaning that *Screenbot* got an "assist" on the play. Only in the MCSSL...

**306. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Sit, Ubu, sit...* The White Division Mountaineers had their full roster of players show up for the game. Manager Joe Spiecker had to shuffle the boys around each inning so that everybody had an equal chance to play and everyone sat out an inning. The inning ended. Tom Wuerstle jogged into the dugout to get his glove. Joe pointed at the bench and said to Tom, "Sit." To which Tom replied, "BOW-WOW."

**307. Senior Softball Snippet:** *"Sh-h-h-h-h... Quiet. No Talking..."* The White Division Mystics' Joe Hackman had been on vacation and had missed the previous week's games. Upon returning for Tuesday morning's game, Joe marched into the dugout and announced to his teammates, "Well... I'm back from vacation. Gussed you guys missed me, huh? What was it like without me around for a week?" Ronnie Clemens was quick to reply, "Like a library."

**308. Senior Softball Snippet:** *He looks 'runner-ish'...* Don Petrille of the White Division Mystics was huggin' second with one out and another runner on first. The next batter ripped a bullet line drive for the second out right back to the pitcher so hard that Donnie never even moved a muscle standing on second base. His teammates chided him from the bench. "You gotta be ready to move in case he drops the ball!" Donnie yelled back, "I'm ready! I'm ready!" On the very next pitch, the batter started to swing, and then hesitated. Donnie, of course, ready to run like he just told his teammates, was called out for leaving the base.

**309. Senior Softball Snippet:** *There are no 'old guys' in this league, only 'seasoned seniors'...* The Mountaineers and the Mystics of the White Division were playing a tight game. Ray Forlano of the Mystics had just made a really nice play at second base, stabbing a line drive to record the third put out. As the Mountaineers' Georgie Schreder was taking the field, he passed by the Mystics' outfielder Dan Brady. Ray, Dan, and Georgie had all been former teammates. Georgie said to Dan, "Nice catch by that old guy out there." Dan replied, "Which one?"

**310. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Total Eclipse of the Schwartz...* Stan Schwartz of the Blue Division Mavericks returned from his trip to Charlestown, South Carolina, where he had gone to watch the total eclipse of the sun. Stan had a comfortable seat and a cold beer and had just settled in for an expected one hour wait for the eclipse to start. However, after fifteen minutes, Stan admitted that he fell asleep and missed the entire whole thing. During yesterday's game, while playing first base, his teammates swore he repeated it.

**311. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Wha-a-a-t-t-t?...* Pete Perez of the Magics was on first base and was "motoring" toward third on a liner to mid right field. As Pete got closer to the base, he started to slow down. The Mavericks' right fielder, Kris Gigliotti fired a perfect one-hopper strike to third baseman Tom McGready to catch Pete at third for the out. The look on Pete's face said it all. He looked like someone who had voted for Hillary.

**312. Senior Softball Snippet:** *The Statue of Liberty Play ala MCSSL style"...* The White Division Maniacs were forced to reach deep into their playbook and pulled out their version of the 'Statue of Liberty' play in order to defeat the scrappy Mystics. In the top of the 8th inning, the Mystics had a runner on second with no outs. The batter hit a hard grounder to Steve Czyzewicz at shortstop. Steve threw the ball to first for the out. The runner on second, Joe Hackman, alertly ran to third on the throw. It looked like he would beat the throw easily. That's when the Maniacs pulled off the play. Bill Boyd made the put-out at first and then fired the ball to third. Third baseman Tom Musselman (The Statue) had not moved from his fielding position from the time when the ball was originally pitched. Seeing that Tom seemed oblivious to the play and that the throw would wind up down the left field line, Joe rounded third towards home. However, pitcher Jimmy Flynn (Mr. Liberty) had hustled to third base to back up the play. Bill's throw came right to Jimmy (they claimed it was designed this way) who tagged Joe out for a double play as he scrambled back to third base. The Maniacs went on to win it in the bottom of the 8th. At the post-game interview, Tom Musselman was asked by reporters to comment on the play. "Look. We saw Jim Binsberger work that play in the Blue Division, so we thought we'd try it." Manager Steve Czyzewicz refuted Tom's comment. "Wrong. We developed this play throughout spring

training. We knew we could depend on Tom to be the “statue” and Jimmy to be the “liberty” part of it. Works pretty darn good, doesn’t it?” Later, Jim Binsberger refuted Steve’s claim, insisting, “He’s full of baloney. We developed that play, not them. Even Musselman admitted that. Keep in mind this Maverick team has been around this league a lot longer than those young puppies on the Maniacs team. What more do I need to say?”

**313. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Bob Carnahan catches a pile after catching a foul ball...* The Red Division Mays’ first baseman Bob Carnahan made one spectacular over-the-shoulder catch of a foul ball to end the inning. Bob was being cheered by all. As he trotted past the mound to drop off the game ball, an opposing team player said to Bob, “Lemme see that ball, Bob. I want to wipe the (*mild expletive here, synonymous with ‘manure’*) off it.” Bob’s teammates were quick to respond. “There isn’t any (*mild expletive here, synonymous with ‘manure’*) on the ball. It’s in Bob’s glove!”

**314. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Clyde Beck sets MCSSL’s most dubious record...* The new Blue Division Mavericks team has been in the headlines all through the 2017 inaugural season. Clyde added to the growing record-breaking achievements by accomplishing a feat that nobody can remember happening before. He was forced out a second base three times in the same inning. Clyde led off with a single, got forced out, pinch ran for that batter on first, got forced out again, then pinch ran again for the next batter at first. Yep, Clyde got forced out a second base for the third out. Nobody in the league could remember that ever happening before. Clyde expected that everybody would just forget about it.

**315. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Speaking of dubious records...* On a Thursday back in early September, a very rainy night-before and misty morning-after left all the teams short of players. Rather than leave teams short, Alex Stanish “bent the rules” a bit and made himself available and ended up playing in three games, all teams being the away team. Alex’s substitute teams won all three games, the last one going two extra innings. Alex had played a total of twenty-three

innings with three wins. Tommy Corcoran immediately filed a protest with the league for violation of the “Corcoran Rule” citing that the third victory should be negated and therefore Alex’s record should be wiped off the books. Corcoran was asked to comment after the third game. He said, “My record of four games with two victories still stands!” Alex responded, “Not anymore! I have three games and three wins!”

*(League Historian’s Note: Corcoran’s record of playing in four games in a single day several years ago was made before the “Corcoran Rule” went into effect.)*

**316. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Humpty-Dumpty had a great fall...* After watching yet another senior softballer take a nasty tumble in the outfield and get hurt while chasing down a fly ball, the Red Division Mays’ Jimmy Flynn made an astute observation. “You know... you’d think that after falling down for over sixty years already that we’d *all* have learned by now how to do it without getting hurt!”

**317. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Quotes from the “MCSSL Legends of the Game”...* Barry Ackerman, assistant manager of the Blue Division Marshals, was asked recently how the season was going in the new four-team division. Barry's response: "Well, if we play any more games, we'll lock up 4th place."

**318. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Boo-boos and Band Aids ...* Angelo Malizia of the Blue Division Mavericks suffered a boo-boo on the tip of a finger on his pitching hand while trying to field a grounder hit up the middle. After the inning was over, Angelo went into the First Aid kit and wrapped it with thirteen Band-Aids. He returned to the mound the next inning. Manager George Hart was asked why Angelo was continuing to play. George replied, “So he can complain about the pain, why else?”

**319. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Complain, complain, complain...* Angelo was complaining yet again about getting called out at first on a close play. His teammates, however, were perfectly all right with the call. When asked why, they unanimously agreed, "Because it's much more fun to hear him complain than to hear him brag."

**320. Senior Softball Snippet:** *End-of-Year Blue Division Awards...* The inaugural season of the Blue Division, according to head sports writer/blabber John McCann, generated a number of notable awards recognizing significant player accomplishments. Here are the awards and recipients as reported by John, in no particular order:

*Infielder Most Likely to Make Hitters Happy:* Will Faussett, Marshals.

*Outfielder Most Likely to Make Hitters Happy:* Jim Young, Magics.

*Pitcher Most Likely to Make Hitters Happy:* Bob Wellington, Marvels.

*Hitter Most Likely to Make a Pitcher Happy:* Manny London, Marvels.

*Best Imitation of a Bird Bath Bathing Bird While Playing 1st Base:* Stan Schwartz, Mavericks.

*Player Most Likely to Eventually Piss Off Someone:* Tie - Walt Godshall, Marshals; John McCann, Mavericks.

*(League Historian's Note: Walt can rest easy this winter. If the rest of the league had a vote, John McCann would win this last award by a landslide!)*

**321. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Quotes from the "MCSSL Legends of the Game"...* Fred Silverman, Manager of the Blue Division Marshals, was asked why the Marshals' games seldom go over on hour: "We make our outs quick...usually before a guy can even take a leak between innings."

**322. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Speed kills...* Bill "Mosquito" Bogle of the Blue Division Mavericks made some terrific last-second running catches in the outfield throughout the season. Bill was asked what his secret was, and how does he catch up to balls so fast. Bill's answer, "My non-speed is the key."

**323. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Don't Tread On Me...* Jerry Kratz, of the Blue Division Magics, managing a game in the absence of both managers, was already known to be a 'pinch runner happy' kind of guy. Jerry went a little overboard when he used Big Jim Young as a pinch runner. After the game, Jim declared he was going to “pinch stomp” on Jerry if he ever did that to him again.

**324. Senior Softball Snippet:** *More Fake News in the MCSSL...* The league historian overheard Assistant Commissioner Mike DeStefano at the end-of-season picnic telling anyone who would listen about how he had tripled home a bases-loaded three runs to win the game in the Marathons' last game of the season. The league historian, who always verifies the highlights and snippets passed along, was very skeptical of this outlandish claim. *Mike DeStefano? A triple? I'm supposed to believe this? This guy can't even run to the bathroom!* Anyway, it took some “sleuthing” to sort out the facts about the claim. Here's what really happened... Mike was up with the bases loaded. He hit a line shot into the right/center field gap. The fielders did not fall down or make any errors. Indeed, they retrieved the ball, relayed it into the cut-off infielder, who fired it toward third base, but the runner reached third base safely ahead of the throw. Three runs had indeed scored. The league historian questioned Mike. “How did you make it all the way to third if nobody bobbled the ball?” Mike replied, “Well... you know...” The league historian grew more skeptical. “You can hardly run on those bad trucks of yours! How did you make it?” Mike replied, “Well... you know...” Finally, the league historian asked, “Are you taking illegal steroids to enhance your performance?” Mike only replied, “Well... you know...” It was shortly after that when Joe Laskowski jumped into the conversation and cleared up the inquiry. “Mike asked for a runner-from-home, so I ran for him.” Like the headline says, *More Fake News in the MCSSL...*

*And the Last Finishing Closing End-of-Season Snippet Finale...*

**325. Senior Softball Snippet:** *Ray Forlano's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday Present....* What a memorable season filled with happenings and highlights all summer long! We had another milestone birthday to celebrate, this time for Ray Forlano's 80<sup>th</sup>, who along with Angelo, is an MCSSL original founding father and player. The boys were not about to let the day pass by without a little celebration for Ray. But this is the MCSSL. It seems there is always a snippet in the making...

Before the game started between Ray's Mystics and the Musketeers, the whole gang, led by Timmy Smith, sang a heartfelt "Happy Birthday" to Ray behind home plate, then celebrated with cupcakes. Let the game begin! Before the 1:30 p.m. game started, however, Timmy found himself short of a pitcher. John Packel, who had already played several games that day, had hung around for the sing-along. Timmy was desperate. John, reluctantly, agreed to pitch for the Musketeers. What followed was a slugfest that saw over 30 runs scored, and numerous outfielders ducking for cover as they camped under fly balls only to be blinded by a stunningly bright sun.

But that's not what this snippet is all about. Here's how it went. Packel pitched flawlessly (if you discount all the runs that had already piled up in the first two innings) until finally Birthday Boy Forlano finally came to bat. Packel threw four consecutive balls. As Ray strolled to first base, Packel was heard singing "Happy Birthday" to Ray. Two innings later, Ray came to bat for the second time. Packel, bearing down, was utterly unable to bear down, and again walked Ray on four pitches. No Happy Birthday this time, just a wry grin. When Ray came to bat a third time Packel threw a strike, his first of the day to Forlano. However, his newfound confidence was short lived, as Packel next threw four consecutive balls to walk Ray for his third consecutive at bat. Ray grumbled as he trotted down to first, not amused by Packel's walking him for the third time on his birthday, of all days.

Sometime much later in the afternoon, Ray came to bat a fourth time with a man on third. Totally humiliated by his previous three walks to Ray, Packel really bore down. *You've had your birthday gift from me*, John thought, as he threw a perfect strike right down the middle. Ray looked stunned. John had Ray right where he wanted him. The second pitch was just as perfect, but Ray, composure now regained, lashed a single to left field (where else does he hit?)

scoring the man on third. Ray was heard to exclaim as he tore down to first base, "My-y-y-y birthday... my-y-y-y-y birthday..." The now discouraged John Packel was heard to remark, "I shoulda walked him." The Mystics eventually won. After the historic game was over, John Packel was heard mumbling to himself as he walked to the parking lot, "... I guess every batter from now until forever will claim it's *his* birthday..."

*Stick around. The winter season is just around the corner...*