

SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS... MORE YET IN 2018

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 we go again with some of our favorite lighter moments from the league's history that makes us all laugh as we move forward into Calendar Year 2018.

326. Senior Softball Snippet: *Pitchers ain't expected to hit, anyway...* John Packel of the Orange Shirt Team is known for his legendary pitching expertise, but maybe not so much for his batting proficiency. One of John's winter teammates, it seems, pointed out that he had hit into quite a few double plays last summer. John responded back that he had also grounded into a triple play near the end of the summer season. John just wanted his winter teammates to know that, regardless of what they thought, he didn't always hit into double plays.

327. Senior Softball Snippet: *If you think lemmings follow their leader...* It was the bottom of the sixth inning. The visiting Gold Shirt Team was holding onto a three-run lead behind the pitching of none other than Hall-of-Famer Gordy Detweiler. The first Red Shirt batter grounded out. The second batter singled to right. The third batter hit a hard grounder to the shortstop, who flipped to second for the force out. "That's three!" exclaimed Gordy. "Let's get a couple more runs," Gordy added, as he started to trot off the field. Like lemmings headed for the cliff, the whole Gold Shirt Team started the trot to the bench following their fearless leader. The Red Shirt runner alertly took second base. "Wait a minute!" Red Shirt manager Georgie Schreuder yelled, walking out toward the mound. "That's only two outs!" Gordy shot back, "No it's not. That's three." Georgie shot back, "How can it be three if we've only had three batters and one of them is on second base?" The startled Gold Shirt lemmings stopped in their tracks. Well... for the next several minutes a "spirited discussion" took place about how many outs there actually were. Gordy finally conceded there were only two outs. "All right," Gordy addressed the lemmings. "Let's get the third out." The lemmings followed their leader back onto the field. "Runner goes back to first," Gordy motioned. "Wait a minute!" Georgie yelled again. "The runner stays on second. Just because you guys had a mass senior moment doesn't mean WE did!" Well... for the

next several minutes another “spirited discussion” took place about whether the runner should stay on second or return to first. Justifiably, it was finally agreed that the runner would stay on second and the inning resumed. One pitch later the inning was over. Just goes to show that senior softballers, just like lemmings, blindly go over cliffs and let their leader do the thinking.

328. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Corcoran Excuse...* The field improvement project at School Road Park, right after the end of the summer season, uncovered a surprising revelation. Field Operations Director Tommy Lane and a few of the boys from the field maintenance team were on hand during the renovation to learn more about field grooming. During the work it was discovered that the distance between third base and home plate was actually 66 feet instead of the standard 65 feet like all the other bases. The rest of the diamond was perfectly aligned. Now, Tommy Lane, understanding that this slightest of measurement was really no concern of the senior league, decided that it wasn’t worth the additional expense to the league to dig up third base and reposition it. Everybody agreed to leave it as it was. That is, except Tommy Corcoran, who claimed, “... that’s obviously the only reason why I was ever thrown out at home plate!”

329. Senior Softball Snippet: *Conservation of Energy... a basic tenet of physics and senior softball...* We all learned about it back in high school, although most of us have forgotten it by now. Anyway... Bryan Wood of the Red Shirt Team was in an awful batting slump. The first three at bats resulted in three consecutive third-strike foul balls into the net and ceiling. Bryan returned to the bench with that all-familiar indelible smile. “Well,” he said to his teammates. “On the bright side, I certainly didn’t tire myself out running the bases today.”

330. Senior Softball Snippet: *Just a little short yet again...* Mike Destefano, hard-hitting manager of the Orange Shirt Team, whacked yet another long line drive that was caught by an outfielder yet again... and making another out... yet again. A frustrated Mike came back to the bench shaking his head. “I can’t buy a hit.” One of his teammates said, “Keep that swing, Mike. You can’t hit it any better than that.” Mike replied, “I used to get those over the fence. Now all I have is warning track power.”

331. Senior Softball Snippet: *We ain't as young as we think we used to be...* Ray Forlano was enjoying his twentieth season as one of the league's original members. Ray was managing the Maroon Shirt Team, which had been playing well until now. The team wasn't doing so good at the moment, as a sequence of errors just took away a comfortable lead after Ray's pitching had held them in check. Ray was heard mumbling as he stomped back to the mound, "You know, it looks like next year I'm going to have to draft a younger team." One of his teammates replied, "If you're talking about yourself, Ray, that shouldn't be much of a problem at all."

332. Senior Softball Snippet: *But he can't hear as good as he once could...* Speaking of Ray Forlano, he still amazes a lot of guys with his playing prowess. Ray was turning in another fine fielding performance for the Maroon Shirt Team, and when he came up to bat, the Purple Shirt gang yelled, "Here comes the All Star!" Ray stepped out of the box and yelled back, "Who are you calling an 'Old Star'?" Do we need to say more?

333. Senior Softball Snippet: *Nyuk, Nyuk, Nyuk... ambi-dexteros he ain't...* The Gold Shirt Team sent the venerable Gordy Detweiler to the mound once again. Gordy strutted out and started the next inning. Four pitches later, the lead-off batter was on first base with a walk. Lucky for the Gold Shirts, the league rule allows only one walk per inning. The second batter of the inning watched as Gordy missed the strike zone on the next eight consecutive pitches. Third baseman Gary Krause finally yelled over to Gordy, "Did'ya ever consider that you might be left-handed?" The wily Gordy replied, "No, I'm not. Why?" It must have gotten Gordy's attention. He threw the next pitch right down the middle for a strike. Gordy turned to Gary. "See? I told you so."

334. Senior Softball Snippet: *A new rule proposal for the MCSSL...* Among the most of notables this winter season so far has been the lack of run production by the league in general. There have been a lot of low scoring, one run games. Mark Rosen of the Maroon Shirt Team came up with an idea for a new rule proposal. Under the current rules, only one walk per inning is allowed. Mark asked, "What happens to that potential walk if it isn't collected?" Mark

rationalized, “There’s an easy solution to the run scoring deficiency. Make the un-collected walks cumulative. If nobody walks in the first inning, then you’re allowed two walks in the second inning. If none again in the second, then three in the third. Etcetera. A team could end up accumulating seven walks by the last inning.” Now whether that proposal is going to increase run production remains to be seen. But Mark is going to submit it anyway and call it the “Rosen Walk-Banking Rule.” Mark hopes to make a name for himself in the annals of winter play.

335. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Hubble Telescope would probably help, too...* One of the ongoing problems in the winter league is the scoreboard. Not that it doesn’t work. It’s just that it is so hard to see from the field. Many a discussion is overheard regarding what inning it is. The other day the Black Shirt Team infielders were observed all squinting to read the scoreboard. “It’s the fifth, right?” someone asked. “No. It’s the sixth. Can’t you see that?” came the reply. “It looks like a five to me,” came the response. “You need to get your glasses changed,” it was recommended. “What I need is binoculars, not new glasses.” What we need is a new scoreboard. You know, one with big numbers like those senior cell phones. Wonder if they make scoreboards for seniors?

Stick around. These guys have only started. There’ll be more for sure...

336. Senior Softball Snippet: *Speaking of lemmings and senior brain farts...* It was a typical winter’s morning game at nine a.m. Mike DeStefano and Georgie Schreder, respective managers of the Orange Shirt Team (“F” on the schedule) and the Red Shirt Team (“I” on the schedule), were ready to do battle. The schedule read... “FI” ... (*home team listed first*). The field was all set up by 8:30 a.m. and the players started warming up. Georgie reached into his bag for his glove. There on top was a cellophaned ball. A game ball. *We must be home team*, Georgie thought. He put the ball on the bench, advising his pitcher that the game ball was ready to go. Mike saw Georgie put out the game ball on the bench. *Ah-h-h... they must be the home team*, Mike thought, never questioning. The game commenced with the Red Shirts taking the field and the Orange Shirts coming up to bat to start the game. An hour and a half later, the game

was over and another score went into the books. It wasn't until the following morning that both Mike and Georgie realized the mistake. Both senior fellows admitted the blunder. The comedy of it all was that, in addition to Mike and Georgie, there were twenty other players who never picked up on the boo-boo. Talk about lemmings and senior brain farts.

337. Senior Softball Snippet: *Modesty will get you everywhere...* The Maroon Shirt Team put on the big shift to the right defending against the batter who was known only to pull the ball to the right side. Third baseman Joe Laskowski shifted position into the shortstop's area, not expecting any business, as the batter had never hit a ball in that direction that anyone could ever remember. But hey, this is softball. Anything can happen. There were two outs, so Joe relaxed. In came the pitch. A line drive came screaming into the gap vacated by Joe, catching everyone by surprise, most of all Joe. He recovered quickly, stretching out his glove to make a spectacular backhand snag of the ball ala snow cone style right before it hit the glass. His teammates erupted. A modest Joe was overheard saying, "I *had* to catch that ball. I wasn't ready to make a throw."

338. Senior Softball Snippet: *Redemption...* Some say it was a brain fart, but Stan Walters of the Maroon Shirt Team said it was a tweaked hamstring. With runners on first and second and nobody out, Stan came up to the plate (although later, someone said Stan was overheard saying he thought there was one out). Stan hit a hard grounder to third, and the Black Shirt Team commenced to pull off a triple play. Stan was noticed to be running at half speed down to first base. When the inning ended, Stan announced to his teammates that he thought he might have tweaked a hamstring, and that was why he trotted down to first. His teammates weren't buying it. They suggested he might not have only tweaked the muscle in his leg, but also the muscle between his ears. Stan redeemed himself, though. He drove in the winning run later in the game, and all was forgiven.

339. Senior Softball Snippet: *Can you hear me now? Or why I'm now singing soprano...* Tommy Corcoran of the Gold Shirt Team is back in the snippet news again. Seems Tommy was playing shortstop when a laser-guided ground ball was unexpectedly and inappropriately caught

in the place where you hope a ground ball is not placed when the place is not the pocket of your glove. Despite seeing fireworks and all sorts of star spangled banners flashing as the grounder brought Tommy to his knees, he managed to squeeze the ball between his legs and recover it, throwing the runner out at second base before that all too familiar pain registered in his brain reminding him why some ball players routinely use that crouch-shaped seldom utilized sports equipment device designed principally to preserve the precious family jewels (all these thoughts went instantly through his head). But on the brighter side, a miracle happened. It was said that Tommy, in addition to contemplating asking the choir master at church to move him over to the ladies' soprano section, suddenly had an unexpected revelation. When he yelped, he actually heard himself.

340. Senior Softball Snippet: *Only Gordy could get away with it...* The game had just ended, and Georgie Schreader gathered up his gear and exited the indoor court. As he sat on the bench to pack up, it seems that Gordy Detweiler, Jim Binsberger, and a few other "patriarchs" of the winter league were engaged in a serious discussion about aging. Gordy must have been holding counsel, because the "chiefs" all nodded in agreement each time Gordy puffed on the peace pipe and invoked the great spirit in the sky. As Georgie was changing, Gordy turned and asked, "By the way, George. How old are you?" Georgie smiled. "I'll be seventy this year," Georgie reverently replied. Gordy nodded approval. "You're really getting up there in age, aren't you?" How could Georgie respond to that?

341. Senior Softball Snippet: *Only the Pyramids last forever...* Gordy Detweiler is not very well known for his trend-setting fashion-style acumen (although some day future archeologists who dig up his paint truck might herald it as a find equal to the pyramids). Anyway, Gordy showed up for a game all set to play, decked out in his gold-shirted uniform and signature winter shorts that highlighted his signature knobby knees. Now, Gordy is by no means a fashion expert, but he was wearing a paint-stained, frayed, tattered and torn painter's jacket that the kids in South Beach would probably kill for to wear. A real relic! Knowing it's potential fashion value, Gordy was reluctant to take it off and leave it on the spectators' bench like all the other guys who left their jackets. "Do you think somebody might steal this?" Gordy asked the whole gang, most

of whom were all waiting to play the next game. Down at the other end of the facility was a herd of toddlers playing kick-the-ball while all the mommies watched. “Don’t worry, Gordy,” the boys advised. “We’ll keep an eye on your jacket in case one of those little thieves tries to steal it!” Gordy felt a whole lot better knowing he could depend upon the boys to watch his precious jacket. It worked. After the game, Gordy’s jacket was still there, safe on the bench. Imagine that...

AND HERE ARE A FEW FROM THE KICKOFF MEETING...

342. Senior Softball Snippet: *Murphy’s Law MCSSL style...* At the annual kickoff meeting, Joe Kelly and Georgie Schreader were all set up to start their power point presentations. Murphy’s Law, of course, was a part of the morning’s agenda. Everything had been set up with the computer and the projector, just waiting for the button to be pushed. They pushed it. It didn’t work. Right away it begged the question, *How many MCSSL senior softballers does it take to figure out how to turn on the machines?* The answer: *Nobody knows, since about a hundred and fifty of us technically-challenged seniors were at a loss as to why it wouldn’t start.* Oh, well. Thank goodness there was a youngster at the church who got it started. (Yeah, but we bet he couldn’t play softball as good as us!)

343. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over John McCann...* Speaking of Joe and Georgie, the kickoff meeting made a little history. It was the first time in the recent saga of the MCSSL that John McCann, the league’s all-time windiest orator, did not take the podium to deliver a diatribe. (Not that the audience was saddened, mind you.) But the boys in the listening audience weren’t about to be disappointed. Joe and Georgie both picked up the slack presenting their own brands of oratory by delivering poignant messages on the wonderfulness of being senior softballers and their history. Both Joe and Georgie are awaiting the results as to who will inherit John’s windy mantle.

344. Senior Softball Snippet: *As good as any excuse can get...* Speaking of John McCann, he was finally apprised of the fundamental reason why he has been such a lousy pitcher all these years in the MCSSL. After learning the details of the field renovation project at the kickoff meeting, as presented by Tommy Lane, John announced that he was vindicated. All his pitches of the past were “undirected” because home plate was not properly lined up with the pitcher's mound, which was not lined up with second base, which was not lined up with center field. John was quoted after the meeting, "How could *anyone* expect me to pitch well under these outrageous circumstances? I KNEW it wasn't my fault!"

345. Senior Softball Snippet: *As good as any excuse can get...* It was announced at the kickoff meeting by Tommy Lane that Jeff Jordan will no longer be a member of the Field Maintenance Team due to his re-locating to West Chester. When Tommy made the announcement, you could have heard a pin drop. There was pure panic in the eyes of the rest of the field team members. Jeff was the only one who was capable of operating the very complicated shop-vac water-sucking-up machine, and now one of them was going to have to take on that tremendous responsibility. Tommy was able to assuage their fears, though. He assured his team that with the new renovations to the field, that the machine would probably never need to be used again, and that the renovation project was one of the reasons Jeff waited until they were completed before moving out of the area. A great sigh of relief was heard reverberating in the halls of Calvary Church, the converts singing their praise that all was going to be well at School Road Park for the upcoming 2018 season. Everyone is standing by...

... *STICK AROUND, THE SEASON AIN'T EVEN STARTED YET...*

346. Senior Softball Snippet: *That'll teach you to listen...* The weather was so bad that the field remained closed. All spring practice sessions were cancelled until further notice. Softballers were advised to monitor the hotline for continual updates. It turned out, as we all know, that nobody got in any practice before the season opened. Nobody, that is, except Dan Brady of the field maintenance team. Anxious as everyone else and chomping at the bit to prep the newly

renovated field for play, Dan jumped out of bed, picked up the phone and dialed the hotline to get an update on the status for Wednesday morning. The words of Tommy Lane echoed through the phone, “Senior softballers... it’s Tuesday, April 17th...” Dan abruptly hung up the phone. “Games are on!” he exclaimed. Dan faithfully trudged to the field at 7:00 a.m., broke out the equipment, and commenced to prep the field. By 8:30 a.m. Dan was standing back admiring his work. “Might as well wait for the boys,” Dan thought. At 8:45 a.m. the parking lot was still empty. At 9:00 a.m., there still wasn’t a soul who had arrived. It dawned on Dan to go back and listen to the hotline, that maybe he missed something. Dan learned a very important lesson about listening that day. The rest of Tommy Lane’s message continued like this, “... Tuesday, April 17th, 5:00 p.m. The Township has advised me that the field will remain closed for the rest of the week...” Dan holds the distinction of being the only MCSSL member to get in any spring practice, albeit, of course, his “practice” was prepping the field.

347. Senior Softball Snippet: *On your mark... get set... GO!* Opening Day: The first game of 2018 hadn’t even gotten underway yet when the season’s first game snippet hit the headlines. Leave it to Georgie Hart and the Blue Division Mavericks to demonstrate the first senior moment of the new season. Confusion reigned supreme before the first pitch was made as the Mavericks were unable to get a correct count of the number of players available. One count had fifteen, another had thirteen, and a yet another had fourteen. The problem was solved (or so Georgie thought) when he assigned people to positions in the field. There were three guys left in the dugout. It took a few moments to do the math, since the whole team has been away from school for more than a half century. So, with that problem solved, the opposing Magics team was wondering why it really mattered anyway.

348. Senior Softball Snippet: *The snippets just kept coming on opening day...* Much to the surprise and delight of everyone, Angelo Malizia “unretired” and came back to the Mavericks for his twentieth season. Angelo played catcher. In the second inning, with Gordy Detweiler on the mound, Gordy asked what the count was after offering up three pitches. Angelo replied back, “Ohh and three...” What’s even funnier is that Gordy replied, “Oh-kay. Let’s get him out.”

349. Senior Softball Snippet: *Angelo still got game...* The Magics had the bases loaded with no outs in the 5th inning when the Mavericks Georgie Hart fielded a hot (well, maybe luke warm) grounder at shortstop. He threw to Bob Gaugler at third base for a force out. Bob surprised everybody by firing a bullet to catcher Angelo Malizia at home for a 6-5-2 double play. Later in the dugout Bob was asked why he took a chance by throwing to Angelo. Bob replied, "I've played a lot of years with Angelo, so I know his limitations."

350. Senior Softball Snippet: *New renovations to School Road Park field has Red Division hitters handcuffed...* We have to pass along this conversation overheard around the Vic Zoldy bench prior to the startup of the first Red Division game. Some of the "big hitters" in the league were mulling around waiting for the last Blue Division game to conclude. Everyone was much impressed at the condition of the field. Steve Mallozzi observed, "Man, they did a really good job. Maybe it's just me, but... doesn't it look like they moved the fence back?" The funnier part is that about other five guys responded, "Yeah. I think they did."

AND IT WAS ONLY OPENING DAY...

351. Senior Softball Snippet: *Dick's Sporting Goods will take them back as long as you have the receipt...* Having no pre-season practices or warm-up like everyone else in the league, Bob Zolad of the White Division Mountaineers came up to the plate for his first at-bat of the new season. Bob was ready. He was even sporting a brand new shiny pair of Nike softball shoes. Bob, well known for his fleet-footedness around the bases, hit a shot to the short outfielder, who threw the base runner out at second. Bob, who had quickly taken off from the batter's box, quickly stumbled, almost falling flat on his face. Bob barely reached first base safely to avoid the double play as the relay throw came from second. His stumbling out of the box, of course, did not go unnoticed back at the Vic Zoldy bench. "Hey, Bob!" somebody yelled. "Hope you saved the receipt for those new shoes."

352. Senior Softball Snippet: *Next time let's discuss the options before the play...* The White Division Mountaineers and Maniacs were engaged in a tight game. The Mountaineers had runners on first and third, one out. A rocket grounder was fielded by sure-handed shortstop Steve Czyzewicz. A sure inning-ending double play. Steve looked to fire to second base. However, second baseman Vince Torno and middle fielder Jeff Griffiths stood there looking at each other. Steve instinctively held onto the ball and darted toward second. At the same time, so did Vince and Jeff. Realizing the runner was going to beat everybody, Steve desperately tossed the ball. Of course, nobody could get a handle on it. Runners safe at second and first, a run scoring. Vince was overheard summing up the play. "All right, guys. We had four options there. One, I cover second. Two, Jeff covers second. Three, Steve takes it himself." Steve asked, "What's the fourth?" Vince replied, "The one we picked. Nobody did anything."

353. Senior Softball Snippet: *The Red Gooney of Courage...* It was a cold and blustery day as the Red Division Mantles were battling the weather conditions as much as the Mays team. The Mantles' left fielder Dave Linthicum was camped under the towering fly ball. Or so he thought. The wind swirled and Dave twirled, trying to get a bead on the ball as it zigged and zagged through the gusts of wind. Just when Dave thought he was in position, his foot got caught in a lump of grass and he started to tumble. The ball came down hard against his head, leaving a very noticeable gooney on his forehead. A stunned Dave was quickly surrounded by players from both sides. But there is no sympathy in the MCSSL, especially in the Red Division. As Dave was helped to his feet, the Mays' Joe Sharp retrieved Dave's glove and laid it on the ground, pocket wide open. "Leave it here," Joe said. "The glove probably has a better chance of catching a fly ball than Dave does."

354. Senior Softball Snippet: *Flynn was a' huggin' second...* The White Division Mountaineers had two outs against the Maniacs when Jimmy Flynn doubled to right center field. Flynn was a' huggin' second as Tom Musselman... *mighty Tommy was advancin' to the plate.* Tom is well known for his huge strides as the ball is being pitched, but then holding back his swing if he doesn't like the pitch. Third base coach Brian McCleary emphatically reminded Jimmy of that fact. "Don't leave the base until he swings," Brian yelled. Jimmy replied, "Don't

worry. My groin reminds me of that every time.” In comes the pitch, and sure enough, Tom takes a long stride and holds back his swing. And sure enough, Jimmy breaks for third, coming off the base for the third out. And sure enough, his groin reminded him once again not to anticipate the batter swinging.

355. Senior Softball Snippet: *Another senior league milestone for the record books, or, how in the heck do we score this one?* White Division Marathons vs. Magicians. There was one out. The Magicians Lee Phillips was on first base when Tommy Corcoran ripped a vicious shot into the right center field gap. The instant Tommy left the batter’s box, he had inside-the-parker etched in his brain. Lee rounded second base and headed for third, an easy trot to home for the score. Problem was, he missed tagging the bag at second by a wide margin and the whole Marathons infield echoed the missed base. Lee stopped, reversed direction, and headed back to second base. Meanwhile, Tommy is hauling around the bases like a runaway freight train, head down like a charging bull, and passed Lee who was on the way back to second. It was a classic *Oh, s...t* moment! Tommy and Lee both stopped, both reversed, and passed each other the second time going the other way. Lee reversed again, then headed toward third again without touching second. Confused yet? By the time the dust settled and the play was called, Tommy was declared out for passing the runner and Lee was called out at second as the throw beat him back. Didn’t matter. Officially, Lee was out for his double reverse. It was probably the first time in MCSSL summer history that a double play was called and nobody could declare a put out or an assist.

356. Senior Softball Snippet: *Even after the play, there was no mercy...* Leave it to Ray Forlano, who was watching the Marathons vs. Magicians game when the infamous Corcoran/Phillips double play was called, to put it into perspective. As Tommy Corcoran headed back to the dugout, Ray was overheard saying, “We all know you can’t hear, Tommy, but we didn’t know you couldn’t see either!”

357. Senior Softball Snippet: *Is there such a thing as an intentional double play?* Apparently, there is here in the MCSSL. The White Division Marathons vs. the Magicians make the snippet news again with another headlining double play. The Marathons Carl Craft was on second and Tom Weinman on first when Joe Laskowski ripped a shot to the outfield. In came the throw to the cutoff infielder, a perfect throw to the plate to cut down Carl at home. A second perfect throw to third base cut down Tom for the double play. On deck batter (and Marathons manager, by the way) Mike DeStefano, exclaimed, “What’s the matter with youse guys? I’m up next batting clean-up!” His teammate base coaches replied, “Yeah, we know. That’s why we sent the runners.”

358. Senior Softball Snippet: *Getting a jump on the competition...* John McCann of the Blue Division Mavericks was coaching third base. John was overheard bragging about how he jumped and almost caught the line-drive ball last inning. Howie Schwartz of the White Division, waiting to play in the next game, overheard the remark and jumped in with, "Yea, but we also noticed that when you jumped, your feet never left the ground." What came next was almost unbelievable. John McCann was speechless.

359. Senior Softball Snippet: *Classic MCSSL senior moment...* Terry Leach of the White Division Magicians is on first base with two outs. A blooper pop-up is hit to the right side of the infield. “I got it!” yells the Missiles second baseman Curt Fields. “I got it!” yells first baseman Paul Gibbons. Both fielders converge on the sure out to end the inning. The boys on the Vic Zoldy bench swear they heard Terry calling for it. Terry runs in between the two fielders, stops, then suddenly covers his head. Both fielders hesitate. The ball comes down and plunks Terry. The third out is called, as the baserunner is hit by the very-playable batted ball. Terry returns to the dugout, only to be confronted by his startled teammates. “What’s the matter with you?” his teammates ask. Terry replied, “Gimme a break. What’s the big deal? I had a senior moment. I called for it. I forgot I was a runner and not playing second base.”

360. Senior Softball Snippet: *You had your chance to make history and you blew it...* In a White Division game between the Mountaineers and the Missiles, the Mountaineers were getting a real shellacking. Hits out the ka-zoo by the Missile batters, but more errors by the Mountaineers than could be counted. Finally, in the bottom of the seventh, down by a ton of runs, the Mountaineers came into the dugout for their last at bat. Manager Joe Sharp snapped at his players. “Well, it looks like we set a new MCSSL record today. Every one of us had an error.” Everybody looked at each other. “Uh-h-h, Joe? I haven’t had one,” Artie Douglas said, rather sheepishly. Joe quickly snapped back, “Well, you blew it! You had your chances.” The artful Artie snapped back, “We could always tie it and go into extra innings. That would give me an outside chance.” Joe, somewhat relieved that now he could keep his team out of the record book, just shook his head. “You’re benched if we do, Artie. Go sit down.” Guess the Mountaineers weren’t going to make the record book after all.

AND IT AIN'T EVEN SUMMER YET...

SPECIAL EDITION SENIOR SOFTBALL SNIPPETS

MCSSL MARAUDERS vs. PHILLIES BALL GIRLS CHARITY EVENT

On June 16th, 2018, thirty members of the MCSSL signed up to play in the league's annual charity event at our home field in Hatfield. It was the "old guys" against the "twenty-something gals" in another fun-filled (and often comedic) contest. Keep in mind that we had two teams alternating play, so the dugout was always occupied. Our beloved Gordy Detweiler once again took the mound to pitch both games for the very talented young ladies. How serious did the old guys play? The Snippet Master couldn't write it all down fast enough. But the following snippets should say it all...

361. Senior Softball Snippet: *Welcome to the world of "yutes"...* "PLAY BALL!" umpires Bruce Williams and Don Dennis declared. The leadoff batter for the Phillies Ball Girls hit a routine grounder to shortstop. Commissioner John Frantz fielded the ball, crow-stepped, and fired the ball to first. By the time the ball arrived, the runner was already past the base by three steps. Pitcher Wayne Bailey turned to John and said, "Who did you think we were playing, us?" The next inning, John was on second base when the batter hit a drive into the left field gap. John was waved around third. About halfway home, he was gunned down at the plate by a laser-like relay throw. As the humbled John returned to the dugout, Wayne Bailey asked, "Who did you think we were playing, us?"

362. Senior Softball Snippet: *Early scouting report...* The first two innings were over. The boys hadn't scored a run yet. Gordy walked to the mound in the bottom of the third, looked over into the Marauder's dugout, and said, "You guys stink!"

363. Senior Softball Snippet: *Scouting some new talent for the MCSSL...* Half way through the first game, after the third out, Mike DeStefano stopped by the Phillies Ball Girls' dugout and asked Gordy, "Any of these girls going to be sixty any time soon?" Gordy replied, "I don't know, but I'll ask them after the game. They'll be older then."

364. Senior Softball Snippet: *Refresh my memory...* Steve Alligood ripped an impressive hit to the outfield. Problem was, Steve was more impressed with his hit and less impressed with the ladies' defensive play to that point of the game. Steve rounded first – like all good runners should – and slowly trotted back toward first. Another laser-like relay throw came from the outfield. Steve was thrown out before he could get back to the base. Upon Steve's sheepish return to the dugout, Wayne Bailey was waiting to ask the same question for the umpteenth time. But before Wayne could even ask, Steve said, "Yes, Beetle. I *did* forget we weren't playing us."

365. Senior Softball Snippet: *It's only an exhibition game...* The fleet-footed Roger Rinker hit into a double play for the first time in recent memory. When asked about the humiliating experience, Roger only replied, "It's not really a league game, so it doesn't really count, does it?"

366. Senior Softball Snippet: *Gotta be some kind of record...* Nobody could ever remember eight double plays being made during a MCSSL doubleheader. But that's how many the young ladies turned against the Marauders. So many that somebody in the dugout observed, "There probably wasn't that many double plays turned during last years' World Series!"

367. Senior Softball Snippet: *You're never too old to learn...* Halfway through the second game, the Marauders finally turned their first double play after studying how the Phillies Ball Girls had already managed to turn eight. Bobby Sipes at second base made the pivot and just got the runner at first. Knowing that the league historian was keeping the game highlights, he exclaimed, "Did you jot that one down?" Georgie Schreader replied, "No. I need to save the pencil lead so I don't run out recording theirs."

368. Senior Softball Snippet: *Preserving the record...* Chas Weygand was up, one out, runner on first. Chas hit a bullet grounder down third. Throw to second, relay to first... safe by a fraction of a step! Great hustle? Not to be recognized in this dugout. His teammates response: “Way to avoid the ninth double play, Chas.”

369. Senior Softball Snippet: *Let’s all sing along, now... Weebles wobble but they don’t fall down!* Don Petrille bounced a grounder to shortstop, and was easily thrown out at first base by at least ten steps. One of the fans in the stands commented for all to hear, “He looks like a Weeble running down the baseline.” Don’s wife just happened to be in the stands near the heckler. She turned, defending her husband and replied, “That’s why he didn’t fall down! He only wobbles!”

370. Senior Softball Snippet: *Scouting report of the day...* One of the more endearing plays during the game came on a routine fly ball to right center field. The Phillies Ball Girls’ short fielder called for it, “... I got it! I got it!” she yelled, then, “... I don’t got it...” The ball fell in for a hit. Ron Clemens was overheard saying, “She’s got a lot of potential to be a good senior softball player someday.”

371. Senior Softball Snippet: *A home run by any other color?* Don Muir managed to get a ball deep into the gap with a chance of circling the bases. The relay throw got by third base, and Don scooted home. All smiles, Don entered the dugout. A “home run” was written all over his face. However, his teammates were quick to remind him that it was, “... a little leaguer home run, Don... against girls, Don...”

372. Senior Softball Snippet: *Better than a sacrifice fly...* Tom Levins hit a long, long fly ball deep to left field... it curved foul. But... the young lady in left made a great play, leaping and catching the ball near the fence. No mercy in the Marauders’ dugout. “Way to make her look good, Tom,” they said.

373. Senior Softball Snippet: *I was intentionally playing shallow to challenge the young lady's hitting ability...* Georgie Schreader was playing left field when one of the young ladies hit a shot over his head. "How did that little thing hit that ball so far?" Georgie asked when coming back to the dugout. "We don't know," his teammates replied. "But we did notice how slow you got to the ball while she circled the bases."

374. Senior Softball Snippet: *A real spectator's sport, that's for sure...* Gary Krause kind of summed it all up while observing the games from the dugout: "This is more entertaining than watching *us* play during the week."

375. Senior Softball Snippet: *Was there collusion within the ranks of the MCSSL, or should we stay focused on Hillary's e-mails?* Don Dennis and Bruce Williams did one terrific job of umpiring the games, making all the right calls. Mostly right calls. Some right calls. Anyway, one thing DID NOT go unnoticed by Bruce's peers in the dugout. It seems the ladies always had the "book" on all the hitters up at the plate. The defensive "shifts" were textbook perfect, resulting in a number of predicted outs. Interviewed after the game, Bruce was asked what he was continually discussing with the ladies each and every time a Marauders batter came up to the plate, after which the ladies were observed shifting to an alternate position in the field. "The charities," Bruce replied. "It's all about the charities." Don was asked to comment. "No comment about Bruce's comment," was Don's comment.

HAD ENOUGH YET? STICK AROUND FOR MORE...

376. Senior Softball Snippet: *Move over Road Runner, we've got Speedy Gonzales...* Well, maybe not. In a hotly contested Blue Division game between the Marshals and the Mavericks, legendary speedster John "Speedy Gonzales" Packel of the Marshals smashed a ball that got way past the outfielders. John tore around the bases inspired by the likes of his speedy namesake... only to be thrown out at second base on a tag play, no less, by Jim Binsberger, who had been waiting for the runner to arrive like a kid awaiting Santa Claus. The Mavericks were quick to note that John was, "... out attempting to stretch a triple into a double."

377. Senior Softball Snippet: *Vern woulda had it...* Every player in the MCSSL hears these very words almost every game when a batter tips a foul ball behind the plate. "Vern woulda had it..." always echoes from the dugout or the Vic Zoldy bench. Vern Hunsberger of the White Division Maniacs proved to everyone probably for the thousandth time that he is the league's premier catcher superstar extraordinaire. Catchers throughout the MCSSL, throughout the Red, White, and Blue Divisions, and probably throughout all senior leagues on the east coast (maybe even throughout the U.S.A.) revere the league's legendary receiver. Vern has never been known to miss or drop a sure out behind the plate. Why, just last week, Vern was catching a critical game between the Maniacs and the Monarchs when he caught successive foul balls off the bats of Roger Parker and Enzo Vassalluzzo for outs. We thought it might be some kind of MCSSL record. "Nah," said Vern. "I do it all the time. Just two more routine plays." Wow! What a humble superstar!

378. Senior Softball Snippet: *Ever see Pac Man dance the Bristol Stomp?* In a Blue Division game Mavericks vs. Magics, the boys must have thought they were back in their youthful days of the 1960's & 70's. The Mavericks were trying to hold onto a one run lead in the last of the seventh inning. The first batter for the Magics hit a ten-foot high popper to Gordy Detweiler. The ball hit in front of Gordy and proceeded to spin in a circle away from him. Gordy chased the ball like he was playing – and losing – a game of Pac Man. Every time he tried to grab the ball with his glove, it skittered a foot further away. The next batter hit a grounder to the infield. First baseman Roger Rosenberger had been playing pretty far off the bag. As he got near the bag, he turned to catch the throw. He caught the ball and then blindly stretched his leg back in a vain

attempt to find the bag. No matter how many times he stretched to find the bag, he couldn't. He looked like a guy on Bandstand dancing to "The Bristol Stomp." Both runners eventually scored and the Mavericks lost. How nostalgic.

379. Senior Softball Snippet: *Casey Stengel couldn't have said it better, Sammy...* Go back a little bit in baseball history. The 1962 Mets were inarguably the worst team ever in baseball. But like Manager Casey Stengel said, "I gotta put nine of them out there every day somewhere." John McCann is a modern day Met disguised as a Maverick. John was playing left center field (they didn't know where else to put him) when a ball was hit to his right. John darted, yelling, "I got it! I got it!" Unfortunately (and predictably) he didn't get it, but at least for a change the ball hit his outstretched glove. After the inning was over, John tried to explain to his teammates what happened, citing "wind vectors" and "ball surface moisture" and "gravity-induced air currents" as his reason for not catching the ball. However, Sam O'Brien (also a modern day Met disguised as a Maverick) put it into perspective as well as Casey Stengel could ever have said it. Sam responded, "In other words, John, you opened your mouth and the air slowed you down."

380. Senior Softball Snippet: *Gotta blame somebody...* Finally, after losing an untold number of games down the stretch, the Mountaineers finally reigned victorious by coming back in the bottom of the seventh inning to secure a one-run victory. Oddly enough, the team only fielded twelve members, and in the absence of both the manager and assistant manager, the game's strategy fell on Georgie Schreader as the interim manager. Georgie used an old-fashioned time-tested method of managing a baseball game/conducting a jousting tournament. He dumped the names on the ground then trusted the "runes" to position the players on the field and in the lineup. A miracle happened. The Mountaineers actually won a game. The next item on the agenda was, in the words of winning pitcher Tom Holland, "... whom shall we *blame* for this momentous victory?" The round table of teammates all agreed. "We shalt blame it upon Sir Georgie!" And thus, Georgie Schreader was nominated as "Manager of the Moment."

The following hand-written note was found under the car wiper blade of Field Maintenance Team member Dan Brady:

“If anyone has a key to the equipment locker could you check to see if my glove is there? (Black-Red L)... (signed) Chuck Favata... (p.s.) you can contact me at the Dementia Unit at Abington Lansdale!”

Like the Terminator once said, “Baa-add eye-dee-ah.” Nothing escapes the snippet watchers...

381. Senior Softball Snippet: *Did Chuck Favata abandon his gloves or did the gloves abandon Chuck Favata? After another blow out over Chuck's White Division Musketeers, his glove could take it no more. As Chuck drove away from SRP, the glove allegedly fell or jumped out of his car landing onto Orvilla Road, where it evidently crawled to the curb in hope of finding a new owner and team. It was joined by his two batting gloves. Several hours later, Vince Torno of the Maniacs left School Road Park after his team recorded yet another victory. Vince spotted the three gloves as he drove by, and risking life and limb, stopped and jumped into traffic to retrieve the gloves. When Vince returned home, he promptly took photos of the gloves with the intention of selling them on ebay. Vince's incredible lovely and astute wife, noticing what he was doing, asked, “Are you sure that one of your old fart softball buddies didn't put those on the roof of his car and drive away? Duh...” Caught in a connubial dilemma (and maybe a bit embarrassed by his pragmatic wife) Vince put out an email to try to find the owner. Sure enough, Chuck (who was glued to his email page at home over dinner) recognized the gloves, responded, and arranged a meeting with Vince to recover them. Chuck confided in Vince that he has not been playing well and he was thinking of quitting softball, and instead concentrating solely on golf (about twenty-five other golfing buddies would question that decision, but that's another story). But Vince talked him out of it as he told Chuck, "If the glove doth fit, you must not quit!" Rumor has it that Chuck's gloves are not happy.*

382. Senior Softball Snippet: *Chuck Favata's back-peddling damage-control explanation...* Exposed on the world's senior softball stage, Chuck had to come up with an explanation. "My fielding glove and batting gloves were going into time-out when I got home, but somehow they got wind of it and ran away. I think it was Russian meddling. They didn't get far due to the American eagle eye of Vince Torno. All is forgiven and they will be put back in action next Monday."

383. Senior Softball Snippet: *Chuck Favata's gloves cry foul...* Monday came around and having been reunited with his fielding glove and two batting gloves over the weekend, Chuck resumed his role of playing third base for the White Division Musketeers after convincing both managers Billy and Steve Mallozzi that the "wayward glove" rumor was just that, a rumor. Well... another rumor has it that the gloves did not cooperate and Chuck played an awful game. Billy and Steve called Chuck onto the carpet (actually onto the grass in front of Billy's lawn chair near the Vic Zoldy bench) immediately following the most recent loss. The rumor mill ground out the truth. Chuck broke down. "I should have left the damn gloves there!" he cried on confessional knees. "Curse that Vince Torno! I coulda been a contenda with new gloves!"

... and now back to our regularly scheduled snippet programming...

384. Senior Softball Snippet: *Fairy tales are, well, maybe fractured a little bit...* Riding high on their one-game winning streak, the White Division Mountaineers called upon interim manager Georgie Schreder to make the line-up against the pesky Magicians in the hope of extending their winning streak to two games. Georgie took up the monumental challenge. The Mountaineers got slaughtered. After the game, his teammates huddled up once again. "Whom shall we *blame* for this momentous loss?" The round table of teammates all agreed. "We shalt blame it upon Sir Georgie!" And thus, Georgie Schreder's short-lived knighthood as "Manager of the Moment" was unanimously changed to "Manager Once-Upon-A-Time."

385. Senior Softball Snippet: *Epidemic of recent lost softball gloves traced back to Chuck Favata...* In the aftermath of the “Chuck Favata Incident” (as it has come to be known), representatives from the CEC (Center for Equipment Control) arrived at School Road Park from Atlanta to investigate a report of a serious epidemic outbreak in Hatfield. They were somewhat relieved to learn that it was only a common case of SMS (Senior Moment Syndrome). Field Maintenance Team specialist Jimmy Flynn was on hand to explain. He opened the job box, displaying four fielder’s gloves left behind by the league’s members. “To whom do they belong?” asked one of the reps. “Don’t know,” Jimmy replied. “Nobody ever puts his name on the glove.” The reps all just shook their heads. Jimmy asked, “Will there be consequences?” They replied. “Not quite yet. Right now, it’s just a rash. But one more glove in this job box and we’ll be declaring it an epidemic. Call us immediately if and when that happens.”

... and the summer season is only halfway spent...