



ON DECK

Newsletter of the BEANTOWN SOFTBALL LEAGUE

John H.: "Well..."

On continuing assignment, Slide Tornpants, On Deck's summer intern, has been interviewing John H., former Chaps player, trying to get one player's view of the early days of the Beantown Softball League.

JOHN H.: I couldn't help noticing, but how'd you ever tear those pants that way, Slide?

TORNPAANTS: Pardon me?

JOHN H.: I mean, was it on purpose? I mean, did you do it to relieve pressure or something?

TORNPAANTS: It's private. Besides, John H., I'm the interviewer.

JOHN H.: I only ask because we had a shortstop named Roland with a similar problem, the same rips. A terrific player. He could place a ball all over the field. Kind of like watching a ballet dancer on a Rocky Mountain high. He turned me into a juvenile delinquent, you know.

TORNPAANTS: No, I didn't. Was he your best player?

JOHN H.: Arguably. There was also Peter P. But years ago, he met a guy named Howie at a tournament in Toronto and we lost him to the Isle of Manhattan. And there was the ole redhead, Mark C., who we nabbed for a season, before the suburbs got him. They still pop up at tournaments, tough. Yup, they're right up there with Roland.

TORNPAANTS: Whatever happened to Roland?

JOHN H.: He's still playing now. Changed his name, though. And his pants. That reminds me, Slide...

TORNPAANTS: Excuse me John H., can't we get away from these torn pants? You promised to address the initial issue.

JOHN H.: I did?

TORNPAANTS: You promised. and then you were going to remember the night of the Herbie's Ramrod Massacre.

JOHN H.: Two controversial topics in one issue of On Deck? My...my...my...Well, a deal's a deal. Let's start with initials.

TORNPAANTS: Yes, initials. Are they enough, John H?

JOHN H.: More than enough. In fact we would never have needed them if there hadn't been so many Johns on the team to begin with. We had John R. and John G. There was me. Then came John B. Even Jason's real name was John, for God's sake. Why, half the line-up was Johns? We had to do something to tell us apart. For our own sakes, at least. You know, all you

need is to give everyone on the team a different name and you don't need initials. It's as simple as that. And then you don't have any controversy.

TORNPAANTS: A provocative solution to a festering issue.

JOHN H.: Oh, yes. It was a dark and stormy night. There was moisture. Lost of it. Too much. At the very least, it was a relentless drizzle. It was cold...and it was Wednesday. All bad signs, I tell ya'.

We scheduled to play our archrival back then, Herbie's Ramrod, the men in blue, on ol' Clemente, the original diamond in the rough. But the field was a quagmire. Unplayable. What we needed was a commissioner to call off the game. Except we didn't have one yet. So, instead we went to the kiddie diamond at the other end of the field. Now, I knew from getting my finger broken over a year before during our rainy first practice [Ed.-see previous issue for the gruesome details.] that such wetness can pose unacceptable challenges. but did they listen to me? Nooooooooooooo.

TORNPAANTS: You spoke out? You protested?

JOHN H.: In a way...I lit a joint. I thought they'd understand. And I wasn't the only one, mind you. Coley, an enormous bambino, who could hit the ball a country mile if he connected, had a joint before the game, too. 'Course the difference between him and me was that I sat out the game and he didn't. He struck out three times. Called strikes and swinging...Fortunately, he played for Ramrod. anyway, we shouldn't have been playing, but you know how it can be when we get a chance to sling a little mud. The game lasted long enough for Chaps to win 5-2. And when the contest was finally called, it seemed like half the Ramrod team was out of it. Even our own Gigs was involved in an injurious situation while sliding home. He was okay, but the Ramrod catcher, Mario's boyfriend, fractured a collarbone. They took him away in an ambulance...However, the real carnage lay ahead. You see, Alan M. and Ralph C. of Ramrod were leaving in Ralph's car after the game when they were smashed by an oncoming negligent driver, which sent them to the hospital, too. I hear it was like a regular ballplayers' convention in that emergency room. Even Suki, Chaps' mistress, was there, doing a Florence Nightingale turn, ministering to the boys.

It was quite a night, but for Alan M. only a spooky portent of things to come - you see, he'd barely recovered enough to get away to rest when he got smashed again by another negligent driver in Provincetown while riding his bike.

TORNPAANTS: Was it raining?

JOHN H.: Come on. Would he ride a bike in the rain? But it does bring us to the main lesson of the evening.

TORNPAANTS: What's that?

JOHN H.: DON'T PLAY IN THE RAIN, YOU DUMMIES!!!