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# ON DECK

Newsletter of the BEANTOWN SOFTBALL LEAGUE

## The TRIP

Slide Tornpants, ON DECK's cub snoop, has been interviewing an old Chaps player, John H., all season long.

**TORNPANTS:** Some people think about the Gay Softball World Series along about playoff time, and invariably people start murmuring and smiling about THE TRIP. What's it all about? And why are you giggling already?

**JOHN H.:** I shouldn't, I know. It was actually more like a Greek tragedy that wouldn't end. It still brings tears to my eyes. 1980. The year the Chaps team was all set to go to L.A. Our first Series.

Dawn cracked. The sun rose. And then all hell broke loose. Our coach, and League Secretary, who was bucking for a promotion from the Mayor's office, called me about 8 a.m. to explain that he was leaving us in the lurch and to ask if he could drop off the bats in 15 minutes so I could get them to the bus station.

Bus station, I gulped. Aren't we flying to Los Angeles?

You are, he said. But you have to take a bus to New York to get the plane to L.A.

Right, I said. But can't you drive me and the bats to the bus station?

And miss the boat to P'Town? he replied.

We had a chance, I know we did. After all, Paradise had come from behind and beaten Milwaukee when Bruce B. hit his awe inspiring grand slam. I knew we had a chance. We just didn't have a coach.

So this is where John B., one of our rookies that year, stepped in. when we got to the bus station he started pointing people from the team toward the right door. Someone had to do it.

Mama Toby, sub supreme, was already serving ham and cheese (mustard or mayo) before we got to the turnpike entrance. And it was still before 10 a.m., for godssake.

We checked out bats, baggage and selves onto the plane, and the next thing I know we hear two ear-shattering thuds, one after another, as we're taxiing down the runway. Gigs, who was the team comedian back then, shouts out: Flat tires! Two flat tires!

Well, we all knew about him anyway, so we didn't pay him any attention. About five minutes later, the captain's voice came over the intercom and said we've had two flat tires and were returning to the terminal. Eventually, we did.

We reboarded the plane and as we took off it started raining down on all of us from the ceiling because the water in the air conditioning system had condensed while we were waiting for Mr. Goodyear.

Before the flat tires they'd told us what we could have for dinner. Steak, chicken, or kosher. Well, it took so long to change the tires, the caterer, fearing botulism lawsuits, reclaimed most of the food, so half the passengers didn't get fed. Not many in our group cared, though, funny as that may seem. Even Jim V. was giggling already. What a sport. He kept that up and us up that way for another six, seven hours. And Steve S. never stopped grinning until we landed. Then the movie projector burnt the film before it broke down. But again, not too many of us seemed to notice.

The next thing I know, there's all this scurrying around, pillows, flashlights, stewards and blankets going every which way, and people kept saying, Is there a doctor on board? And Gigs calls out, somebody's having some kind of attack!!! He must have eaten the pork!

What a joker, I think to myself. And then the captain comes over the intercom again and says we're going to have to make an emergency landing in St. Louis because a passenger is having an attack of food poisoning.

As we began our fourth departure of the day, sixteen hours into our odyssey, a middle aged woman with two teenagers, one male, asked John B., Are you all ballplayers? Yes, ma'am, he replied. And looking at one of the teenagers, added, And we're all queer!

That's when I started to tell him my life story.

An eery calm permeated the super oxygenated atmosphere of the cabin as we crossed the Continental Divide. Then, Help! Help! was heard. More scurrying. More blankets and flashlights... Help! Help!

Well, our first baseman, Bruce B., a true journeyman, had gotten his foot stuck in the seat in front of him. Amputate! Someone yelled. Not another emergency landing, groaned another.

Soon we all fell asleep and Bruce got his foot unstuck.

So we got to L.A. about twenty hours after we left Boston. No welcoming committee; the bars were closed and we couldn't even find our hosts.

Welcome to L.A.

Boston lost its first game, but then went on to beat San Francisco during an 8 A.M.er, and went on to the finals against L.A., as real underdogs. But by then a goal was within grasp and we were hooked.

**TORNPANTS:** Any recommendations for the team going to Houston?

**JOHN H.:** Yes. Make sure your coach goes with you, even if you have to kidnap him; fly from Boston and...pray. Then go out and win it for Beantown.