

# *michigan* **GOLFER**



**Jack Berry**  
**receives PGA's**  
***Lifetime Achievement Award for Journalism***

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*Cover: Jack Berry with his family at the Golf Writers Association of America Award dinner, April 4, 2007 (l to r) daughter Anne Daugherty, wife Bonnie Humm, daughter Jill Berry, Jack Berry, daughters Karen Gebhardt and Susan Berry. Photo courtesy of the PGA of America.*

# Jack Berry Receives Lifetime Journalism Award

By Terry Moore

*“My favorite colors are blue and green—blue sky and green grass. I’ve had my share of both. My favorite thing has been to find out what’s going on and write about it.”*  
—Jack Berry

In a memorable tribute to Michigan’s most acclaimed golf writer, the PGA of America’s President Brian Whitcomb bestowed the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award for Journalism to Jack Berry. With his wife and four daughters beaming in the audience, Berry accepted the honor in Augusta, GA, at the annual Golf Writers Association of America Awards Dinner on the eve of the ’07 Masters. Previous award recipients include such notables as Dan



From left, Greg Johnson, Jack Berry, and Terry Moore celebrate Jack Berry’s Lifetime Achievement in Journalism award at the Golf Writers Association of America award dinner.

Jenkins, Jack Whitaker, Herbert Warren Wind, Dave Anderson, Jim Murray, and Renton Laidlaw. Berry is the first local “golf beat” writer to be so recognized.

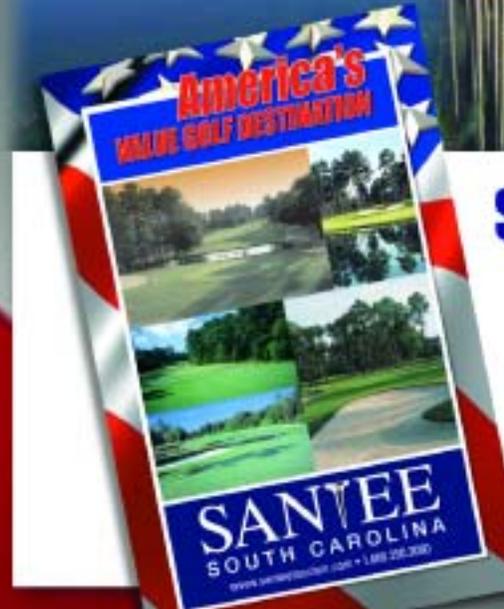
“I was lucky to work at two newspapers, the *Detroit Free Press* and *Detroit News*,” said Berry in accepting the award, “that had a tradition of covering local and state golf. I liked covering the locals, the club pros, the publinoxers, and the amateurs, all easily approachable and friendly and happy to get their names in the paper.”

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### Jack Berry

And did he ever get their names in the paper. Berry originated the News popular “Golf Page,” a weekly feature that covered all aspects of the game in the state—charity fundraisers, the newest golf course, profiles on players and owners. Although Berry has covered 38 Masters and scores of other majors, he never forgot nor neglected the duties of the local golf beat. That’s why, for example, he would drive down to Sharon, OH, to cover the U.S. Open Sectional event and wait for the last qualifier to be determined, preferably some club pro or amateur from Michigan bursting with a

quote about heading to Oakmont, or Wing Foot or Oakland Hills.

“I’m lucky that I was born in Michigan,” said Berry at the podium, “with its great history and tradition in golf, with such PGA champions as Walter Hagen, Walter Burkemo and Chick Harbert. Three Michiganders have won the Club Pro Championship. And Oakland Hills has hosted major championships...and a recent Ryder Cup that perhaps the PGA would like to forget for the result, but definitely not for the facility, the galleries and the weather, which

were all spectacular.”

In his remarks, Berry also acknowledged his fellow golf writers and their national organization, the Golf Writers Association of America (GWAA), in which he served as both President and later as its Secretary. “I’ve belonged to a lot of writers’ associations but none can approach the Golf Writers Association of America in writing ability, camaraderie and accomplishment.” During his tenure as GWAA President in 1984, Berry lobbied to have women reporters in the players’ locker room at the Masters so they

could have equal footing with their male counterparts in doing their jobs. Later as the GWAA Secretary, Berry was admired for his informative and witty newsletters, savvy industry networking, and for his efforts— with the able and tireless assistance of the PGA’s Julius Mason—to upgrade the annual awards dinner, making it one of the most popular evenings of Masters week.

Berry’s award presentation was also noteworthy for a most impressive six minute video in which a number of his colleagues and friends paid tribute to him, including Dave Anderson of the *New York Times*, Dave Hackenberg of the *Toledo Blade*, Nick Seitz of *Golf Digest*, Greg Johnson of the *Grand Rapids Press*, Treetops’ Rick Smith, and this writer representing *Michigan Golfer* where Berry has been a longtime and loyal contributor.

Outgoing GWAA President Art Spander of the *Oakland Tribune* (CA) said: “Today, too many journalists put themselves in the story. Jack never was the story. The story was what was going on the golf course.”

From Rick Smith: “He put northern Michigan on the map, made it come alive, and helped to grow the game.” And from past GWAA President Marino Parascenzo: “With professionalism, integrity, and hard work, Jack presented it fairly and accurately—that’s the key to journalism.”

Due to time constraints, the video unfortunately but wisely omitted some lighthearted com-



Photo by Art McCafferty

**Jack Berry (r), known for his great writing skills, helped bring in the Internet Television era as a reporter with Michigan Golfer Television Host Bill Shelton (l).**

ments about Berry’s infamous golf game. But through unimpeachable sources, this writer learned of a few video “out-takes” such as this priceless line from Johnson: “If I’m ever lost in the desert, I hope I have one of Jack Berry’s golf balls in my pocket—because that ball would surely find water!” Another writer recounted that Berry’s constant travails with the forced carry shot over water motivated one Media Day organizer to embroider the back of Berry’s gratis golf cap with this apt nickname: Aquaphobe.

But when it comes to writing, Berry plays at scratch. Despite retiring from the *Detroit News* in 1993, he’s remained active and involved in golf circles by not only writing and advising on golf but serving as a steadfast volunteer for various projects including the

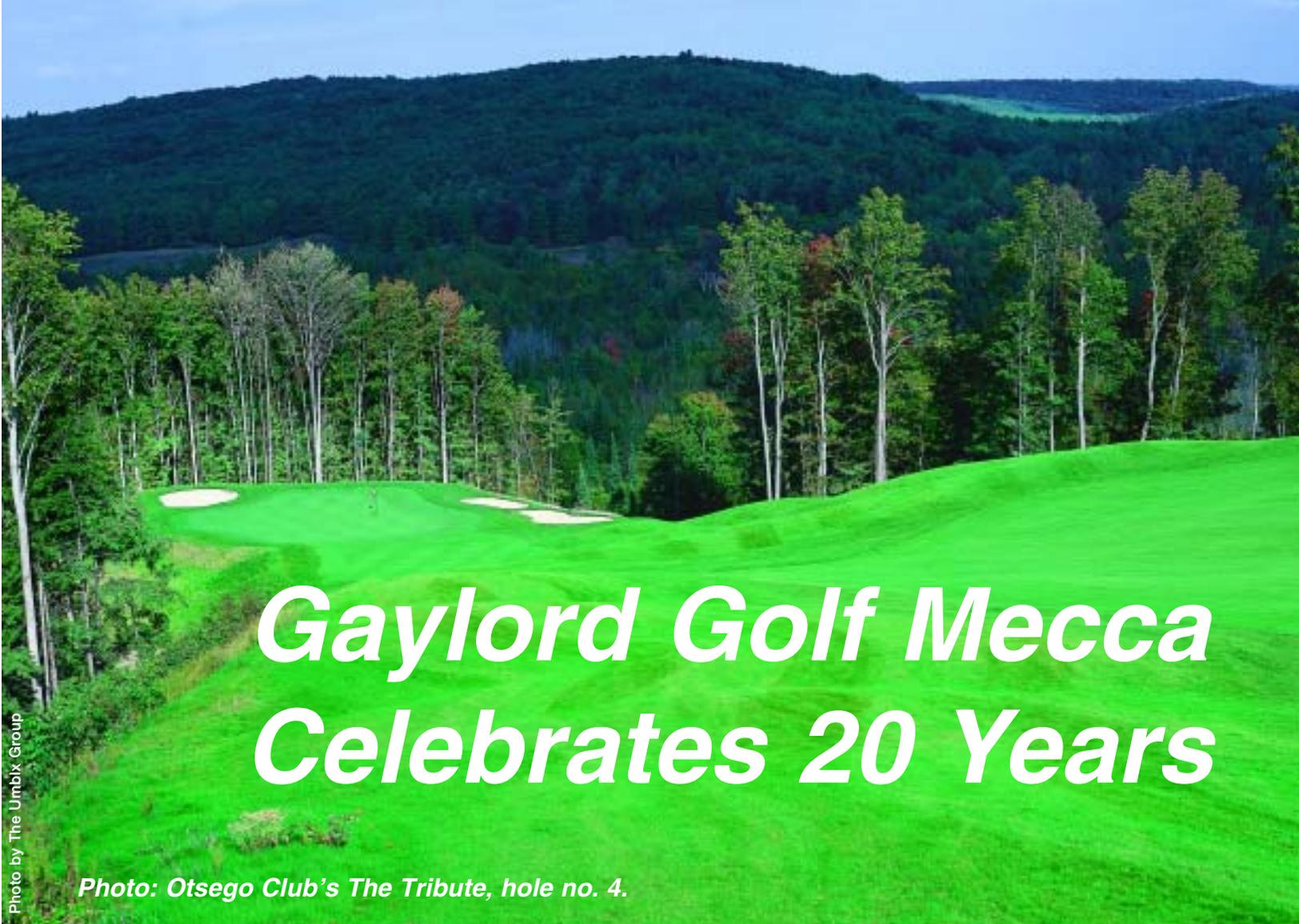
GWAA Journalism Scholarship Fund which identifies worthy college undergraduate recipients at his alma mater, Michigan State University.

In his remarks, Berry quoted his predecessor at the *News*, the late John Walter, who once said about the golf beat, “You go to the nicest places and meet the nicest people.”

Often the nicest and most deserving people win prestigious awards.

Richly deserved, this time Jack Berry is the story.

*A member of the GWAA, Terry Moore lives in Grand Rapids, MI and may be contacted at [terry\\_moore@comcast.net](mailto:terry_moore@comcast.net) **MG***



# *Gaylord Golf Mecca Celebrates 20 Years*

*Photo: Otsego Club's The Tribute, hole no. 4.*

## **By Art McCafferty**

**T**his year, the Gaylord Golf Mecca celebrates 20 years of doing business. It is a nice story to write about, as it shows what cooperation can do for an organization. The major players involved with putting this formidable group together, were Keith Gornick and Dick Weber of The Otsego Club, Larry Bowden of The Natural at Beaver Creek Resort, Bill Topham of Treetops Resort, Dan Webster of Gaylord CC, Dave Smith of Wilderness Valley, and Paul Beachnau representing the newly formed Gaylord Convention and Visitors Bureau.

From that start, the Gaylord Golf Mecca grew in size, visibility and prestige. They have increased their number of courses from eight to 21 and their lodging properties from four to 20. Gaylord has gone from a quiet northern Michigan town, to a major recreational area. While golf is king, there is also substantial skiing, snowmobiling, boating and fishing to round out their product line.

The Gaylord Golf Mecca's golf inventory is impressive. Golf course designers include, Robert Trent Jones, William Diddle, Tom Fazio, Rick Smith, Tom Doak, Jerry Matthews, Ron Otto and Mike Husby. Many of their courses

have appeared in Top 100 lists in *Golf Digest* and *Golf Magazine* and have dominated Michigan based lists for years.

Through the cooperation of the various properties they have achieved national recognition. The biggest star in this galaxy of stars is interestingly, Threetops, the par 3 course that was designed by Rick Smith. This course has been featured on ESPN for almost a decade. The Par-3 Shootout, invites members of the PGA and Champions tour to the resort to play for a half million dollars.

Golf professionals that have played the tournament include, Lee

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Trevino, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, Fred Couples, Phil Mickelson, Chris DeMarco, Lee Janzen, Andy North, and Raymond Floyd, Lee Trevino, was the only member of the group to make a hole in one and share the top prize of one million dollars.

Treetops also was a star player in the making of the first Big Break television show on the Golf Channel. Rick Smith, who had been getting some serious face time as a teacher on the network, was a natural choice for the event's hosting duties. The first show highlighted the resort and its many courses. Smith might still be doing the show, but he became Phil Mickelson's teaching pro and the demands of his schedule would not allow Rick to continue his hosting duties, a situation he greatly regretted.

Photo by Art McCafferty



**The Natural, hole no. 9**

As the Gaylord Golf Mecca celebrates its accomplishments of the past and begins to re-tool itself for the next decade, it will do so under

different leadership. Harry Melling has passed and the resort is in the hands of Rick Smith and a number of silent partners. Osprey S.A., thus ending over five decades of Gornick ownership, purchased the Otsego Club as well as the Wilderness Valley courses, which includes, Black Forest. The Lakes Course has been sold and rebranded as the Mountain Lake GC.

They will be retooling under a different economic climate than they faced 20 years ago. The graph depicting rounds played, peaked in 2000 and has declined every since. Most of the properties are struggling due to the lost of rounds and other golf related revenues. Still, the Gaylord golf community is setting its course for better days. *MG*

Photo courtesy of Treetops



**Treetops, Robert Trent Jones Course, hole no. 6**



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— a GLSP signature video by Joseph Yunkman

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*Other Signature Videos by Joseph Yunkman:*

Buck's Run with Jerry Matthews and Jim Zeh

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2006shows/bucksrun/>

The Loon with Mike Husby

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/Loon/>

Rose Creek-with Arthur Hills and Steve Forrest

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2004shows/rosecreek/>

The Majestic at Lake Walden with Jerry Matthews & Bill Fountain

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/majestic/>

The Bull at Pinehurst with Jack Nicklaus

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2003shows/thebull/>

The Natural at Gaylord with Jerry Matthews & Larry Bowden

Video: <http://michigangolfer.tv/2005shows/natural/>

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# Mike Biber Takes Over The Otsego Club

By Jack Berry

In all the years that I've interviewed people, I've never met anyone like Mike Biber who seemingly almost overnight has become a major figure in Michigan golf with eight courses stretching from Kalamazoo to the newest addition, the historic Otsego Club in Gaylord.

Biber summed up our lunch meeting at The Capital Grille in Troy with an e-mail two days later:

thanks for the good time  
laugh too much  
talk too much  
work too hard  
talk about families too much  
too much good food  
then back to work  
not a bad combination  
like what we do

Like what he's done is build a company, Osprey S.A. Ltd., that manages nearly five million square feet of space in suburban office buildings, medical office buildings and industrial and warehouse space in Florida, Texas, North Carolina and Michigan.

Biber said that recreation is only five percent of Osprey's business but, like the bird it's named for, it spreads big wings. It started small, with "player-friendly" par 71 Ridgeview in the 1970s in Kalamazoo.



Mike Biber

"It cost \$200,000 back then and we put \$12,000 down. It was all the money we had."

Golf is in Biber's blood. His father, Walter, was pro in Lansing, Sault Ste. Marie, Jackson and finally at Kalamazoo Country Club. Biber said his father, Ron LaParl of Battle Creek Country Club and the late Reggie Myles Jr. of the Country Club of Lansing were compatriots.

"I started working in the pro shop in Kalamazoo when I was five or six. My dad had me painting the bag room. He emphasized junior golf and started caddy scholarships. He was an innovator. He was the first to have carts and then he almost got fired for putting women's clothing in the golf shop."

In later years when Ridgeview became available, Biber and his brother and sister bought it. It is described as "an excellent choice for senior players, families and kids wanting to play the game at a relaxed pace."

With the late December acquisition of the Otsego Club, Osprey has the blueblood of Michigan resorts, originally the private rustic hideaway where the Fords and the Briggs and the Durants skied and played golf.

In between, Biber and his partners collected The Medalist, a demanding 18 hole course by Bill Newcomb in Marshall, Manistee National's two courses, Cutter's Ridge by Jerry Matthews and Canthooke Valley by Gary Pulsipher (you can hook – the name comes from a lumberjack's tool) and Wilderness Valley's two courses near Mancelona, the first a nice relaxed 18 by longtime Oakland Hills professional Al Watrous, and brawny Black Forest, one of Tom Doak's early designs.

"Tom agreed to finish Black Forest for us – He said it's the toughest course he ever designed. And he agreed to look at Manistee. I'd also like to encourage him to redesign the Classic (Otsego's first course by William Diddle)."

Nothing was set on a date at the time of this writing. Biber is hoping that since the courses are close to Doak's Traverse City home

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### The Lodge at the Otsego Club

they'll be tempting, just a short drive instead of plane trips to the far-flung properties he's worked on since becoming one of the most in-demand designers in golf.

Biber's timing for expanding Osprey's recreational properties – he was high bidder for Keith Gornick's Otsego Club – might seem strange in view of the struggles in the Michigan market with the downsizing of the automobile industry.

"I'm a contrarian. I think Michigan is coming back. We're Michiganders," Biber said of his family and his Brighton-based

company.

Biber said when he and three partners started the company seven years ago as a private investment company, all of the properties they invested in were in Michigan.

"My job was to diversify and now we're in Florida, Texas and North Carolina and less than one-third of our business is in Michigan. It's easy to lease 100 percent in Houston, Tampa and Charlotte but not in Detroit. But we have 1.5 million square feet in Detroit and it's fully leased.

"Everybody criticizes Detroit but we think it's on the rebound

and the automobile companies are working hard. It's a gamble for us. You take what the market god gives you and there are good prices in Detroit right now," Biber said.

"We have a good team with good young people and we hope to build the company for their grand-kids.

"Golf is a tough business in a tough economy in a tough state. We're making money but not a lot of money. You've got to manage it hard and give good value. When you buy low, you better have a lot of capital. You better be in the business. It better not be a hobby. I

didn't buy a ski hill (Otsego) because I love to ski. I haven't skied in five years."

Osprey's plan for Otsego, which Detroit steel magnate Don McLouth opened in 1939, is renovating all of the cabins and lodge and constructing a first class snowboarding area. Michigan never can match the Rockies for ski terrain but you don't need a 14,000-foot mountain for boarding.

The Gornick family, Keith and his father, Alan, before him, made "the Club" a family area for the half century they operated it. Biber said he used to take his family there but over the years, as the youngsters got bigger but the hill didn't, they lost interest in skiing. Boarding has brought them back and Biber said "Keith and his family have meant a lot to Michigan families and we hope to carry on that tradition. Otsego is a little gem that we hope to take to the next level."

Biber expects the combination of Doak's Black Forest, just a short drive south of Gaylord, and Otsego's Tribute course with its spectacular views over the Sturgeon River Valley, to help fill the resort's 100 rooms.

As for neighborhood competitor Treetops, only a few miles east of Otsego,

Biber said "Thank God for Rick Smith and Treetops. There's 100,000 potential customers driving right past my place." And he likes Arcadia Bluffs, Smith's award-winning design just north of Osprey's two courses at Manistee National.

"They've been wonderful to us," Biber said. "We had a wind shear that took out 500 trees and they were the first to call us and offer us help. The best thing that could happen to us was to be near them."

There's method to that madness too. Manistee has rooms, Arcadia doesn't. Golfers can stay and play Manistee and drive on up to Arcadia to play there.

"Four years ago I was asked what is the best course in the area. I said Crystal Downs is first and it would probably cost \$600 if you could get on it. Arcadia Bluffs is next and it's \$180. We charge \$60 and I said 'When you're done, tell me which one you enjoyed the most.'"

Biber obviously enjoys what he's doing and where he's doing it. He cancelled a meeting in Florida because he didn't want to miss the first snowfall in Michigan.

"Now if it was the 50th snow..." he said, laughing all the way. **MG**

# Osprey

By Jack Berry

**W**hat's in a name? The umbrella name of six Michigan golf properties and a private real estate trust based in Brighton came when Mike Biber had a small home in Osprey, Fla., a town of 4,000 on the Gulf of Mexico, south of Sarasota.

"I bought a little bitty property there and I needed a name for it. I thought of a couple names and was told they weren't available," Biber said. "So I said Osprey. They said that wasn't available so I said Osprey SA Ltd. I was buying a company in Spain at the time and SA is company designation and stands for Sociedad Anonima."

And what is an osprey? Ospreys are large raptors with a wingspread of 4-1/2 to 6 feet. They plunge feet first into the water for fish. They're not only in Florida and up the east coast but also in northern Michigan waters.

Looking for a picture of an osprey for the company logo, Biber said a friend showed him the back of a Canadian \$20 bill. An osprey. **MG**

# President Ford Left His Ski and Golf Legacy at Beaver Creek

By Michael Patrick  
Shiels

Michigan's President, the late Gerald Ford, was eulogized very publicly in Palm Springs, Washington D.C., and, ultimately, his hometown of Grand Rapids. It is there, on a shaded hillside along the Grand River, that he lies, beside the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum.

While America watched these funerals on television, one is left to wonder why Beaver Creek, Colorado, and, 12 miles to the east, Vail, were left out of the media procession. After all, Ford maintained a home in the area for the last 40 years of his life. I came here, to Beaver Creek, to find out why Beaver Creek was the Western White House for the Republican President Ford, and, his place of solace after losing the 1976 Presidential election to Democrat Governor Jimmy Carter, of Georgia.

Gerald and Betty Ford lived in Beaver Creek for five months of each year; hosted celebrities in an annual charity golf tournament;

ceremoniously lit the Beaver Creek Christmas Tree each year; and served as Grand Marshall for the Independence Day Parade. He served the board of the lovely stone chapel he helped create and worshipped in. More serious business took place here, too, as Ford founded, in 1982, a forum called the American Enterprise Institute, which brought world leaders such as England's Margaret Thatcher, Germany's Helmut Schmidt, and the American Presidents to Beaver Creek. Now, you'll encounter skiers from around the world each

time you ride a Beaver Creek chairlift.

"I don't think anyone did more to put Beaver Creek on the map than Gerald Ford," Harry Frampton, Chairman of the Board of the Valley Foundation, told me as we sat in the Centennial Conference Room of the quaint and classy Inn at Beaver Creek, where Ford hosted an annual reception for the charities which benefited from his golf tournament. In 1981, Ford was one of the founding members of the organization, as Frampton



Art McCafferty films the tribute to President Ford at the Gerald R. Ford Museum in Grand Rapids.

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explained to me as I interviewed him on my radio show. “For over 20 years President Ford never missed a single board meeting. He was there every month. And he was always there on time. He was also very active in contributing to the meetings.”

“What was it like to sit in meetings with a former President of the United States?” I asked Frampton.

“Well, it was very intimidating sometimes. But I wasn’t as scared as my wife. The first time we were invited to a cocktail party at President Ford’s home, she was just as nervous as could be. But once we got to the house, Ford greeted her warmly and asked her at least ten questions about her and her activities. It calmed her right down. He was such a good person that way.”

Ford’s home at Beaver Creek is plainly evident in a neighborhood just up the hill from the ski resort public areas and the Inn. It is not isolated or sealed off in any way, nor was he. Gerald and Betty Ford could be spotted anywhere in town – even grocery shopping in the local Safeway store.

“Of course he always had security agents around him,” said Frampton, “but we all knew them by name. It was very friendly.”

In fact, the only unique feature of Ford’s home are the security quarters bunkered into the hillside across the small yard behind the blue, wooden home. The house is most visible, in fact, by hopping a ride on the Strawberry Park chairlift, just outside the back door of the Inn at Beaver Creek. (Three

support poles up!) In fact, that convenient chairlift is the closest to a hotel anywhere in North America, (about 30 feet) which is reason enough to consider making the Inn your headquarters if you visit Beaver Creek. With only 45 rooms, it’s a homey escape from the hustle and bustle of the village area, yet only about 100 yards from the center of town. Staff members, who remember your name and tend to your needs quickly, make you feel, shall we say, very Presidential. You’re likely to encounter Presidents and CEO’s, business moguls and titans of industry who favor the Inn. When I asked the bartender if many celebrities stay at the Inn, he replied, “Celebrities? No. Our guests are more likely to be the people who hire and write checks to the celebrities.”

After a daily complimentary hot breakfast, that Strawberry Park chairlift, just beyond the wood-paneled ski lockers and out the Inn’s back door, lifts skiers to a potential elevation of 11,440 feet of elevation and 148 trails over 1,805 acres, with challenging moguls, steep sweeping runs through wooded passages, and gentle glides leading to the stylish villages of Beaver Creek, Bachelor Gulch and Arrow Head. The route I took to the Broken Arrow Bar stretched over four miles of varying downhill pitch with majestic mountain views the entire way.

Back in the Beaver Creek Village, you can enjoy outstanding dining at restaurants such as the brilliantly Italian Toscanini just beside Beaver Creek Village’s charming, year-round outdoor ice skating rink, or, near the resort

gate, in Beaver Creek’s original homestead ranch house, a four-star, French, chef-driven gourmet restaurant with magical cuisine and atmosphere. There are romantic “on mountain” dining options as well, such as Beano’s Cabin, accessible only via sleigh ride, or, during the day, you can ski to the festive, themed Red Tail Camp, where the vegetarian chili is a spicy, warm-up option.

Rooms at the Beaver Creek in range between \$200 and \$400 per night; a daily lift ticket at Beaver Creek, which allows skiing from 8:30 a.m. until 4 p.m., costs \$80 for adults. There are various flight options into the Vail or Denver Airports from Detroit, including Northwest Airlines and Frontier, both of which offer non-stops into Denver, which is about two-hour’s drive to Beaver Creek via shuttle bus or rental car. Vail/Eagle Airport is 25 miles from Beaver Creek, and Beaver Creek will give you a free lift ticket on the day you fly in just for showing your boarding pass and Vail Valley lodging confirmation. Visit <http://BeaverCreek.com> to have a look at the various amenities and even book travel (special discounts are available.)

President Ford made Beaver Creek his home; you and your family can be certain to feel at home here, as well.

*Michael Patrick Shiels hosts the Michigan Talk Network’s “Big Show” each weekday morning from 6-10 a.m. on 11 radio stations across the state. His travel articles and columns appear in publications around the world. He may be contacted at [MShiels@aol.com](mailto:MShiels@aol.com) MG*

# Tom Bendelow – Now Remembered

By Art  
McCafferty

A few years ago, when I was researching a series of articles on the history of Michigan golf courses, the name of Tom Bendelow emerged repeatedly. While I noted the name, it was my work on Donald Ross's Michigan courses that really piqued my interest.

In Ross' book, "Golf Has Never Failed Me," he mentioned that he had designed the Muskegon Country Club in 1911. When I called upon Muskegon during the research for my article, they produced a drawing and a letter that Donald Ross wrote in 1920. It was a fact that nearly a decade before Ross visited Muskegon, Tom Bendelow had been to Muskegon and had designed the Muskegon Country Club course.

Why had Donald Ross claimed

this golf course to be his own, when clearly another person had done the original design? This question led to others as I continued my research into the history of this forgotten golf architect. I was so moved by Bendelow's story that I wrote an article about him for the *Michigan Golfer*: "Tom Bendelow;

Golf's Johnny Appleseed". Since the article appeared online, I have been contacted by others interested in Bendelow and others who wanted to help set the record straight. One of those individuals was Stuart Bendelow, Tom's grandson.

I am glad that Stuart Bendelow has taken the time to correct the historical record and enlighten the golfing community. For example, 52 Michigan golf courses were designed by Bendelow. I think this would be astounding news to any golf writer or reporter in Michigan.

His book, "Thomas "Tom" Bendelow The Johnny Appleseed of American Golf," has a deafening and most clarifying ring to it. Now, with Stuart Bendelow's book, this important golf architect will be forgotten no more. **MG**

