

*Michigan*  
**GOLFER**

January / February 2004

**Jack Saylor —  
Golf's  
Piano Man**

**MICHIGAN GOLFER**

**Publisher/Editor**

Art McCafferty  
artmccaf@glsp.com

**Editor Emeritus**

Terry Moore

**Managing Editor**

Kelly Hill  
kehill@ameritech.net

**Chief Information Officer**

Jennie McCafferty

**Internet Service Provider**

Pat & Rick Rountree  
Dundee Internet Services, Inc.

**Director of Information Technology**

Katie Delcamp  
katie@glsp.com

**Writers at Large**

Susan Bairley  
Jack Berry  
Craig Brass  
Tom Doak  
Greg Johnson  
Bradley S. Klein  
Vartan Kupelian  
Jon Maddern  
Norm Sinclair  
Mike Shiels  
Ron Whitten

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John Bebow  
Mike Duff  
Jim Neff  
William Shelton  
Mike Terrell

**Writers**

L'anse Bannon  
Margaret Bowers  
Rick Coates  
Liza Dypka  
Sam Fullerton  
Dennis Grall  
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Janina Parrott Jacobs  
Mickey MacWilliams  
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Judy Mason

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Bernice Phillips  
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Ken Tabacsko  
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Marc Van Soest  
Phil Winch  
John Wukovits

**Photo/Video**

Kevin Frisch  
Dave Richards  
Carter Sherline  
Clarence Sormin  
Brian Walters  
Joe Yunkman

**Representatives**

Brian Manning  
B.J. Erwin

**Director of Accounting**

Cheryl Clark

**Web Development**

ZebraFish Studios  
zebrafishstudios.com

**Director of New Media Development**

Trevor Zylstra

**Copy Editor**

Rose Zylstra

**Office Assistant**

Erica Miller

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**GLSP Advertising & Business Office**

3588 Plymouth Road, #245  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
734.507.0241  
734.434.4765 FAX  
info@glsp.com  
glsp.com

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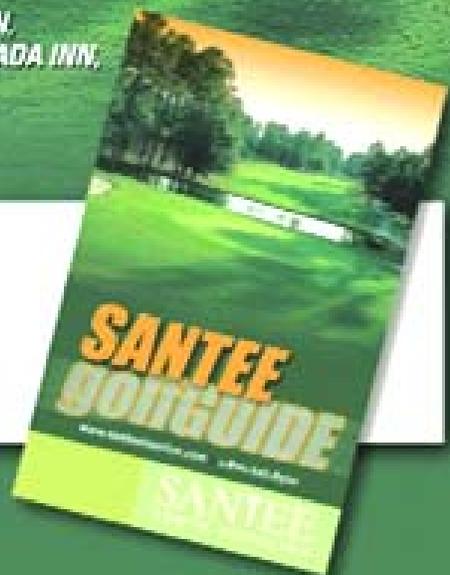
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# Jack Saylor — Golf's Piano Man

By Art McCafferty  
Publisher

Jack Saylor, Michigan's legendary sports writer, was also known by many in the golf industry as the Piano Man. We will miss the great stories, the puns and humorous writing of Jack. And, too, we will miss the voice and hands that brought so much enjoyment to those who shared an evening or two with him at a piano bar somewhere and sometime.

Hundreds gathered at the funeral home and later at the Waterford Elks Club to pay their respects to Jack, his wife Joyce and their family. And while it was a sad occasion, it seemed that, in no time, Saylor stories were being launched as fast as practice balls at a Japanese driving range. The hundreds of photos scattered throughout the facilities provided the catalyst for many of the stories, some of which are shared here.

There were photos of Jack with his family and wife Joyce. There was Jack in his navy uniform, looking every bit the role of the tail gunner he was trained to be. There were stories to go with the photos of his time at the *Pontiac Press*, *Detroit Times* and finally, the *Detroit Free Press*.

Boyhood friend Harold Horn talked about the time Jack was on strike at the *Detroit Times* and was putting out "The Sports Page" as an alternative paper and making good money at it. "In fact," said Horn, he really was not that anxious to return to the *Times* as the money was that good." Other photos had him pictured with basketball and football players that supported the Michigan Sports Writer of the Year Award he received early in his career. Lloyd Carr, Michigan's football coach,

began one of his press conferences with a reference to the greatness of Jack as a beat writer and how much he will be missed.

Most of the stories that day were about Jack and golf. He was a fair golfer, playing at one time to a 10 handicap. He was not long off the tee, but he kept the ball in play and had a nice game around the green. According to his golfing buddy of 40 years, Harold Horn, Denny McClain once told him, "You play



Jack Saylor, Jack Berry & Arnold Palmer

pretty good golf for a guy that has a 11 inch inseam." Jack was not so much a fashion plate, but a fashion platter. His golf outfits were a both a visual feast and puzzlement, and he would have fit in very well with Doug Sanders and Jimmy Demaret.

Finally, there was a photo of Jack at his beloved keyboard which we used as our cover shot. Jack was good— for someone with no formal training. So good, that during that same *Detroit Times* strike, Jack was hired to be the piano man at a

downtown Detroit watering hole.

In a recent article by Jo-Ann Barnas of the *Free Press*, she quoted Jack's pal and fellow writer George Sweda. Sweda said, "It was no secret that Saylor, who never learned to read music, was known as the best piano-playing golf writer on the beat.

"He was awesome," Sweda said. "He literally closed places like Pinehurst. I remember him playing one time on Easter Sunday at Spring Island in South Carolina — on a course that Arnold Palmer designed — with Arnold singing alongside him.

"Another time, we were at the Mission Inn in Carmel, California, at 1 in the morning, when Clint Eastwood walked in. Jack played for another hour."

Dave Richards talked about the time they stopped by the Pinecrest Inn at Pinehurst and there was Jack entertaining the group.

The Piano Man.

One of his final Michigan performances was at the grand opening of The Tribute at the Otsego Club. After being feted by Keith Gornick's staff, members of the media were treated by Jack, whose playing put the coda on a fantastic affair.

Jack Saylor always finished his sessions with the theme from the Mickey Mouse Club. That's good enough for us.

M-I-C-K-E-Y M-O-U-S-E  
Hey there, hi there, ho there  
You're as welcome as can be  
M-I-C (See ya real soon)  
K-E-Y (Why? Because we like you)  
M-O-U-S-E

Jack, thanks for the memories. **MG**

**GOLFER.tv**

**A Tribute to Jack Saylor**

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# Scotty Bowman: A Golf Ball is Only a Round Puck

By John Wukovitz

Until he retired from an esteemed career in the National Hockey League, the end of summer meant one thing for former Red Wing coach Scotty Bowman—the start of hockey. While others enjoyed crisp autumn afternoons and nature's splendid colors, Bowman turned to game strategy and player preparation.

No longer. Since he stopped coaching the Detroit Red Wings following their Stanley Cup victory in 2002, Bowman's thoughts have ranged far from the ice surface. "Golf is my next passion to hockey," states hockey's most illustrious helmsman.

A brief conversation with Bowman underscores his shifting focus. Rather than chat about Gordie Howe and Wayne Gretzky, Bowman fires off a litany of golf professionals whose acquaintances he has made. He rattles off golf scores and anecdotes like he used to relate hockey history, and he speaks of the game of golf in the revered terms used by one who is completely taken with the game's legacy and challenge. Like a regular fan, for instance, he proudly

boasts of the golf ball autographed for him by both Tiger Woods and Ernie Els.

It should be hardly surprising that Bowman loves golf, for his father grew up in Scotland and worked in the shadow of famed St. Andrews. Bowman never played the sport much, though, until 1979, when he moved to Buffalo, where he joined his first country club, Transit Valley. Six years later he moved into a beautiful home adjoining the layout.

"I always had a dream to live on a golf course, and a house on the sixth fairway, halfway down a par-5 hole, became available. My kids had been playing a lot of junior golf, so this made it easier for us to get them to the club. The house was also an investment. I always wondered how long I would stay in one place in hockey, and it would be easier to sell a place on a golf course."

Now that he has more time to enjoy the activity, Bowman usually plays golf three times a week at Transit Valley. Most Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays you can find him walking the fairways with his golfing buddies, either competing in a weekly tournament or

ying for bragging rights. He admits he has much work to do to lower his current 14 handicap, but states that he receives plenty of other benefits.

"I like the exercise part. I like walking whenever I get a chance. The weather in Buffalo is real nice in the summer. It never gets too hot. The game is not very time-consuming. I can get over there and back in less than four and one half hours. I also find that when I'm out on the golf course, it takes my mind off everything else. I can relax in doing it."

When winter storms into the Buffalo area, Bowman heads to Florida with a group of pals from Transit Valley and from his hockey days. He also loves returning to Michigan to play in charity golf outings and in the annual Red Wing golf tournaments the club hosts in Traverse City and in Detroit.

Unlike many golfers, Bowman is not devoted to one particular brand of clubs. He keeps a set of Titleist irons in Buffalo and a set of Pings in Florida, which complement his Taylor-made driver and Titleist putter. "I'm not really a big guy on equipment," he adds, leaving one with the feeling that he could

walk onto any golf course and feel equally comfortable using his own set of clubs or that of any other golfer near him.

Bowman, who registered his lowest 18-hole score of 78 at Transit Valley about twenty years ago, has a love for golfing tradition and venerable locales. When speaking of the game, he reels off names of famed layouts as if chatting about old friends. "I like Winged Foot. I went overseas with about one hundred hockey people and played six rounds in six days—St. Andrews, Carnoustie, King's Barns, Bally Bunion, and others. I enjoyed that trip. My favorite course, though, would have to be St. Andrews because of the history of the place."

Over a lengthy career coaching hockey, Bowman crafted a reputation for being exceptionally thorough, well-prepared, and professional, so it comes as no surprise that he has noticed those qualities in the top golfers he has met. "I am amazed at their preparation and how they concentrate. Once they are at the first tee, for the next four hours nothing is going to phase them. The great hockey players, like

Steve Yzerman, are really focused. Once he gets ready to play the game, he's only thinking of the game. Same with golfers. They have a routine, preparation."

That is why Bowman most enjoys watching the players warm

reserves his highest praise for Tiger Woods, whom he compares to hockey's Mario Lemieux and Wayne Gretzky for the way he dominates his sport. He has closely followed Woods's career with an interest that sometimes approaches awe.

"Mostly what I recall about Tiger Woods is how he is not going to make a mistake when he has a lead. Good players have an innate ability, a lot of confidence, and breaks. When they see an opportunity to win, they seize it. Some call it a killer instinct, and that's what I see with Tiger Woods."

Bowman has been fortunate enough to coach and compete with the best hockey has offered over the past four decades. Now that he has retired, he brings the same passion and intensity to golf. He has learned that professionals in both sports teach the same lesson for everyone, a lesson that can be applied to any aspect of life, not just sports.

"You've got to put in the time," he emphatically remarks. "The people who are successful put in that extra time. When you think you've done enough, just do a little bit more. Work hard. The people who have reached the top of their game have put in a lot of work that other people haven't." MG



Scotty Bowman

up at the driving range. There, the coach who implemented some of the most successful systems in hockey history studies the way touring professionals ready themselves for top-caliber competition. "People don't realize the time these athletes put into their sport."

As is true of most people, Bowman

# Falling Rounds Rising Optimism

By Liza Dypka

There is an old Michigan saying, “you can’t go more than three miles anywhere in the state without running into a body of water.” This statement could almost be true for golf courses. Michigan is so over populated with courses that the competition has caused a few courses to close their doors and call it quits. Dave Richards, CEO of Golf Marketing Services, explains, “We’re in the middle of a fall-out. Between 1997 and 2002, 150 new golf courses were built, but there were no new golfers. The whole country went nuts (building courses), because of the Tiger Woods excitement, and Michigan was lead the way.”

The competition between the golf courses has led to great opportunities for the golfer. With more choices and dropping rates, one would think that golf was up quite a bit from last year, but in reality the percentile is not great enough to even mention. So if dropping the prices weren’t bringing in the golfers, the responsibility lies on the shoulders of the managers and marketers to come up with creative ways to attract the new golfers. Sandy Mily, co-owner of Fox Hills in Plymouth,

had an image while golfing with her son a few years ago, “while they were building the championship course, my son and I would play a few rounds. He was upset because I, a woman, would beat him. Whenever I gave him the choice of what holes to go back and play, he would always pick the par 3’s. That’s when I knew (a par 3 course needed to be built).”

They didn’t stop there to attract kids; their clubhouse has a safari theme. Mily has seen a ton of increase with mothers and children. “Parents can’t go play hockey or football with their children, but they can all go play golf. It’s great to see families playing together,” Mily said. Fox Hills has seen an increase in numbers all around, but they can’t say for sure it’s because of the par 3 course.

New courses are nice, but events are what really bring in the people. Jim Dewling, owner of Mystic Creek in Milford, thought of that nine years ago. It’s been a tradition to have an eight week junior golf program every summer. “We do see an increase in business, we have a lot of the kids from the program tell their friends and bring in their families. It really brings a positive growth to the game,” Dewling said.

What does this all mean for the future of golf and its economy? Paul Beachnau, Executive Director of the Gaylord area Convention and Tourism Beaureu, feels optimistic, “The economy is starting to pick up, and people will be traveling more. The weather was not very good for golf in 2003, so that can only get better.”

The 35th Ryder Cup will be coming to Oakland Hills Country Club in Bloomfield September 17th-19th. This should help Michigan’s golf economy, “It’s a great opportunity to educate the press and media from all around the world about how great golf is in Michigan. Businessmen come in from around the world on a daily basis (with the automobile headquarters located in Michigan). They will be more aware of the golf and hopefully will bring their clubs with them this year,” Richards said.

Only about fifteen courses are being sold or thinking about selling, which means a great number of courses are staying open. It’s a little too early to speculate exactly what will take place this summer, but with all of the golfing events and tours taking place in Michigan, I feel a great amount of golf will take place all summer long. *MG*

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# *Alabama Bound*



Peninsula Golf Course - 4th Hole



Cotton Creek - 3rd Hole

## By Mike Shiels

**G**ULF SHORES, AL – “Alabama? You want me to go to Alabama?” I asked Michigan Golfer publisher Art McCafferty.

If he’d accused me of being a snob, he would have been spot-on correct.

I went to Alabama, and, well, shut my mouth Coach Bryant: “I came, I saw...I corrected.”

The first noticeable local landmark when making the 45-minute drive west from Pensacola Airport

*Photos courtesy of the Gulf Shores Golf Association.*

over to Gulf Shores might have cemented all of my preconceived stereotypes were it not so damned original and authentic. The Flora-Bama is a beach bar that hovers over the state line dividing Florida and Alabama along the Gulf of Mexico. Walking in the door is like walking into a Burt Reynolds movie. A crowd, including former NFL quarterback and grizzled local curiosity Kenny Stabler, sat in the smoky dimness. Some were in chairs and some on stools at the long bar, listening to the honky-tonk band and sipping or slugging Budweisers - just a he-in’ and a she-in.’ Hundreds of braziers hung from the rafters. (Yes, you read that correctly) A sign read: “Fights break out! Bras get thrown! Wild Dancing and Drinkin’!”

Make your way through this opening scene and you’ll find a veritable rabbit warren of various rooms, stages, tables, pool tables, and bars. If you make it all the way out to the back, you’ll find beach volleyball nets, metal tubs of iced suds, and a deck on the ocean. The Flora-Bama even has it’s own gift shop with souvenir thongs, tube tops, and other hillbilly delicacies. I noticed a CD by Rusty McHugh, one of the house bands recorded live at the Flora-Bama, entitled: “We All Love a Woman With a Big ol’ Ass.” A closer examination of the label showed that the first cut on the disc was: “Don’t Wait Up for the Shrimp, Mama. Daddy’s Comin’ Home with the Crabs.” The printed inlay



Kiva Dunes Golf Club - 13th Hole

card offered a description of the Flora-Bama: "Imagine 400 people squeezed into the room, 'Lolas' everywhere, 100's of wires strung all around, microphones hanging amongst the bras from the ceiling, bartenders and waitresses running, people screaming & dancing, Bushwacker machine smoking.' Turn it up loud!"

Sure, you can self-induce a hangover every night at the colorful Flora-Bama, or even piss away afternoons guzzling longnecks and shooting oysters at the beach there if you like, but don't think the Flora-Bama experience is representative of the Gulf Shores area.

The real, lasting impression I took away from the Gulf Shores, Alabama area was a pristine and pleasantly tasteful one. Imagine 32 miles of uncluttered white powder beaches, crisp and tidy new hotels,

condominiums and themed residential buildings, un-crowded roads, typically warm temperatures and the Gulf of Mexico lapping at your feet.

The area is blissfully underdeveloped. By no means is it a remote location – it just feels like one. Lots of space between buildings and fewer of them keeps the beach from becoming an impregnable strip of collected commerce such as Daytona or Myrtle Beach. There is not the prevalence of putt-putt golf-carnival rides-neon t-shirt shops-strip joints-seafood buffet-psychedelic tarot card reader-sea shell shop-ice cream store-sports bars. An episode of "Cops" will never be shot in Gulf Shores, and neither will "Girls Gone Wild." This is a family place for discriminating vacationers and snowbirds that enjoy nature and peace.

According to data compiled by the Southeast Agricultural Weather Service Center and the Dolphin Island Sea Lab, the coldest temperatures occur in the month of January, when the average still holds at 50.5 degrees. By February and March, temperatures can be in the 70's. Temps top out in July and August at an average of 82.8 degrees.

Truth be told, charter fishing and boating on the ocean or in the Intracoastal Waterway are the most prevalent and bountiful activities in Gulf Shores, and there seems to be a draw for birdwatchers too, since migratory fowl flock through. Birdie hunters, on the other hand, have almost 300 golf holes to choose from on very pleasant, green and remarkably hilly, inexpensive courses.

"Damn the Torpedoes – full



Cypress Bend - 18th Hole

speed ahead!” was first shouted here in 1864 by Admiral Farragut during the battle of Mobile Bay, and the statement is a good philosophy when choosing golf courses too – they’re all in good condition, they’re all inexpensive, and they are all very welcoming.

The Gulf Shores Golf Association, founded in 1995, packages up and promotes 10 of the area’s premier golf facilities and with 15 local accommodations – from luxury beachfront condos to on-course golf villas to affordable chain hotel rooms. Notable golf course designers Arnold Palmer, Bruce Devlin, Jerry Pate, Robert Von Hagge, and local architect Earl Stone have routed their work through and over coastline, wetlands, rolling hills, and forests.

Kiva Dunes Golf Club is billed as the area’s premier golf course and was ranked nationally by major golf magazines. Former PGA Tour player Jerry Pate designed Kiva Dunes,

which is an artful sight from the luxury condo hotel and beach homes that surround this core golf course: stark white bunkers dotting the most emerald of green grass. Though the ocean is not visible from the course, the Kiva Dunes property is directly on the Gulf of Mexico, and offers 3,000 feet of private beach to guests and residents. The links-style golf course itself is flat, but is shaped through sand dunes, lakes and natural wildlife areas.

One publication listed Kiva Dunes among the top-100 public courses in the nation.

“It’s flattering to have our golf course included on this list,” said Mark Stillings, director of golf at Kiva Dunes. “While Kiva Dunes was selected, the Gulf Shores Golf Association has nine other premier courses that also provide the best golf experiences available in the region and the nation.”

That’s anything but faint praise, and it’s genuine. While Kiva Dunes has that “big course feel,” the other offerings in Gulf Shores are cozy courses of quality.

Craft Farms Coastal Golf Resort, for instance, offers 54 holes of golf bursting with juicy Southern hospitality. Its Cotton Creek course was the very first Arnold Palmer design in the area, and the design is Palmer at his most subtle. Cotton Creek is a playable golf course and the entire facility is meticulous and homey.

Cypress Bend, the other on-site 18-hole course, is a later Palmer design, built in the sawgrass lowlands to compliment his earlier work. It is a much more watery affair, with the evil liquid coming into play on virtually every hole. Wide fairways make the course very playable, though. The Cotton Creek and Cypress Bend courses



Lost Key Golf Club - 13th Hole

at Craft Farms make for a lovely and genteel 36-hole day.

Palmer's other work in the area, Lost Key Golf Club, is much more difficult than his two courses at Craft Farms. Narrow fairways and lots of lush growth remained after construction because Lost Key is an environmentally friendly Audubon Signature course.

Strategically placed mounding will sometimes save errant shots, but it's best to come to Lost Key with a straight ball and appreciation for wildlife.

Another terrific chance to enjoy nature is Peninsula Golf Club, which is very near Kiva Dunes. Peninsula's 27 holes are built on 820 secluded acres touched on two sides by the Bon Secour Wildlife Preserve and the restful Mobile Bay.

A trip to Rock Creek Golf Club is the longest commute you'll have if you stay at the beach, but it is worth the 45-minute drive north into Baldwin County. Your first view out of the clubhouse will reveal the most dramatic elevation changes in the area. The course throws one fun hole after another at you, and it is built on the type of park like property that one would love to walk even if there were no golf course. Loaded with tall pines and hardwoods, Rock Creek was my favorite of the Gulf Shores courses.

In the same general vicinity of Rock Creek, Timbercreek Golf Club has 27 holes carved through a forest of dogwoods, magnolias and pines. Lots of elevation changes and rippled fairways made Timbercreek the trickiest of the courses I played, but I saw only nine of the holes due to darkness.



Timber Creek Golf Club- 7th Hole

Timbercreek has hosted multiple Alabama Open Championships.

One trip to Gulf Shores made me ravenous for another – such was the hospitality and quality of golf. Rates vary depending on the type of lodging you prefer, but it's safe to say that a night's lodging and 27 to 36 holes can be had each day for under \$100.

Other courses under the Gulf Shores umbrella are Soldier's Creek, Woodlands, and Glenlakes – each blissfully quiet and ornate in natural surrounds.

Gulf Shores is 19.5-hour drive from Grand Rapids – 1,013 miles, and plenty of Michigan snowbirds. Casual attire is welcomed in all of the restaurants and public areas. Naturally, the freshest Gulf seafood is the way to go, but treat yourself to a diversion and spend an evening at Nolan's, a comfortable, modest restaurant founded by a charming couple with Detroit roots. The Lebanese Salad is a longtime house specialty, but even more famous is a man-sized entrée called "Steer Butt." I found this

name entirely unappetizing until the delicious filet arrived at my table. After dinner, slip back into Nolan's showroom bar for some knee-slapping live music. Live Bait, another nose-wrinkling name for a restaurant, is also another local favorite, and lots of fun. You can eat seafood dishes outside along the marina, and every half-an-hour the house puts on a crab race and gives out dessert prizes. There's also a cute "ring on a string" game to keep kids busy and give adults something to wager on and brag about. Oh, and despite my earlier comment about being the anti-Myrtle Beach, there are plenty of off-course options for children, including miniature golf, go-carts, water slides, amusement rides, and movie theatres, but they're tasteful, spread out, and not "in your face."

There is simple, fresh fun of all kinds for everyone in Gulf Shores.

For more information, log on to [www.GolfGulfShores.com](http://www.GolfGulfShores.com).

*Golf writer Michael Patrick Shiels may be contacted at [Mshiels@aol.com](mailto:Mshiels@aol.com) MG*

# Top Ten Michigan Golf Stories for 2003 (Random order)



Jack Saylor

## Passing of Jack Saylor

Jack Saylor of loud pants, Rube Goldberg swing and deft hands at a piano keyboard, left us after a year of poor health. He was one of the top golf quills in Michigan and left a legacy of intelligent writing behind him.

## Michelle Wie Plays in Bay Mills Open Canadian Tour

The media tent at Bay Mills Open Canadian Tour was crowded and abuzz about the tournament appearance of Michelle Wie, the 13-year-old Hawaiian phenomenon. While she did not make the cut, she made enough of an impression to give her many fans a glimpse of what should be a bright professional future.



Michelle Wie

## Captains Courageous at Oakland Hills

Captains Langer and Sutton visited the revered Oakland Hills CC to promote the upcoming Ryder Cup. The eyes of the world will once more be focused on the Oakland Hills North and South courses that have been worked on by the likes of architects Donald Ross, Robert Trent Jones and Arthur Hills.

## Michigan Architect Tom Doak on the Path to World Renown

Tom Doak, one of a number of superb Michigan based golf architects, has begun his foray into a body of work that will propel him into the stature of an internationally renowned golf architect. Fresh off his award winning work



Bernard Langer & Hal Sutton © Camer Sherline / Frog Prince Studios



Tom Doak's Highpoint, Hole No. 18

at Pacific Dunes, Tom now finds himself designing courses in New Zealand, Australia and Tasmania.

### **Tiger Defends at the Buick Open**

Happiness was having Tiger as defending champion of your tournament. His appearance this year brought out the sponsors, the galleries and the media. While Tiger did not win here this year, he still won enough tournaments to become PGA Player of the Year. The Buick sponsorship has produced a feeling that Tiger has a little Michigan in him.



Tiger Woods

### **Michigan Amateur Returns to Belvedere GC**

The Michigan Amateur returned to its roots this year. The Belvedere GC in Charlevoix, which had hosted the tournament on many occasions in the past, had a substantial make-over in the past few years. This, among other reasons, brought Michigan's most famous amateur event back to its storied roots.

### **The Big Break Debuts at Treetops Resort**

The Golf Channel's first reality show had a decidedly Michigan bent to it as Rick Smith and Treetops Resort provided the hosting and location of the program. Also, Anthony Sorentino, the unabashed golfer from Rochester Hills, finished second in the tournament but first in attitude.

### **Stacy Snider Wins the Tournament of Champions at Boyne**

In the Year of the Woman Golfer, Stacy Snider put the Michigan exclamation point on it by becoming the first female to win the 54-hole, \$100,000 Michigan PGA of Champions. Her payoff was a check for \$17,250 and a legion of new admirers.



Stacy Snider

### **Fox Hills Rakes in the Accolades**

The year started out with the Fox Hills folks being awarded the national course of the year by the NGCOA (National Golf Course Owners Association). It concluded with Kathy Dul Aznavorian, Sandy Dul Miley and their mother, Estelle Dul, grabbing a host of awards from the MGCOA.

Architects Ray Hearn and Paul Albanese, also took their share of bows for the design of the award winning Strategic Fox.



Beveldere GC

**Lights, Camera, Action-Michigan Golf on Television**

Television cameras were all over Michigan this year. Network television carried The Buick Open, Farmers Charity Classic and the Ford Senior Players Championship.

The Golf Channel stepped up to the tee, by telecasting The Bay Mills Open Canadian Tour and "The Big Break". ESPN was on hand to capture the action at the Tylenol Par Three Shootout.. Finally, The Michigan Golfer televised, the 101st Western Amateur, The Bank of Ann Arbor Futures Classic, The Fifth Third Bank Michigan Women's Open. The Haig Tournament, Jeff Daniels Comedy Golf Jam, and the Bay Mills Open Canadian Tour to a worldwide audience on the Internet. *MG*

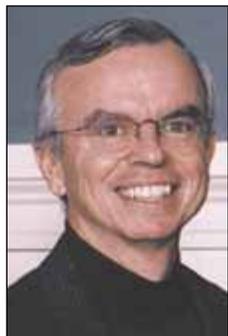


The Stragetic Fox Opens at Fox Hills



Michigan Golfer TV Reporter Vanessa Bell

# Slice of Life



**By Terry Moore**  
*Editor Emeritus*

I'm continually amazed when traveling out of the state to stumble upon the "Michigan connection." Of

course, you have to be inquisitive by nature to learn the links back to our state. If you don't ask any questions of the people you meet, seldom will you discover any local ties. This was brought to mind when I visited Naples, Florida last month for a much needed prescription of golf and warm weather.

I played Tiburon Golf Club designed by Greg Norman and located within the elegant confines of The Ritz-Carlton Resort. (Incidentally, Tiburon is also home to the Rick Smith Golf Academy.) Tiburon offers two excellent 18-holes courses (The Gold and The Black)—one that is open to resort guests and outside play while the other is reserved for the private members of Tiburon. (The courses are flip-flopped each day between private and resort play.) The Gold course is also the venue of the annual Franklin Templeton Shootout hosted by Greg Norman. But more on the course later.

Tiburon is the handsome by-product of the affiliation between The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company and WCI Communities, Inc. Since the '70s, WCI has become one of the leaders in golf course community development, now operating more than eleven different communities across Florida with more on the way. (For more details, visit [www.wcicomunities.com](http://www.wcicomunities.com)) The Ritz-Carlton Hotel is one of the pre-

mier names in the hospitality business and in Naples has two properties: one is located on the beach overlooking the Gulf of Mexico and boasts a 51,000 square foot Spa; the other is the Golf Resort that is home to the Tiburon and is a 10 minute drive from the beach.

The General Manager of the Resort is Bradley Cance, a young, energetic executive who graduated from Michigan State University in 1989. And let it be said that you can take the man out of East Lansing but you can't take East Lansing out of the man. Cance is a true Spartan, ever watchful of the fortunes of his basketball and football teams. With a BA degree from M.S.U.'s School of Communications, Cance's first job was with the Four Seasons Hotel Company. There he was introduced to its vaunted "Whatever it takes" company credo. "Four Seasons engrained in me that excellent customer service is paramount to success," said Cance. Later when he arrived at Ritz-Carlton he found a company dedicated to similar principles.

"Ritz-Carlton is where I learned the power of empowerment," said Cance. "Each Ritz-Carlton employee has up to \$2000 to spend to fix a guest opportunity." Cance went on to explain the "Gold Standards" of Ritz-Carlton when it comes to customer satisfaction and employee motivation. Simply put, any employee can promptly rectify a guest concern or problem without having to seek approval from a manager or higher up. "This empowerment feature is simply invaluable."

It would be hard to find a more alert and conscientious staff than at The Ritz-Carlton. With a Spartan at the helm, they are committed to customer service and

making sure it's not just a slogan.

Oh yes, and the golf course is quite inviting and accommodating as well. Tiburon's conditioning is impeccable and it mirrors Augusta National in that it has virtually no rough per se. Instead, you have wall-to-wall lush fairways mowed to a firm and ever-fast half-inch height. In some ways, this can make it somewhat challenging for wayward drivers because there's no rough to slow up a fast-slicing or hard-hooking shot heading recklessly toward the native areas or lagoons. But if you keep the ball in play it can be quite the comfortable test. Other nice features of Tiburon are the stacked sod wall bunkers and the sparkling coquina shell waste bunkers. There are five sets of tees on both the Gold and the Black layouts so there's no excuse for finding the proper tees for one's game.

On this same getaway trip, I discovered another Michigan connection over at Raptor Bay GC in nearby Bonita Springs. Raptor Bay is located next to Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa and is the result of a partnership with WCI Communities and Hyatt Hotels & Resorts. Designed by Ray Floyd, Raptor Bay was the first resort course in the nation to receive Audubon International's Gold Certification for environmental stewardship and sustainable practices. In fact, I played it in its opening season a few years back so it was refreshing to see how it has improved. Back then, I was somewhat critical of how difficult it was to hold shots to the many perched and firm greens. But I'm happy to report that the greens have softened and are now nicely accepting and holding shots. And as before, it's in exemplary condition with some of the fastest

greens you'll find for a resort course.

One of the golf pros at Raptor Bay—Bryan Smiggen—is a native of Owosso, Michigan. Bryan played college golf at Saginaw Valley State University in 1994-98 for Coach Joe Vogl. Shortly thereafter he became the Interim Head Professional at Owosso Country Club. He arrived at Raptor Bay in August 2001 just prior to its September Grand Opening. Smiggen's favorite hole is the first one on the Osprey nine—or the tenth hole if starting on the Hawk side—the 525-yard par five. "Depending on the tee, this really is a reachable par five but you have a risk/reward in doing so," said Smiggen. "A potential three can also become an eight very quickly." Smiggen is also proud of how Raptor Bay complements and protects the diverse wildlife habitats. "During your round, you can see eagles, ospreys, hawks, turtles, alligators, deer, rabbits, raccoons, and herons to mention only a few," said Smiggen. "It's quite a beautiful golf course."

And if the course happens to be unkind to you, you can recover in comfort at the Hyatt Regency. This is a major resort with all the amenities and niceties of a four-star destination. There is a fabulous pool area that will delight and distract children for hours let alone adults. There's private beach area out on the Gulf for Hyatt's guests available by water taxi. And to top it off, there's a spacious, state-of-the-art fitness center and Spa.

Okay, if any of this information sounds inviting to you, then you're in luck. Because WCI Golf is offering a new "Southwest Florida Golf Getaway," a package that features play at Tiburon, Raptor Bay and Solana GC (in Fort Myers) for \$362 from January to April 15. Call 1-877-WCI-PLAY. *MG*

# Winter Golf in Michigan

By Jerry Bahr and Peter Allen

**W**e know, the first thing you're thinking is that these words do not go together – Winter Golf and Michigan. A contradiction in terms. As I sit down to write about this topic it's snowing outside and the wind chill is in single digits. We won't be hitting the links today but our clubs are shined up and ready to go.

Most golfers in Michigan are thrilled to get some late autumn golfing in October. You clean up your clubs, or not, put them in the basement and reacquaint yourself with the remote control for your television. With a bit of patience and moxie this doesn't have to be the case.

What you may ask, are the essentials of winter golf? First and foremost, you'll need a friend as crazy as you are. You'll need several layers of shirts, a turtleneck and windbreaker or two to keep your upper torso warm. It always amazes us how you can have all of these layers on and still maintain some semblance of your normal golf swing. A pair of winter gloves, or just a golf glove for your off hand, is an absolute must. You'll understand why this is essential right around the fifth hole when you can no longer grip the club. Wear anything you have got to keep your head warm, preferably a knit or polar fleece hat. Remember, this is not a beauty contest. Water-resistant shoes are a must. When your feet get wet and cold it's time to call it a day.

Finally, and most important, a golf course that is open and provides full cart covers.



Peter Allen

Now you're warm and ready to golf. As you get ready to tee off on the first hole you hit your first snag. The ground is frozen and you can't get your tee in the turf. Typically, after breaking a few tees and asking yourself what in the world are you doing out on a golf course, you'll find a soft spot or some other diehard's tee hole and you'll figure it out. You tee off and push your shot to the right because there is absolutely no way you're going to get around on the ball off the first tee while still getting used to the fact that it's cold and you've got six extra pounds of clothing on. You take out another ball, while announcing to the rest of your group that you are evoking the "two off the first tee" rule with no penalty. Now you realize that you will have to shorten your swing and concentrate a bit more on getting the club head through the ball. Voila! Your second shot goes reasonably straight and you're in the fairway. One of the bright spots of playing winter golf is, if you hit the fairway, you will experience record-breaking drives. Keep in mind that it's a good rule to leave your 100 compression balls in the bag and use 80 or 90

compression ball as your club head speed will be slower than normal resulting in the ball not being compressed as it typically would.

Ok, perhaps you're hitting your third shot into the green on this 420 yard par 4 hole from 100 yards out, and you take out your pitching wedge. Taking your time to think about what you're doing, you address the ball, take a nice, smooth, swing, and hit your first good iron shot of the day. This wedge shot arcs beautifully towards the green, it's the right

course is yours, nobody in front or behind you.

The number of courses in Southeastern Michigan staying open year round is on the rise. These are open when conditions permit (no snow on the greens). Each course has its own cart heater policy. Below is listed courses that cater to year round golf. This is probably not an exclusive list but what we came up with through our research. A 9:00 A.M. phone call to the course of your choice is always a good idea before heading out.

Bedford Hills allows carts out even with some snow on the ground. Whiteford Valley does not provide covers, however, they allow play and carts even with a couple inches of snow on the ground.

### **Oakland County**

Oakland County Parks and Recreation is now providing covers at Red Oaks (reopening in the spring of '04), Glen Oaks, Springfield Oaks, and White Lake Oaks. Indian

**“One of the bright spots of playing winter golf is, if you hit the fairway, you will experience record-breaking drives.”**

distance so you're already thinking bogey. The ball hits the green and trampolines approximately 25 feet in the air, picks up speed, bounces again and lands out of bounds. Now mind you, the out of bounds is about 20 yards behind the green. NOTE TO YOURSELF: next year take a lesson on the benefits of the pitch and run shot. A possible bogey turns into an eight.

With a little patience and a lot of laughs your game begins to come around after two or three holes. One of the great benefits to playing winter golf is that hitting your ball on an ice-covered pond is not always a lost cause. Wait to see if the wind is kind and blows your ball to the shoreline. Walking out to retrieve your ball is not recommend for obvious reasons.

You have finished your round and head to the clubhouse for some warm coffee. You realize that the round of golf took only three hours. Probably the greatest perk about winter golf is that the

### **Livingston County**

Huron-Clinton Metro Authority has two courses in this county, Kensington and Huron Meadows. The cart covers rent for \$2 per cart and personal heaters are allowed. Kensington had over 200 rounds by December 13th .

### **Macomb County**

Cracklewood seems to be the leading place to play in this county. They rent covers and have carts with special cup holders for your heater. The clubhouse is always open, for cards and conversation. Wolcott Mill is another Huron-Clinton course that is open year round.

### **Monroe County**

Both Green Meadows and Bedford Hills have cart cover and allow customers to use their own heaters.

Springs is the one Huron-Clinton course that remains open.

### **Washtenaw County**

Brae Burn has long been a major player catering to winter golfers. They have thirty cart covers and have run out on several occasions this winter. Covers are part of the cart fees and heaters are available for rent. Hudson Mills is the only Huron-Clinton course in this county.

### **Wayne County**

Lake Erie and Willow are the last of the seven Huron-Clinton courses. In addition, Riverview Highlands has 30 covered carts.

We hope this article will encourage you and a friend to take on a new adventure during the long winter months in Michigan. As long as you're prepared you'll have a great time. *MG*

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## The Michigan Golfer Television Show

Channel: <http://michigangolfer.tv>

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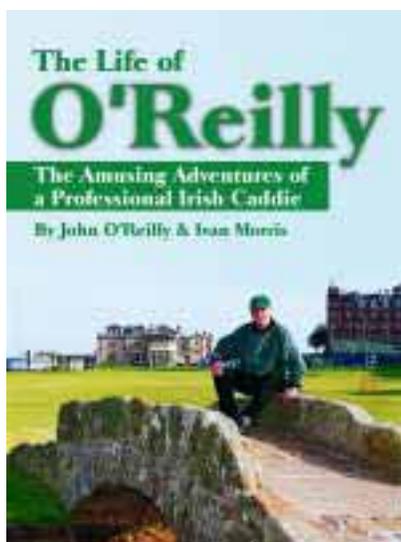
### Upcoming Shows

- **Walter Hagen and the Ryder Cup—  
A Series with host Bill Shelton**
- **Walter Hagen: The Detroit Years**
- **2004 Bank of Ann Arbor Futures  
Classic**
- **Golfing Michigan's Upper  
Peninsula**
- **Izzy Mariucci Golf Classic**
- **Dick Weber Memorial**
- **2004 Bay Mills Open Players  
Championship**
- **Rick Smith and The Big Break**
- **Golf Fashion Items at the PGA  
Merchandise Show**
- **Ireland: Host of the Next Ryder  
Cup**
- **"The Concession" with Tony  
Jacklin**
- **Gene Sarazen and Shell's  
Wonderful World of Golf**
- **Jeff Daniel's Comedy Golf Jam**



**"The Haig"**

# Book Reviews



*The Life of O'Reilly : The Amusing Adventures of a Professional Irish Caddie*  
by John O'Reilly and Ivan Morris

Like many of you, I have been intrigued by the subject of caddies over the years. The intrigue became more heightened by the great Caddyshack movie with Rodney Dangerfield. Chevy Chase and Bill Murray. Of late, we have been treated to the special relationship between Tom Watson and his caddy Bruce Edwards.

Last year, the Michigan Golfer, visited French Lick Resort and Spa and had the opportunity to do a series of caddie related shows with head professional, Dave Harner. The Caddie of French Lick series told the stories of caddies that had served the resort in the 40's, 50's and 60's. It was terrific learning

about the times they had and the likes of celebrity golfers like, Joe Louis, Bing Crosby, Arthur Fiedler, Howard Hughes and Lana Turner. We invite you to view the Caddies of French Lick series at <http://michigangolfer.tv/2003shows/frenchlick/index.html>

Clock Tower Press's new book, *The Life of O'Reilly* contributes another view of a caddie's life. John O'Reilly was royalty around the European Tour. To Seve Ballesteros, he is "The Legend. He carried a bag for many of Europe's great players and had the opportunity to caddy in the states.

The book captures the magic of what it is like to be in the inner circle of golfers and caddies that compete on the highest level. We find just how tough it is to make a living on the tour and the importance that a caddie can bring to the success of the

professional golfer. In addition, we get the opportunity to visit within the European tour and find out how things might differ between their tour and our own.

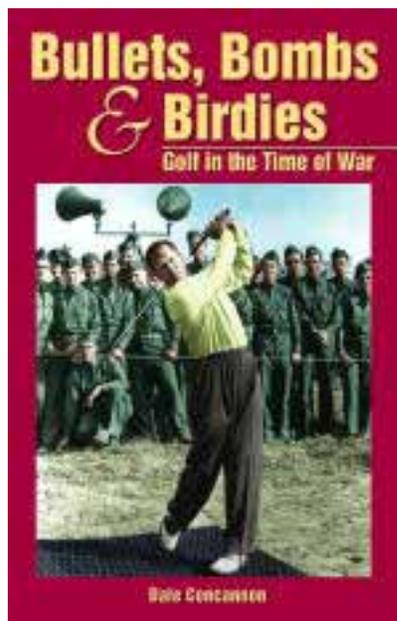
It is a delightful read that goes faster than a downhill putt on an Oakland Hills green.

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*Bullets, Bombs & Birdies :  
Golf in the Time of War*  
By Dale Concannon

**B**ullets, Bombs & Birdies, another new book from Clock Tower Press, takes a look at the connections of golf and battlefields. The book brings to mind our own, Wawashkamo Golf Club located on British Landing Road at Mackinac Island. As you may recall, the course features a real life bunker that was dug by early island defenders.

In *Bullets, Bombs & Birdies*, the writers take you as far back as 1457, "with national defense hinging upon widespread mastery of the bow and arrow, the King of Scotland banned "gowlf" because his subjects were spending more time on the local links than they were at archery practice." From that time period, we continue on until we stop at the Vietnam War where Arnold Palmer told Richard Nixon, that whatever you do, "go for the green".



The story mostly focuses on the challenges that the war brought to the British Isles as golf courses were turned into landing fields, and bunkers into troop training areas. The book contains golf course photos that you will not have seen before. Again, it is an interesting book that helps to fill the gap of golf course history during times of war.

<http://www.clocktowerpress.com/display-book/000108/NON-FICTION>

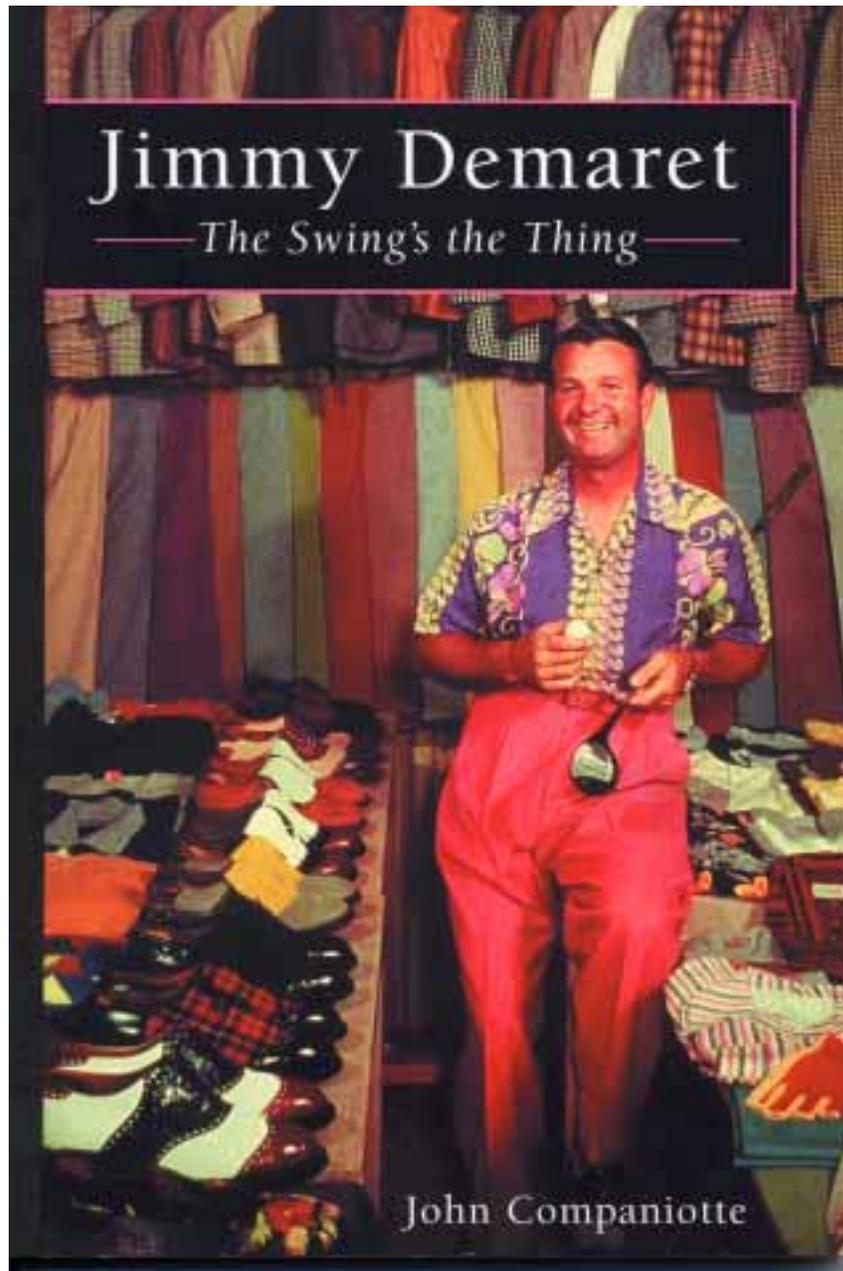
*Jimmy Demaret:  
The Swings the Thing  
Clock Tower Press*

**J**immy Demaret: *The Swings the Thing*, has few demerits as a golf book. It is another fast and entertaining read from the folks at Clock Tower Press. Scheduled for release this year, the book highlights the plethora of highlights in one of golf's flashier players. Demaret was a bit like Hagen, but only in Technicolor. He of bright pants and deft chips shots brought the golf world a little something different. Can you say pastel?

A bonus for Michigan readers is Demaret's ties to the state. He

was a former pro at Plum Hollow and he brought both Bob Hope and Bing Crosby to town for matches. In May, 1942 Bob Hope and Walter Hagen took on Demaret and Mayor Ed Jeffries and beat them 2 up. In September,

Championship to Plum Hollow. Demaret participated in some charity Ryder Cup events at Oakland Hills and Detroit Golf Club that involved his mentor Walter Hagen.



he paired up with Bing Crosby and lost to Chick Harbert and Bryon Nelson. He also helped to bring the 1947 PGA

*PGA Championship: The Season's Final Major*, for Clock Tower Press. This book will also be out later this year. *MG*

In reminiscing about his early days on tour, Demaret recalled the influence that Walter Hagen had on him. "I'll admit I tried to be like him, said Demaret. "He was a very natty dresser, although they didn't have colors then. I remember seeing him drive up in a limousine, get out and go to the tee. We had some time together right at the end of his career. Walter and I did a little partying together."

Author John Companiotte also collaborated with Dr. Catherine Lewis to write the

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