

MICHIGAN MAN NEWSLETTER

September 8, 2004

Hello again!! I hope everybody had a great summer. Here in northern Michigan it arrived about a week ago and left Monday evening. Out of the approximately 90 days of summer, 59 were below the average temperature. We had more days in the sixties than we did in the eighties. But!!! It was a great summer, none the less.

I went back to my calendar from Memorial Day through Labor Day weekend and I must confess it brought back warmer feelings than the weather ever did. I was back at Hoppies (they changed hands again) and it was a blast. Guiseppe was with me tearing up the place with his burlesque act and sing-alongs.

We took our first family vacation to the Wisconsin Dells. Other than a little car trouble it was great. I had a wonderful time playing a private party in Farmington Hills as well as Houghton Lake for some Alma College graduates who used to come see me in Mt. Pleasant.

I started my golf season off in ignominious fashion losing in the match play tournament at Mulligan Hills in the first round. Well, I didn't shank any. My son Quinn and I took a road trip together and played some basketball with the geezers down state. He got a kick out of that. He also did a wedding with me in Gaylord. He brought along his i-Pod and hooked it into my sound system and eventually took over the show, casually clicking on songs that the younger crowd would request. He's turning into a young man before my eyes. He got his license this summer. Oh joy! Sort of. During his road test I was relegated to the back jump seat in my S-10 while he and the instructor took the front. I am a bit claustrophobic as it is but being cramped into the back seat like two pounds of sausage in a quarter pound casing I quickly began to regret my late night fast food and road donuts as I wriggled around trying to get comfortable. As soon as we were underway panic set in and I was bordering on a severe anxiety attack as my son took his FORTY-FIVE MINUTE road test. I struggle for breath as Quinn followed the instructions given him and simultaneously I could see every worst case scenario I ever dreaded coming true. At every turn I awaited a T-Bone to my side of the truck. I could see my funeral where they would bury me in a small mailbox as my sons and widow would weep, solemnly closing the small door and putting the flag up. After a few minutes the driving test instructor turned and said calmly, "I guess I should have brought some duct tape for daddy." I don't know if she meant to strap me down or to quiet my screams and gasps. Either way I was as forced into some sort of more relaxed state.

For a man with closely clipped nails I managed to produce stigmata on my palms during one of several desperate and prayerful moments. We finally came to halt back in the church parking lot where we started. My son had passed his test. I pondered whether I should go over to the church and say a prayer of thanks but like a soldier being born again in the foxhole, I broke my deal with God and just moved on.

Sometimes I seem to have a strange karma. I have those Forrest Gump moments when the ludicrous nature of life falls like a burial shroud around and over me and while most people can see it, I can only stare in amazement and wonder how I made it this far on the chronological scale.

My son asked when I was getting a new truck so he could have the old one (my beloved S-10 with 222,000 miles). "Not for a while," I replied.

That week my truck broke down in Houghton Lake and as they towed my clunker into the dealership for repairs we parked right next to a used S-10. Right price, acceptable mileage, same color. My cap even fit on the back. After an \$800 repair on the fuel pump, my son had his truck and I ... I am on my fourth S-10, having put well over a half million miles on the previous three.

But, all in all, it was a great summer. But I hear winter will be tough and long this year. The caterpillars are wearing their fuzzies, chipmunks and squirrels are extremely active. and my S-10? It's a four wheel drive. Never had one of those before. Strange karma, indeed.

* * * * One quick golf joke.

Man walks into a pro shop at eh golf course asks the old guy behind the counter, "Do you sell ball markers?"

"Why, of course," he replies.

"How much?" the golfer asks.

"One dollar." answers the geezer.

"Good price," says the golfer and hands the man a buck.

The old guy puts the dollar in his cash register and hands the man a dime change.

"What's this? asks the golfer.

The old guy smiles and says, "Your ball marker."

My schedule.

It's great to be back at Hoppies on Burt Lake. (I get to go home at night for a change) and I am excited about going back to Four Green Fields. I took a year off and I'm sure it helped both of us. My good friend Tommy Foster took Fridays there last year and he will still be there on Thursdays. Stop in and see him. Cliff Erickson is there still there on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

I don't recall ever having my schedule this filled up this early. With the exception of some December Saturdays I am pretty well set through the end of the year but I will only list two months at a time. If you need to know where I am in advance please don't hesitate to e-mail me or call my cell at **231.420.3360**.

SEPTEMBER

Wednesday

9/8 & 22, The Noggin Room in the Perry Hotel, Petoskey 7-11

9/29 O'Toole's in Novi 9-1

Thursdays

9/16 The Noggin Room

9/9 & 9/23 Dick O'Dow's in Birmingham 9-1

9/30 Horn's on Mackinac Island 9-1

Fridays

9/10, 17, 24 Four Green Fields in Royal Oak. 9-1

Saturdays

9/11 Hoops in Auburn Hills 9-1

9/18 Doherty Hotel in Clare 9-1

OCTOBER

Wednesdays

10/6 Daily Limit in Grand Lake 9-12

10/13 & 27 O'Toole's in Novi 9-1

Thursdays

10/7 & 21 The Noggin Room in the Perry Hotel in Petoskey

10/14 & 28 Dick O'Dow's in Birmingham

Fridays

10/1 & 8 The Noggin Room in The Perry Hotel in Petoskey

10/15, 22, 28 at Four Green Fields in Royal Oak

Saturdays

10/2 Hoppies on Burt Lake 9-1

10/23 Hoops in Auburn Hills 9-1

10/30 Thunder Bay Resort in Hillman

One more...

Some of you know I go to church. Most people don't believe it, but it's true and one of the best jokes I've heard in a while came from the pulpit. As one of our senior parishioners was preparing to read the scripture he stepped the pulpit and said, "Before we do the responsive reading I'd like to tell a quick joke."

Folks, we have an outstanding preacher, one who never fails to captivate the rapt attention of everyone present. He is funny, well-spoken, truthful, precise and to the point with his homilies but he has yet to reel everyone in like old Bob did as the entire congregation leaned to the front of their pew seats, with eyes like saucers, breath held in anticipation of the that innuendo or faux pas that might not exactly be the right place or time.

"Well," he began ...

These two ladies had died and met at the Pearly Gates waiting to enter the Kingdom. One said to the other, 'How'd you die?'

The other replies, "I froze to death."

"That must've been horrible," the other exclaimed.

'Naw. Once I got over the shakes I just kinda fell a sleep and that was that.'" She paused. "How about you? How'd you die?"

"Oh," said the other. "Massive coronary."

"Now that must've been terrible replied the first. 'How did it happen?"

"Well I was at work and I knew my husband was having a affair so I ran home thinking I would catch him. There he was sitting in his chair reading the paper like nothing was going on. I ran up the stairs and looked in the the attic. I ran down the stairs and searched the basement. Nothing. I rifled through every closet. Nothing. I knelt down to look under the bed. Nothing. Just then Pow. My heart gave way."

The other paused for a moment and said, "You fool! If you'd a looked in the freezer we'd both alive right now."

Imagine the congregation's relief.

This issue brought to you by the 'weathermen" who don't the difference between a high pressure system and a cold front. Bah!!!

For more Mike Ridley check out **www.MikeRidley.Com**