

THE MICHIGAN MAN NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 26, 2003

Hello...

This the inaugural issue of the Michigan Man Newsletter. You have received it because you either have e-mailed me and you are on my data base or you have given me your business card or e-mail address. If this is an inappropriate address (like work) or it is something you do not wish to receive just bounce it back to me and I'll delete your address. I will try to put it out at the end of each month.

I suppose one of my main intentions is to stay in touch with you and being so lax in my schedule update I would hope this serves as a more prudent way of letting you know how to find me.

One way or the other we have come in contact with each other and I want to keep you updated on my schedule as well as write a short travelogue concerning my jaunts around the state. I have been a free lance writer for the Straitsland Resorter for the past six years and will include both new and back issue articles. I hope to include jokes (none too bawdy) and pictures of the places I've entertained. I will also provide links to different sites that might be of interest.

That being said, let us kick off the show.

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Joke du Jour

The Cannibals

Several cannibals were recently hired by a big corporation. "You are all part of our team now," said the HR rep during the welcoming briefing.

You get all the usual benefits and you can go to the cafeteria for something to eat, but please don't eat any of the other employees."

The cannibals promised.

Four weeks later their boss remarked, "You're all working very hard and I'm satisfied with you.

However, one of our secretaries has disappeared. Do any of you know what happened to her?"

The cannibals all shook their heads no.

After the boss had left, the leader of the cannibals said to the others,
"Which one of you idiots ate the secretary?"

A hand raised hesitantly, to which the leader of the cannibals
continued,

"You fool! For four weeks we've been eating Managers and no one noticed
anything, then you had to go and eat the secretary!"

* * * *

A few years ago I received a nice letter from the, then Governor, John Engler thanking
me for performing "Michigan Man" at the Michigan Week Kickoff ceremonies in the
Capitol. Soon after, Mitch Albom of the Detroit Free Press and Jeff Karoub of the Flint
Journal wrote columns suggesting that "Michigan Man" be the official state song of
Michigan. The Secretary of State's office was deluged with e-mails, faxes and phone
calls in support of this proposal.

The notion of an official state song (wrong: "Michigan, My Michigan" is not the
"official" song) has been around for years, if not decades. Every State Rep. wants the
songwriter from his district to be the one that writes the state song. At last count there
were about two hundred and fifty entrants. Believe it or not, it is a hot political topic. If
it does reach the congressional floor again, it will probably be attached to some pork
belly legislation. Honestly, I don't think we will see a state song in our life times. Plus, it
is not something I spend too much time dwelling upon. So much for my political
ambitions.

But I do receive a lot of requests for the lyrics and have tried my best to
accommodate them so I thought I would publish the lyrics here. I believe you will find
the song on my web site at mikeridley.com. It is in the key of G for you ear trained
musicians. E-mail me if you have any questions regarding the rest of the music.

MICHIGAN MAN

When I wander far a way, a dream stays with me night and day.

It's the road that leads to my home state,

I am a Michigan Man.

Changing seasons paint the scene

like rainbow trout in a hidden stream

the white tail deer and the tall pine trees

I am a Michigan Man.

(chorus)

I am I am a Michigan Man

ask where I'm from and I'll show you my hands

Lord above I love this land

I am a Michigan Man

From the Keewenaw down to St. Joe

Kalamazoo east to Monroe
Sault Ste. Marie and back again
I am a Michigan Man

(cho)
(bridge)
Mitch-i-ga-mee
Win a-wen nsustung
wah-sey-wah mib-zey-wen
geen-wah gaa-muk,
wen-maa-naa-nuk
Ab-nab-ma-ing
Anishnabe Anishnabe

(Looking back,
he who understands
the passing light
will always remember
the first people of
Michigan)

If I should die across the sea
on a peninsula you can bury me
and on my headstone it should read
here lies a Michigan Man

(chorus)

(repeat chorus)
I am, I am a Michigan Man
where sleeping bears lie on the sand
where Manitou has placed his hands
I am a Michigan Man

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Keweneh Music

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LET'S ALL TALK, TALK ABOUT ME

I'm not a real big fan of beating my own drum (my wife would argue differently) but I suppose it is something I should do once in a while just for the sake of maintaining my entertainer's ego. Pardon me if I sound self-

indulgent. If it gets to be too much, let me know. How's that for preemptive humility?

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My schedule for the month of November is as follows:

Hey!!!! All you Michigan and Michigan State fans!!! I'll be at the Brown Trout In Indian River on Saturday, November 1. We will be tailgating on the patio at the Trout from 11:00 a.m. until I am either pummeled into submission by the downtrodden and depressed Wolverine fans or carried away on the shoulders of my victorious Spartan comrades. You probably know where my loyalty lies but did you know that Lloyd Carr is a graduate of Northern Michigan University so the Wolverines do have at least one redeeming quality. I'll be at the Brown Trout again the night before Opening Day of firearm deer season. This is one of the high holy days in northern Michigan and if you've never seen a sea of blaze orange fueled by testosterone and deep seated need to shoot something, well, take my word for it, Indian River is the center of activity come Opening Day.

Every Thursday (with the exception of Thanksgiving) I will be at Dick O'Dow's in Birmingham. The staff and management are about as nice a group of people I have ever worked with. They have great food at reasonable prices and entertainment Thursday through Saturday with Irish entertainment on the weekends. It is also a great people watching place and there's always an outside chance you'll spot one of the Detroit Red Wings after a game. Their phone is 248.642.1135 or you can find them on the world wide web at www.dickspub.com.

One of the most conducive venues for live entertainment is at the Noggin Room which is downstairs at the Perry Hotel in Petoskey. You can call them at 231.347.4000 or visit www.staffords.com. I am there November 19 and 28. They have a friendly and efficient staff, great food and a comfortable pub atmosphere. They feature live entertainment Wednesday through Thursday and if you've ever spent a weekend in the Petoskey area you're familiar with Sean Ryan, one of the great solo acts in the state of Michigan. Stop by the Perry Hotel when you're in northern Michigan.

If you are in northern Oakland County, and even if you are not, come by Hoops where Opdyke, Lapeer and Perry roads meet just south of the Palace at Auburn Hills. I'll be there November 7, 14 & 22. I've been working with Mike and Jimmy Allen since 1989. They run one of the greatest

sport's bars in Michigan. Great pub grub and a great staff. Call 231.373.4744.

I know a lot of you know me from Four Green Fields in Royal Oak. I am on a weaning hiatus. I have been there more than fifteen years and the break will probably do both of us good. Cliff Erickson and Tommy Foster are there on a regular basis and they are both great. Stop by and enjoy their shows.

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BACKROADS

I tend to spend a lot of solitary hours driving to and from my gigs. From within that rolling capsule of a truck I have seen coyote dashing across roads under moonlit nights and in the wee hours of the morning watched a fox trotting in the median with a small rabbit in it's jaws. I have seen osprey swooping away from ponds with a fish dinner for the nest. In the late spring when the ground is somewhere between a way-off white and kinda brown I have watched eagles desperately scraping up roadkill. Yes, they do go in for carrion when other hors d'hourves are still laying low from a long and cold winter. I've seen red tail hawks and owls sitting in a stone silent and motionless vigil waiting for a fieldmouse to poke his head out of the brush, More than once I have spotted a sow bear and her cubs loping across the road ahead of me and have dodged enough deer to qualify as a life member of P.E.T.A. I suppose, in all my travels I have nailed...nothing. Knock on wood.

But I spend a lot of time traveling in the northeast part of the state and if you know your Michigan facts you realize that the danger in colliding with the wildlife there might put you on the short end of the deal if the wildlife happens to be an elk.

Last week, shortly after I left the Thunder Bay Resort in Hillman, about five miles into my trip across County Road 624 I saw movement up ahead. Slowing down, expecting a deer to tip toe across the road I screeched to a stop. What a surprise. The biggest bull elk I had ever seen stepped out onto the road and turned, squarely facing me as if daring me to move another foot. I, in my diminutive Chevy S-10, was actually looking up at his head, no more than ten feet away. Behind him the cows and calves of his herd quick stepped across the asphalt, secure in their knowledge that the

Big Wapiti was holding the mechanized monster at bay with his huge six by six spread. The bull whoofed through his nostrils inviting a challenge. I was tempted to honk my horn but this guy seemed a little too mature to put up with my kind of nonsense. Plus the prospect of a punctured radiator in the middle of East Jesus Nowhere was not the most appealing scenario at two in the morning. He was the herd's safety patrol boy. The biggest crossing guard in all of Michigan. The herd cleared the road and he stood looking over as the last one stepped into the brush. He slowly looked back at me and snorted again, stood to his full height and leisurely walked to join his progeny and harem alike.

I watched in wonder as he stepped over the ditch and looked back at me one last time. Magnificent and majestic. I would be the sore and sorry loser if we ever collided. I'm only guessing, he may have tipped the scales at maybe eight hundred pounds.

It is a sad commentary that we see the wild either in a zoo, on the Discovery Channel, Michigan Out-of-doors or even from behind automotive glass. Maybe there is a good reason to keep us separated but the notion of man in harmony with nature is becoming a more elusive if not synthetic reality. We depend on them more for our viewing enjoyment than as our cohabitants in the natural world.

Getting outside in the autumn is about as close as you can get to nature. Wildlife is engaged in a lot of... ahem... natural activity. Then tend to move around a lot. There is a botanical fireworks display that slowly dissipates into a muted watercolor. Knowing even that gives way to the leafless skeletons of a deep winter you watch each day as if trapped inside O. Henry's "Last Leaf." You want it to last longer than you know it will.

When the gun metal gray of an impending cold shower turns bright blue, the wind subsides as the air freshens and things for a moment seem as clear as a crystal lake. You reminisce the summer and anticipate another long Michigan winter. Each September snowbirds start chatting up the flight south for the warmer climes. But autumn in Michigan? For some of us it is the reason we live here.

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Well, I've just about exhausted my limited vocabulary and I'm sure there are things you must attend to, as well. If this format offers up some weird translations let me know if I should send it in another format. I hope to see you all again soon, either up here in and around northern Michigan or

somewhere on the road. Be good, take care and remember...er...don't forget...running is unnatural ...except from enemies and to the bathroom.

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This issue of the Michigan Man Newsletter is brought to you by Rusty Hooks' Square Dance Brassieres.
"They stay up no matter how frantic the fiddlin' gets!"

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