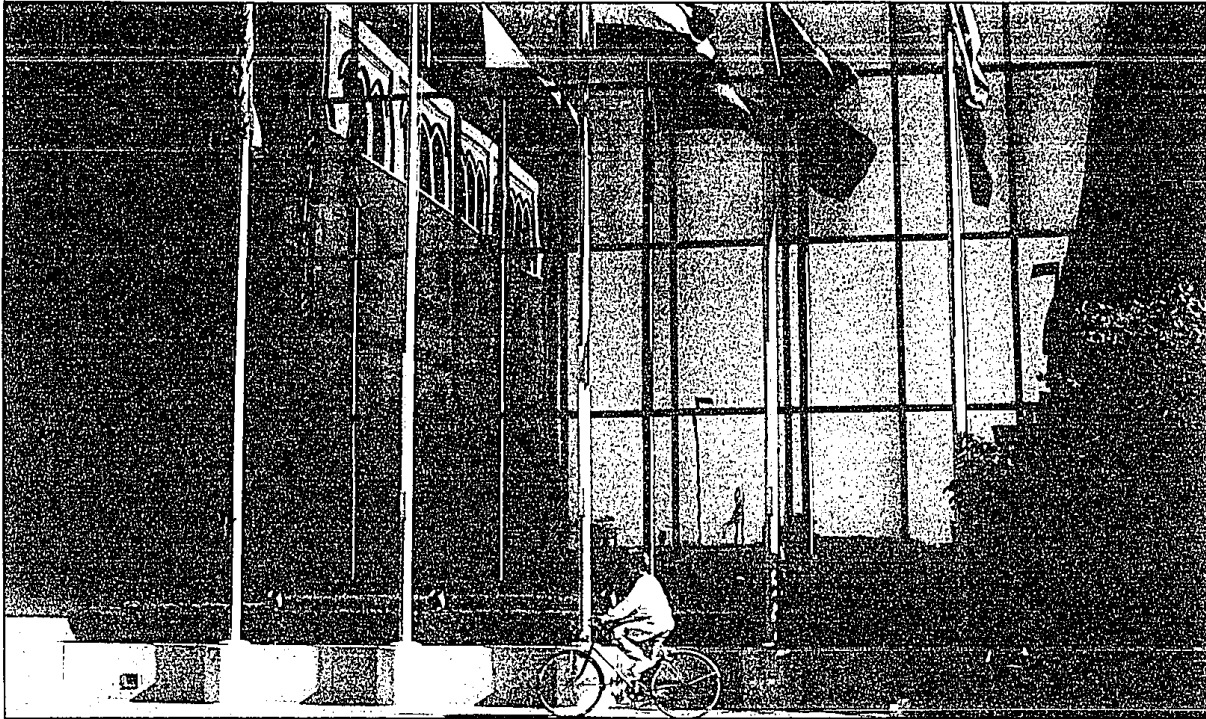


Singer/songwriter Ichabod Stowe, who is a Birmingham Groves graduate transplanted in New York, has a new album out, "It's My Turn," which features a delightful mix of folk, pop, rock and even reggae. For more on Ichabod, please turn to Page 3D.

STREET SCENE



WEST MICHIGAN TOURIST ASSOCIATION

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, right downtown on the Grand River, is one Grand Rapids' largest and best-located hotels.

A rapid trip through a grand city

By Carolyn DeMarco
staff writer

You need a weekend off and you're longing for city lights. New York's too expensive. Detroit's too close. Chicago's too far.

Remember Grand Rapids, Michigan's second largest city? With a core population of less than 200,000, it's certainly not the Big Apple (nor does it pretend to be).

But there's enough activity offered to fill a winter weekend nicely. And, as a bonus, it's less than 2 1/2 hours from Detroit.

If the idea of a weekend in a large, but not too large, city is appealing, read on.

THE LUXURIOUS Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, right downtown on the Grand River, is certainly the area's largest and best-located hotel, and the rates reflect it.

If you can't get a special weekend package, plenty of other moderate hotel choices are available. Among them are Days Inn, Red Roof, Marriott, Quality Inn and Holiday Inn.

One obvious "what to do with ourselves now that we're here" is the Gerald R. Ford Museum, an interesting afternoon whatever your politics, and cheap at \$1.50 per person. It's just a walk over the Grand River bridge from the Amway.

Films and two dozen displays trace the 38th president's life from his early childhood in Grand Rapids, through his University of Michigan football years and on to the House of Representatives, then his selection as vice president and his swearing in as president.

Of special interest is a reproduction of the White House Oval Office.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

Monday through Saturday, noon to 4:45 p.m. Sunday. It's closed Thanksgiving Day, Christmas and New Year's Day.

SOME OTHER sights to see:

- The Alexander Calder Sculpture at Ottawa and Lyon is worth a drive by, if only to ask yourself quietly what other people see in the red-orange "La Grande Vitesse."

- The Fish Ladder Sculpture. Ah, now we're talking something practical here.

The sculptor's plan was to help the spawning salmon climb the rapids instead of knocking themselves out to defy gravity and the Grand River rapids, but no one told the fish, at least the day we visited. It's still fun to say you've been.

- Heritage Hill is a nationally recognized historic district of 365 acres and 60 residential architectural styles.

Among them are the Meyer May House, 412 Madison Avenue, a Frank Lloyd Wright restoration of the 1909 house. Free tours are offered 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, 1-5 p.m. Sunday.

The Voigt House Victorian Home Museum is close by. This magnificent house needed no restoration. The Voigts never threw anything away or changed a thing.

The clothing of the day displayed on beds, the wallpaper, the dozens of rocking chairs are all authentic, as are the items that stocked the pantry and the laundry room, like laundry flakes.

The house is open 1-3 p.m. the second Sunday of each month and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesdays.

- The Grand Rapids Art Museum, 155 Division, is a short walk from the Amway and worth the exercise.

Larger than a small museum,

smaller than a large museum, it's worth an hour of your time to view the traveling and permanent exhibits, especially the furniture room. It's free Tuesday and Saturday.

- While you're in the vicinity, stop at the Kendall School of Art and Design. One recent display on the school's main floor was a jukebox exhibition, "Man, They Dig This Jive." Fifteen jukeboxes were on display dating from 1927.

- For downtown shopping, visit the City Centre Mall, a three-decker Trappers Alley-type affair, or the adjacent Monroe Center pedestrian mall.

Hats in the Belfry is a small haberdashery that carries everything from berets to deerstalkers to Australian cowboy hats. Try the Shaver and Pen Center, "Michigan's Largest Pen Dealer." Or The Great Divide, which sells only U-M and MSU memorabilia.

YOU CAN do lots of things in January. Bring downhill or cross country skis or ice skates.

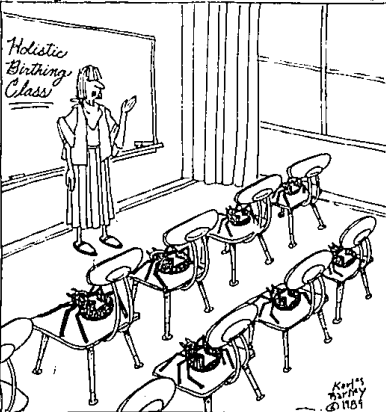
For maps and information on outdoor recreation spots, including public ice skating rinks and folks who offer sleigh rides, send for a free copy of "Grand Rapids Guest Book." Bed and breakfast places are also listed. Write Gemini Publications, 40 Pearl NW, Suite 1040 Trust Bldg., Grand Rapids 49503. Or call (616) 459-4545.

"On the Town," a tabloid calendar of events for the month, is also distributed free. Write Downtown Publishing Inc., 759 Butterworth SW, Grand Rapids 49504. Phone (616) 451-0361.

For a little more general information on the western Michigan area, send for "Visitors Guide West Michigan," from Visitor's Network, 190 Monroe NW, Grand Rapids 49503. Phone (616) 459-1297.

Warp Factor

Karlos Barney



"Remember ladies — rapid shallow breathing . . . relax between contractions . . . and immediately after the birth seize your mate and devour him!"

He provides weather tips to sail by

By Chris Rizk
special writer

If the temperatures are cold these days, Chris Bedford declines to take credit for it.

Temperatures, he said, are only a small part of his duties as a meteorologist since 1986 with the New York-based firm of Galson Technical Services, Inc., an environmental consulting firm for special interest sporting groups.

But he will take partial credit for returning the America's Cup to America and away from the Australians.

Admittedly, Bedford's sailing skills did little to recapture the most-coveted sailing prize. But his knowledge of weather conditions did.

Bedford, who has ties to Redford (and yes, he's heard all the jokes about Bedford/Redford, he said) through his parents who live there, has the lucrative title of "weatherman" for America's Cup team leader Dennis Connor.

It is, he said, easy to be at the beck and call of the famous



Chris Bedford, formerly of Redford, provided meteorological support to Dennis Connor's crew during the 1987 America's Cup Races.

yachtsman Connor, who used Bedford to lead his team to victory during the 1987 America's Cup races.

"It was their on-site meteorological support," Bedford said. "Each

day, I'd make weather forecasts and spend some time out on the water."

That's Australian waters for those who don't remember that the American's Cup was won in the

ern hemisphere in 1987. Bedford spent five months in Fremantle near Perth in Western Australia, charting weather conditions for Connor's team.

EXPERT WEATHER readings are supposed to provide an extra edge to winning. Was he correct a lot?

"Well," the 25-year-old said hesitatingly, "let's just say they asked me back."

Connor first asked Bedford to join his team when the latter's boss, Lee Davis, relinquished the title to pursue a teaching position at the University of Michigan.

That's where Connor met Bedford, then an undergraduate working toward his degree in atmospheric science.

"He knew I was interested in the kind of forecasting the Cup team needed," Bedford said. "He asked me if I'd be interested."

Bedford began charting Cup forecasts in October. Sometimes, because the stakes for winning the

Please turn to Page 5