

Creative Living

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STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

Bill Haney
'giving back to the community'

Momentum for accentuating the positives

By Joan Boram
special writer

WRITING ABOUT Bill Haney is like writing about Scheherazade, except that his fabulous tales are all true. There's the story of the 9-hole golf course that intrepid golfer Haney (with wife Marcy and their four young children) constructed with their bare hands.

And his stint as director of public relations at Bendix during the "Bill and Mary" show.

How about the time he persuaded a certain expertscaster occupying the White House to film a tribute to Detroit baseball great Charlie Gehringer?

HANEY'S A SORT of one-man think tank, and he carries out a lot of his own ideas.

For example, when he saw that Detroit and Michigan's self-image would benefit from a publisher who would accentuate the area's many positives, he decided to be that publisher, in his "spare" time. Hence, the formation of Momentum Books.

A senior vice president at the advertising firm of Darcey, Masius, Benton and Bowles, the indefatigable Haney spends a lot of time on the road. Last month, for example, he was in London, New York, California, and New Mexico.

Chicago, Miami, New York, other cities, all have positive images of themselves," says the West Bloomfield resident. "They recognize interesting people who contribute to their city's color and culture. Detroit needs positive stories about the exciting, accomplished people who live here."

"It seemed to me that the 4.4 million people in the Detroit metropolitan area needed and deserved and would support a book publisher that would focus on the community. New York publishers aren't interested in a run of 4,000, but I knew that a quality book, focusing on an area of intense local interest, could easily sell that number, and make a profit. So I became a publisher."

Haney's first few titles reflected his interest in sports.

"Pigeons, Bloody Noses, and Little Skinny Kids," written by Jeff Mortimer told the story of Wolverines basketball.

IN 1984, HANEY convinced Tiger sportscaster Ernie Harwell to write "Tuned to Baseball." "Ernie wrote every word himself," insists Haney. "I gave him an outline and told him to write 10 pages a day, and he did. I just showed him what voice to use. Ernie's a friend of his readers: they've been listening to him for 35-40 years, and they know what he sounds like. Not many people know it, but Ernie has written and published over 200 songs, so it was easy for him to find his 'voice' and maintain it throughout the book."

"There's no room for error in a book. The wrong type, wrong voice, wrong title, wrong price — it just won't sell."

Harwell fans recognized the voice. "Tuned to Baseball" has sold 70,000 copies since 1985; the paperback edition just went into its seventh printing. It's Michigan's No. 1 best seller.

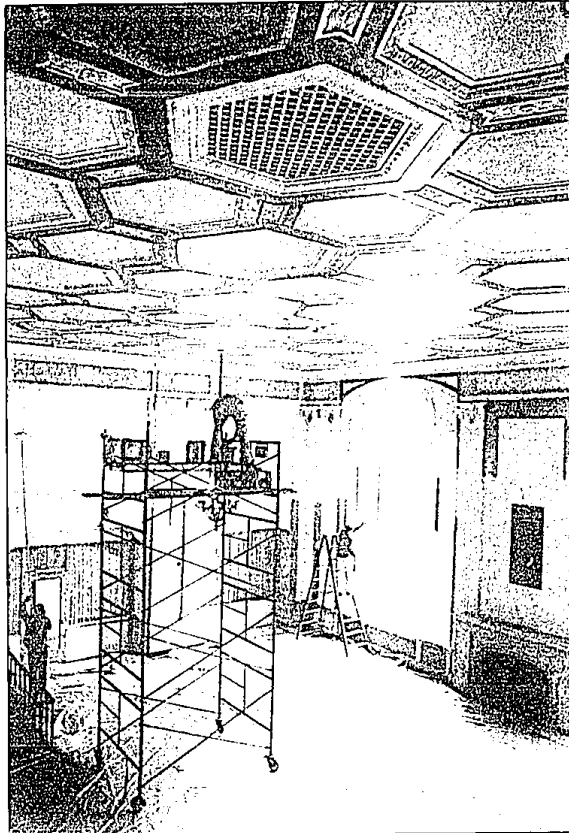
Acting on a hunch that Michigan State would go to the Rose Bowl, Haney got Lynn Henning to write "Spartan Seasons" in 1987. His hunch paid off, and the book sold 7,000 copies the first two weeks after publication.

Don't think that Haney got into publishing on a whim. He's been involved in publishing for almost 22 years, including several years as associate managing director of the University of Michigan Press. All told, he has published 242 books, either for U of M, or under his own imprint.

IN HIS OFFICE at DMB&B, Haney displays "A Travel Guide to the Great Lakes Shoreline" which he produced for U-M Press in the '70s. It's still in print," he says with satisfaction. He tells of asking his friend George Periot to read the three volumes for errors and suggestions. "Poor George had such bad eyes. He read the whole thing with a giant magnifying glass. But he did it!"

"So what," you're wondering, "does a publisher do? Contrary to popular opinion, a publisher does not print books. Nor does he write them."

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SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

An overview of the Leland lobby restoration.

By Joan Boram
special writer

The year 1927 was a good one for architecture in Detroit. Several exciting new buildings went up, including the Detroit Institute of Arts, Olympia Stadium, and the Maccabees Building on Woodward.

And, on Bagley and Third, the Detroit Leland Hotel joined its opulent older sister — both were designed by the Rapp Bros. of Chicago — the Michigan Theater.

It was the same year that Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs and Clara Bow officially became the "It" girl.

1927 is a lifetime away, however, and, with buildings as with people, time often creates more wounds than it heals.

The Olympia, alas, is no more, the Maccabees has seen better days and the Michigan Theater has met a fate worse than death.

BUT THE DIA, thank goodness, is better than ever. And the Detroit Leland is gearing up to make a glamorous comeback under the aegis of Ramada Inns.

The Italian Renaissance-style building has never been abandoned to the elements, like too many of its neighbors. As the Leland House, it has been an apartment hotel for the last couple of decades. There's a busy coffee shop that still

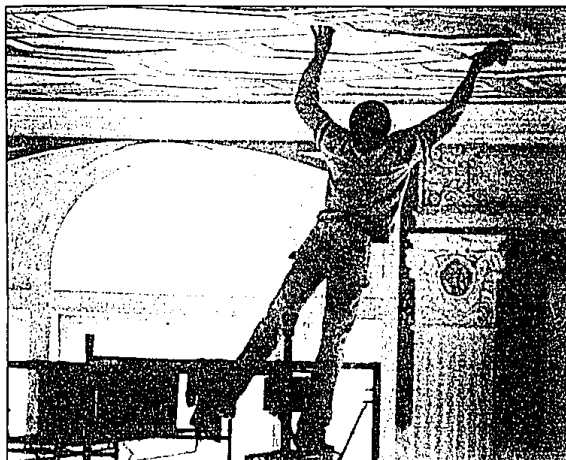
serves sundries in old-fashioned tulip-shaped glass dishes and one of the four ballrooms has metamorphosed into the City Club, a popular hangout for young people.

Which is not to say that everything is in mint condition.

"The Hotel was 'spruced up' in the '50s," says manager Mike Higgins ruefully. "The rose marble floors in the expansive lobby were covered with turquoise, yellow and blue carpeting. Turquoise paint was liberally applied to architectural details, including the classic brass chandeliers in the lobby, and anything that wasn't 'brightened up' with turquoise was 'tuned down' with white."

White paint still covers the elegant brass clock in the elevator area, the graceful brass-and-wood railing around the charming balcony overlooking the lobby and the several ornate brass grills. Some of these items, such as the chandeliers, can be dipped to remove the offending paint, but must require a painstaking application of patience, skill and elbow grease.

WHICH BRINGS us to the heroes of this story. The \$3.5 million funding from the Detroit Development Authority was essential to the project, but somebody had to get to work with a toothbrush and a nut pick to clean those grills. Somebody had to scrape the glue off the

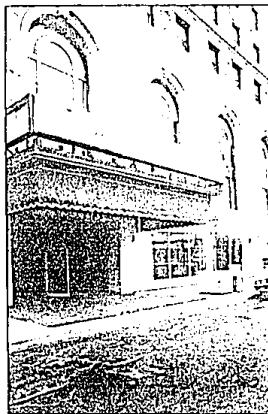


SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

A fearless Robert Sadler works on the ceiling.

Leland House

A glorious comeback



SHARON LAMIEUX/staff photographer

The Leland House: 'superb architectural interior'

marble floor. Enter Andy Bouchard and his intrepid band of eight craftsmen.

"This is the best crew I've ever had," said Bouchard, whose Birmingham-based A.C. Bouchard Co. specializes in restoration work. "They're a mixed bunch. One is a licensed mechanic from up north who just likes the work. Two are from an area drug rehab clinic. My foreman, Rich Bohr, has been with me for eight years."

"Bob Wagner just walked in one day and said he wanted to learn the work. He's been applying gold to plaster details with a Q-Tip. He's got the steadiest hand I've ever seen. "To do this work takes patience and skill — some have the aptitude, some don't. So far I've been lucky. The whole crew is personally involved in this project — they take pride in seeing the place come to life."

As Bouchard talks, the fearless Robert Sadler stands on a two-story wheeled platform, stretching to cover the coffered ceiling with "antique taupe" paint prescribed by project designer Terry Ellis, of Barbara Kopitz Design Associates.

SADLER APPLIES the paint to a small area and then "rags" it, taking a piece of cloth and dabbing at the wet paint for effect. Raging isn't an exact science and it's difficult to judge the effect from close up. Sometimes an area will need to be wiped clean, repainted and re-raged. When the effect is just right, tiny amounts of gold paint highlight ceiling details. The transformation is truly magnificent, but this isn't a job that provides instant gratification.

Like everyone else involved in the project, Ellis is bubbling with enthusiasm. "It's a designer's dream to have the opportunity to refurbish a superb architectural interior such as

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Raised details of plaster are painted gold with a cotton swab.