

RANDY YOUNGMAN

Are you one of those newspaper junkies whose first instinct is to immediately snatch the sports section out of the paper? Me To! Hopefully the Dodgers, Notre Dame, the Rangers or the Celtics didn't embarrass themselves last night. Aren't those the issues that are really important? Who gives a rats ass that 7/8's of the world surface has gone missing while you were busy catching up on that beauty sleep you so desperately need? We must be able to discern the priorities of our lives! Sports first and the rest can be used to wrap the fish entrails.

Grantland Rice, Red Smith and Jim Murray are in my opinion the foundation stones of sports journalism. Cancelling and renewing my subscription to the L. A. Times because of their left wing, pinko editorial staff was a common occurrence. The only redeeming value the paper offered that kept me coming back was Jim Murray. Then Murray passed! So the Orange County Register took up the grail and Randy Youngman assumed the place as chief scribe and bottle washer. As it turns out he is a veritable word smith and as such has been assigned the duties of being my authority on everything sports.

The world of golf didn't enter my consciousness until post-retirement. Up to that point it was ranked right up there with croquet, soccer and badminton. Hey, Waters what are you going to do when you retire? I don't know, maybe take up bag pipes or woodworking, the neighbors would love that. Then lightning struck! The great awakening! Youngman, based on his reputation as the standard of all sports, piqued my interest. What is this golf thing? And so began the age of enlightenment.

Here's this sports writing guy who carries a decent handicap, is a golf aficionado, (for you unwashed that's someone who appreciates a certain sport) and has been asked to be his papers golf reporter. Please, please, don't throw me in that briar patch! Youngman has attended practically every tournament in the golfing world. Oh the anguish he must have suffered, the necessity of visiting the greatest golf courses in existence. Not only that, but can you imagine, having to endure the degradation of playing those courses as background for his reporting. Thankfully they were covered by the expense budget.

There you are, glued to the tournament, the magnificence of the courses we can only play vicariously through our favorite players. That guy must be color blind! Do you see what he's wearing? No sense of style! Oh man, did you see that, he missed a 3 foot putt? I can do that! But there they are, the greatest golfers in the world. All we get are glimpses, face shots, form we can only imagine, chips, putts, drives and then they are gone. Where did they go? Into the club house of course away from the maddening crowd! Well guess who gets to hang out with them? That's right, Youngman. Someone has to interview them, rub shoulders, quaff the occasional beer or twelve. When we open that golf magazine and read those articles it is by someone who has established himself as a real reporter, comfortable to be with, reliable, and been around long enough to have established himself as a fixture in the upper echelons of the real world of golf.

Writing for your local school paper can morph into a rewarding career. Guess who began his journalism career at Ashtabula H.S. and North Park College? The weekly football picks between the so-called expert and the quest prognosticator are further proof of just how far a writer can expand his vocation.