



## Escape From Wisconsin?

By Rob Schultz

I have the sniffles, my wife is hacking and wheezing, my car is hacking and wheezing, there is a noise emanating from my basement that could only be the sound of the furnace, and I haven't played golf in weeks.

It must be fall. That means winter is just a few days away.

And I hate winter. I hate winter more than the Cubs, Bears or anything else from Chicago. I hate winter more than property taxes and mortgage payments. I hate winter more than the NFL's instant replay, the in-the-grasp rule and 3½ hour games.

Two writers, whose sanity must be questioned, recently wrote columns in my newspaper describing how anxious they are for winter to arrive. They can't wait to ski, walk and hunt in America's winter not-so-wonderland.

I suppose those are some nice activities, if you like chipping the icicles off your moustache and stopping in a snowbank every so often for one of those farmer blows. It never hits the snow, either. The wind always cranks up at the perfect moment and you're left with a mess on your coat or pants.

Nope, those activities aren't for me. I prefer to mope in the winter. I sit in the house, watch TV endlessly, cry whenever I look out a window and see snow and then plop back on the couch and mope some more.

My outdoor activities consists of running to my car in the garage, driving to work, parking as close as possible to the office door, and then running to that door. I pay my neighbor to shovel the driveway when it snows and I hang up on any friends who call to ask me to go skiing.

Skiers. Yuk. Golfers and skiers don't get along, especially when a skier tells a golfer how smooth the trails were when they made their own path over the 6th green at X, Y, and Z Country Club.

Golf course superintendents should invent some booby trap that destroys those silly little cross country skis worn by an intrepid explorer foraging over a green.

This all leads to a question I've been asking myself since birth: Why do I live in Wisconsin?

Every winter I risk my life on the highways whenever it snows, my stomach gains an extra two inches from my poor imitation of hibernation, and I can't golf.

That's the No. 1 reason I hate winter. Each spring, it takes me six weeks or more to get my swing back. By that time it's June. Great, one month later football season starts, I have to pull out my reporter's notebook and watch two-a-day practices for a month and I have to put my clubs away again. When football season ends, there's snow on the ground.

But then I look at the alternatives. I love the southeast. Great golf courses, pretty scenery, good college football teams. No, or little, snow. But then there are the rednecks with gun racks in their pickups, holy rollers who still think Jim and Tammy Faye were framed, awful summer humidity and weird bugs. And don't forget Hugo. Egad. Terrible combination. Not for me.

Then there's the southwest. Great golf courses, pretty scenery, great college football and basketball teams. But there are snakes everywhere. I'd cringe every time I'd hit a ball in the rough. Forget it.

Finally there's the west. Great golf courses, pretty scenery, great college and pro football and basketball teams. But California? Drugs. AIDS. Earthquakes. Cracks are everywhere. I'd never drive under an overpass again without sweating. I guess I could handle it if I lived near the Monterey Peninsula, but that's too expensive for a poor sportswriter to even think about.

What's left? Not much. Wisconsin looks better all the time, especially when you consider those beautiful April and May days after dreaming about them all winter. And you can't beat this state's summer.

And then there's the possibility that our winters will get milder every year now that the ozone layer is disintegrating over the earth's poles. When I

learned that, I got so excited that I bought a case of Arrid anti-perspirant aerosol cans and emptied them into the air over my backyard.

Wisconsin is the pits in the winter, but it's not as bad as living through an earthquake, hurricane, or tantrum by a redneck who's pointing his .22 at you for looking at his girlfriend. I'll just go out and buy another blanket and slip another \$10 to my neighbor to make sure that driveway of mine stays dry. Then I'll dream about April and May.

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Environmentalists have their place. They should save seals, whales and rare birds. They should go to Alaska and clean up the mess left by the Exxon Valdez.

But they should stay away from golf courses, farms and anywhere else that's not inhabited by seals, whales, rare birds and the Exxon Valdez.

There's this pond at the new University of Wisconsin golf course. At least it's supposed to be a pond. It looks more like a quagmire. It's full of rusty cans, broken beer bottles and lots of other gross stuff. My cats' litter boxes look more appealing, even when they haven't been emptied for two weeks.

The UW would like to clean up the alleged pond. A great idea, I thought. Dredge it out, build a hole around it. It would turn an eyesore to an eye opener.

Wrong. The environmentalists at the DNR didn't let them. They must like the rusty cans, beer bottles and the other gross stuff. I can't wait for the next environmentalist to knock at my door and ask for a handout. I'll give him my cats' litter boxes. That's right up his alley.

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