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## **Sigsby uncovers treasures that people call their lives**

By Kris Winterton

To Rick Sigsby, people are treasures. People and the notable things they do are the basis of his weekly column, "Rick Off the Record," which runs in the Gladwin County Record & Beaverton Clarion.

Recently he took it a step farther and self-published a book that consists of many of his 2006-2007 columns. The book is called "Discovering Hidden Treasures: Interesting People and Places in Mid-Michigan." It's the product of Sigsby's one-on-one interviews, with a few cultural commentary pieces thrown in.

"Readers have responded enthusiastically to Rick's perceptive look into the lives of their neighbors," said Mike Drey, publisher of the Gladwin County Record & Beaverton Clarion.

Perhaps the reason for the positive response to the column is that Sigsby is a good storyteller. "Everyone has a story to tell," Sigsby said relaxing at a table as he sipped coffee. "The key is to find interesting parts of peoples' lives that others would be interested in."

Sigsby lives in downtown Coleman with his wife, Ann Sigsby. He said he's found that some of the most interesting stories he's heard and written about in his column came from people who think their lives are ordinary or who don't think others would be interested in reading about them.

One such person is Guerdon Schumacher, a longtime resident of Beaverton who taught school, then owned a successful insurance agency for many years and served on the board of Chemical Bank and Trust for 21 years. "Guerdon loves to talk about people and issues, but not much about himself," Sigsby wrote. "He believes everyone can contribute to keep the community moving forward, and he keeps his finger on the pulse of Beaverton and Gladwin County."

Sigsby believes there's always more to people than meets the eye. "The biggest joy I get is when someone says to me, 'I thought I knew that person, but I learned something new about him,'" he said.

Take Ben Ball, for example. Most people in Gladwin think they know Ben, Sigsby wrote in a column last November. They might know him as the wood shop teacher and golf coach at Gladwin High School. But people might not know that Ball has taught many other subjects and also is an inventor, a builder and a beekeeper, among other things.

Ball's wife, Lana, says her husband can do anything, and readers of "Rick Off the Record" learned of some of his lesser-known accomplishments. In Sigsby's book is a photo of Ball tending his beehives.

Sigsby himself has an interesting resume. Born and raised in Midland, he worked as a park ranger for Midland County for 11 years. A racehorse owner who currently owns one racehorse, he writes for several horse racing magazines that have national circulation. He has a master's degree in education and taught in the Saline School District for two years. For six years he served as community services director for the American Red Cross in Midland.

The folks Sigsby features have varied backgrounds and occupations. Included are Indianapolis 500 auto racer Gordon Johncock, Great Lakes Loons Manager Lance Parrish, Sen. Debbie Stabenow (who was born in Gladwin and raised in Clare) and the legendary football coach Bo Schembechler, whom

Sigsby memorialized after Schembechler's death in November 2006.

Then there are other folks who aren't as well-known but whose lives Sigsby found fascinating.

There's 21-year-old Robert Miller, who lives in an Amish community in Clare, works in his father's sawmill and operates his own equine tack shop. People who read the column about Miller probably gained insights into the Amish lifestyle, Sigsby indicated.

One of his most eye-catching chapters is titled "Could Jimmy Hoffa Be Buried in Coleman?" People who want to know more about that subject might want to buy the book, which sells for \$15 and is available at several locations, including Heaven Scent in Coleman, Yesterday's Depot in Coleman, Candy's Cut-N-Curl beauty salon in North Bradley, Riverwalk Place in Gladwin and Stone Cottage Gardens in Gladwin.

"Discovering Hidden Treasures" also can be ordered online at [www.ricksigsby.com](http://www.ricksigsby.com).

Will there be a "Discovering Hidden Treasures — Volume 2?" Sigsby said he certainly hopes so.