

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN BAND ALUMNI ASSOCIATION:
YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

May 2011
Volume 63, Issue 1

M *fanfare*

Michigan's Man Up Front



Jeffrey McMahon serves as “Michigan’s Man Up Front” for the 2011 season. He is originally from Clinton Township, Michigan where he was a Drum Major of the DeLaSalle Collegiate High School Marching Band for two consecutive years.

Jeffrey is in his Senior year of studies at the University, working towards a Bachelor’s Degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering. He served as a Rank Leader of

the MMB Horn section in both his sophomore and junior seasons. Jeffrey is a member of the Men’s and Women’s Basketball Bands, as well as a member of the Michigan Volleyball Band.

Off the field he has represented the MMB in Mock Rock performances, is a member of the Nu Chapter of Kappa Kappa Psi, and a member of the Michigan Marching Band Bible Study. Jeffrey, son of Laura Mazza and Frank McMahon, has three siblings; A.J. McMahon, Kristen and Bret Rizzo.



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Upcoming Events

SUNDAY, MAY 29
Symphony Band
China Tour
Homecoming Concert
7:30 PM Disney Hall
Los Angeles
Tickets:
music.umich.edu/laconcert

Sunday, AUGUST 7
UMBAA Golf Outing
Scholarship Fundraiser
9:00 AM UM Golf Course



That Michigan Band

By Joseph M. Dobos '67

Chapter 8: Something About Pride

With the autumn of 1906, the University of Michigan Band began its second decade of existence, and there was hope that its new, young conductor, Eugene J. Fischer, would be the leader who could find a remedy for the band's financial problems.

Eugene Fischer—better known as “Ike”—was a student at the University when he assumed control of the band. The Fischer family was well known in Ann Arbor—his father was principal of the local German Evangelical School; his sister, Emma, was a highly regarded pianist who taught at the School of Music. A respected musician himself, “Ike” Fischer enjoyed a considerable reputation as a cornet player and leader of local dance bands. Having grown up in Ann Arbor's musical Westside German community, Fischer was involved in music all his life. And when the Michigan Band held its first rehearsal on that November day in 1896, young “Ike” Fischer was a student in grammar school just a few blocks away. During his boyhood years, Fischer must have seen and heard the Michigan Band on many occasions. When he enrolled as a student at the University, he joined the band was soon named its solo cornet player. In a sense, “Ike” Fischer and the Michigan Band grew up together.

Now, as director of the band, he brought insight to the job that was unique, and for this reason, he had a special appreciation of both the problems and potential of the band. In his first newspaper interview as director, Fischer declared that “the maintenance of a band is a hard proposition because of the few inducements offered the members.” He pointed out that, at the University of Chicago, band members were given tuition; at Purdue University, band members were excused from military drill. “If inducements were offered, Michigan would have as fine a band as any university.”

While financial problems could not be solved right away, Fischer was able to

solve the musical challenges, and the results were lauded by the *Daily*, the campus newspaper, which said that the band was “the best the University has had in years.” At the football games—which were now played at the new 20,000 seat Ferry Field—Fischer would lead the band in an “overture” before the game began. And when the team arrived on the field, the band played the time-honored Michigan song, *Hot Time in the Old Town Tonight*.

Fischer soon proved himself to be an excellent organizer and promoter; more importantly, he did not shy away from dealing with controversial issues that involved the band. In 1907, as Fischer began his second year as leader, the band had enough uniforms for only twenty-five players. Fischer wasted no time and approached the Board of Regents with a proposal to have tuition fees returned to band members who successfully completed the college year. Fischer gained the support of the *Daily* which reminded its readers that “the path of the University Band was never laid with velvet.” Citing the band's lack of rehearsal facilities and its perennial financial woes, the *Daily* hoped that the “Regents will see fit to facilitate the existence of the Michigan Band.”

Perhaps considering this proposal too bold—especially from a young man such as Eugene Fischer—the Regents tabled the proposal indefinitely and further decided to not allow the band to rehearse in rooms in McMillan Hall as had previously been done. It was a stunning setback, but undaunted, Fischer found new rehearsal rooms above the Oyster Bay Saloon! This, no doubt, upset the Regents, and a deal was worked out to allow the band to use McMillan Hall again but a rental fee was charged.

During the winter months, Fischer kept the band busy by playing at several dances. With the money raised, it was hoped that a bandstand could be built on campus to present outdoor concerts in the spring. Evidently, not all the

money raised went for the designated purpose. In an editorial in the May 28, 1908 issue of the *Daily*, it was noted that the “band gave us hopes, some time back, that if their dances were well attended, a bandstand would be built with the proceeds and concerts would become a weekly joy. We learn, much to our disappointment, that they have bought only watch fobs for themselves and that no concerts will be forthcoming.”

Financial problems still remained, and in December 1908, the band's president, H. Dale Souter, announced that “the band will play for no more games unless it can receive help from the students or from some other source.” Later that winter, on Saint Patrick's Day, an audience of 1,400 people packed the Majestic Theater to hear a joint concert given by the band and the Glee Club to benefit the Michigan Band. During the concert, John Sullivan, captain of the football team, led the audience in nine “rahs” for the band. In May, the band gave its first outdoor concert before a crowd of 2,000 on the steps of the Law Building. Nearby, under the Tappan Oak, construction was underway of the long promised campus bandstand. After the hour long concert, the band played for a benefit dance in Barbour Gym which raised money for “the purchase of capes and caps for next year when it is intended that the band men will wear heavy blue capes over civilian clothes.”

During the fall of 1909, the Michigan Band appeared in their new uniforms—which were designed by Ike Fischer's wife. And in a rare act of generosity, the Athletic Association donated \$100 to help defray some of the cost of the new uniforms and to purchase some needed equipment. That autumn was also saw the appointment of a new University president. After nearly forty years in office, James Burrill Angell retired and was succeeded by Harry Hutchins.

On November 13, 1909, the Michigan

Something About Pride

football team went to Philadelphia to play the University of Pennsylvania. It was a rowdy game, enlivened by the presence of nearly 400 members of the crew from the battleship, the U.S.S. *Michigan*, which happened to be in port. Also present at the game was the ship's band. Whether or not members of the crew were from the state of Michigan—or had ever heard of Michigan—it made no difference. Everything Yost's Wolverines did on the field received unconditional "rousing cheers from the sailors." And the U.S. S. *Michigan* band did its part—playing several "martial airs" which caused so much commotion from the sailors that the Pennsylvania team "entered almost unnoticed." The Wolverine 16 to 6 victory received widespread coverage from the Eastern press; it was the first time a "Western" school had beat one of the Big Four—Yale, Harvard, Princeton, and Pennsylvania. Several press accounts erroneously mistook the band from the U.S.S. *Michigan* as being the University of Michigan Band—much to the chagrin of "Ike" Fischer and the actual University Band which remained in Ann Arbor!

Thanks to the publicity about the role of the band from the U.S.S. *Michigan* played at the Pennsylvania game, a subscription was held on campus to raise funds to send the band with the team to the University of Minnesota the following week. "We were \$200 short," wrote band manager, Dale Souter, "and at the last moment, Dean John O. Read of the Lit. School endorsed a note with me to obtain that large sum from the Farmers and Merchants Bank." Using the borrowed money, the band traveled to Minneapolis where Michigan won the game. Upon return to Ann Arbor, the merchants on State Street were so elated and enthusiastic over the victory that they took up a collection so that the band could pay off the note to the bank. "Those were the days," Souter reflected, "when life was comparatively simple."

"A little May Festival of its own, underneath its roofless house near the library" is what the *Daily* called the weekly Friday night concerts given

during the spring of 1910 by "genial" Eugene Fischer and the Michigan Band. "Extensive travels have secured for him a large supply of special features with which to tickle the music lovers of Ann Arbor." Each week, until the end of classes in June, the band attracted an audience of 2,000 to the little bandstand under the Tappan Oak. Thanks to the *Daily*, the some of the repertoire of what the band played has been preserved:

The University of Michigan Band
Outdoor Concert
May 26, 1910
March "Present Greeting"

Concert Waltzes	Bennet
March: "Love Me All the Time"	Howard
Three Twins	Hoschma
March: "Hostrausers"	Chambers
American Patrol	Meacham
Semper Fidelis	Sousa

The University of Michigan Band
Outdoor Concert June 3, 1910
March: "The Thunderer" Sousa
March: "Col. Philbrook" Hall
Sextette from "Lucia" Donizetti
March: "Rusticano" Mascagni
Concert Waltzes "Spring Song" Herman
March "Occidental" Sousa
Gypsy Love Song Herbert
March de Concert "America" Brooks

The repertoire was typical fare for bands of the day. The fact that Fischer scheduled four different programs in four weeks suggests that the men in the band must have been excellent readers. These concerts were a major step in the establishment of the band as a musical organization that could attract an audience on its own merit.

The following fall, Michigan again was scheduled to play at Philadelphia. This time, Fischer—no doubt remembering the band from the U.S.S. *Michigan*—was determined that his band would accompany the team. "Unless steps are taken to send the band to Philadelphia," Fischer warned, "it will probably disband at the close of the football season. The members have been counting on this trip and the disappointment will cause so many to drop out that it will be impossible to

keep the organization together. The musicians feel that they do hard work and contribute more to the rooting than anyone else and that one trip a year is due them for their efforts."

Fischer's words received much publicity, and many responded to help out the band—including Michigan's oldest alumnus, Brigadier General Joseph R. Smith, Class of 1848, who lived in Philadelphia. In a letter to Fischer, General Smith wrote: "Enclosed please find a small contribution to help the band meet expenses of coming to the Michigan-Pennsylvania football game, November 12." Wrapped inside the letter was a draft for the sum of \$2.50!

Rallied by the spirit displayed by General Smith, one of the largest campaigns ever held for the band was organized. A large sign was placed in the window of Wahr's bookstore on State Street that read: "I have sent the band to Pennsylvania." In addition to the sign was a football grid, and every time \$10 was raised, the "football" on the gridiron moved five yards. Contributions poured in from everywhere: \$25 from the New York Alumni, \$5 from the Philadelphia Alumni, \$80 from the Athletic Association, and of course, the \$2.50 from General Smith! Two days before the big game, the football on the gridiron in Wahr's window went over the goal line, and the twenty-four member Michigan Band was able to make the trip. "We will blow our thanks to the skies during the whole game at Pennsylvania!" exclaimed a grateful band member

The big game ended in a scoreless tie, but the Michigan Band was a big hit with the *Philadelphia Press* which observed that "one of the most conspicuous objects on the field was the Michigan band. It filled the air with stirring music and presented a pleasing spectacle to the eye in its neat blue uniforms. When it wasn't playing, its members were indulging in weird acrobatic stunts indicative of great pride and joy in the Wolverine team. During the intermission between halves, the band paraded the field and played

Something About Pride

lively accompaniments for a body of several hundred loyal Michigan rooters in the north stand.”

As a result of the recognition given to the band’s efforts, the Regents offered to provide some financial support for the band to the sum of \$100 contingent upon similar donation from other campus organizations. Not satisfied with this meager support, Fischer announced that the band was “already indebted to considerable extent for rent of our practice room and the purchase of a new bass drum, and if the University does not continue the custom of the annual appropriation, it will be impossible to keep the organization together. This will mean that there will be no spring concerts. Should this result, the members of the band will be fully disappointed as the students, for the spring work is enjoyable, and it would be discontinued only with reluctance.”

Reactions to Fischer’s strong comments were not well received, and he was taken to task by the editors of the *Daily*. In response, Fischer accused the paper of twisting the facts and demanded an apology.

The open air concerts did go on as planned, but there was a problem with unsupervised children who disrupted the proceedings—playing tag, yelling, and practically “climbing over the musicians” while they were performing. At the concert on May 5, 1911, one of the rascally boys tumbled from the trees, where the lanterns were hung, and fell some twenty feet to the ground and “had to be taken home in a cart by his companions.”

“This is getting to be a serious nuisance,” Fischer complained. “The youngsters disturb the musicians and the people as well. We can’t see why the authorities do not do something to put a stop to it.” The *Daily* agreed, and in an editorial titled *For Ike’s Sake*, the paper suggested that the student council police the diag during the concerts. At the next concert, patrols were in evidence everywhere; the concert was presented without incident.

By 1911, the University of Michigan was no longer a member of the Western Conference; about half of Michigan’s games were played with schools from

the East. For this reason, some Michigan fans considered *The Victors*--which ended with the words, “champions of the West”—to be unsuitable. Among those who held this view were Earl Vincent Moore, a senior at the School of Music, and J. Fred Lawton, a graduate of the Class of 1911.

On a crisp October afternoon in 1911, they met on the corner of Trumbull Avenue and Grand River in Detroit and decided that Michigan needed a new fight song. They had collaborated before as a song writing team. Lawton, a self-styled poet, and Moore, a gifted organist, had worked together on several Michigan “opera” productions—Ann Arbor’s answer to Gilbert and Sullivan.

It was Moore who brought up the idea of writing a new Michigan song to which Lawton readily agreed. They went to Lawton’s parent’s house which was located nearby on Trumbull Avenue at Selden to write it. They hopped onto a streetcar and immediately began work on their new song. While looking at the advertisements posted on the streetcar, Lawton got an idea for a verse:

Varsity
We’re for you,
Here for you to cheer for you,
We have no fear for you,
Varsity!

At the same time, Moore noticed a constant—almost annoying—clanking sound caused by a flattened wheel on the streetcar. From this, Moore got the idea for a usable rhythm. Neither of them had any paper to jot down their ideas, so for the duration of the ride, Moore “kept pounding out the rhythm on the seat of the car” and Lawton recited the words over and over so as not to forget them.

Upon reaching their stop, the two young men raced into the Lawton home and sat down at the parlor piano to hammer out a tune. Lawton’s family—hearing the noise that was coming from their parlor—retreated to a back room where they listened to singing “that didn’t sound a bit like human beings!” As the song developed, Lawton thought that the text ought to say “something about offense, something about defense, something about pride.” When the song

was finished, they played it over and over, and Lawton’s family came in to listen; soon the whole family was marching arm in arm, singing the chorus of *Varsity*.

Back in Ann Arbor, a few days later on October 6, nearly 2,000 students filled University Hall for the weekly Friday night Mass Meeting. As Moore played the opening syncopated chords of *Varsity* from the console of the Frieze Memorial Organ, the assembled throng roared its approval. The song was hit; encore after encore was demanded. After playing about a dozen choruses of *Varsity*, Moore tried to stop, but the crowd only responded back yelling “More, more, more!” Thinking they meant Earl, Lawton pulled his friend from the organ bench to take a bow, but the frenzied crowd shouted, “We don’t want *that* Moore! We want more *Varsity!*”

In attendance at this rally was “Ike” Fischer, who immediately recognized the appeal of *Varsity*. He agreed to play the march the next day at the Michigan-Case football game. Very likely, he made his own band arrangement overnight, and at the game, the Michigan Band performed *Varsity* during the half time. In so doing, Fischer chose to omit the traditional playing of *The Yellow and Blue* which caused the *Daily* to print the headline: *Did You Miss the Yellow and Blue?* As for the new song, *Varsity*, the *Daily* called it “stirring” and predicted that it would “be one of Michigan’s most popular songs.” The *Michigan Alumnus* reported that it was not uncommon, that fall, to hear the tramp of “many feet and much whistling on the Diagonal Walk across the campus.” The tune that they whistled was *Varsity*.

Earl Moore, who one day would become the first Dean of the School of Music when it was incorporated into the University, remembered the Michigan Band of 1911 as a group of “zealous players of wind instruments and drums gathered in front of bleachers on Saturday afternoons in the fall to provide some rhythmic, though hardly melodious, stimulus for the football heroes in need of student enthusiasm and cheers as they fought on the gridiron.” Compared to more modern

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day bands, Moore described the band as a “well-intentioned but motley crew, both as to dress and musical performance.” But in defense of Fischer, Moore explained that “they were the best we had in those days, and perhaps they made up in enthusiasm for what they lacked in technique and drill.”

Sometimes, enthusiasm was all the Michigan Band had to keep spirits high. When, during the fall of 1911, there was only enough money to send twenty-five band members to the away game at Cornell—one would have to be left behind—Fischer volunteered to remain in Ann Arbor. Thanks to the *Daily*, funds were found to send Fischer to the game. “All we can do to show our appreciation,” said a grateful member of the band “is to make a lot of Michigan noise.”

On November 18, at the Michigan-Pennsylvania game, the first motion picture ever made at the University of Michigan was shot, and in this silent film were shots of the Michigan Band on parade along with other events connected with the game.

In February 1912, a minor scandal arose when the Student Council accused the band’s manager of forging a check for \$16.75 during the Cornell trip. Fischer intervened explaining that the check in question was the result of a simple misunderstanding. As a result, it was agreed that in the future the band would be more accountable as regards use of Student Council funds.

Another controversy arose in the spring when library officials complained of the weekly Friday night open air concerts which were said to be a “distraction from academic pleasures and duties.” At this, the *Daily* mused if there actually were “people in the library on Friday nights!” It was agreed to hold the concerts north of the flag pole, near the apex of the diag sidewalks.

The following October, at the first home game of the season, the Michigan Band was unable to play *Varsity* because the conductor’s score and instrumental parts were loaned to “someone in Ohio” and had not been returned! Fischer

feared that the parts were lost for good; a new arrangement was quickly made for subsequent games.

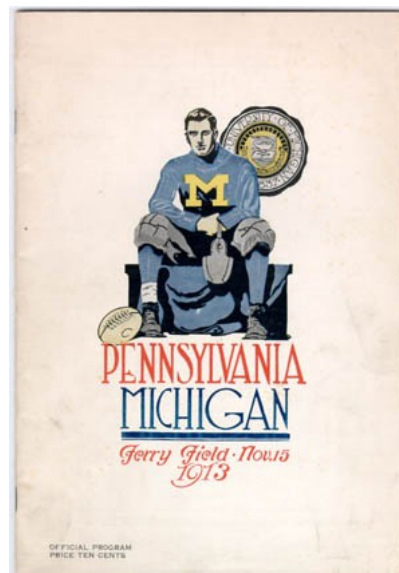
Later that season, the Michigan Band—again short on funds—was unable to accompany the team for the game at Ohio State. On the train ride to Columbus, a few, zealous Michigan fans took up a collection, and upon arrival, hired a local band to play at the game. Needless to say, when news of this reached Ann Arbor, there was considerable outrage—“Where were these people when the Michigan Band needed money!” In response to this “act of treason”, the *Daily*, under the slogan: *No Foreign Band Will Do!*, waged a campaign to send the Michigan Band to the upcoming game in Pennsylvania.

Again, there was much argument whether or not the band should have to beg for money to accompany the team on away games. As in the past, the Athletic Association responded that it lacked the money to help the band. This response was unsatisfactory to the Student Council which decided to hold a campus referendum on November 4 to allow students the opportunity to voice their opinion. The outcome was 1,946 to 91 in favor of the Athletic Association assuming the expenses for an annual trip for the band.

As the vote was only advisory, the Athletic Association restated its earlier position that it could not afford such an endeavor. While the band was no better off than before, its problems were at least in the forefront of campus opinion. Disappointed, Fischer promised that the band would “not go on strike” and would continue to perform at the remaining home games. At the same time, he warned that “the University will lose its band if no provisions are made for its proper maintenance.” At the next home game, the band “appeared upon the field shortly before the game and marched out playing *The Victors*” which was followed by “a sharp rooting duel ... between the north and south stands.” After Michigan’s 20 to 7 victory over Cornell, the crowd swarmed over Ferry Field and made “souvenir of the east goal post.”

In February, Fischer boldly announced that the band would likely disband unless its financial problems were solved. The Student Council proposed that the band be given yearly allocations from both the Athletic Association and the Board of Regents. Further, it was recommended that the band be organized on an entirely new basis with important management issues to be handled by a joint committee of faculty, the Athletic Association, and the Student Council. It was hoped that the band’s size could be increased to fifty members.

The success of this plan depended on what action the Board of Regents decided to take. The answer came on April 25, 1913, when the Regents denied the request “for a proper University Band.” In response, the Athletic Association offered to donate \$200 to defray the current expenses of the band. Fischer refused; he reasoned that if the band were to accept, it would mean the defeat of its ultimate goal—to secure a permanent means of financing for the band.” The *Daily* commended Fischer for “sticking with a black white promise for permanent support of nothing.”



That Michigan Band

**THE UNIVERSITY OF
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AND THEIR FIRST YEAR IN THE MICHIGAN BANDS**

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UMBAA Concert Band performs at Ann Arbor Huron HS on June 12

UMBAA Concert Band Presents Songs & Dances

The UMBAA Concert Band is a volunteer organization committed to providing a place for UM Bands Alumni of all ages and abilities to gather to make music and to socialize. Formed in 2009 with 53 members, the UMBAA Concert Band continues to perform well received concerts and looks forward to growing the membership (73 members currently) and increasing its role in the community.

The University of Michigan Band Alumni Association Concert Band presents a free concert, *Songs & Dances*, at 1 p.m. June 12, in Meyer Auditorium at Ann Arbor Huron High School, 2727 Fuller Road.

The music includes *His Honor* by Henry Filmore; *Summer Dances* by Brian Balmages; *Four Shaker Songs* by Frank Ticheli; *Antithigram* by Jack Stamp; *Psalm for Band* by Vincent Persichetti; *Courtly Airs and Dances* by Ron Nelson; *Symphonic Dances* from *Fiddler on the Roof*, by Jerry Bock, arranged by Ira Hearshen; and *The Victors*.

The band will be conducted by Langston Hemenway, who is currently touring with the Symphony Band in China, and by guest conductor Glenn Bengry.

WE NEED YOU! The University of Michigan Band Alumni Association Concert Band is seeking musicians for the Fall Session. Everyone who played a band instrument for at least one semester in a University of Michigan ensemble is encouraged to join. No auditions are required. To sign up or for more information, please email UMBAAConcertBand@umich.edu

UMBAA Alumni Concert Band CDs

Recordings from all of the UMBAA Alumni Concert Band sessions are available for purchase. CD Order forms can be downloaded from our website www.mmbvidcrew.com. CDs are available for \$12 each. Video excerpts from each concert can be viewed on the MMB Photo Video YouTube Channel youtube.com/mmbphotovideo.

Sixth Annual UMBAA Golf Outing

August 7, 2011

University of Michigan Golf Course

2011 UMBAA Golf Outing

By Michael Lee '93, UMBAA Past President

One of the most common comments we receive after our golf outings is people would prefer a shotgun start. This is a common golf tournament format in which all teams tee off at the same time at different holes. It makes the day considerably shorter and there allows for more opportunities to socialize. People enjoyed the University of Michigan Golf Course so much, many were willing to sacrifice the shotgun start for playing there.

This year we received word from the Golf Course administration that we are able to have a shotgun start at our annual golf outing! There's one condition: We have to have 92 players in order to do it.

So talk to your friends and family and let's strive for our largest golf outing ever. Not all teams require a band alumnus/ae in order to participate.

The committee is still putting the finishing touches on this year's event, so keep an eye on the website listed below for further details.

For more information, email umbaa-golf@umich.edu or go to: www.umbaa.org/golf



At left, some of the participants in the 2010 event took a tour of the Michigan Locker room.

Right, The 2010 UMBAA Golf Outing winning team of Michael Harlow, Bob Whiles and Dave Malek (not pictured) receive their UMBAA Golf Outing trophies from Tim Demske



40 Years of Women in MMB—DVD

To commemorate the 40th Anniversary of women in the Michigan Marching Band, a retrospective DVD is being planned. If you have photos, videos, stories or information which would be helpful to this project, please contact UMBAA President Susan Sutherland at susansutherland@gmail.com

Traverse City Alumni Band Seeks New Members

The Traverse City (MI) Cherry Blossom Festival Parade takes place on the morning of Saturday, July 9, 2011. A U-M Alumni Band has participated in the parade for the past several years. If any UMBAA alumni would like to play in this year's event, please contact Peter Deneen imdeneen@charter.net or Ross Childs rccons@charter.net.

Symphony Band Tour update in the next issue of *M Fanfare*

Watch for the August issue of *M Fanfare*, which will include the complete story of the Symphony Band's epic residency in China, find out all the specifics of the 2011 Blast From The Past, registration information for the 2011-12 U-M Bands Concert Schedule, the next installment of *THAT MICHIGAN BAND*, and much more!



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SAVE THE DATES 6TH ANNUAL UMBAA GOLF OUTING

Sunday, August 7th, 2011 University of Michigan Golf Course

9 AM Shotgun Start *More details inside!*

For more information, contact **Matt Miller**
mattmill03@yahoo.com or 734.476.4869

2011 BLAST FROM THE PAST

Friday-Saturday October 28-29, 2011

M vs Purdue

Watch your Mfanfare for more information!

