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— AP photo by CHARLIE NEIBERGALL

Michigan players including Tim Hardaway Jr., (right), and Nik Stauskas (11) celebrate after defeating Syracuse in their NCAA Final Four tournament college basketball semifinal game on Saturday, in Atlanta. Michigan won 61-56.

Vergiels gets front-row seat to UM ascension

■ The Monroe man has been the public address announcer for UM home games for eight years.

BY NILES KRUGER
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The University of Michigan didn't have a very good basketball team eight years ago.

But things started to change when John Beilein took over as coach of the Wolverines for the 2007-08 season. Michigan has gone from an afterthought in the Big Ten to a team that will play tonight for the national championship.



BOBB VERGIELS

And Bobb Vergiels of Monroe has enjoyed a front seat for the transformation.

Mr. Vergiels has been the public address announcer for UM basketball games at the Crisler Center for eight years.

But even after sitting courtside for every home game this season and watching most of the others on television, Mr. Vergiels had no idea the Wolverines would make this kind of run in the national tournament.

"No, I don't think anyone did," he said Sunday morning during his drive to Detroit to serve as public address announcer for the Tigers' game against the New York Yankees. "It's always a goal of a team to get to the Final Four, but this was unexpected."

Mr. Vergiels was up late Saturday night basking in the glow of the thrilling 61-56 victory over Syracuse in the national semifinals.

"I watched it like everybody else," he said. "I had a lot of trouble sleeping after that. Oh, my gosh, what an exciting game."

Mr. Vergiels will be back at the Crisler Center tonight as the

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Sharp-minded Wolverines ready for final challenge to win national title

BY NOAH TRISTER
AP sports writer

ATLANTA — Virginia Commonwealth's press. Syracuse's zone.

The University of Michigan has handled every test so far. Now it's time for the final exam — a University of Louisville team that is the NCAA tournament's top overall seed.

Michigan is trying for its first national title since 1989 and tonight will be its first appearance in the championship game since 1993, when the Fab Five lost to North Carolina.

The last two decades have been difficult for the Wolverines, but after sanctions and mediocrity, they're back in the spotlight

at college basketball's signature event.

Coach John Beilein's team is plenty talented, but point guard Trey Burke and the Wolverines have reached this moment because of their smarts — and their ability to adjust quickly to new challenges.

"It means a lot to Michigan," Burke said. "This program hasn't been this far in two decades, so just to be back in this situation definitely means the world to alumni and it means the world to us. That's been our No. 1 goal since Day One."

It was clear from the start that this could be a special team. Led by Burke, the Wolverines won

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► Breakdown of tonight's national title game — Page 1B

► Go Blue! Tom Treece shows his colors supporting favorite team — Page 3A



— AP photo by CHRIS O'MEARA

Michigan head coach John Beilein speaks during a news conference Sunday in Atlanta.

SNAKE ON A SHIP

Encounter with Burmese python doesn't end well for the reptile

BY DANIELLE PORTTEUS
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Vinnie Maltese has one amazing story about his snakeskin wallet.

The story involves a Burmese python, a merchant marine ship and a spooked crewman.

Mr. Maltese, the dean of science and mathematics at Monroe County Community College, brought his wallet to the Monroe County Historical Museum on Friday to share his story.

The event encouraged residents to bring One Amazing Artifact, which will be on display in the museum through Saturday. It was held in conjunction with the One Book, One Community celebration.

During 1993, Mr. Maltese was working on a ship that was stationed at Lhokseumawe, Indone-



sia, facing the Malacca Strait.

"We were anchored three miles off the port and when the tug boat went to take us to shore, one of the men reached down and out comes this snake," the former seaman described. "It was a good size, about 14 to 16 feet and just came up out of the water."

However, the pesky snake didn't go away. Later, as the crew was preparing to warm up the hydraulic winches, an unlucky

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— Evening News photo by Tom Hawley

Vinnie Maltese, dean of science and math at Monroe County Community College, brings in a Burmese Python snake skin wallet from 1993 as part of the one amazing artifact to be on display at the Monroe County Historical Museum.

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TODAY'S OBITUARIES Details, 7A

SHARON (SHERRY) ANN (LIEDEL) KISH, 74, of Dundee
BARBARA L. MCAULIFFE, 78, of Monroe
NETTIE ELIZABETH SOWDER, 101, of Monroe

DUANE R. VENABLE, 59, of Toledo, formerly of Monroe
JEFFREY (JEFF) E. ZEILER, 54, of Temperance

WEATHER Details, 6A

TONIGHT
Breezy, cloudy



49°

TUESDAY
Mostly cloudy



56°

▶ FROM PAGE 1A

Vergiels (cont.)

university shows the title game on the big screens at the arena. He will be a kind of master of ceremonies, keeping the crowd revved up during breaks in the action.

"I'll watch the game with 12,000 of my closest friends," he said. "It will be like being at the championship game from 850 miles away. I am getting excited about tomorrow."

He will have to be back at Comerica Park Tuesday morning to prepare for the Tigers' game against the Toronto Blue Jays at 1 p.m.

"I am sure Tuesday afternoon will be kind of blurry," he said.

Crisler has undergone major renovations in recent years and fans have flocked to the arena as the team improved.

Mr. Vergiels says the atmosphere at Michigan games this season was great.

"Oh, my gosh, the place has been packed," he said. "The team has been relevant. We were the last undefeated Division 1 team in the country and we spent at least one week at No. 1. The place has been packed and everywhere you look, you see maize shirts."

It wasn't always that way.

Tommy Amaker was the coach of the Wolverines for Mr. Vergiels' first two years on the microphone.

Wolverines (cont.)

their first 16 games and were eventually ranked No. 1 in the nation at the start of February.

But as Beilein stressed over and over, it was still a young team. Burke, the consensus national player of the year, is a sophomore. Guard Tim Hardaway Jr. is a junior, but Michigan relies a lot on freshmen Glenn Robinson III, Mitch McGary and Nik Stauskas.

When the NCAA tournament began, the Wolverines still had a lot to prove — but this team's mental strength should not be underestimated.

On the first weekend of the tournament, Michigan faced VCU in the round of 32. After only a day to prepare for the Rams' chaotic full-court press, the Wolverines breezed to a 25-point win.

Two victories later, they were in the Final Four — and again, they were up against an intimidating defense. Syracuse's 2-3 zone confounded opponents in the earlier rounds, but Michigan made six first-half 3-pointers and held on to beat the Orange 61-56.

Snake (cont.)

fellow reached down and the snake reappeared, sending the ship mate backward where he tried to scurry away.

"The young guy reaches out and saw the snake and started to fall backward," he described.

Unfortunately, Mr. Maltese was not able to witness the incident live because he was working in another area.

The ship's boatswain, who apparently was familiar with large snakes, chopped its head off. The serpent was taken to a man who made 14 wallets. Half of the crew members were selected to receive wallets.

"I was one of the lucky ones," he said with a smile.

Since then, he's kept the wallet on display, but has

The Wolverines were just 10-22 in Mr. Beilein's first year as coach and finished 15-17 in 2009-10.

"It's been real interesting to watch," Mr. Vergiels said.

He doesn't interact much with the players and coaches other than to wish Mr. Beilein good luck before the games.

The players come up to the official scorers' table before games to fist bump Mr. Vergiels and others sitting there.

He liked what he saw from this team early.

"When I first saw the five freshmen, I thought, 'Oh, my gosh, they are really good,'" he said. "Then you mix them in with (Trey) Burke, (Tim) Hardaway and Jordan Morgan."

Mr. Vergiels feels that freshman Mitch McGary has been the key to the Wolverines' tournament run.

"He has been absolutely, totally unexpected," he said. "I don't know how anyone could have scouting plans for anyone like that."

Mr. Vergiels will be on the edge of his seat tonight as Michigan (31-7) plays the University of Louisville (34-5) for the national championship.

"What a great ride it's been," he said. "Now we are the underdogs. We'll be the darlings. Louisville will be tough, but they've got to play Michigan."

The Wolverines used their final timeout with 1:51 remaining in that game, bringing back memories of Michigan's last appearance in the Final Four, when Chris Webber called a timeout the Wolverines didn't have, resulting in a technical foul and a loss to North Carolina.

Michigan wasn't about to make that mistake again, and the Wolverines held their nerve against Syracuse's pressure.

"We just stuck together," Burke said. "A lot of people would crack under pressure when you're in that type of situation."

Michigan has looked poised, prepared and confident for the last month or so. Burke's presence at point guard is crucial, but the rest of Beilein's team makes smart decisions as well.

"He really recruits to his system maybe better than any coach. As Jim (Boeheim) recruits to his zone defensively, he recruits to his system," Louisville coach Rick Pitino said. "He gets everybody that can pass, catch and shoot. Then if you get up on 'em, they can ball fake and drive."

never used it.

"Indonesia has a very primitive way of making these things," he explained. "I've never even folded it."

After 20 years at sea, Mr. Maltese said he could have brought several items to the event, but thought others would enjoy the story.

Edmund La Clair, assistant professor of history at MCCC, said the program was a way to keep the museum involved in the One Book, One Community event after the successful programs held last year in celebration of the book, "March."

"It was a way for people to share their stories," he said.

The artifacts will be on display from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday at the museum, 126 S. Monroe St.

▶ DEATHS

Nettie Elizabeth Sowder

Nov. 25, 1911-April 6, 2013

Nettie Elizabeth Sowder, age 101 of Monroe, passed away at 3:34 p.m. Saturday at Medilodge of Monroe. She had been seriously ill for three weeks.



Family and friends may visit from 4-8 p.m. today at Rupp Funeral Home where services will be held at 6 p.m. Rev. Larry Head, pastor of Lakeside Missionary Baptist Church, Newport, will officiate. Nettie will then be taken to Claiborne Funeral Home in New Tazewell, Tennessee where continued visiting will be from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. Wednesday. Burial will follow at Burchette Cemetery in Harrogate, Tennessee.

Born November 25, 1911 in Claiborne County, Tennessee, she was the daughter of George W. and Rachel (Burchett) Brittain. She married Tilmon Sowder on October 7, 1944 in Greensboro, North Carolina. Sadly, he preceded her in death on December 8, 1978.

Nettie was educated through the eighth grade at Claiborne County Grade School. She was a member of Northside Baptist Church in Knoxville, Ten-

nessee. For 33 years, Nettie was employed in Greensboro, North Carolina as a machine operator in a textile mill making clothing for men in the armed forces.

Nettie was a very good cook and loved to have company. She always had a story to tell about her childhood. Although she never had children of her own, she enjoyed helping to raise many of her siblings' children.

She is survived by a brother-in-law, Rev. Burnis Hopper of Monroe and numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to her husband Tilmon, Nettie is preceded in death by three brothers, James, Chad and Moss Brittain; eight sisters, Bessie White, Minnie Webb, Maggie Gulley, Mary Cosby, Hazel Fultz, Blanche Hopper, Cinda Gose, and Zephia Brittain.

On behalf of Nettie's family, they would like to thank Dr. Hunt, Mercy Memorial Hospice of Monroe, and all the personnel, workers, and activity volunteers at Medilodge for their kindness and care of their dear Aunt Nettie.

Online condolences may be sent through www.ruppfuneralhomeinc.com.

Sharon (Sherry) Ann (Liedel) Kish

Feb. 3, 1939-April 6, 2013

Sharon (Sherry) Ann (Liedel) Kish, 74, of Dundee MI passed away Saturday, April 6, 2013 at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital in Ann Arbor, MI after a long illness.

Sharon was born on Feb. 3, 1939, at home in Maybee, MI, to Eugene C. Liedel and Ruth H. Morey.

She was an active member of Calvary Baptist Church on Riley St. in Dundee, MI, and a long-time member of the Dundee Senior Center.

Sharon is survived by her sons; Mark (Nicole) Kish of Saline, MI., Benjamin (Charlene) Kish of Saline, MI., and John (Erika) Kish of Groveland, FL, and

grandchildren Zachary, Mackenzie, Mitchell, Chelsea and Matthew. A brother Eugene N. (Flora) Liedel of Manchester, MI., Sisters Sue E. (Kenneth) DeVee of Monroe, MI., and Sheila (Leroy) Reichenberger of Saline, MI. as well as several nieces and nephews.

Preceded in death by her parents, husbands Ralph Myers and Joseph Kish, son Keith Myers and her niece, Sable Martin.

Sharon will be cremated and a memorial service will be held Saturday, April 13, 2013 at 11:00 A.M. at Calvary Baptist Church, 318 Riley St., Dundee, with Rev. Don A. Brown, pastor, officiating.

Publisher Workman dead at age 74

NEW YORK (AP) — Peter Workman, the founder of a publishing company known for such best-sellers as "What to Expect When You're Expecting," died Sunday. He was 74.

He died of cancer at his New York City home, said Selina Meere, spokeswoman for Workman Publishing Co.

Workman was founder, president and CEO of one of the largest independent publishers of nonfiction trade books and calendars.

Fashion designer Lilly Pulitzer dies

MIAMI (AP) — Fashion designer Lilly Pulitzer, known for her tropical prints, died at her home Sunday, according to Quattlebaum Funeral and Cremation Services. She was 81.

Pulitzer's dresses became a sensation in the 1960s, but changing taste brought trouble. She closed her company in the mid-1980s after filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. The label was revived about a decade later after being acquired by Sugartown Worldwide Inc., which then was bought Oxford Industries in 2010. Pulitzer remained as a consultant.

Barbara L. McAuliffe

July 29, 1934-April 6, 2013

Barbara L. McAuliffe, age 78 of Monroe, peacefully passed from this life at 2:23 p.m. Saturday in her home surrounded by her loving family.



Friends may call from 3 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Rupp Funeral Home. She will lie in state at 9 a.m. Wednesday at St. Mary Catholic Church. Mass of the Resurrection celebrating her life will begin at 10 a.m. The church pastor, Rev. Marc Gawronski will officiate. Cremation will follow her funeral with interment at St. Joseph Cemetery at a later date.

Born July 29, 1934 in Detroit, she was the daughter of Alex and Dollene (Lewis) Hunter. She married Francis L. McAuliffe on October 1, 1955 at St. Mary's Church.

As a Registered Nurse, Barbara was employed for 14 years in the infirmary at the I.H.M. Motherhouse and then for several years at the Adrian Health Department before retiring.

Barbara was a member of St. Mary's Church and was most known for her compassionate care for others.

She is survived by her husband Francis McAuliffe of Monroe; two sons, Francis (Dawn) McAuliffe III of Ann Arbor and Stephen (Melissa) McAuliffe of Monroe; three daughters, Dollene (Marty) Smallbone of Dowagiac, Michigan, Kelly Johnson of Mundelein, Illinois and Mary McAuliffe of Monroe; a brother Stephen (Elaine) Hunter of Monroe; sixteen grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Barbara is preceded in death by her parents, a son Matthew McAuliffe; a daughter, Laurie Rassel, and a brother, Alexander "Sandy" Hunter.

The family would like to express their gratitude by asking that memorial donations be made to Great Lakes Caring Hospice and especially thank Tammy and Amber for the wonderful care given to Barbara during her illness.

Online condolences may be sent through www.ruppfuneralhomeinc.com.

Jeffrey Zeiler

Feb. 20, 1959-April 5, 2013

Jeffrey "Jeff" E. Zeiler, 54 of Temperance, MI, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, April 5, 2013 in his home.



Born February 20, 1959 in Toledo, OH, he was the son of Edmund and Mary (Hepner) Zeiler. A 1978 graduate of Bedford High School, he married Shirley D. Kuykendall on August 24, 2002.

He worked within the family business, E. R. Zeiler Excavating for the majority of his life. He was a member of Local 324 and Local 18, I.U.O.E., and the National Hot Rod Association.

He is survived by his loving wife, Shirley. Step-child-

dren, Tyler and Skylar Johnston. Parents, Edmund and Mary Zeiler. Sisters, Cindy (Kent) Cousino, Lisa Zeiler, Katie Lingle and 11 nieces and nephews.

Visitation will be from 3-8 pm Tuesday at the Michael W. Pawlak Funeral Home, 1640 Smith Rd. (at Jackman) Temperance, MI. Mass of Christian Burial will be 11:00 am Wednesday at Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, Temperance, MI, where he will lie in state after 10:00 am.

A celebration of his life will continue at his home Saturday at 5:00 pm. Memorials may be made to the Bedford Township Lions Club. www.pawlakfuneralhome.com

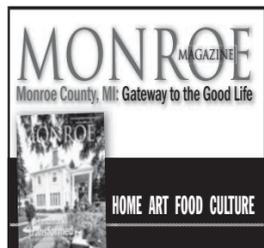
DEATH NOTICE

Duane Venable

April 7, 2013

Duane R. Venable, 59, of Toledo, formerly of Monroe, died at 12:10 a.m. Sunday at University of Toledo Medical Center, Toledo.

Private funeral services will be at Rupp Funeral Home.



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