

Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters



Summer 2008 Vol. 24 No. 3



MARKETING
Green Routes

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A PUBLICATION OF THE CONGRESS OF MINNESOTA RESORTS

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Harlan & Heidi Schauer
Harlan Schauer, Agent/Director
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Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters



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CONGRESS OF MINNESOTA RESORTS

PRESIDENT

Dana Pitt
218-547-1464
Dana@minnesota-resorts.com

VICE PRESIDENT

Ed Fussy
218-586-2094
fussys@mnresortvacation.com

OFFICE MANAGER

Vicky Krattenmaker
888-761-4245 (Office)
cmroffice@tds.net
cmr@minnesota-resorts.com



EDITOR

Sue Paradeis
218-232-0255
vacation@shingwako.com

LAYOUT & DESIGN

Amanda Wheece
763-878-2823
supermandee@yahoo.com

ADVERTISING

Linda Gronholz
218-543-5245
lmgronholz@hotmail.com

PRODUCTION MANAGER

Pat Addler
218-243-2487
vacation@crlodge.com

CMR ADVISOR

Jennifer Bateman
218-732-5434
vacation@twinlets.com

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS

Tim & Carolyn Aarsvold
Susan Ferguson
Joanne Fussy
Kim Jamtgaard
Sheila Niemeyer
Mary Schiebe

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“A Slice of the Good Life” at a MN Resort.

Photography by Tom Pingel, Former Resorter, Thunder Lake Lodge

The Minnesota Resorter is a quarterly publication of the Congress of Minnesota Resorts. The opinions expressed in the articles printed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions nor the official position of the CMR nor any of its officers, directors, or members. Please address any comments or inquires to the committee contact. The Minnesota Resorter is printed by Arrow Printing.

From Your President's Pen



President Dana Pitt
Congress of Minnesota Resorts

Hello Resorters,

By the time you read this, it will be July and hopefully the warm weather of summer will finally be here. But as I write this in early June, spring hasn't even arrived yet. With over 50 inches of snow in April, ice still on the lake for the Opener and "October-like" weather so far in June, we're wondering what nature has in store for us next. Maybe a 4th of July snowball fight for the kids or, at the other end, maybe some wakeboarding on MEA Weekend. Seems like nothing is "normal" anymore – it's always one extreme or the other.

As resorters, we just have to roll with it and play the cards that are dealt to us. In our case, due to the late spring, we had to prioritize our projects and were only able to finish those at the top of the list and the others just won't get done until we close in the fall. It's unfortunate and disappointing, but that's the situation we face and there isn't much we can do about it.

When the weather is lousy and the fish won't bite, we still have to smile and try to encourage our guests to make the best of it. When things beyond our control go bad, we have to shrug it off as no big deal (at least on the outside) and do our best to show our guests a good time.

With gas pushing \$4 a gallon this summer and a slumping economy, we're faced with the additional challenge of simply getting guests to our resorts. Again, we need to adapt and make the best of it. We don't just fold up the tent and quit - we change our marketing plans, take shorter reservations, offer specials or do whatever it takes to fill our cabins. Our money-making season is short and every open cabin we have is a lost opportunity that we can't get back. No doubt the economic conditions today are affecting our industry, and many of us may see a downturn in business. But then what industry isn't affected by this?

Fortunately, resorters are a resourceful and resilient bunch and will do what's necessary to ride out the storm. Weathering the storm means we need to be smarter resorters. Sure we'll try to keep our cabins full, but if that doesn't happen, then we'll need to run a little leaner to stay in the black. We'll need to take a look at where we can cut expenses or maybe put a major project on hold for awhile until business turns around.

I don't mean to dwell on the gloom and doom out there, but the fact is the entire country is facing some tough conditions right now. But there are also bright spots, after all, people still need a diversion and a release from the pressures – and our resorts are their escape. As resorters, we can best create these bright spots by working together and helping each other. Working as a team we can better educate each other, market more effectively and fight for relief at a state level.

There is no better time than right now to get involved in the CMR. Through involvement in our educational programs, marketing plan and legislative efforts, you will not only directly improve your bottom line, but also help benefit our industry as a whole. Please take the time to read more about these CMR programs in this issue and consider joining the team. A great way to learn, and have fun doing it, is to attend our Fall Conference which is in beautiful Duluth, MN this year, October 26-28. This is also a great opportunity to connect or reconnect with fellow resorters - so I hope to see you there!

Our motto, "Resorters Helping Resorters," is even more important during the difficult times, and I'm glad the CMR is out there helping me.

So roll with the punches and have a great summer, Resorters!



Please plan on attending the
2008 Congress of Minnesota Resorts
Fall Conference

See page 11 for details!



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Winterizing Your Motors and Boats... Pennies Now, Or Dollars In the Spring!

By Tim Smalley, MN DNR Boat and Water Safety



Each fall, after the season is over, it's a good idea to prepare your boats for winter storage. For some, putting the rental boats away consists of turning them over on the beach, locking the motors in the pole barn, and forgetting about them until April 30.

You might find that taking a few more steps in the fall makes for a lot fewer hassles in the spring as you get ready for your first guests. If you have to stop to fix a cranky motor or hunt for a child-sized life vest without a broken zipper, you can't be assisting the guests with more pressing needs.

While checklists are a well-known writer's deadline crutch, in this case, one makes perfect sense, so here we go...

1) Fill all the gas tanks and use a fuel stabilizer, especially if your fuel has ethanol (all regular gas in Minnesota has ethanol, as does some premium unless it is labeled as non-oxygenated). Ethanol has an affinity for water and can cause other problems, especially in older motors. A stabilizer helps deal with moisture



condensation problems and keeps the gas fresh until spring. As far as I know, nobody is predicting \$20 per barrel crude oil prices next year, so you might as well fill 'em up now.

2) Flush the cooling system. You can bet at some point during the summer, at least one of your guests ran through the shallow end of the lake and dredged up a good percentage of the lake's bottom sediment plus the usual snips and snails and eelpout tails through the outboard's water pump. Using an " earmuff " style flushing attachment that hooks up to the garden hose can help make flushing a quick chore. Water pump impeller fins can break off after a few years and may need replacing, too. This isn't a job for "Mr./Ms. Fumble Fingers" so, if you aren't sure how to do it, you might want to farm this one out to the professionals.

3) Check the plugs and fog the cylinders. While you are flushing the motor, this isn't a bad time to take the cover off and check the plugs, plug wires, and fuel lines and run some engine cleaner through the carb. After this, run the engine with the fuel line disconnected until it stops. This pulls the stabilizer through the system. Inspect the plugs too, but before you put the plugs back in – spray some fogging-oil in each cylinder to help prevent the cylinder walls from rusting. Empty and clean the fuel-filter bowl as well.

4) Change the gearcase lubricant on the lower units. Even on new motors, a little water can sneak by the propshaft seal. It then gets into the lower unit and can corrode the gears, and if it's a lot of water, might cause freeze damage. If the old gear lube oil looks really milky, it's also a telltale sign of imminent seal failure. More than a few drops of liquid water (leaky shaft seal) or a large amount of metal filings or gear teeth (grinding gears) in the oil mean a trip into town to the shop. Unfortunately, there is no Gear-toothfairy, so it will COST money to repair. Changing gearcase lube can be messy, since you fill it from the lower drain hole. Take both upper and lower drain screws, let the old stuff drain out into a coffee can (and dispose of it properly). Then force the lube into the bottom hole until it runs out the top one. This is a little easier if you use one of the inexpensive lower unit gearcase lube pumps that you can find at a well-stocked marine dealer. Have some kitty litter around to soak up any spills on the garage floor. Please remove the cat first.

5) Check for any worn or loose parts. This includes the steering, which can loosen up over the summer, and also the trim tab on the bottom of the anti-ventilation plate just above the prop. The trim tab, in combination with the steering friction adjuster (sometimes a screw, sometimes a lever) helps fight a kind of boating accident we are seeing more of every year. Folks let go of the steering tiller or wheel while the boat is moving and it is so loose that the boat cuts a hard right due to "propeller walk" and ejects the operator from the boat. The boat continues around in a circle, running down the person in the water - thus the name, "Circle of Death" accident. I've seen photos of the results. I wish I hadn't looked...

6) Check the propeller for any bad dings. Repair or replace as necessary. You can hammer out minor dings with a rawhide mallet. Bigger ones need professional help. Dents and nicks throw off the prop's balance which can eventually wear out seals and gears. Also

check for fishing line around the prop shaft. Remove it to prevent damage to the shaft and seals.

7) Grease any zerk fittings that need it, and finally, store the motor standing up – no, not you, the motor should be standing all winter. It doesn't hurt to put a breathable (not plastic) dust (or pigeon fallout) cover on them too.



Patch any small holes in your watercraft.

8) Look at non-motor items. Check your boat oars for serious cracks and replace as necessary. Check aluminum boat hulls for missing rivets, torn seams, obvious leaks, loose seats, torn up transoms, etc.

9) Check your boat cushions and life vests, and make sure they aren't torn or otherwise damaged. Also check buckles, zippers and snaps to be sure they are in working order. If they're damaged, torn or seriously worn, they have to be discarded. You can't sit down at the Singer and stitch old flower-power appliques over them – state and federal laws forbid patched or repaired PFDs. Most new life jackets are made from closed-cell foam rubber, but if you still have a few of the old orange "Mae West" kapok vests around, squeeze them to make sure they aren't hardened from water leaks. Note - The kids REALLY love to wear these, especially if they are dirty, greasy and smell like the inside of a minnow bucket. They'll remember your resort fondly from Dad making them wear "those ugly orange life preservers." Do yourself a favor, get some of the new attractive vest-style PFDs. They are more comfortable and people are more likely to wear them, which is the whole point

of life vests. Nothing will spoil a happy summer like a customer drowning from one of YOUR boats, and it happens to some resort operator just about every year.



Maybe this boat with its license stickers lined up fighter ace-style belongs to Maverick, Tom Cruise's character in "Top Gun"? The laws insists that only one sticker be visible, so cover or scrape off the old ones.

10) Check your registration stickers for expiration (they turn back into pumpkins on Dec 31 of the year indicated) and renew, if necessary. These are the colored square decals with the last two digits of the year of expiration on them that stick on each side of the bow of the boat, *sternward from the numbers*. Many boat owners get this wrong. They tend to want to stick it next to the MN on both sides. Nope! It goes before the MN on the starboard (right) side of the boat and follows the last two letters on the port (left) side of the boat. And don't line them up fighter ace-style, one after the next. The law requires that only the current year be displayed on the boat.

11) Be sure your resort's name is clearly marked on both sides of the boat in letters that are at least 3" tall. It's fine if you don't want to do this, but if you don't, you are required to carry the boat registration cards in the boat when they are in operation. You might as well have your rental boats as floating billboards rather than hoping your guests don't lose the boat registration card!

That's it! Lock your equipment away and hope for a short winter.



The year sticker needs to go to the rear of your license number on both sides of the boat. This is a shot of the correct display of the license on both sides of the boat. Notice it isn't next to the MN on the left, or port side of the boat for you old salts. Also, the numbers must be at least three inches tall and there is a space between the MN, the next four numbers and the last two letters.

EDUCATION

The Ice Out of 2008!

“Sometimes You Get the Bear and Sometimes the Bear Gets You”

By Tracey Hays, Bear Paw Resort

On May 3, Two Inlets Lake was 98% ice-free. It was a beautiful, calm and sunny evening, perfect for putting in the docks and the Loon nest. Sunday, May 4, started out to be another nice spring day. Then, out of the blue, a very strong, unpredicted northwest wind kicked up.



The ice starts to drift in.

In the northwest bay, behind the island, was the remaining 2% of ice that normally stays there and is the last to melt. Well, not this year! That darn thing decided to float loose and headed right for Bear Paw. My husband Joel and our son Jacob, who were out fishing, saw the ice moving and decided to do some ice breaking with the 14' Lund. But, being the worried mom/wife, I called on the walkie-talkie and ordered, “Don't do it—it's too dangerous!”



A job well done!

Now, this 300' wide floating ice island started closing in on our shoreline. Several of us were standing at the end of the first dock, thinking it would be entertaining to watch the ice as it broke up when it hit the dock. First, the Loon nest was pushed into shore. Then the dock started to shake. The ice was not breaking up like we thought it would. All of a sudden, we realized what was happening and ordered everyone off the dock. So, now we were on land watching the steel dock move about 3 feet up onto shore and realized this was a bit more serious than



14 foot ice breaker

just leisure entertainment. We knew we had to break the ice before it reached the next dock because it was aluminum and would collapse if hit. Armed with a combination of shovels, spades, pitchforks and kids with sticks (tools of/for all ages), the Hays', the neighbors, and Tracey's dad Chuck looked like frantic miners trying to dig for gold, but, in fact, were trying to save our docks. That huge slab of ice extended the exact length from the Loon's nest to our last dock (talk about a bull's-eye). We ran from dock to dock frantically whacking away.

Joel and Jacob were still in the boat and couldn't get in. Again they decided to use the boat to break up this monster. Well, now it sounded like a great idea since the ice was moving faster than we could break it up with tools. What a sight that was—Joel riding up onto the ice with our little 14' Lund to break it, forward/reverse, forward/reverse—and it helped! Going back to the worried mom/wife, hmmm, see if I hadn't stopped him originally when the ice floe was halfway across the lake, none of this would have happened. The ice was not its normal 3-4 inches of honeycomb; it was a solid 3-4 inches then the additional 3 inches of honeycomb.

It was so amazing to watch this “natural” event and the incredible strength, speed and power it had. We were very thankful that our neighbors came over to sightsee and were there to help us. We're happy that we were home at the time and that no one was injured from the “fun” activity. We think the record 50” of snow removal in April had us in top physical shape for ice breaking! Two hours later, there was not one chunk of ice to be seen. Now it was official, Ice Out - May 4, 2008.



Last of the ice 2008!

The moral of the story - wait until the ice is 100% off before putting in your docks.

2008 Spring Workshop

By Mary Schiebe, Knotty Pines Resort

After being buried in over two feet of snow April 5 & 6, everybody was sufficiently dug out to attend the Spring Workshop held April 8 at the beautiful Hiawatha Beach Resort on Leech Lake in Walker. There were 77 attendees, five new CMR members. This was a fantastic turn-out of membership with lots of new faces! The pre-workshop School of Resorting classes scheduled for April 7 were postponed to April 9 but were surprisingly very well attended, also, despite the snow!

We were greeted at the Workshop by Dana Pitt, our CMR President. Following Dana, Ginny Kruger from Warren, MN spoke about **LifeAnswers: Live the Life You Desire**. She shared with us some of her life experiences and taught us to pay attention to our own life experiences to find the S.T.A.R.'s (Statements of Truth Arising from Real Life Situations) in them. She explained to us how to use these experiences to overcome challenges that we face in our lives. Life gives us questions and challenges, but also gives us answers through our own experiences.



Ginny Kruger shared some of her stories about growing up on a resort

Judd Brink from **Backyard Birds** in Brainerd spoke to us about "Birdscaping." He showed us several types of bird feeding stations and how to maintain them as well as what types of bird foods are best for particular types of birds. For instance, the Chickadee Blend bird food is better than the "wild bird mix" as there is a lot of filler used in the wild bird mix. A regular (weekly) removal of old seed, wet seed and seed on the ground prevents diseases. Birds like fresh seeds. We learned that bird watching is the second most popular hobby in our country. \$2.6 billion is spent on bird food every year. 171,000 non residents come to Minnesota every year to enjoy bird watching. He suggested offering a guide service as part of packaging programs in our off-seasons, setting feeding stations along nature trails, offering build-your-own-bird-house activities, and displaying a seasonal white board to keep track of migrating birds in our area.

Brad Sayre, Loss Control Representative for United Fire Group, and Dan Borseth of Pine Insurance spoke to us about safety issues at resorts. Brad was very entertaining as well as educational. He was from Iowa so we all had a good time bantering with him while we learned very important things about resort safety. **Pine Insurance Agency** also sponsored our breaks providing beverages and snacks. Thanks again, Dan & Brad!

Dave Bergman and Chris Van Meter of **Explore Minnesota Tourism** spoke to us about the tourism council's advertising efforts and how to market with lodging packages. The EMT website gets 13,000 user sessions per day!

Mark Novotny, CMR Legislative Chair, shared an entertaining video about the "Day At The Hill" trip in February. It inspired us to participate next year when resorters will again take their concerns to the legislators at the state capitol during the legislative session. Thanks go to Jennifer Bateman and

her son Calvin for producing the film - well done! It will be shown again at the Fall Conference.

One of the favorite activities at conferences is the Cracker-barrel Sessions. The topics were "Saturday Change-over," "On-Line Reservations," "Loan Shopping," "Regulation Delays," and "Resort Activities." These were lively, amicable and incredibly helpful. We all learn so much from other resorters who share their experiences and success in the areas of suggested topics! Overheard comments from a couple different members indicated that just one small tip alone was worth coming to the Workshop and would save them money and time at their resort this year.



School of Resorting class for PEX certification

We can't wait to see what's next for the CMR Fall Conference. Please join us in October for more fun and education! Mark your calendars today for October 26-28 (Sun-Tues). The Conference will be held in beautiful Duluth, MN - so we hope to see you there!

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EDUCATION

2008 CMR Scholarship Recipients

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts is proud to announce this year's scholarship winners. Part of the scholarship application includes answering the question, "How has living and working at your family's resort shaped your present character and your future plans?" Here is what each recipient wrote:



Carol Kirshner Scholarship
Kaitlyn Steffen, daughter of David & Camilla Steffen, Isle O'Dreams Lodge Resort, Park Rapids

Living and working at my family's resort has shaped my life tremendously. One way that it has shaped my character is that I am more people oriented. I have the opportunity to be around and interact with all types of people everyday in our open season. Five days out of the week, we have children's activities in the morning and family activities during the evening. I help run these activities as part of my job and have learned to easily cooperate with people. Working at our resort has also helped me to learn business entities and to work as a team with my family and co-workers. Not only has that shaped my character to be more organized, negotiable, and business orientated, but it has also shaped my future plans. My current plans are to go to college at the University of Minnesota, Duluth for either a business or an accounting degree. I hope to someday be able to run our resort when my parents retire or open a business, such as a resort, of my own with a business background. Living and working at my family's resort has shaped me to be a part of a caring business.



CMR Scholarship
Angela Marie Hooper, daughter of Marty & Sue Paradeis, Shing Wako Resort, Merrifield

Working at my family's resort has taught me a lot about long hours, customer service and cleanliness. Because of my experience I was hired to work at another resort, where I trained a temporary laborer and worked as a team player on my first day. I had nothing but compliments from my manager, inspector, and team lead. Later, at this same job, other tools and experience from my parent's resort helped me obtain a supervisor position, where I supervised 45+ employees and filled in for the manager. I was able to start payroll actions and account billing and became very active with the corporate office. I decided to go to school for accounting after gaining all of these experiences and that was when things started to take shape. I see myself talking with my mom and giving her feedback on their resort. I continue working for my parent's resort in the summer to replenish my income to continue my education. My son and I see the benefits of what I am earning for us, the examples that I set forth for him and now his own new experiences as a resort grandson. He says he is going to work on the resort and has his hat and T-shirt already!

Coming from a big city in Illinois to northern Minnesota, where my family owns our resort, has changed all our lives tremendously - for the better.

My family is together almost all the time now, especially in the summer. When I was little, I spent most days playing with the kids who would come on vacation. But, as I grew up, I acquired more and more responsibilities at the resort. For the past few years, I have worked 40 hours plus per week all summer. Some jobs are fun, like kids crafts or pool attending. Some aren't so bad, like cleaning cabins. But some are absolutely disgusting, like emptying the fish gut cans! But, no matter what job I am doing, I always greet the guests with a smile and try to make sure their vacation is fun.

My parents always say, "The way you work and the way you handle yourself represents the whole resort." This has instilled a sense of responsibility in me to act maturely, be a good role model, work hard, and to treat others with respect that I will carry with me into my adult life.



CMR Scholarship
Kelsea Lynn Ingebretsen, daughter of Ray & Vanessa Ingebretsen, Aspen Resort & Campground, Orr

We would like to wish these three outstanding students the best as they proceed with their ambitions. It is very clear that growing up at a resort has helped shape these individuals and given them wonderful strengths to enter the working world.

Best wishes from the Congress of Minnesota Resorts Board.

These scholarships are a Congress of Minnesota Resorts Member only Benefit!

Contact our CMR Office Manager, Vicky Krattenmaker at cmr@minnesota-resorts.com or 1-888-761-4245 for more information or an application today!

Mark your calendars today for Sunday - Tuesday, Oct. 26 - 28, for the Congress of Minnesota Resorts 2008 Fall Conference!



The Conference will be held at the Radisson Hotel Harborview in beautiful Duluth, MN!
 Watch for a brochure in the mail for detailed information and registration.
 Enjoy interesting and informative speakers, visiting with other resorters, the ever-popular cracker-barrels, a lively Vendor Expo with prizes, bonus School of Resorting classes and much more!

Contact Kim Bowen, CMR Fall Conference Coordinator at 218-652-3111 or relax@crowwing.com for more information.

For more information about the Radisson, Duluth it is located at 505 West Superior Street, Phone: 218-727-1490, website - www.radisson.com/duluthmn



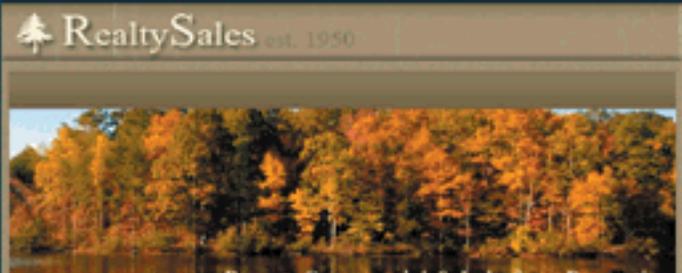
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What the CMR Can Do for You!



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- Full-time lobbyist working for the interests of RESORTS ONLY!
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- Stay informed on legislative issues that effect our industry.



EDUCATION

- Fall Conferences and Spring Workshops - informative sessions and networking with other resorters.
- School of Resorting educational classes.
- Yahoo Groups - online resort chat room.
- Members only online resources on our website.

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Resorters Helping Resorters - Since 1985

*None of us is as smart
as all of us.*

Be it successes or trials -
We've been there and
done that and want to
share it with you.

The Congress of
Minnesota Resorts exists
to help family owned
and operated resorts in
Minnesota to continue as
a viable segment of the
Minnesota tourism
industry.

*"I always scope out the groups
that work best for the resorts and
found that the CMR is a great
organization. I didn't want to jump
the gun on it, so I took time to
figure it out, liked what I found
and that's why I joined."*

*Joe Scharber
Sleeping Fawn Resort & Campground
Park Rapids, MN*

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MARKETING

A Change of Seasons

By Tom Pingel, Former Owner of Thunder Lake Lodge

We took pictures - lots of pictures. The digital camera was one of our most valuable tools. The photo might have been a family shot on the rocks, in front of the lodge, by the cabin, in the boat, or just about anywhere. It might have been with that prized catch, the kids in action, a sand creation at the beach, or any of the other things guests found to do. Often it was a sunrise, a rainbow, incredible cloud formations, or fall colors around the resort or lake. Or wildlife – a buck swimming across the lake, otters fishing from the edge of receding ice, eagles soaring, or loons just being loons. And, of course, the photographic record of the weekly Kids' Fishing Contest captured a level of unparalleled excitement.

We had thousands of pictures - hundreds every year - printed and kept in binders on the desk in the lodge. Guests in 2007 would get a chuckle from that shot in the '99 book. Our guests loved them, but few people enjoyed the pictures as much as we did. After the holidays, in the dead of winter, before the excitement of a new season was upon us, we would pull the binders off the shelf, sit down on the couch, and relive the previous season.

This winter was a little different. We hadn't had one like this for 10 years. I'm not talking about the snow, or the cold, or that the septic didn't freeze up. The pictures were there. The '07 season was as deserving of our annual review as any other season. But this was a life changing winter, just like the winter of '98 when we left the corporate, suburban life for the adventure of living 35 miles from the nearest stoplight and being responsible for everything from stopped up septic to the bottom line. We were entering a season of change. We didn't seek out this change. It found us. The resort wasn't on the market, but an opportunity came knocking.

The parallels are astounding. Our family had vacationed at the lake for 20+ years and talked about owning a resort someday. Then in the fall of 1997, my employer changed their retirement plan and overnight the dream became a plan. We owned and operated the resort for 10 years and talked about retiring someday. Then a fellow resorter approached us last fall and asked if Thunder Lake Lodge was for sale.

So here we are in 2008, planning for our post-resorting life. The emotions have been many. It's been VERY interesting. We often joked (somewhat seriously), that owning a resort was my dream and Jeanne's nightmare. But guess who's having the biggest problem with this change now? Jeanne! Maybe it's a guy thing or a girl thing. Once the decision was made to sell, I immediately made the emotional cut. Believe it or not, Jeanne is cleaning cabins this summer!

What was really different about this winter was our reliving the highs (and lows) of our 10 years of resorting. We'd like to share a few of our memories.

Thunder Lake Lodge wasn't known as a fishing resort (although that's not to say there was anything lacking in the number and quality of those finned friends in our lake). We took possession of the resort May 1 and a week later were hosting our first guests for opener. That first day we saw an 18 lb. northern, four 10 pounders, and almost everybody limited out on 6-7 pounders. Over the years, there were several 40 inch+ northern taken, including the largest northern in the Longville Lakes area a couple of



'Opening Day' picture in '98. You might not recognize the people in the picture, but it's us!

years ago. But the best northern was the last. This winter, a guest speared a 45 incher upon arrival. What a hog!

While numbers weren't always great, we could always count on some nice walleyes. There was the guest who checked in at 4 p.m. promptly (honoring our check-in, but not wanting to miss a minute - also hanging around until exactly 9 a.m. to get the most out of the stay), went to the fishing dock to check his equipment and reeled in a 27 incher on the first cast. I took his picture, tossed it onto our website, and showed it to him. The next day he came down and asked me how he would be compensated since I was using his likeness for profit and gain. I told him the picture would be off the site in 5 minutes.

Some of the best walleye fishing was saved for last also. Last summer we had a first-time family check in on Saturday (they were friends of some 'regulars'). That first afternoon she caught a 28" walleye. That night he got a 30". Those 'regulars' just happened to be reporters from KARE 11 who had their gear with them to do a spot on the Longville turtle races. Well, they did an extra shoot. We got a spot on "Thunder Lake Walleyes." A little 'PR' never hurts. They'll be back again this year!

But the most exciting fishing took place daily from our docks. That was the place uncountable kids caught their first fish. Fishing was great from the docks. The record number of fish caught in our weekly 30 minute fishing contest was 50 with 25-30 being the typical winning number. Kids loved the action. The real treats from the docks were the crappies. One young man earned the title of Mr. Crappie for his annual prowess. The engine on dad's car was still running and he was already on the docks hauling in the crappies. Nice slabs. Good eating.

Everybody was a winner at the fishing contest. I dreaded the weeks when we had upwards of 30 kids in the contest and I had to think of 30 different awards. Jeanne never did like the 'Yellowiest Belly on a Pumpkinseed' but 'Most Stripes on a Perch' was OK. Only 3 or 4 times a summer did any of the kids come up empty. They still got awards. I think it was our very first contest that Kenny came up empty, crying after it was over.

He still came to the award ceremony and received an award for 'Most Intimidating Fisherman.' He puffed up real proud when he got his award. Only as everyone was leaving the ceremony did I hear him ask his dad, 'What's 'intimidating' mean?'

What was best about the resorting experience was the people. We often said that the American family was alive and well and stayed at Thunder Lake Lodge. We catered to families and we had some great ones. We had lots of family and friend groups, and each had their traditions. One family was very artistic and held 'Thunder Lake Idol' every year. For another, the kids couldn't wait for the end-of-week scavenger hunt. In another family, the dads got the kids for an afternoon while the ladies rented the pontoon and celebrated all their birthdays on the lake together - quite festive with all the wrappings, color and food.

The traditions of two groups stand out. One group had been vacationing together for many years. They developed a routine for their week at the lake. Saturday evening they had a flag-raising ceremony. The next Friday they had an awards ceremony and lowered the flag while singing their song. In between, the competition was fearsome. Each cabin was responsible for organizing a tournament of one kind or another from fishing to pool, tennis or who-knows-what. Cabin 7 was results-central. They had a big whiteboard on the deck for recording all the results. The deck also was the warehouse for upwards of 40-50 trophies to be awarded on Friday.

The other notable group had 'international night' every year. They had a theme - Mexican, Italian, Wild West - and dressed up in costumes, decorated the cabins, and, of course, had an international buffet to fit the theme. We made sure we were around for that one. Come to think of it, we conveniently dropped in at most of the big family or group potlucks.

But the best traditions were the simple ones like making sure the family got together every year. In those years when school started before Labor Day, we had two families that brought their kids to the lake instead of sending them to school for those couple of days. I still remember the day Abbie learned to ride her 2-wheeler.

We made a lot of changes at the resort. During our tenure, we either rebuilt completely or added bedrooms to about half the cabins. We rebuilt the docks, replaced the boat/motor inventory, went to all-electric, and



Sunrises were always one of our favorites

purchased all new appliances and beds, and who knows what else. It was most rewarding when the guests noticed - made the work all worthwhile.

One of the changes we made was elimination of chests for storing clothes. Every time we'd have to go to a cabin for a blown breaker, stopped toilet, or whatever, we found our guests living out of their suitcases whether or not there was a chest. And when those few who did use them left, they usually left behind some unmentionables (not always clean). Guess who found them. Cleaners? Nope. The next guests in the cabin. So all our remodels and rebuilds now have shelves for storage - no chests. No one has complained yet about not having a chest of drawers for storage.

The most frustrating part of the whole business was holding a 'lottery' every week to see which cleaners would show up (and how long they would stay). There isn't much we look back on as lowlights, but the annual/weekly struggle to get and keep a full cleaning crew ranks near the bottom. That we DON'T miss! We needed about 10 cleaners for an efficient, comfortable Saturday. One year we weren't even close. We had to offer our guests an allowance if they cleaned their cabins before they left. That was a joke. Guess who took us up on that offer? The guests who left their cabins spotless anyway. So we really didn't gain too much, but we did make it through the summer.

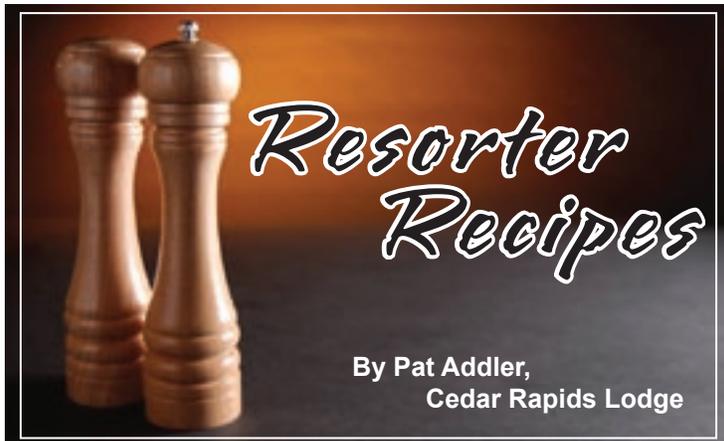
Remer had an August festival every year. We remember one of our early years when we were dependent on high school kids for cleaning. About 10:30 that Saturday morning all the kids announced they were leaving because they were doing this or that in the festival. Four of our 18 cabins were clean and there were two cleaners left to finish them!

We thought mother/daughter teams worked well. And they usually did. In fact, if a young lady of 14 or so wanted to clean, we would only hire her if mom came as part of the package. HOWEVER, one summer we had this young, aggressive, persistent young lady who kept calling wanting to clean. We said only if mom comes along. Mom finally relented and we hired the two of them for the last few weeks of the summer. We never saw mom's house. Hope we never do. Mom used Fabreze to wash the windows.

We're still not sure just what our future holds. Over two years ago, we bought a small house near Walker for our own getaways (hey, resorters can have a vacation home too) so we were fortunate enough to have a place to go when we sold the resort. We're in the process of getting that up to snuff for a 'full time' home. It will be great being in the neighborhood. We want to visit our fellow resorters, but don't want to bother them when their guests are there, so we figured Saturdays about noon would be a good time to drop by and visit. So when that car drives in while you're mowing the grass, cleaning the beach, stocking firewood, cleaning boats, or whatever, it might just be us - dressed in our flak jackets.

We cannot think of a nicer bunch of folks than resorters. To be associated with the likes of you has been an honor. An even greater honor was the opportunity I had to serve as president of the CMR a few years ago. We will remember these 10 years as a highlight of our journey through life.

One last reflection. Our lodge had a panoramic view of the property and lake. Nothing was ever as satisfying as standing on the deck at the lodge seeing boats coming and going, dads and kids fishing on the docks, paddle boats and kayaks on the water, kids building sand castles on the beach, moms in the chaise lounges, land and water volley games in action, maybe a soccer or baseball game, 'ladder golf,' kids on the playground, etc., etc. - often all at the same time. *That's* why we did it!



By Pat Addler,
Cedar Rapids Lodge

DARLENE'S SALSA

- 1 14 oz can Rotel tomatoes
- 3 Roma tomatoes
- 1 15 oz can peg corn, corn & peppers or whole kernel corn
- 1 orange pepper
- 1 red pepper
- 1 green pepper
- 1 jalapeno pepper (mild)
- Fresh cilantro
- 1/2 tsp. minced garlic
- 1 red onion
- 1 15 oz can black beans
- 1 squeeze of lime juice



Cut up all ingredients & mix with canned ingredients.
Chill & serve with tortilla chips.

SOUR CREAM RAISIN BARS

- 1 cup butter or margarine
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 cups flour
- 2 cups oatmeal
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 tsp. salt

Mix until crumbly; take out 2 cups crumbs for topping & press remaining into greased 9 x 13 pan. Bake at 350* for 15 min. Cool slightly.

Filling:

- 4 egg yolks or 2 eggs
- 2 cups sour cream
- 1 1/2 cups raisins
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch



Cook filling until fairly thick—5-8 minutes. Pour over baked crust and crumble 2 cups topping over filling mixture.

Bake another 15 minutes & cool. Cut into bars....enjoy!

SLOPPY JOES

- 2 lb. ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cans chicken gumbo soup
- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1 Tbsp. mustard
- 1/4 cup brown sugar

Brown hamburger & onion; drain if needed. Add remaining ingredients & simmer. Serve on buns. Freezes well too!

KEY LIME PIE

- 2 6 or 8 oz. containers yogurt
- 1 pkg. lime jello
- 8 oz. cool whip
- Graham cracker pie crust

Mix the dry jello with the yogurt; stir in the cool whip. Pour into the pie shell. Top with additional cool whip.



Chill 2 hrs. & serve. Great summer time pie!

Have a Recipe
you'd love to share?



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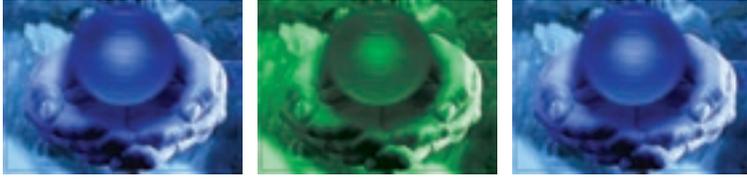
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Green Routes-Places to Visit, Eat, Shop, Stay & Play

By Linda M. Ulland, Executive Director, Central Region Sustainable Development Partnership



Everyone is talking Green, and that goes for tourism as well. The recent Sustainable Tourism Conference in Duluth drew people from throughout the state interested in incorporating sustainable practices in their businesses. Travelers are increasingly interested in supporting those businesses.

One way to search out businesses that promote sustainable practices is through the Green Routes website, which offers an alternative to conventional tourism. Green Routes directs you to places where you can get locally grown food, experience unique cultural attractions, and participate in activities that minimally affect the environment, like biking and birding. Green Routes is a way to discover small, unique businesses rooted in their communities. They may be restaurants that serve foods fresh from the local farmer, lodging properties that have implemented practices to conserve energy and protect water resources, or businesses that cater to silent sports.

Green Routes started in Minnesota in 2005 as a pilot project spearheaded by the non-profit Renewing the Countryside organization. The first Green Routes focused on the Tamarack region of Mille Lacs and the Upper Minnesota River Valley in the Granite Falls area. Subsequent Green Routes were developed for Northwest Minnesota, the North Shore, Southeast Minnesota, and the Central Brainerd Lakes Area. Brochures were prepared that identified tourism businesses and attractions. A website was also launched that identified those businesses included in the original brochures.

To be included in the Green Routes, application forms were developed and made available to businesses and attractions. Regional advisory groups reviewed the applications, identified other businesses that might qualify, and decided which to include in the Green Routes materials. Criteria used to evaluate applicants included economic, environmental, and social criteria, including:

- Contributes to the local economy by employing local residents, using local products and growers, and supporting local businesses.
- Conserves or enhances natural resources (e.g., use of renewable energy, recycling, wildlife habitat protection).
- Engages customers and visitors through active, personal, and meaningful participation in nature, people, places, history or culture.
- Uses sustainably produced or organically grown products.

The basic criteria and approval process remain the same today. Applications are available online at greenroutes.org. Applications are reviewed by the Green Routes staff, who contact representatives in the region to verify the appropriateness of including the applicant. Information is now contained on an updated website, and a state-wide printed map is being developed that includes all businesses and attractions included on the website.

For further information, or to apply to participate in the Green Routes program, contact Margaret Schnieders at margaret@rtcinfo.org.

Welcome to Our New CMR Members:

Bonnie & Jeff Brand & Chris Brand, Pine Cone Lodge, Park Rapids
 Tim & Dina Tabbert, Moonlight Bay Resort & Campground, Walker
 Cheryl Dockter, Morning Star Resort, Cass Lake
 Doug Andresen & Nancy Swenson, Becker's Resort & Campground, Bemidji
 John & Doreen Seekon, The Pines Resort, Deer River

New Mangers/Owners:

Craig & Jamie Riendeau, Thunder Lake Lodge, Remer

Associate Members:

Mullen Insurance Agency, Anne Mullen, Fergus Falls



Goody Gathering

By Joan and Sam Bernick, Pine Tree Cove Resort

Each week, many of you reserve a certain evening to host an all-resort gathering where everyone brings a dish to pass. We have stayed at resorts where that was done, and it was always fun. Now that we own a resort, we know how much work that is!!! We tried it for a while, especially when we had families in camp. Every week we cooked the brats and hamburgers, set up tables in our screen pavilion, provided plates, condiments, coffee and juice, etc. Many guests hung around a long time, and it would be so late before we could clean up! The grill got to be such a mess so often, along with the floors, counters and tables. We burned out on that early on.



We are older now and our stamina is lower. Up here near the Canadian border, we almost always have a rainy or too windy of a day to get out on the water for long. So, now we check the forecast and decide a day or two ahead of time to have a mid-morning or mid-afternoon "goody-gathering." We mention to every cabin what we have in mind and how we will check the weather and decide. We don't want people to give up fishing time, but if they want to come by and join us, great, or we can wrap up a snack for them. We usually purchase frozen sweet rolls from a convenience store and just pop them in an oven, cool and frost lightly. Then we cut them in half so folks can try a couple of different treats. Sometimes we have some grapes or other fruit with them. We provide coffee, but any other beverages the guests bring. This doesn't last as long; paper plates are fine, less costly and still great fun. We have almost 95% rebooking, as many of you do, so the folks in camp already know each other to some extent. Some weeks, especially early in the season before families come up, we know the people that would like to do this and those that rather just sit on their porch or deck and play cards on off times and not be social. No problem.

Most comments last year, our second year of doing this, were very positive. We have also, on occasion, set up for s'mores by an early evening fire after dinner instead. That is, if we had nice weather all week and this timing fit best. There just isn't anything more satisfying than getting to know people better, right?

TALES FROM THE CAMPFIRE



Fishy Story

One week a husband & wife along with his sister came to the resort. While trying to save money, the two women bought a husband and wife fishing license as the women's names were Margie & Billie (same last name). They were fishing nearby in separate boats. A warden checked licenses on both boats. He kept his comments to himself, but quickly came to shore to check with the lodge office. While slightly stumbling on his words, he tried to check on the marital status of the two women. In the end, the warden required the two women buy separate licenses stating, that the state of Minnesota does not recognize same sex marriage.

Lost In Space

By Su Ugstad, Balsam Bay Resort.

In February 2008, I received an email inquiry for a cabin for the last week of June. It happened to be from someone I know from my hometown (thank goodness), so I replied back, catching her up on what's been happening since her last visit and letting her know our availability for the end of June. The next day she emailed me to tell me that what I had replied to was her email inquiry from last May, 2007! She went on to write that when she hadn't received a reply from me (last May), she just called and made the reservation instead. We are both stumped as to where this email has been for the last nine months, and why it chose to finally appear now, but dated February 7, 2008. Somewhere I could hear Rod Sterling saying, "You've just entered the Twilight Zone!" Maybe those who have a better understanding of cyberspace can explain it. At least this guest now knows why I never replied to her inquiry last year. But it makes me wonder just how many old inquiries I've been replying to lately!!

Extra Guest

By Mark Novotny, Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort

When we took over the resort, there were many repeat guests – some had been coming for 25 years and were now bringing their grandkids. This story is about one of them...



On a Saturday in July, I was visiting with this guest while others in the group were unloading their weekly supplies. I noticed that one of the kids was carrying a box that was covered with a blanket. At that moment, I thought nothing of it. That evening my wife overheard the kids talking and asking how Henry traveled. My wife did not remember a "Henry" that checked in and she forgot about asking me until the next day.

Sunday morning as we looked through our guest registrations, we did not find a "Henry" that had checked in. We thought perhaps it was a friend of one of our guests who had a cabin on the lake and had been dropped off.

Monday, the kids were still talking about "Henry," and it got our curiosity up again. So we started watching them and looking for "Henry."

On Wednesday, we happened to see a few of their kids playing outside with something in a cage and what appeared to be a white RAT. Now there has been a no pet policy on the resort since 1957. It was already Wednesday afternoon and at this point, the rat had been here for days. Since our guests were long time customers, we figured they were trying to "pull the wool over our eyes" as we were the rookies. We went along with it, but added an extra person charge to their bill.

On Friday, when everyone was checking out, I handed the invoice to our long time guest. When she reviewed the invoice, she questioned what the extra person charge was for as they had not registered an extra person. I looked her straight in the eye and told her that it was a charge for "Henry." Looking very sheepish, she said that there was no rule on pets and they had no where to go with it.

At this point, I proceeded to tell her that pets have never been allowed at the resort, even when she was a child. When she argued that it was not posted on the refrigerator, I explained that the no pet policy was stated on the website and in our brochure since they needed to know this information before they arrived.

All in all, she paid the bill with the extra person (pet) charge and still put down a deposit for the following year. They continue to come and stay with us and enjoy their vacations – without "Henry."

Tried and True Resorting Tips

By Resorters for Resorters

- ✓ Pre-fill the ice trays in the freezers to reassure our guests that the refrigerator is cooling.
- ✓ Adding and expanding wireless internet service for our guests.
- ✓ We added a “guided” trail hike this year. I get to know the guests that go on the hike a little better.
- ✓ Offer to make copies of items from our welcome books - jokes, songs, and stories.
- ✓ I put cookies in each cabin every Saturday to welcome the guests. This year I bought pre-baked cookies from my wholesaler and thawed them and put them on plates. They were baked by someone.... just not me! Saved me a half day of baking!
- ✓ When you have a large group of 4 to 5 cabins they tend to share the dishes and they are all mixed up and the count is way off. Then it costs time with the cleaning help to rearrange. We give the guests an inventory list of the dishes/utensils and they have been happy to check the list the night before they leave and it is all back in order.
- ✓ We supplied all the cabins with Stock Pots; it eliminated the guests asking us for ours all the time.
- ✓ Making the beds with the blankets on helped eliminate people taking the folded one off the shelf and using it outside.
- ✓ Part of their welcome is receiving a NOAA weather report printed off the computer. If there are major changes in the report I hang an updated one in the lodge/store. The guests liked this.
- ✓ Calling attractions and restaurants in advance to find out days and times of operation. This can save on unnecessary or untimely travel.
- ✓ Self serve bait system.
- ✓ Having area maps available and offer directions to attractions and restaurants.
- ✓ Customized responses to children’s notes to the resort’s Secret Garden elves. It’s a souvenir they can’t get anywhere else.

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Contact Linda Gronholz
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- ✓ We created a form this year that says “Black Pine Beach Resort encourages you to attend this great area event!!” Then, when a special event or a particularly popular activity is going on in the area we highlight it on this form, make copies of the form and hand deliver it to each cabin.
- ✓ One thing we try to do is eliminate the stress in our lives during resort season. Whatever causes us stress we try to fix, replace or change. That means anything from tearing down an old cabin, replacing equipment, or eliminating other troublesome issues.
- ✓ Provide good quality yard games/toys and make them accessible to guests at all times. This way they always have something to do without having to find you first. Ideas are croquet, bocce ball, holy board, hula hoops and a variety of balls and Frisbees.

The Date Has Been Set!!

The CMR Fall Resort Tour is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, September 10th, 2008 in the Crosslake Area.

The resorts on the tour this year include:

- Beacon Shores
- Black Pine Beach Resort
- Lykins Pinehurst Resort
- Quarterdeck Resort

Mark your calendars now so you won’t miss out on this great opportunity to visit some very unique resorts.

Keep watching for more information. See you there!



Is your listing on exploreminnesota.com all that it could be?

Reprinted with Permission from Explore Minnesota Tourism

There's lots of advice on writing for the Web; but who has time to read it?

Bottom line: people don't read a Web site - they scan it. So, you have to...



Grab the reader's attention

Bearing this in mind, here are 10 tips to help you best use your real estate on exploreminnesota.com:

1. Be concise.
2. Keep content current.
3. Use keywords (think of the search terms under which you'd like a user to find you; don't use words that will disappoint customers).
4. Use meaningful sub-headings (not "clever" ones).
5. Use bulleted and numbered lists.
6. One idea per paragraph - keep paragraphs short! (users will skip over any additional ideas if they are not caught by the first few words in the paragraph).
7. Cut your word count in half (or less) than conventional writing.
8. Don't over use punctuation (one exclamation point makes the point and is professional).
9. Do not use "marketese" - overly hyped promotional writing (E.g. "hottest ever").
10. Use photos, graphics and meaningful captions to add content.

More detail on each of the above listed items can be found in future issues of EMT Express.

Resource: <http://websitesitips.com/webcontent>

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Legislative News

Long Summer Campaign Follows Successful 2008 Legislative Session

By Joel Carlson, CMR Lobbyist

With remarkable speed and bare knuckle effort - the 2008 legislative session came to a successful conclusion. Promises of health care reform, property tax relief, a balanced budget, transportation funding and a significant capital bonding package were kept. Many Capitol wags felt it was the most successful session in years - and not simply because it ended on time!

Make no mistake; there were "pawlenty" of bumps and bruises along the path. The successful override of Governor Pawlenty's gas tax veto (the only successful override during his tenure) and the subsequent ouster of Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau as Transportation Commissioner left a bitter taste among the warring DFL and Republican partisans. After getting a major diss'in from the legislature, Governor Pawlenty went on to issue 34 vetoes of DFL bills, a new world record! There were points in the session when a timely and successful agreement on major issues seemed as unlikely as \$2 a gallon gas.

Speaker Kellier took a slightly different tact – she didn't seem to care if Pawlenty was running for Pope - she wanted the session to finish on time...

Speaker Kellier took a slightly different tact – she didn't seem to care if Pawlenty was running for Pope - she wanted the session to finish on time and forge agreement on everything possible. Her

Governor Pawlenty went on to issue 34 vetoes of DFL bills, a new world record!

Most credit House Speaker Margaret Kellier and Governor Pawlenty for keeping an even hand on the tiller – successfully docking the session in heavy winds. Looking back on it over the past few weeks, it's actually quite amazing that anything was accomplished. The small Republican minority in the Minnesota House really wanted nothing positive to happen, and the huge DFL majorities could have simply blamed any impasse on the Governor. Senate Majority leader Larry Pogemiller toiled daily to make his feeling known that Governor Pawlenty's stature as a potential Vice-Presidential candidate was boggin' down the works - national politics are to blame for the bad feelings between the DFL legislature and the Governor.

efforts paid off, bringing home over \$80 million of property tax relief, small increases in education spending, \$365 million in state budget reductions and modest steps to lowering health care costs. Not a shabby ending to close out her first two-year term as Speaker of the House.

Minnesota House Elections will shape 2009

While all elections are important – the races for the Minnesota House of Representatives will be the most critical for CMR and our legislative efforts. Rep. Frank Moe, an ardent advocate for resorters and author of several of our legislative initiatives, announced that he will not be seeking re-election this fall. Other CMR "saints" leaving this year are Reps. Bud Heidgerken (Freeport), Dean Simpson (Perham), and Aaron Peterson (Appleton). These House members were vital to tourism and resort issues, and will be greatly missed. Please consider sending them an e-mail to thank them for their service to the state and support of greater Minnesota and family owned resorts.

The battle lines have mostly been drawn for the House elections, with a total of 13 members voluntarily leaving office (as of 6-12-08) and most candidates already endorsed for election by their respective parties. Nine of the current retirements are Republicans, making their bid for a comeback slightly more daunting. The effort to elect a new member is intense, and costly. Having to work to retain nine seats, just to keep your current numbers, is tough duty.

DFLers currently hold an 85-49 edge, leaving them five votes short of a veto proof majority. The speculation on the election is centered on how well the Presidential candidates will fare in Minnesota. A close race between Obama and McCain would signal only a marginal change in the House. If Obama wins Minnesota by a blowout (over 55% to 45%), it's possible that the DFL could gain some seats.

No one - not a sole - is suggesting that McCain could romp in Minnesota. In fact, the most recent poll indicated that even having Governor Pawlenty on the ticket as VP would not help McCain win in Minnesota. Ouch.

Through the Fall Conference and into the session, CMR will have to work to educate the newest members of the House about our issues, the difficulties of running a family owned resort, and the critical role the state can play in helping to make resorts a success. We also need to continue to remind policymakers of the importance resorts play in the local and state-wide economies.

...CMR will have to work to educate the newest members of the House about our issues, the difficulties of running a family owned resort...

LEGISLATION

Franken (Stein)

I love humor - listening to it, reading it, writing it on occasion, and way cool. So, I was thinking that having someone who makes a living being funny would make for a colorful US Senate race. Colorful... oh boy. Al Franken has now developed more bumps on him than the cars during the last golf ball sized hail event. And, there is going to be more as the months unfold.

Many political types believe that Franken's "missteps" have damaged him so badly that he cannot win. This will promote a primary fight from prominent DFLers in Minnesota, like Mike Cerise. While I totally agree that someone will try to take Franken out in the September primary, calling Franken's downfall "missteps" totally missed the mark. Look - the guy is a Hollywood screenwriter that made a living in all 50 states. He wrote satire and books making fun of politicians (it sounds easy, but it's really not!) and that's how he earned his reputation. Now, some DFLers are complaining about Franken and his electability. DFLers feel it was right and proper when Franken wrote "Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot" but penning the demeaning "Porn-a-Rama" for Playboy oversteps the bounds of decency. You can't have it both ways.

I have two issues with the current Franken Affair (as it's come to be known):

Why didn't the DFL research these issues long ago, and, why would the Republicans even mention any damning character issues until after the September primary election?

Legislative issues important to CMR members were addressed during the 2008 session.

Two priorities of the Legislative Committee - property tax relief and a state-wide review of vacation rental homes were both successfully adopted. CMR also worked to defeat changes to the post Labor Day School starting requirement, changes to the fishing opener, a state-wide walleye slot size and reduced bag limits. It was a very successful year for the CMR! We need your help to develop new issues during the summer and fall of 2008. There are pending issues with state-wide plumbing licenses, fish packing and transport, and revisions to the state shoreland management rules.



We need your help in St. Paul if we are going to continue to be successful. Make sure you attend the election year Fall Conference, and make a commitment to attend the "Day on the Hill" in 2009!!!

Legislation Fund

By Mark Novotny

We had a successful legislative session this year. Explore Minnesota Tourism is required to study the impact private home rentals have on the lodging industry. Also, we gained a property tax reduction in a budget deficient year. If you were not able to attend Day on the Hill or testify at a committee hearing, maybe you would like to make a donation to the legislative fund. This fund is used for Day on the Hill expenses and transportation for the resorters who volunteer to testify at committee hearings. With the gas prices as they are, any donation would be appreciated to defray these costs so that we can have resorters present our resort issues directly to the legislators. We are still working on resort issues and we need your help!!

Please send your donations to:

Mark Novotny, CMR Legislative Chairman, 3489 Ford Dr. NW, Hackensack, MN 56452

EXPLORE MINNESOTA TOURISM - June '08

Summer '08: Tourism Talking Points

Reprinted with Permission from Explore Minnesota Tourism

This year's high gas prices and economic slowdown have brought some media coverage about the potential impact of these factors on tourism, across the country and in Minnesota. In case of media inquiries about the outlook for the summer travel season, here are some talking points, based in part on input from the Minnesota tourism industry.

- This summer, more travelers will be looking for affordable destinations closer to home, and Minnesota tourism businesses anticipate that residents of Minnesota and nearby states choose Minnesota for unique, affordable getaways.
- Minnesota is expecting overall travel at about the same level as last summer. In a sample of tourism lodging businesses contacted by Explore Minnesota Tourism prior to Memorial Day, two-thirds expected occupancy this summer to be the same as last year or higher, and almost half expected higher revenues.
- However, travel patterns are changing. While most people will continue to travel, many will take fewer trips, stay fewer days, travel closer to home and take more day trips.
- In addition, budget-stressed consumers are spending less at restaurants, attractions and gift shops during their trips. On the other hand, attractions like museums, zoos and amusement parks may get a boost from families choosing day trips and at home vacations this year.
- Many people are waiting longer to make lodging reservations, making it harder for businesses to predict how their summer will fare.
- Seven in ten polled tourism businesses expect that high gas prices will either have no effect on their businesses, or will actually benefit their business, with more travelers take trips closer to home. But some destinations, such as those far from population centers, are concerned about the potential impact of high gas prices.
- Explore Minnesota advertising targets many nearby markets like Sioux Falls, Des Moines and Milwaukee, as well as Minnesotans themselves. Since these markets are the traditional sources of Minnesota travelers, the state is well positioned to be the destination of choice for close-to-home road trips.
- Minnesota tourism businesses are seeing more Minnesota customers, and expect fewer out-of-state customers. Favorable exchange rates are expected to bring in more visitors from Canada and abroad.
- In addition to economic concerns, weather is always a factor influencing tourism business in Minnesota. The cool, rainy weather so far is a tough start to the summer tourism season.

2007-2008 CMR BOARD MEMBERS

ADMINISTRATION

CMR President

Dana Pitt
Bailey's Resort
33216 County 38
Walker, MN 56484
218-547-1464
Dana@minnesota-resorts.com

CMR Vice President

Ed Fussy
Pimushe Resort
218-586-2094
fussys@mnresortvacation.com

Office Manager

Vicky Krattenmaker
21403 52nd Street NE
New London, MN 56273
888-761-4245
cmroffice@tds.net
cmr@minnesota-resorts.com

Secretary

Timberly Christiansen
Finn-N-Feather Resort
218-335-6598
finnfeather@hotmail.com

Treasurer

Tim Aarsvold
Geneva Beach Resort
320-763-3200
TJA@GenevaBeachResort.com

EDUCATION

Jennifer Bateman - Chair

Two Inlets Resort
218-732-5434
vacation@twinlets.com

Conferences & Workshops

Kim Bowen
Crow Wing Crest Lodge
218-652-3111
relax@crowwing.com

Timberly & Jason Christiansen

Finn-N-Feather Resort
218-335-6598
finnfeather@hotmail.com

Sheldon & Mary Schiebe

Knotty Pines Resort
218-732-5466
stay@knottypinesresort.com

Jason & Jody Ball

Cass Lake Lodge
218-209-6843
js8ball@hotmail.com

Debbie Eickhorst

Kohl's Resort
218-243-2131
relax@kohlsresort.com

MARKETING

Jim & Debbie Eickhorst

Kohl's Resort
218-243-2131
relax@kohlsresort.com

Su Ugstad

Balsam Bay Resort
218-566-2346
rsugstad@means.net

Ed Fussy

Pimushe Resort
218-586-2094
fussys@mnresortvacation.com

Ed Becker

In-We-Go Resort
218-652-3536
vacation@inwegoresort.com

Tim Aarsvold - Website

Geneva Beach Resort
320-763-3200
TJA@GenevaBeachResort.com

LEGISLATION

Mark Novotny - Chair

Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort
218-675-6683
hydeawaybay@tds.net

Ed Fussy

Pimushe Resort
218-586-2094
fussys@mnresortvacation.com

Jason Christiansen

Finn-N-Feather Resort
218-335-6598
finnfeather@hotmail.com

Ed Becker

In-We-Go Resort
218-652-3536
vacation@inwegoresort.com

Tim Aarsvold

Geneva Beach Resort
320-763-3200
TJA@GenevaBeachResort.com

OTHER

CMR Lobbyist

Joel Carlson
Legal Research/Gov't. Affairs
6 West Fifth Street, Suite 700
St. Paul, MN 55102
651-223-2868 • 651-223-2868
jdcresearch@aol.com

EMT Advisory Council Rep.

Mark Novotny
Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort
218-675-6683
hydeawaybay@tds.net

U of M Tourism Center Advisory Board:

Tom Ossell
Northern Lights Resort & Outfitting
651-351-9666
tom@nlro.com

Publicity

Sheila Niemeyer
Niemeyer's Rugged River Resort
218-829-4587
relax@ruggedriverresort.com

Past President:

Jennifer Bateman
Two Inlets Resort,
218-732-5434
vacation@twinlets.com

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