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Fall 2005 Vol. 21 No. 4

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A Congress of Minnesota Resorts Publication

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT'S PEN



Ed Becker
CMR President

I would like to begin my letter this fall with why the Congress of Minnesota Resorts is an organization I am proud to be a part of. Our motto is "Resorters helping Resorters". To continue this I want to welcome you to use the e-groups line. As strong storms hit this summer some of those in need used this site to express how much damage was done at their resort. This enabled that were able to lend a hand were able to give a hand where needed. Thank you to those that took the time to help a fellow resorter in need. Those that need more help to continue to do the fine-tuning to clean up or to help re-build structures that were damaged please let us know. The Congress of Minnesota Resorts e-groups is a source of communication that I can't say enough about. After speaking with other resort owners the information exchanged through this site is priceless. I encourage everyone to continue to take advantage of this tremendous tool.

The Fall Conference is an empowering time of the year. This year is going to be extra special as it will be our 20th Anniversary Conference. I hope that you will be able to attend this unique event and bring along a fellow resorter so they too can benefit from the great information this conference will have to offer. If you need information about the conference, please contact Vicky at the office at 1-888-761-4245 we would love to have you join us.

The fall tour of resorts in the Cohasset area was a very enlightening experience and always a great time to share experiences and ideas with fellow resorters. I would like to take a minute to personally thank the three resorts, Hidden Haven – owners Mike and Judy Czeck, Pincherry Grove Resort – owners Leroy and Carol Gruhlke, Wildwood Resort – owners Jay and Kim Jamtgaard, who allowed everyone to come to their resorts and share their ideas with other fellow resorters.

As fall comes to a close I hope everyone is able to reflect back on a good season. Lastly, I would like to thank everyone for giving me the opportunity to serve as your President for the Congress of Minnesota Resorts this past year. Through this past year, I have gained a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience. I would like to thank the Board for their support as well. Each of our committees was faced with more tasks than time and each of the challenges were met head on and accomplished. We have had a great year and I appreciate the dedication from each of the board members.

Become a Member of the CMR!



See page 22 for details



***We need YOUR
stories, articles and pictures
for the
Minnesota Resorter Magazine!***

Email your submissions to: weslake@prtcl.com
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Underwood, MN 56586
Questions? 218-826-6523

FOREVER CHANGED

By Cheryl & Mike Harris, Northern Lights Resort

The sky was as dark as midnight and it was 10:25 a.m. This was only the beginning of what was to come and forever change the face of Northern Lights Resort and the people who were there – both guests and owners.

On Monday, June 20, 2005, we awoke to a sunny morning. The resort cabins and campground were full. Many of the guests were already out fishing or playing on the beach and in the water. About 9:00 a.m., the weather radio went off advising us of a storm approaching. Based on the information from the weather alert and watching the Weather Channel, we went around and advised our guests to put away their tubes, floaties and lawn chairs because there was a storm coming. We had heard there might be winds of up to 60 mph. Since we had had storms of that intensity before in our 11 years of resorting and had weath-ered them in good shape, we weren't overly concerned but wanted to warn the guests to be on the watch. Many storms have come through, but the hill to the south of us had provided a pretty good barrier over the years. As we watched the radar and the approaching storm, the warnings continued for winds up to 60 mph. We were never alerted to the fact that the winds were nearing 110mph and that it was straight out of the west rather than the southwest. This storm evidently had a mind of its own.

At 10:30 a.m., the rain started and the winds were picking up in intensity. Most guests were in their cabins, campers or were gone to town to do some shopping. Then the full impact of this storm hit. It actually came in about three waves. The most intense part of the storm started at 10:45 a.m. and lasted about 45 minutes.

During the storm, I was in the store getting blankets and towels for our guests (and their dogs) so they would be able to dry off a little. The wind was so strong; it kept pushing open our commercial door so eventually we had to lock it to keep it shut. As the children sat crying and some uncontrollably screaming, I handed out suckers. It seemed to help – not only the children, but the rest of us, too. The power went out and the water was gone within 20 minutes. We sat and watched as many other trees uprooted and others broke and fell. That was all we could do was watch. Nothing had prepared us for this.

There were three guests in our fish-cleaning house at the time of the first wave. As a tree came through the roof, they tried to get out but a large branch had fallen across the door. After they managed to push it aside, get out, and make a dash for the bait barn next door, the storm seemed to lessen just a bit. Then it picked up again as they entered the bait barn. Three big trees crashed through the roof of the bait barn and broke six of the eight rafters. The men decided this wasn't safe either so they headed for the store which is located next to the bait barn. The store is the basement of our home and is built through a hill and so has a

double walkout – front and back. As the intensity picked up a third time, many other guests made their way to the store for protection. Mike was upstairs in the house checking out what was happening in the rest of the resort. That's when he heard that awful sound people say they hear when a tornado is approaching. He saw trees whipped around like twigs.



As the storm was abating and the weather clearing enough to go out, all we could do was look at the devastation. Everyone was checking to see who hadn't made it to the store and speculating where they might be. Mike realized that the only cabins occupants unaccounted for were from cabin 8, so he headed straight out to that cabin. He had to climb over downed trees to get there. The people in the cabin saw him coming and opened the inside door. They weren't able to leave the cabin because a tree fell over their doorway blocking them in. As they saw Mike approaching, they hollered out that they were okay and doing well. We knew that the grandfather had a pacemaker and defibrillator due to heart problems. Our relief at their wellbeing was immense. Mike told them he'd be down in a minute to cut the tree off so they could get out. The grandmother told Mike that there was no rush; they were playing cards and doing fine!

Once our guests' welfare had been established, a giant wave of devastation washed over Mike and me. If it had not been for our guests there at the time, I doubt much, if anything, would have been accomplished the rest of that day. We all stared in disbelief at the havoc the storm had wreaked through the resort. We found out later that we had had 110 mph winds through the front of the resort and a tornado in the back of the house through the woods of the resort. We lost 118 trees in the front of the resort, 24 trees behind the house and 79 trees through our wooded area. In retrospect, we were extremely fortunate that no person was injured or killed and no cabin or camper was damaged beyond continued use. The bait barn and fish-cleaning house took the worst hits from falling trees. Ironically, the wind never touched our many bird feeders or our resin table and chairs that sat out in front of the store. We were lucky, though. Mike said if that tornado had been 50 feet further north, we wouldn't have a house.



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Most of the guests headed back to their cabins and campsites to assess their damages first. Once that was accomplished, they all came back to the store and asked us where we wanted to start with the cleanup. All I could do was to thank them and tell them to pick a spot. Four men spent five hours with chainsaws just to get vehicles in and out of the resort. Satellite bathrooms were brought in due to loss of water and power. Ice and water were dispensed without charge. Children as well as adults gave of their time and energy to help restore what was possible to its former state. Most of the campers went to the campground and started cleaning up by removing limbs and branches off their campers. They came and asked for rakes and just took over. By the time I was able to get to the campground later that day, those wonderful people had most of the mess cleaned up and started a burn pile to get rid of the brush.

Mike had looked at the lake and shoreline during the storm and already knew that all of our docks and boats were gone. At one point during the storm, he did see the lake was up about 5 feet. He could tell because on one of the boatlifts, the lake was up to the gearbox on the wheel of the lift. After the storm, he saw that although the docks and some boats/motors were upside down in the lake, they did not all disappear. The water level had risen so high that it pushed up through our narrows much like a tsunami. The water just rose – no waves – just rose and some of our dock sections had floated off. With the water so much higher than normal, it only appeared that all the docks had left the shore. We had our two 24-foot pontoons chained to a 40-foot dock. Both pontoons along with the dock ended up around the bend on a neighbor's dock – whose pontoon was upside down in the lake. When Mike and one of the guests found our pontoons both started and ran! They were able to drive them and the attached dock back to our shoreline.

During all this time, other guests had retrieved overturned boats and motors out of the lake, restored most of the docks to original positions and found most of our dock sections. The children had a ball taking out paddleboats; tying onto floating dock sections and paddling them back in. The boats were cleaned out and motors were taken off and set on the ground along side gas tanks. Still more guests were raking our lane to rid it of small debris so people could get in and out. Others were cleaning up around each cabin where possible. Nearby farmers with their machines and volunteers from other resorts cut up and removed as many of the trees and brush as they could. Friends and neigh-

bors dropped by to help where they could. The power company finally got power restored to most of the resort by 10:00 p.m. that evening. We bought the last generator in Fergus Falls and hooked up the remainder of the resort, the campsites and three cabins, so at least they could have refrigeration and water.

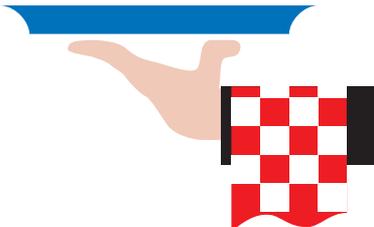
Then came Tuesday. Clean up continued. By Thursday, we realized that progress was steady, but slow. I'd been on the CMR chat line since Tuesday responding to inquires about how we were doing and getting much emotional support. Many wanted to come and help, but had their own businesses to run – which we understood fully. On Thursday, one member offered a phone number of a friend of his who does professional logging. I called, got the number and phoned it. Through this member, we met the most wonderful two men who didn't want to gouge us and grossly benefit from our misfortune. Believe me, there were people flooding into Ottertail County from all over the five-state area ready to make a bundle off people coping with a disaster. These two men gave us a price and said they could be there Friday morning at 9:00 a.m. to start. We agreed and on Friday morning, they arrived with their equipment. They accomplished more in one day than we had in a week. By the end of three days, our resort resembled it's former self. Granted we were minus many beautiful trees, but the integrity and knowledge of these two men made a world of difference to us. As other people from the area watched them work at our place, we were happy to see they got other jobs with people who were unable to get local commitments for quite some time.

Each night after our 12 – 16 hour days, Mike and I fell in to bed exhausted but thanking God for friends, neighbors and the wonderful people who were our guests that week.

Our local insurance agent came to the resort on Wednesday 2 days after the storm and our insurance company sent out an adjuster who arrived on Friday. The adjuster took pictures, asked questions, and listened to our descriptions since a great deal of clean up had already been done. He was out a couple of times after that. In our claim I requested our guests be reimbursed for the work they did, which would cost them far less than having to shut down and claim loss of income while we cleaned up the debris. I was told that our insurance company received the final report on Friday, August 26 and we should expect payment soon. Time will tell just what we will be reimbursed for.

It's been over two months since that storm. Even though we've had new people come in to check out our place for next year and say how beautiful it is - it will never be quite the same for us. We know where the big trees stood and provided shade. We remember the devastation after that storm. We thank God every day that He spared all of our lives on that June 20, 2005.

RESORTER RECIPES



BAKED WILD RICE

1 cup wild rice
3 cups water

Put ingredients into oven-safe pot with lid. Bake at 350 for 1 1/2 hours. Rinse rice & use for recipe. I bake one pound of rice with 3 times the water. Rinse; cool; put in Ziploc bags and freeze for soup or baked dish recipes.

WILD RICE SOUP

1/2 lb. bacon, cut up & fried crisp; drain
1 medium onion, chopped
5 stalks celery, chopped
1 cup wild rice to cook (or 3 cups cooked)
2 cans chicken broth
2 cans cream of potato soup
2 pints 1/2 & 1/2
1 lb. Velveeta

Sauté onion & celery in 2 T. butter. Add bacon, broth, soup, rice, & chunk Velveeta; when cheese is melted, add 1/2 & 1/2 and simmer on very low temp for at least an hour. Creamy thick soup!

Log into Yahoo e-groups to find out when more Congress of Minnesota Resorts' School of Resorting classes are offered!

PUMPKIN BARS

2 c. flour	4 eggs
2 tsp. baking powder	1 cup oil
1/2 tsp. salt	2 c. sugar
3 tsp. pumpkin pie spice	1 can pumpkin

Mix eggs, oil, sugar and pumpkin together and add dry ingredients. Pour into greased jellyroll pan. Bake 25-30 minutes at 350 degrees. Frost with cream cheese frosting.

CREAM CHEESE FROSTING

1 8oz. cream cheese, softened
1 tsp. vanilla
4 Tbsp. butter, softened
4 cups powdered sugar
Mix all ingredients with hand mixer. Frost cooled pumpkin bars.

CHINESE SPAGHETTI

3 boneless chicken breasts
2 cups chopped broccoli
2 cups pea pods
1 cup sliced carrots
1 onion, chopped
Angel Hair Pasta
1/2 cup brown sugar
1/2 cup soy sauce
2-3 tsp. ginger

Sauté the chicken breasts in 3 Tbsp. olive oil; cut into cubes and return to skillet. Add broccoli, pea pods, carrots and onions. Cook pasta and add to skillet mixture. Mix the brown sugar, soy sauce and ginger and pour over ingredients in skillet. Serve!

CMR FALL CONFERENCE

Mark your calendars now for the 20th Annual CMR Fall Conference!

The conference starts on Monday October 24th at 9 am and ends Wednesday the 26th around noon at Cragun's Resort & Conference Center near Brainerd. There is a block of rooms for Sunday the 23rd for those of you that would like to arrive early and maybe get in a round of golf or relax, watch your favorite football game or visit with friends.

This year's conference is the 20-year celebration of the CMR, so you do not want to miss it!

The Conference committee has many interesting topics planned and some great entertainment on hand. The Fall Conference is the perfect place to meet with other resorters for a getaway after your busy summer, a great way to absorb a wealth of information or just to relax with fellow resorters and friends. We look forward to seeing you this fall at Cragun's Resort!

THE WORKAMPING EXPERIENCE

By Dawn Sullivan, Woodland Trails Resort

There are a number of choices you can make when hiring a resort employee. Do you want a high school or college age person? Would you be better served with someone more mature? How about someone who would live on-site? This year I had my first experience as an employer in the resorting industry and I thought I would share my experiences in hiring a Workamper®.

Before making any hiring decisions I like to sit down with paper and pen and make a couple of lists to focus my energies. (I am the kind of person who plans the plan to plan the plan to make the plan so I had to force myself to stop after three lists.)

The first list I made pertained to the type of work I would want my employee to do. Lawn mowing, cabin cleaning, plus many hours selling gummy worms and ice cream to the little guests at our resort. I also noted in my list that I was looking for someone who could work 4 days a week from Thursday through Sunday. At this point I started thinking that a high school kid might not be versatile enough.

The second list I made detailed some of the personality traits I was looking for in an employee, a self-starter, friendly, hard working and good with kids (see above reference to gummy worms).

The last list I made detailed all the steps I needed to get set up for my first employee, Workman's Comp., payroll information, etc. This list took the longest because I had to learn all about Workman's Comp and State and Federal withholdings, yawn!

After studying my lists I decided that what I really needed was a Workamper® couple. I heard about Workampers® a couple of years ago through another resort owner who had used them before. The term "Workamper®" applies to people who subscribe to Workamper® N you.

Since we have a campground and we had the perfect open site for a Workamper®, I decided to log onto www.workampers.com. At their website I learned that some Workampers® would work for just the trade of a campsite while others wanted payment for some or all of the hours worked. I also learned that, if you used the right language, the cost of the site rental could be excluded from the salary that you pay them.

We were looking for a couple to work a total of 30 hours per week, between the two of them. We decided to take the middle route and pay them for 15 hours per week and they would work the other 15 hours as compensation for their campsite. We also offered another perk, the use of a fishing boat during their off hours.

So we placed our ad on the Workampers® website and, after interviewing 3 applicants we offered the job to a couple who were coming up from Arizona. We sent them a contract detailing the work and pay arrangements and they agreed to come and work for us. Unfortunately, the day they were to arrive came but they never did. They had decided to go someplace else instead. I contacted Workampers® about the situation and they were very helpful and apologetic. They have a policy that allows them to cancel a Workamper® membership in the organization if they are consistent "no shows". They researched my couple and told me that the people I had hired weren't Workamper® members, they must have gotten a copy of the listings from someone who was a member. Since I had a signed contract with the alleged Workampers®, the organization gave me a free ad for my trouble and told me that if I called their customer service number, I could check the employment history of a potential employee before hiring them to find out if they had any complaints lodged against them. First lesson learned.

After the new ad was placed I received 4 more inquiries and found another couple. They were already in Minnesota and just finishing up a short-term position with another campground. The timing was perfect and they were very excited when I offered them the job.

After my first experience, I was more than a little nervous when it came time for them to arrive. We planned for them to arrive a few days before they had to start working so they could get settled into their campsite and learn the 'lay of the land'. They arrived on time and were so delightful and pleasant, I could hardly wait to see how they would work out. After their first week here they were ready to sign up for next year and I was ready to sign them up too. The kids even told me that the new workers were really nice! I couldn't have been more pleased!

When I considered hiring a Workamper® vs. a traditional employee I considered the type of work that they would be doing, I thought about the back-to-school time crunch when hiring kids, I thought about trading a site rental for work hours but there was one additional benefit that I hadn't thought of, when I needed extra help for a special project and when I had an emergency and needed to take off unexpectedly they were right here, ready and willing to step in and help.

As I write this article, my Workampers® will be leaving in just 10 days and I can't imagine how I ran this place without them! I'm sure, as evidenced by my first Workamper® no-show, there are good and bad employees out there. But I am also sure that choosing to hire Workampers® was a great way to go. I highly recommend their organization to anyone out there that needs help and has an available campsite.

APPLY FOR A CMR SCHOLARSHIP!!

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) was established in 1984, with their theme of “Resorters Helping Resorters.” One of our goals is to provide scholastic achievement within the resorting community. Scholarship moneys became available from the previously pledged \$1000 to the Minnesota Office of Tourism, Endowed Chair and in March of 1996 the CMR Scholarship Program was set in motion. With the addition of the Carol Kirchner Memorial Scholarship in 1999, three \$500 scholarships will be awarded each year. The scholarships are to be used for tuition and/or related fees by providing assistance to students in pursuit of their academic or vocational advancement.

The scholarship funds are made available to children and grandchildren of CMR members. An eligible member is one who has been a member for at least three consecutive years and is currently in good standing. Associate members are not eligible for scholarships.

Who is eligible to receive a scholarship?

- A junior or senior in high school who is planning to attend a four year college, a community college, or a vocational/technical college.
- A current undergraduate or technical school student.

NOTE: There are no requirements regarding the course of study a student intends to pursue.

How are applications obtained?

Contact the Secretary of the CMR at cmr@minnesota-resorts.com or 1-888-761-4245

2. Contact your high school Counselor’s Office OR
3. Contact the Financial Aid Office at your college.

NOTE: Information regarding the scholarships is listed in two publications titled “Scholarships and Other Financial Aid for Minnesota Students” and “a State wide guide published by Minnesota Career Information System and Scholarship book”, a nation wide guide by Prentice Hall.

On a yearly basis, the CMR will award three scholarships. Deadline for application is March 15. NO EXCEPTIONS! Recipients OF the scholarships will be notified no later than May 1st. The CMR President or a representative chosen by the president will present scholarships. The president of the CMR will notify the winners by mail and set up presentation times as soon as possible. Winners of the Scholarships, along with photos and essays, will be published in the Minnesota Resorter.

Application is to be mailed to the CMR office in a sealed envelop marked “Scholarship Application”. No one should see the submitted applications until after the committee meets to choose the winners. At that time the committee chairperson will open and present the applications anonymously. Selection of the recipients will be made by the scholarship committee (consisting of three members and one chairperson) designated by the CMR board of Directors. The scholarship committee shall meet as soon as possible after the March 15th deadline. Considerations in selecting recipients shall be completion of application by announced deadline, letter of recommendation, academic achievement, and personal essay and comments.

Scholarships are to be paid by check to the school of the recipient’s choice after the student has completed the first quarter/semester the following fall. Scholarships may be applied to the second or third grading period of the year, but their transcript must be submitted by June 15th of the school year the scholarship was awarded for to utilize the Scholarship money.

Michelle Triska, daughter of Mike and Jackie Triska, was selected to receive the Carol Kirschner Scholarship of \$500.00. She has been helping her family at Voyageur Cove Resort on Lake Vermilion since she was 3 years old. Growing up in the resort atmosphere has enhanced Michelle’s life with so many different skills and has made her more of an extraverted person. She has been an asset to her church, school, and community and has received numerous awards. Michelle has chosen Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, where she plans to go into Nursing.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE STORM

By Tom & Brenda Masloski, Weslake Resort

The summer of 2005 brought many of us a challenge beyond what would normally be considered part of “Owning a Resort”. We started out the year with a very wet spring here in Ottertail County and then on June 20 our worlds were turned upside down by 100 plus mph winds and more heavy rains. Many Resorts in this area lost more than just buildings or equipment; they lost some of their history, or some of the good things that make them a resort. One thing is for sure, a storm can do a lot of damage in 20 minutes, but it will take a year to clean up the mess it left behind.

Almost everyone lost trees and had damage to lakeshore and we were no exception. This being our first official full summer in the business, we were inaugurated quite well. We learned things that most resorts probably have not had to think about. Things like; What really is insurance?, what is our emergency “Stay Open” plan?”, how will we get things cleaned up?, and who are our friends?

Insurance is an interesting word, after all what good is it if it is not there for you when you need it? We had a really bad experience with the first insurance adjuster that showed up to survey the damage. First, he did not show up until 3 days after the storm and we had a lot cleaned up by then. Second, he was not very easy to deal with. By the time, the adjuster showed up, both Brenda and I were operating on fumes. We had just cleaned up from a major disaster, gone three days without sleep because we were keeping generators running night and day, and we were thinking about the next group of guests that would be arriving soon. The first thing the adjuster said to me, before he even introduced himself is, “We will not cover the trees”. You can about imagine how things went down hill from there. The lesson we learned here is that you do not have to settle for the first adjuster you see. If you are not satisfied, contact the insurance company and get another one out. That is exactly what we did. After three weeks of dealing with this adjuster and getting more and more frustrated, we contacted our agent and told him what was going on, he contacted the insurance company and they had a new adjuster, one that worked directly for the company, out to see us the next week. Important Lesson: You are in control here. The insurance company works for you, so if you are not happy, change things. We also learned to pay close attention to our annual insurance reviews. These can really help with issues in the future. We have a 65 ft high TV antenna that services our cabins, which was completely destroyed in the storm and had to be replaced. The adjusters told us this was not listed on our policy, so it was not covered. We have since made sure it is on the policy.

Clean up plan. Fortunately, we were very lucky. We have a lot of family and some great friends, through our church, who all

stepped up and helped us out, both long term and short term. This has truly been our lifesaver. Not only did it help with our clean up but it helped us keep our sanity. Next time we know who to call and who will be there to help.

Have a “Stay Open” plan. For us that meant backup generators and additional help to keep things going. One thing we found out was that most of our time was consumed with clean up for months after the storm. We had to bring in extra help to do the things that we “normally” do ourselves. Other then our personal residence, things are back to normal and we finished the summer without any more damage. (Knock on wood)

All in all this is a summer we hope no one will ever have to relive. This additional pressure and workload added by storm damage is very wearing on you both personally and professionally. Our hearts and prayers go out to the hurricane struck folks in New Orleans and Mississippi. If any other resort ever has to go through what we had to go through, we know we will do all we can to help.



TALES FROM THE CAMPFIRE

Folks from the Windy City Blow Hot Air?

by Jack & Sherry Frost, Joe's Lodge

This is a story from 50 years ago that was told this summer here at Joe's Lodge. Joe was a French Canadian, who started the resort in 1924. He would take people out on a launch for fishing every evening at 8:00. This couple from Chicago wanted to go fishing, but wanted to go out earlier. "No can do," said Joe, so this couple decided to fish by themselves out on the dock. An hour later they came into the lodge with this story how they caught this monster of a fish, and how the fish got their pole. Nobody believed them and laughed when they heard the story. Discouraged and tired of the laughter, they packed up and headed back to Chicago.



Early the next morning, to everyone's disbelief, this huge muskie washed up on shore... with a lure stuck in its mouth and a fishing pole laying beside it. The muskie's head is still hanging in our lodge today, and it's a big one!

Our Little Philanthropist

by Sheila Niemeyer, Rugged River Resort

As resorters, we've all had one of those days we want to pull our hair out. As parents, we've had many of those days and often wish we could start the day over.

Our hair-pulling day started out fine. All of the cabins were booked. I went to town to get bait and groceries. My husband, Corby took Chandler, our 2 year old, down to the bay to get a couple of boats ready for guests. He locked the office door, but left the door to our home open for our five-year-old son, Gunnar, who was playing in the yard with some of the guests' children.

Upon my return from the grocery store, two guests came running up to my vehicle, gave me \$300 and said my son was handing out money to their children! I felt my heart sink. He'd never touched the cash drawer before, what was going on? I quickly rounded up my little philanthropist, and he emptied his pockets of wadded up one-dollar bills.

Upon much discussion, I found he didn't really understand why it was wrong to take the money or even how much he had taken or given away, after all, he was SHARING. In the end, his explanation went something like this... he just wanted 10 dollars to bury in the sand box so they could dig for treasure. Yes, we found \$50 more in the sand box!

Later in the day, Corby was changing clothes in our bedroom and noticed his fishing poles were gone. He asked me what I did with them.... I made it perfectly clear I hadn't touched them. That is when Gunnar, the helpful resorter pipes up, "I borrowed them to some of the guests who wanted

to go fishing but didn't have any stuff, so I let them use yours Daddy."

Gunnar is now very aware that it is wrong to take money, and borrow Daddy's \$200 Rod & Reel to anyone! The cash box was short \$47.00 and now has a new location. The fishing poles were returned minus a few lures and bobbers. Gunnar has learned an important lesson and is getting very good at cleaning toilets, shaking rugs and sweeping decks.

It wasn't our worst day and it won't be the last of those days we want to pull our hair out. But it will be a story we'll laugh at and recount for years to come!

What It's All About (to the Guests)

by Tom & Brenda Masloski, Weslake Resort

Going to a resort is more than just a vacation. This summer we had a family stay at our resort, as they have many time before; Grandma and Grandpa, their daughter and son-in-law, and grandkids. I think this was their 6th year with us. They were great guests who use all of the facilities and respect everything. They fished, enjoyed s'mores by the campfire, visited with everyone, relaxed in the lawn swings, fished (yes, I meant to say it again), had a fish fry, and played games with the other guests at the resort, all around a great family. When they left, they shared with us how much fun they had and were already looking forward to next year. We said our goodbyes, and off they went.

Two weeks later we received a call from the daughter letting us know that Grandpa had passed away; it was a shock to everyone. She said she had to call and let us know how thankful she was that she was able to spend one of the last weeks of her father's life, with him, at our resort. That time to her was more than just vacationing, it was about making memories that will last forever. The one thing she will always remember is that he truly enjoyed the last weeks of his life.

The point here is that going to a resort is not just about vacationing; it is about making memories that our guests never forget. This type of feedback really puts everything else in perspective and makes us proud to be Minnesota resort owners.

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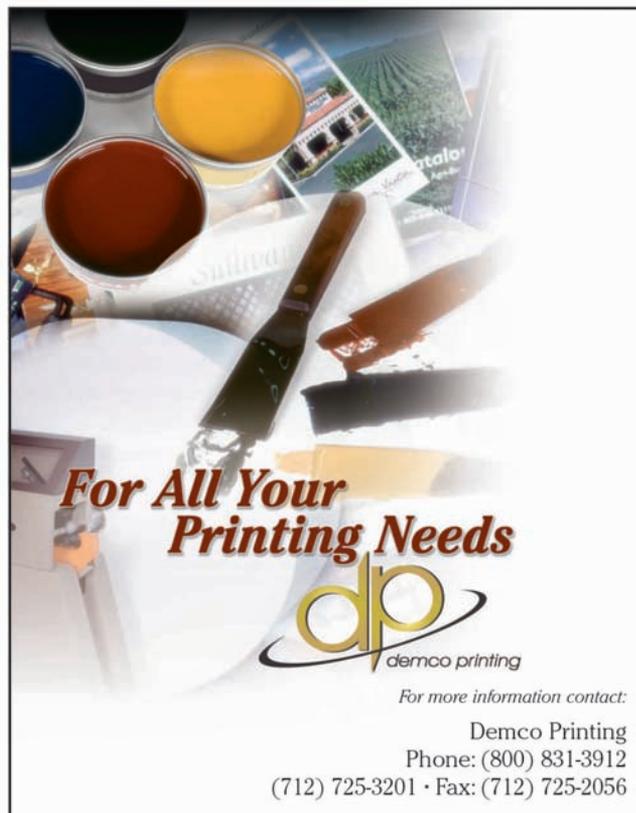
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BEWARE OF A RECENT SCAM!

By Mark Novotny, Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort

I just run across a SCAM!! I had someone make a reservation over the internet for 2 weeks in Sept. I gave them the price and they said that they would be mailing me a check. So far, it sounded legitimate. They mailed me a check via UPS for more than the amount of the 2-week cabin stay, so he asked to have the balance sent to him via Western Union or Moneygram. It was a cashier's check. RED FLAG!! RED FLAG!! I took the check to the bank and they confirmed my suspicion. It was a fraudulent cashier's check! Beware of anyone wanting you to send them money for overpayment!!

A familiar note from another resorter in the Park Rapids area. The "guest" sent a cashier's check for \$5000 to the resort. Then asked the resort owner to take out the amount needed for the cabin rental and send him back the balance, with the excuse that his employer was paying for the trip. Another instance was reported to have happened to an Itasca County resorter.



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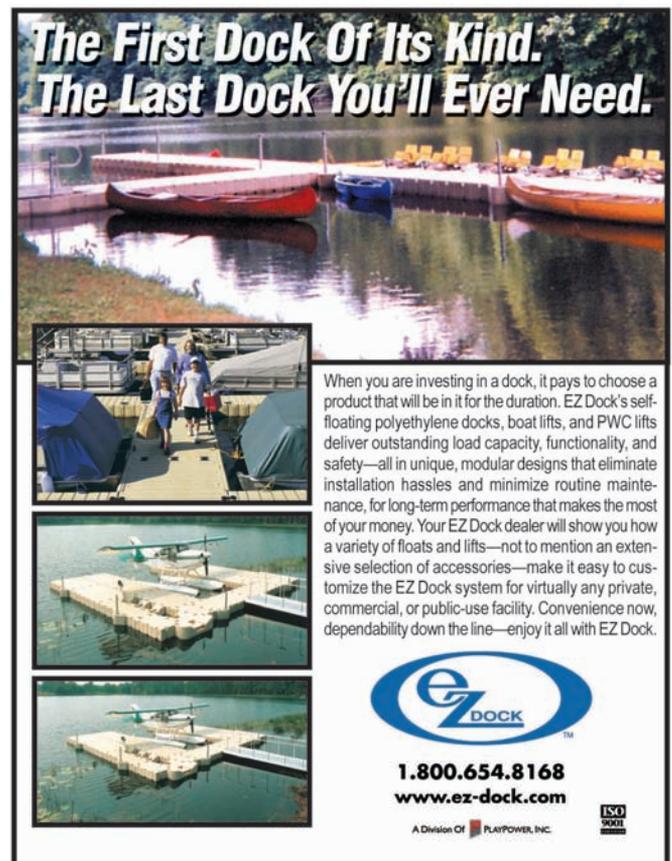
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- Mike & Peggy Trace, Clearwater Canoe Outfitting & Lodge, Grand Marais.
- Wayne & Sue Wahlstrom, Pine Grove Lodge, Max.
- LeRoy & Carol Gruhike, Pincherry Grove Resort, Cohasset.
- Joycelyn F. Weyker, Franks' Lodge & Campground, Dent.
- Floyd & Sue Frank, Round Bay Resort, Park Rapids
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GOING THE EXTRA MILE

By Bud & Phyllis Narveson, Woodlawn Resort

Across the lake from Woodlawn Resort lies Glendalough State Park, formerly the private preserve of the Cowles family that owned the Minneapolis Tribune, until they donated it to the State a number of years ago. The park lies between West Battle Lake and Blanche Lake (our lake), and through the park and its lakes flows a lovely meandering stream. For many years now, we have been loading our canoes on our old car and transporting them and resort guests to a friend's place on the creek a short distance from its origin in West Battle Lake. From there, the guests find their way downstream, through a culvert under a county highway, along the eastern shore of Molly Stark Lake, through a cattail slough, past a beaver lodge, under a bridge and along the western shore of Annie Battle Lake to the grounds of the former resort, where many of them stop to picnic. After their picnic their trip continues down stream across a pond covered with water lilies and lotuses, past another beaver lodge into Blanche Lake and across Blanche back to Woodlawn.

Besides stopping to picnic, guests often do a little fishing in Annie Battle. A lake restricted to "primitive fishing"—no out-board or inboard motors, no trolling motors, no electronic gear, and strict limits (as a result, many large fish). They come back reporting varied sightings of wildlife be it deer, beaver, fish, turtles, herons or the occasional eagle. The trip, at a leisurely pace, takes an average of three hours.

As the canoes approach the resort, we try to be waiting with cameras in hand. The resulting photos go either onto our website, or by email to the guests back at their homes, or both. Some guests have taken the trip for several years in a row, and this year one party liked the trip so much that they made it twice in one week. We have nine parties each week, and some weeks as many as six will make the trip.

We have three canoes, and can load one or all of them on top of our old Ford Taurus. Normal carrier bars are not long enough, so we have cut two 2x4s to just the lengths to hold two canoes side by side. To the ends of the 2x4s we have screwed small pieces of board protruding up so that the canoes cannot slip off. We rest the 2x4s on the top of the car and secure them to the sides of the car top carriers with several wraps of duct tape. We have never had a problem with the tape tearing or the 2x4s slipping. We load the canoes, as needed, one or two across, and the third in the middle atop the other two. We tie the canoes front, back, and across.

The launching point is seven miles from the resort, making a fourteen mile round trip, for which we have been charging ten dollars regardless of number of canoes or people. (Given the cost of gasoline, we are thinking of increasing the charge all the way to \$15.) Clearly, this barely pays for our costs; much less our time, but the good will and pleasure these trips create are priceless.



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CREATURES OF HABIT

By Pat Addler, Cedar Rapids Lodge

I write this article after 18 years of experience in the resort business and am addressing issues that brand new resort owners may want to consider. When you decide to provide an amenity or service to your guests, think long and hard about it before you ever incorporate it into your resort. Guests are “creatures of habit” and will remember each year every detail of what transpired the previous year and haunt you with memories that you may long have forgotten about.

One example I recall happened shortly after we took ownership of our resort on Sept. 1, 1987. We went to the Congress of Minnesota Resorts fall conference and listened while other “seasoned” resort owners shared ideas from their resorts. I remember someone saying they put fresh cookies on the table of every cabin when the guests arrived each week. I thought that sounded like something I could do at my resort and started that same tradition with my guests. Well, 18 years later, the kids are still jumping out of the car—kids from 8 to 80—and checking to make sure those cookies are on the table.

As the years passed, we continued to attend the CMR fall conferences and spring workshops, gaining such insight on everything from how to treat a guest to how many rolls of toilet paper to put in the cabin! (I give as many rolls as a guest needs!) We started doing kids’ activities with the little guests each week, posting a schedule in the lodge each Saturday and smiling our way through minnow races, bingo, bonfires, pizza parties, and several activities geared to the age group each week. We discontinued some activities as our kids got tired of doing them, such as the minnow races, then started doing them again this summer to the delight of several little ones who had never raced a minnow in a guttering trough, for a treat in the lodge!

We have found over the years that it’s the little things you do that cost very little and take even less of your time that end up meaning the most to your guests. As resort owners, we are providing life-long memories for kids and their parents that will not soon be forgotten when they go home from their summer vacation. Each time you drag your feet answering the bell when it rings in the lodge, there is a sweet little smile at the counter just waiting to tell you about the frog on the beach or wanting to show you the bucket of shells they collected on the shore. How many frogs and shells have we seen in 18 years? Too many to count, but in most cases it was the first frog or bucket of shells from that little one.

Several years ago, at another CMR fall conference, a fellow resort owner told me that she made up little cards for the children who came to her resort. She would send the card in a birthday card to each little guest, and the kids would bring the card to the resort the next summer and use it for treats during their vacation stay at her resort. Well...you guessed it....I decided to make my own

“KidKard” to give to each child who came to the resort. I used business card stock, created a card with ten 25-cent punches on the card for each little one to use at their leisure during their week of vacation. Basically, we were starting the weekly corruption of video games, candy-buying, and ice cream treats for each child by giving them \$2.50 in free money to wet their whistles!! It worked! Now the kids jump out of the car, get their cookie off the cabin table, and scurry to the lodge to get their free “KidKard” and officially begin their vacation.

It appears that this article has ended up telling about memories provided to the short crowd at our resort. I guess being a family resort means that we have families coming week after week. We have learned over the years that if you treat the children well and provide things for them to do all week, their parents will be happy and you will most likely have a family that returns year after year for more memories.

Most of the successful ideas we have incorporated at our resort over the past 18 years have originated from the Congress of Minnesota Resorts fall conferences and spring workshops. We have also been board members during three different terms, providing us chat time with other successful resort owners and sharing ideas that worked for them. If you are a new owner or a seasoned owner, please consider attending the fall conference this year on October 24, 25 and 26 at Cragun’s Resort. Sharing that time with fellow resorters will be a priceless experience that will undoubtedly convince you to start new traditions at your own resort. Just remember.....guests are “Creatures of Habit” and will not let go of those traditions!



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PLAN ON ATTENDING THE EXHIBITORS EXPO!

By Ann Moroz, former owner of Bear Paw Resort

The Exhibitors Expo at the CMR Fall Conference is an excellent time to meet with vendors at your own pace and in a relaxed setting. The vendors are ready and eager to explain their product and/or service without a hard-sell approach. They are able to sell right from their booths but realize that their main objective is to get to meet you and familiarize you with their product.

We are planning for 30-plus vendors so there is a wide range of products/services to suit your needs. A few examples of past exhibitors products are: pre-built cabins, accountants, used hotel furnishings, customized resort clothing, one-of-a-kind artwork, financial planners, property architects, hotel/motel supplies, light bulbs, credit card processing, banks, items for resale, insurance, docks, boats and motors, fire prevention equipment, golf cars and many more.

Beverages and snacks are available throughout the Expo. The exhibitors each donate one nice item to be given away. Prize

winners names are drawn every 15 minutes or so throughout the Expo - plus a grand prize at any given time, and you must be present to win. This is a good networking opportunity and just one part of the Fall Conference that resort owners have found valuable all year.

Throughout the year, if you think of anyone who might be interested in possibly showing at our Expo please let me know so I can add them to the database. Even though we sold our resort, Geno & I will continue to plan the Exhibitors Expo - mainly so we can see all of you at least once a year!

Contact Ann Moroz at 218 732-4757 or gamoroz5146@wcta.net for more information.

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WE APPRECIATE OUR FREEDOM

by Mark Novotny, Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort



As many of you know, many families in Minnesota are affected by the War in Iraq. Military personnel continue to be called to active duty and more are being trained for deployment.

The State of Minnesota, with the initiative of the First Lady Mary Pawlenty, has set up the Military Family Care Initiative. From this Initiative, the Leech Lake Area Chamber of Commerce has taken it a step further and, for the Leech Lake Area, has asked resorts and businesses for vacation donations for our active service men and women being deployed. There are criteria that need to be met to qualify for these vacation donations. This idea was to show our appreciation to our active service men and women. We hope that our small sacrifice will show them how much we appreciate their large sacrifice.

If you would like more information about this and how to get it set up for your chamber or organization, please call Mark Novotny at Hyde-A-Way Bay Resort (218-675-6683) or call the Leech Lake Area Chamber of Commerce (218-547-1313) for more information.

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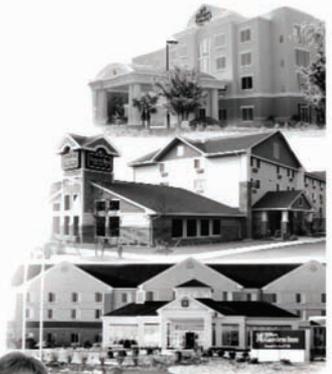
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LODGING TAX IN THE MILLE LACS LAKE AREA

by Tina Chapman, Chapman's Mille Lacs Resort & Guide Service

Lodging tax can sometimes be a controversial issue. Nobody likes to pay taxes, and as resort owners we don't want to be the "bad guys" collecting more taxes that nobody likes to pay! But the reality is lodging tax has become an industry standard across the nation and in many parts of Minnesota. Just stay in Minneapolis once if you want to see taxes — 3% lodging, 1/2% for this, 1/2% for that. Travelers are familiar with the concept!

About seven years ago, the Mille Lacs Lake area was faced with several issues involving the tribal harvest of walleye, tight fishing regulations, bad media coverage, etc. It was negatively affecting business. We had had various tourism organizations off and on, but nothing aggressively active at that time. So the state legislature awarded us a grant to help us get our feet back on the ground, to combat the looming (and as some thought, the "dooming") issues. After receiving (and using up) the grant money, we were told by the legislature that we now had to find our own source of funding, and **specifically** that a lodging tax was the way to do it.

Mille Lacs Lake has 14 cities and townships that surround it, and we needed each one to give us the green light to start collecting a lodging tax. We thought all the area resorts would want the lodging tax and would do it, but we were wrong. Our biggest mistake was assuming this and going straight to the 14 cities and townships with our request. We were pretty much stopped dead in our tracks. We did finally get one city to pass the tax one year later, and that was because two of the four larger resorts/motels were big supporters of the area tourism organization and in favor of the tax. Through the years we still have not been able to get it passed in any of the other townships because there still are so many that just can't accept the idea of collecting another tax. But for those lodging properties that understand the benefit of an active tourism organization, they work with us voluntarily. Each year someone new comes knocking on the tourism door who wants to participate with the lodging tax, and we welcome them eagerly.

If you are involved with an organization or tourism area that is trying to get a lodging tax passed, first and foremost get all the lodging properties on board BEFORE you go to a city or township to have it passed. Do this through education. For those resorters who will not agree with the tax, don't exhaust yourselves over them as we did.

Individual properties cannot collect a lodging tax and keep it for themselves. It is set up through townships, cities, joint powers, tourism organizations, and the like. The tax money collected must be used to market your area. Any member of our tourism organization has a say in how the marketing dollars are spent if they attend the meetings. Be sure to go after the full 3% allowed if you can.

Is a lodging tax good for your business? ABSOLUTELY! Just look at it as a joint cooperative marketing effort and that you are not only competing against your neighbors (meaning other Minnesota destinations) but other states as well. As individual resorts, most of us cannot afford to advertise in AAA, Midwest Outdoors, In-Fisherman, etc. They are just too expensive. But by collecting a lodging tax, our tourism organization can afford this type of advertising for our area, thus gaining exposure for my own business. The tourism organization isn't my only avenue for marketing, but it is definitely a big part of it.



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2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION RE-CAP

by Dave Thompson, Fisherman's Village Resort CMR Legislative Chairperson

Our Lobbyist Joel Carlson and I represented the Congress of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) at the Capitol on many bills this past session. We testified on many occasions on several bills effecting Minnesota Resorts. As your Legislative Chair person, I reported to Resorters on our online chat room, e-groups, on over 30 bills that effected Resorters. Joel Carlson sent weekly Legislative Updates to the e-groups Chat line to highlight events at the Capitol that effected Resorters. As you know, the Legislature again went into special session this year and as he has done every year, Joel was there every day to protect our interests. In special session, several key legislative issues were finalized in our favor, due to Joel's constant vigil and work behind the scenes. The highlights of that work were certainly the Post Labor Day School Law, which will take effect starting the 2006 session. The property tax relief bills were also down to the last days of the session, and we faired well in that area with the new property tax bill offered by the County Assessor's Association as a compromise to 3 property tax bills authored by resort area legislators.

Our key legislative issues this year were:

Post Labor Day School Start. As it has been since 1997, this was our #1 issue. This year, with the added help of the coalitions we have worked very hard to formulate, this landmark legislation was passed. The State Fair, Minnesota State Chamber Association, Mall of America, Explore Minnesota Tourism, Minnesota Innkeepers Association, and Hospitality Minnesota worked with us to pass this bill. Our resort area Legislators as always authored and lobbied hard to get this done. Thanks to all who helped put this over the top.

Fire Marshal Fees. This year the Fire Marshal's Office, led by Fire Marshal Jerry Rosendahl sponsored a bill, HF 2079, to reinstate the fee for service inspection fee on Resorts and small hotels. This past fall the Fire Marshal worked with the Minnesota Attorney General to successfully remove resorts from the inspection process by stating that resorts didn't fall into the definition of a hotel. This year I testified 7 times and made 14 trips to the capitol over the winter months to work with key legislators, to not only oppose this bill but to get the legislature to properly fund and staff this department with the funds already collected from our fire insurance policy premiums. I was successful in defeating this bill, however I was unsuccessful in getting the legislature to re-instate the inspections. The Legislators did slightly increase the General Fund budget, however the Fire Marshal's Office did not even use the increase in funding to add to their staff. Those dollars were spent on Arson Investigators that were already fully staffed. Thanks to all the Resorters who called, emailed or wrote their legislators on this issue. I will continue to keep this issue alive for the 2006 session.

ELS equipment for low volume Resort License Agents. HF 1591 was our bill to not use low volume as a determining factor in determining agent status. We were successful in passing this bill. However low volume agents were put on a 2 year contract so the DNR could come up with a better plan to address our needs to the remaining agents, the DNR also needs to provide equipment to higher volume agents not able to get equipment. We will be working with the DNR's Fish and Wildlife Director John Guenther, to accomplish this goal.

Property Tax Relief. The CMR has had our Small Resort Preservation Bill in front of the legislature since the year 2000. It has passed the Senate Tax Committee each year, but has always been turned down in the House Tax Committee. This year Joel and I testified 10 times in both the House and Senate Committees. During this time, the County Assessor's Association opposed our bill, but offered a compromise bill that did eventually pass in special session. We testified in favor of this bill because ANY improvement in property tax reform for Resorts was a victory. We will continue working on tax language that will remove land valuation based on residential demand. The bill that passed takes effect for payable 2006 taxes. 1c property which is Resort Property homesteaded by the owner and used for temporary, seasonal, recreational occupancy for less than 250 days a year. The new language is: **The first \$500,000 of market value is tier I, the next \$1,700,000 of market value is tier II, and any remaining market value is tier III. The class rates for class 1c are: tier I, 0.55 percent; tier II, 1.0 percent; and tier III, 1.25 percent. If a class 1c resort property has any market value in tier III, the entire property must meet the requirements of subdivision 25, paragraph (d), clause (1), to qualify for class 1c treatment.** None of the other property tax reform bills offered passed. This is still a major improvement. This bill will positively affect the majority of Minnesota's small resorts. If you live on your resort and Homestead it you will benefit from this new legislation.

Delayed Property Tax Payment Date. This bill has been a top priority for the CMR since Sen. Tony Kinkle authored it several years ago. Originally it was not our bill but we have supported it every year and have made sure it gets authored each session. Joel and I testified in favor of it in both the House and Senate. It did not pass again this year. At one point there was some support among legislators to make our property tax payment only once a year and that would be the October payment and eliminate the May payment. That did not get any traction either and failed in committee.

continued on next page...

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Other notable legislation that passed this session that effected Resorters:

Life Jacket requirement for children less than 10 years of age.
 Boat license registration increase on boats less than 19 feet.
 Funds dedicated to public access improvement.
 Walleye limit changed from a possession limit of 6 only one of which could be over 24 inches per day, to possession limit of 6 only one of which can be over 20 inches per day.

Our Day on the Hill event in February was a huge success. Over 40 resorters wore orange life jackets, met with over 70 legislators and the Governor. The Governor even wore the life jacket we presented him with- to recognize our effort in Preserving Minnesota Resorts. The CMR had its best legislative results for our issues ever. We remain an organization dedicated to the improvement and enhancement of resorts in Minnesota.

Log into Yahoo e-groups to find out when more Congress of Minnesota Resorts' School of Resorting classes are offered!

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BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CMR

Your membership in the Congress of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) is a good investment for both you and your resort business. Join in the organization's philosophy of "Resorters Helping Resorters". So many benefits await you! Fill out the membership application today, and become a member of a unique association of resorters, run by resorters, for resorters. Our focus is very clear!

Resort Name _____ Lake _____

Owner/Manager _____ Years in resorting _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Township _____ County _____

Phone _____ No. of rental units _____ No. of bedrooms _____

No. of Campsites _____

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Membership investment is only \$12.00 per bedroom (min., 8 bedrooms or less, \$125, max. \$625.)

Amount of check enclosed _____ Please circle.....New.....Renewal

Send to: Congress of Minnesota Resorts, PO Box 124 Spicer, MN 56288



*We need **YOUR** stories, articles and pictures for the Minnesota Resorter Magazine!*

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or Send to: Tom Masloski
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WHAT IS THE CONGRESS OF MINNESOTA RESORTS ALL ABOUT

MARKETING

As a member, your resort is listed on our web site www.minnesota-resorts.com, and you have password protected access to your listing. This means you can make any changes to your listing anytime you want. It's easy and it gets results!

EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION

This is something that the Congress of Minnesota Resorts is really good at! Every year we hold a one day Spring Workshop and a 2 1/2 day Fall Conference. We also sponsor the School of Resorting. These are all ways for resorters to get together, learn from one another about resorting issues and just plain have fun! We also sponsor the on-line "chat room" that you've probably heard so much about.

LEGISLATIVE EFFORTS

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts assures you of having your voice heard as a resort at the state capitol. The Congress of Minnesota Resorts hires a lobbyist to represent resorts at the state level. Also, our legislative committee keeps members abreast of legislation affecting the resort industry.

GUEST APPROVED RESORT PROGRAM

Available to members, this program allows resorts to survey their guests anonymously. This is a great way to receive valuable feedback and can also be used as a marketing tool.

ALL THE OTHER STUFF

Every year we offer scholarships to member's children and grandchildren, and award our "Resorters of the Year Award" to a deserving resort member. We also get our members hooked up with low long distance phone rates, competitive Visa/MasterCard rates and a free subscription to the DNR's Volunteer magazine.

OUR MOTTO

The Congress of Minnesota Resort's motto is "Resorters Helping Resorters". We believe that none of us is as smart as all of us.

OUR MISSION

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.

What are you waiting for? Join the Congress of Minnesota Resorts today!

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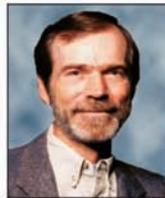
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