

Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters

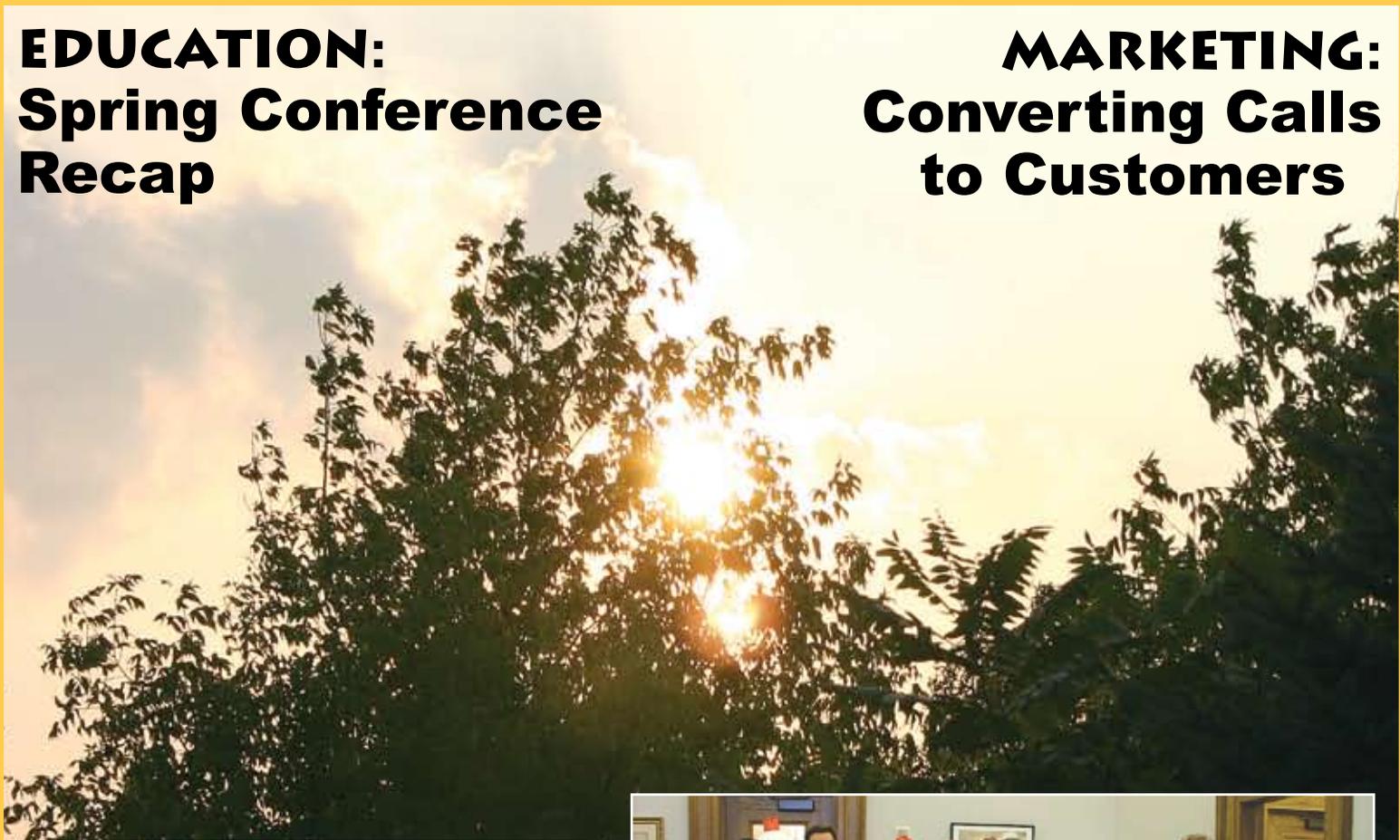


"SWIM SAFELY"
SHALLOW WATER BLACKOUT

Spring 2006 Vol. 22 No. 2

**EDUCATION:
Spring Conference
Recap**

**MARKETING:
Converting Calls
to Customers**



Governor Pawlenty
proclaims March 8, 2006 as
"Dave Thompson Day!"



**LEGISLATIVE:
CMR Day on the Hill**



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Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters



A Congress of Minnesota Resorts Publication

Spring 2006

(Vol. 22 No. 2)

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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 Jennifer Bateman
Congress of Minnesota Resorts

It's usually about this time of year that I am ready for a change in my schedule. Just like in September when I'm feeling the need to be alone and have the resort to myself, it's usually mid-March that I'm feeling ready to start seeing people again! The relaxed pace of winter is nice (our resort is not open for winter business), but the rush of spring work can be just as enjoyable. I think it is fair to say that we all have great pride in our own resort and getting everything up and running for another season provides us all with a great deal of satisfaction.

Don't get me wrong when I say this, but do you ever wonder why people like to come to your resort? Certainly, when you live at a resort and live on a lake, you get immune to what other people appreciate. You take it for granted and you just can't help it because you live and breathe and smell and see the lake life every day.

I think, the best thing you can do to begin to appreciate it again is to leave home and take a vacation. We recently took a family vacation, were gone for a full week, and stayed at a resort. The rate for our two bedroom/two bath unit was, I felt, quite reasonable. However, we had a unit above us and on either side of us. We had to listen to the loud footsteps of a couple preschoolers above us for several nights in a row. Our unit only had windows on the front side which looked out onto the parking lot. We had no view. We had no way to enjoy the outdoor air or the little bit of green space around our unit without making the trek to the pool. While at the pool, we were forced to listen to the piped in rock music because that was how they did things there. We were

located close to an airport so were graced with rocket noise every 5-8 minutes beginning at 6:30 in the morning. And let me tell you, some of those planes were LOUD! We were one block from a four lane highway so heard plenty of sirens. We had a great family vacation and made some good memories, and I have been renewed to appreciate what my resort and my lake and grounds and beach and docks and boats mean to the people who come to stay with us. It's a unique get-away that's dark at night and QUIET!! People from larger cities love the change and we need to always be mindful of what we provide to people. A good environment, along with good service and good facilities, is what many people are looking for.

Now I'd like to give you an update on a few highlights with the CMR this past quarter. In January, Cindy Pitt from Bailey's Resort and I represented the CMR at the Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference in St. Cloud. This was an excellent conference with some real educational benefit to our organization. This issue of the Minnesota Resorter contains a couple articles written from the presentations of some of the speakers. We also had the opportunity to meet and greet other leaders in the tourism industry and to continue to endorse the CMR as a progressive statewide resort association.

After eight years of dedication to the CMR, Dave Thompson is stepping down as our legislative chairperson. His obvious drive for legislative fairness and commitment to the CMR and what we stand for have been evident in everything he does. He's been a good role model for all of us. Thanks, Dave, for helping lead and strengthen our program to what it is today.

The CMR board realizes that our marketing efforts are an important benefit to members. The website and marketing committees have decided to send out a request for a proposal for a complete remake of our website www.minnesota-resorts.com. The plan is for our member site www.resorters.org to be a part of the remake. We hope to secure a new designer and have the website done in July. In the mean time, be sure to read the educational pieces that are included in your newsletter "The Resorter Reporter." These simple tips will help you make the most of your website listing.

Your board has been hard at work! Please read this magazine cover to cover for a complete update in the areas of legislation, marketing and education. Read all the advertising, too, because the advertisers support you and the resort industry. If you have any ideas or input on any resort issue, we'd love to hear from you. Please call any board member or me. We want and need to hear from everybody!

So, with that I'll sign off. Don't forget to plant some trees this spring, and have a fabulous summer!



Wondering how you rank as a Resort in Minnesota?

See page 16 for information on the Congress of Minnesota Resorts

Guest Approved Resort Program.

Swim Safely!

By Darwin & Susan Ferguson, Pine Terrace Resort

July 21, 2005, was warm and sunny, a perfect day to be at the lake! We will never forget that day. A sixteen-year-old guest at our resort drowned. What had been a day of swimming and fun for everyone turned tragic in a heartbeat. The teenager had been swimming with a family member. They had been racing and swimming underwater to see who could stay under the water the longest. The sixteen-year-old started to get on the swim raft, said he was dizzy, and disappeared into the water. A guest rushed to the office to tell us there was a possible drowning. When we called 911, we were told a guest had already reported it on their cell phone. Our guests were helpful and supportive. Some, who had training, went into the water to try to rescue the victim and others offered to drive the family home to the Chicago area at the end of the day.

The sheriff's department and the coroner's office think that our guest was a victim of "Shallow Water Blackout." Everyone needs to be aware of this. We now have information about shallow water blackout in our guest information books. The information was taken from various websites.

The calls, cards and visits from other resorters helped us through this. "Resorters Helping Resorters" at its best! Our sheriff's department was very helpful, professional and compassionate. They treated the family with kindness and respect and have been back to visit with us.

Shallow Water Blackout a common childhood contest played in many lakes & backyard pools is to see who can hold their breath the longest underwater or to see who can swim the farthest underwater. Tragically, this contest may



cause Shallow Water Blackout, resulting in the drowning death of children, teenagers, and young adults every year.

Shallow Water Blackout occurs when a person repeatedly holds his or her breath underwater or physically exerts himself or herself underwater. Even healthy, strong swimmers & energetic children may lose consciousness with absolutely no warning. The unconscious swimmer will not "flail" or "struggle"; rather the person will slip quietly under the water without regaining consciousness.



Shallow Water Blackout



Shallow Water Blackout occurs when a person repeatedly holds his or her breath underwater or physically exerts himself or herself underwater. Even healthy, strong swimmers & energetic children may lose consciousness with absolutely no warning. The unconscious swimmer will not "flail" or "struggle"; rather the person will slip quietly under the water without regaining consciousness.

Please simply explain Shallow Water Blackout to your children and observe the following guidelines at all times:

- Do not play any "holding breath underwater" contests.
- Do not engage in frequent or extended swims underwater.
- Do not take multiple deep breathes before going underwater. Instead, take a single breath & slowly release the breath while underwater.
- Take a reasonable break between each episode of going underwater.
- For more information go to www.safetycenter.navy.mil

Have a Safe and Happy Season!

Clip out these guidelines to post at your resort.

Congress of Minnesota Resorts Spring Workshop

Beautiful Lake Bemidji Backdrop for the Congress of Minnesota Resorts 2006 Spring Workshop

By Tam Mahaffey, Lost Acres Resort

With beautiful Lake Bemidji as a backdrop, 65 resorters attended the Congress of Minnesota Resorts Spring Workshop! The conference was held at the Hampton Inn and Suites on Monday, March 20, 2006. Our CMR President, Jennifer Bateman, Two Inlets Resort, served as the workshop facilitator.

Here is a summary of what we discussed and learned together.

Have you ever wondered what a Scenic Byway was?

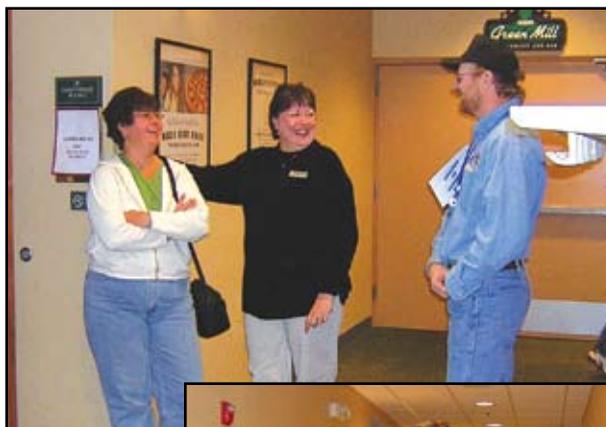
Did you know that Minnesota has twenty-two scenic byways and that six of these are designated as national scenic byways? Lynn Scharenbroich from Black Pine Beach Resort and Dick Haskett from the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway project told participants how to use the scenic byways in the state to help with resort marketing, how the national scenic byway foundation helps with the byway projects, and legislation affecting the scenic byways program. Go to www.byways.org to find out more about byways near your resort. Lynn shared with us how she has mapped out fun and educational day trips for her guests using the byways.

Bruce Meade of Wells Fargo Bank explained what lenders look for in a good business plan. The five Cs; Character, Cash flow, Capital, Conditions and Collateral are the factors that lenders consider when reviewing loan requests. Bruce also discussed how to write a loan proposal for a lender. He encouraged everyone to obtain free copies of their personal credit report. Then he answered numerous questions from resorter participants.

In his last appearance as the chairperson of the CMR Legislative Committee, Dave Thompson told the tale of CMR's 2006 Day on the Hill. Twenty-five resorters carried big red and white bobber coolers as they roamed the halls of the state capitol and state office building. Dave explained the current legislative agenda that will be pursued by the CMR and stressed the successes we have achieved in the past year. For his many tireless years of service to CMR, Dave was thanked with a standing ovation from his fellow resorters.



Lunch, an Italian buffet delight served by the Green Mill restaurant, provided the opportunity for networking, catching up after the long winter and sharing of ideas for the upcoming season.



Mike Hruza, DNR conservation officer, presented fish packer rules and regulations. This presentation generated a whole host of questions from current fish-packers. It also convinced many resorters to apply for a fish-packing license as an amenity. Cleaning and packing fish is something we take for granted; but for many of our guests, using that fillet knife for the first time can be frustrating. Getting the catch all “packed up” can help make their fishing experience more enjoyable.



The Minnesota DNR continued to educate us as Bob Ekstrom, Regional Aquatic Habitat Specialist, gave us ideas on how to stop aquatic hitchhikers from infecting our lakes like a cancer. Examples of aquatic hitchhikers are round goby, zebra mussels, purple loosestrife and Eurasian watermilfoil. Bob handed out some excellent resource information to aid us in identifying aquatic invaders. If we suspect a new infestation of an invasive plant or animal, we should save a specimen and report it to our local natural resource office. Early detection gives them the greatest chance of stopping the spread of aquatic invaders. He also gave us tips on how we as resorters can be better environmental stewards.

Do you have a master plan for your resort? Do you know the planning process? Have you had a site analysis? What is the history of your resort? How can you use it to market and develop your resort? What are you long and short term goals? Paul Richards of Widseth, Smith and Nolting in Bemidji presented many ideas to help with the plan development of your resort if that is an area you wish to pursue.

On a serious side, Darwin Ferguson of Pine Terrace Resort shared a sobering story of an emergency that occurred on their resort. Darwin stressed the importance of emergency preparedness, in their case, for Shallow Water Blackout. He outlined details for calling 911, working with guests, first responders and the sheriff. Mark Novotny, Kerri Ball and Tam Mahaffey followed with suggestions on how to manage a variety of emergencies that could arise at resorts, such as fishhooks sticks, sprains/strains and hypothermia. They demonstrated ideas for first aid kits and suggested that resorters receive CPR and first aid training. There was a great deal of interest in holding a CMR School of Resorting class for the training.

As usual, the cracker-barrels were a hit and one of the best parts of the CMR educational experience. The questions and answers were discussed enthusiastically with everyone sharing great ideas. We went home with thoughts to ponder about how to incorporate these new ideas into our individual resorts.

In CMR tradition, great door prizes were drawn and given

away. Prizes donated were pillows from Bemidji Woolen Mills, handmade furniture from Wade & Mary Smerling of Paradise Resort, a gift from Paul Bunyan Scenic Byways and emergency kits. Prizes from Tom Ossell and Heidi and Harlan Schauer, Northern Lights Resort & Outfitting were given out for asking “good questions” during the cracker-barrels. The grand prizes were long-range walkie-talkies, which will come in very handy for the upcoming season. The winners of the walkie-talkies were Robert Dice from Island View Resort on Nest Lake and Sherry Frost from Joe’s Lodge near Bemidji.



The day was full of information, networking and sharing ideas. If you missed this educational opportunity, plan to attend the CMR Fall Conference that will be held October 22-24, 2006. Watch for upcoming brochures and information.

“These are a few of my favorite things.....”

At the beginning of the Spring Workshop we asked everyone to introduce themselves and tell us one of their favorite jobs they have working at their resort.

Here are some of the responses:

- making reservations
- socializing
- driving the ski boat
- talking with guests
- Friday evening
- planting flowers
- remodeling cabins
- hanging out in the lodge with the guests
- planning
- taking photos of kids with their fish
- teaching kids how to catch & release
- anything my wife tells me to do
- being my own boss
- running the new backhoe
- learning new things from other resorters
- working together with my spouse
- making a list of jobs for my dad to do!
- Love it all!



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Resorter Recipes

By Pat Addler,
Cedar Rapids Lodge



MINNESOTA RESORTER RECIPES

The recipes in this issue were compiled from the “Cracker-barrel Quilters” School of Resorting overnight quilting retreat held in January at Shing Wako Resort. We welcome sewing (and food) enthusiasts to join our group at any time!

Seafood Casserole

Elaine Grove
Twin Springs Resort

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 7 oz. pkg. long grain & wild rice | 8 oz. pkg. frozen crabmeat, thawed (or seafood sticks) |
| 1 C. chopped celery | 1-1/2 lbs. peeled salad shrimp |
| 1 medium onion, chopped drained | 4 oz. can chopped pimentos, |
| 1 green pepper, chopped | 2 cans cream of mushroom soup |
| 1/4 C. margarine | 1/4 C. milk |
| 4 oz. can mushrooms, drained | |

Cook rice using package directions. Sauté celery, onion and green pepper in margarine in skillet. Add rice, mushrooms, crabmeat, shrimp, pimentos, soup and milk; mix well. Spoon mixture into a greased 9 x 13 baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes. Yield: 10 servings.

Caramel Rolls

Ann Moroz
Park Rapids

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 2 loaves frozen bread dough | 1 C. sugar |
| 1 C. vanilla ice cream | 1 C. brown sugar |
| 1 C. butter | |

The night before, partially thaw the dough, then cut into chunks. You can cut the loaf in half length-wise, then in half, then quarter—about 16 chunks for each loaf. Place all the bread chunks evenly in a greased 9 x 13 pan. In a saucepan, heat up the remaining ingredients. Pour the caramel mixture over the bread chunks. Let rise overnight on kitchen counter, uncovered. In the morning, bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes or until golden brown. Then turn over into another pan (this is the tricky part!). An option is to add nuts to the bottom of the pan before putting the bread pieces in.

Star Lake Sandies

Susan Ferguson
Pine Terrace Resort

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 C. butter, softened | 1 tsp. baking soda |
| 1 C. sugar | 1 tsp. cream of tartar |
| 1 C. powdered sugar | 1 tsp. salt |
| 1 C. vegetable oil | 2 C. chopped almonds |
| 2 eggs | 6 oz. pkg. English toffee bits |
| 1 tsp. almond extract | additional sugar |
| 4-1/2 C. flour | |

Cream butter and sugars. Add oil, eggs and extract. Mix well. Combine flour, baking soda, cream of tartar and salt. Add dry ingredients, gradually, to the creamed mixture. Stir in chopped almonds and toffee bits. Shape into 1” balls and roll in sugar; place on ungreased cookie sheets. Flatten with a fork. Bake at 350 degrees for 12-14 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes about 5 dozen cookies.

Low Fat Chewy Fruit & Oatmeal Bars

Sue Paradeis
Shing Wako Resort

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3/4 C. brown sugar | 1-1/2 C. flour |
| 1/2 C. granulated sugar | 1 tsp. baking soda |
| 8 oz. container vanilla or plain low-fat yogurt | 1 tsp. ground cinnamon |
| 2 egg whites, lightly beaten | 1/2 tsp. salt, optional |
| 2 T. vegetable oil | 3 C. quick or old-fashioned oats, cooked |
| 2 T. fat-free milk | 1 C. diced dried mixed fruit, raisins or dried cranberries |
| 2 tsp. vanilla | |

Heat oven to 350 degrees. In large bowl, combine sugars, yogurt, egg whites, oil, milk and vanilla; mix well. In medium bowl, combine flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; mix well. Stir in oats and fruit. Mix all ingredients together. Spread dough onto bottom of ungreased 9 x 13 pan. Bake 28-32 minutes or until light golden brown. Cool completely on wire rack. Cut into bars. Store tightly covered. Makes 2 dozen.





ADDRESS CHANGE?

Please let us know if your address or resort status has changed.

Contact Vicky
1-888-761-4245
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For a healthy RESORT, and a healthy YOU!

In this issue I'd like to yak about the toxic ickyness of chemical oven cleaners (even the "fume free" type). If you have a self-cleaning oven, GREAT! Using high temperatures as a cleaner is a great non-toxic avenue. However, if your resort is like mine, we still have many traditional cabins with older ovens in them. Our charcoal grills also get tons of use, and instead of using chemicals to clean your grill racks, continue reading to learn about natural, safer and CHEAPER alternatives.

Chemical oven cleaners are nasty stuff. I started playing around with natural cleaning recipes for oven cleaning 10 years ago when my hubby and I were landlords in Iowa. Nobody likes cleaning ovens, especially vacating tenants apparently. I tried the store-bought "Easy" spray-on cleaner. After practically passing out and having an utterly wretched headache using it, I decided to try the "fume-free" stuff on the next oven cleaning job. Even then I had to wear gloves, wipe loads and loads of gunky stuff from inside the oven, my nose burned, my eyes watered and I had a bad headache again. If you need to kill a cow at 10 paces, this here's your stuff. Just spray 'em in the snout and wait for the mooing to fade. Gee whiz.

Have you ever read the labels on these cans? "DANGER!" it reads, in big, fat capital letters. A clue, huh? Although to me, it's kinda like saying "Hey, this product will poison you, but as long we're telling you that it will poison you, it's OK for us to sell it to you." From an article entitled Cleaning Chemicals: Are They Affecting Your Health?, 2001, by Michael McCagg, he states: "OVEN CLEANERS contain lye (caustic soda, sodium hydroxide) which is highly corrosive. Direct contact may cause severe burns to the skin, mouth, throat, and stomach. Direct contact with eyes may cause permanent blindness. Inhalation may permanently damage the respiratory tract, especially the lungs. Prolonged exposure may cause kidney damage, brain damage, and reproductive disorders." (source: www.cmmonline.com, Environmental Archives) Sounds lovely, doesn't it? Not to mention that even if you get your oven or grill racks cleaned, chemical residue that's not wiped up thoroughly *outgases* itself and intensifies the next time heat is applied, which infuses into your cooking food. Ewwwww. The US Consumer Protection Agency has issued numerous statements linking 150 chemicals found in your home (including Oven Cleaners) to allergies, birth defects, psychological disorders and cancer.

Enough bad news, here's the good news in two words: BAKING SODA. At seventy cents a box, baking soda is your best buddy in the cleaning arena. It's CHEAP, versatile, and non-toxic! I put a box of baking soda in every Cabin's refrigerator and freezer at the beginning of each season for odor control.

If the box gets soggy or we feel the need to put a fresh box in, I'll save the old baking soda for scouring out ovens, baking pans, pots and grill racks later. The following are some amended recipes I've been using for years (original source: Clean & Green, 1990, by Annie Berthold-Bond): "Believe it or Not" - The BEST AND EFFORTLESS OVEN CLEANER

THE BEST & EFFORTLESS OVEN CLEANER

Baking Soda
Water
White Vinegar Rinse (Optional)

Sprinkle water generously over the bottom of the oven, then cover the grime with baking soda. Sprinkle more water on top of the baking soda. If you let it sit overnight you can effortlessly wipe up the grease the next morning.

Use a green scratch pad or razor blade to loosen stubborn spills. When you have cleaned up all the mess, dab a little bit of vegetable-based soap (Dr. Bronner's is the best!) or white vinegar on a sponge and wash all the sides, top, bottom and inside of door. Rinse thoroughly to remove all baking soda (you may have to let it dry first to see areas you've missed).

TOUGH JOB OVEN CLEANER

1 Sm. Box Baking Soda
1/4 Cup Washing Soda
(Arm & Hammer has a good brand called "All Natural Super Washing Soda" in a yellow box; you can find this in the laundry detergent area of any big supermarket.)

Follow directions for "Believe it or Not" recipe, but add washing soda, particularly to burnt-on areas. Washing soda will help cut the grease, but it requires a lot of rinsing.

SALT VARIATION OVEN CLEANER

Salt
Hot Water

Pour salt and hot water over grease and grime. Let sit for a couple of hours or overnight before scrubbing with a mild abrasive pad. Pour salt directly onto the grease when freshly spilled and come back to it later for easy removal.

- Continued on page 11

CHARCOAL GRILL RACK CLEANING INSTRUCTIONS

- 1.) Spritz grill rack with plain old water OR salt water (dissolve a couple Tablespoons of salt in hot water and pour into an empty quart spray bottle)
- 2.) Throw grill rack in a big plastic garbage bag (you could do several at once)
- 3.) Shake a box of baking soda into the garbage bag and coat the rack thoroughly
- 4.) Tie up the garbage bag and leave it sit for a few hours or overnight
- 5.) Take the grill rack out of the garbage bag and wipe down with a sponge or scrubber pad
- 6.) Rinse or spritz with white vinegar for sparkling finish (and to prevent grease build-up, making it easier to clean next time)

Other non-toxic oven or grill rack cleaning options include steam cleaner gadgets and a product by Shaklee called "Basic I" Industrial Cleaner with 9 degreasers. It's non-toxic and rather inexpensive too (about fifty cents a pint). (Go to www.shaklee.com to learn more.)

NEXT ISSUE'S TOPIC: Got some water stains, spots, or cup rings on your end tables? I'll give you some secrets for quick wood furniture fix-its with handy dandy (and cheap!) ingredients you probably already have in your home.

(E-mail me if you have a natural cleanin' tip or product that you use at your resort that you would like to pass along to other resorters: relax@crowwing.com)



TELL YOUR RESORT STORY IN OUR MAGAZINE



CONTACT SUE PARADEIS AT:
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Nominate a Member of the Congress of Minnesota Resorts For the Resorter of the Year Award

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts selects, through nominations by its members, one resort owner/operator that has shown a dedication to the improvement of the Minnesota Resort Industry. They have demonstrated this by adopting and carrying out business policies and practices that reflect a personal pride in the industry as a whole. They also live up to the organization's motto of "Resorters Helping Resorters" by their involvement in community activities and by displaying a willingness to help other resort owners to successfully operate a Minnesota Resort.

Any member of the Congress of Minnesota Resorts can submit a nomination for this prestigious award. Nominations must be received by June 1. The Awards Committee will determine the winner and the winner will be announced at the Congress of Minnesota Resorts Annual Fall Conference.

The following criteria are considered by the awards committee in making their selection:

- CMR member in good standing for the previous three consecutive years under the same ownership.
- Ability to maintain a successful and progressive resort.
- History of helping and mentoring other resort owners/operators.
- Involvement in community activities.
- At least five years between awards.
- Not a current member of the Awards Committee.

To obtain a nomination form contact:

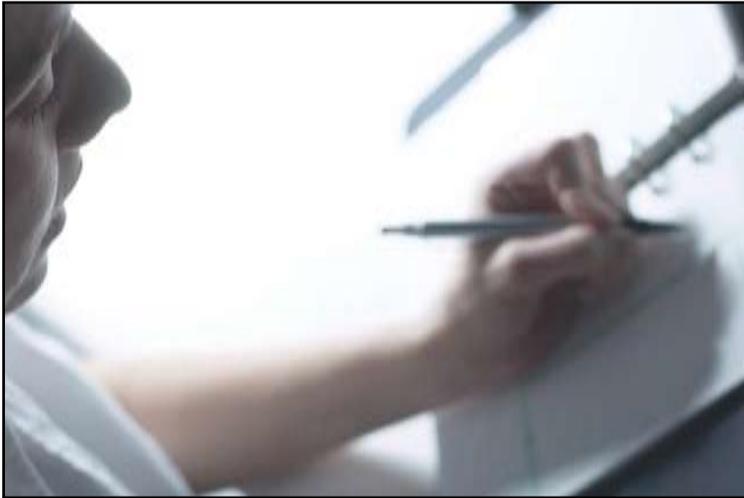
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If you have any questions or need help filling out the form, contact:

Dave Thompson
 218-495-3326
fisrvilg@prtcl.com

Converting Calls to Customers

By Jennifer Bateman, Two Inlets Resort



The Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference is the state's annual educational tourism event and is open to anyone and everyone who is involved in the tourism industry. That includes resort owners! One thing that was new to this year's conference was the format of the breakout sessions. Each breakout session had a speaker for one of the following topics: group and package travel, lodging, marketing, product development, and research and technology. This allowed all attendees the ability to hear speakers with topics relevant to their area.

One very dynamic speaker that I had the opportunity to listen to was Bob Anderson from STAR Performance, Inc. The title of his presentation was "Converting Calls to Customers." As a resort owner, the title obviously intrigued me! Here is a summary of the message he delivered.

It is believed that customers are shopping under the premise of "the three P's." They call your resort needing to know three primary things. First of all they want to know the price -- how much is it going to cost me to stay at your resort. Next is the product -- what do you have to offer me and is it a nice product. Lastly they want to know the place -- where is it located in relation to what I want to do on vacation. We believe that if we can offer a pretty good product in a decent place at a pretty good price they will want to come to our resort. Right?

"Don't describe yourself like everyone else, but rather tell the caller what is unique, interesting and compelling about your resort and your location."

WRONG! It's a misconception that these three P's are why people buy. Research shows otherwise. You cannot be the perfect price, product and place for every call. What IS true is that people buy based on people. When someone calls you, they must like you and trust you before they will buy. You have just 45 seconds to accomplish this!

When communicating with people, 55% of your message is conveyed with body language, 38% is tone of voice, and 8% is the words you use. While body language doesn't really come into play with phone conversations, tone of voice and the words you use certainly do. You must always keep this in mind when you answer the phone.

When a person calls you to inquire about your resort and availability, they are already an interested person. They have most likely already been to your website and narrowed their decision down to three or four resorts. Your goal is to turn an interested person into a customer! And in order to do that, you have to get them to like you and trust you.

Don't just try to get a reservation, but have a conversation with the person. Find out their name and call them by name. Find out their interests and play on those. Don't describe yourself like everyone else, but rather tell the caller what is unique, interesting and compelling about your resort and your location. Make yourself stand apart! It's okay to have fun and be yourself, but avoid annoying verbiage like slang words, 'um' and 'ah.' And don't forget to close the call by asking for their business.

So first you have to get 'em, which is getting them to make a reservation. Then you want to net 'em, meaning they should leave your resort MORE than satisfied and want to come back!



The Congress of Minnesota Resorts attends the 2006 Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference.



Jennifer Bateman, Ed Fussy, Lynn Scharenbroich, Bunny Fox, Cindy Pitt and Steve Fox were some of the CMR members who attended the 2006 Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference in St. Cloud.

In May

Look for...

Lilacs Blooming, Morel Mushrooms, Monarch Butterflies, Chokecherries Blossoming

Be prepared for...

Black flies and Mosquitoes biting, June bugs buzzing

Be respectful...

Loons are nesting, Canada Geese and Wild Turkeys are Hatching.

It's All About "THE EXPERIENCE"

By Cindy Pitt, Bailey's Resort

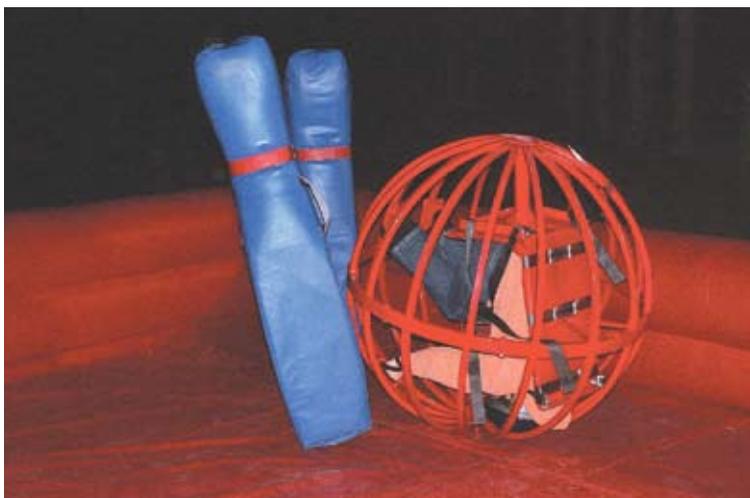
In January, I had the opportunity to attend the Explore Minnesota Tourism Conference along with our CMR President, Jennifer Bateman. The keynote speaker was James Gilmore, a dynamic speaker with great energy. He is the co-author of the book, *The Experience Economy*, which presents how "you must learn to stage a rich, compelling experience." The main theme was the "experience" that people are seeking when taking a vacation. He really had some thought provoking ideas for me. What is the "experience" that you offer at your resort? Some things to consider when marketing the "experience" of your resort are - Why do people come to your resort? - Is it the cabin? - Or could it be the "experience" they had or are looking for?

First, there are a few main categories or types of people seeking the "experience." They include the passive person who is seeking to be entertained or relaxed. There is the active person who may be seeking something educational or an adventure. Or it may be the person who is immersed in their life and seeking an escape.

Some of his ideas include the following:

1. "Ing" The Thing – How can you "ing" the thing?

By changing the existing look or feel of your resort and package it to create the sense of more of an "experience". Fishing, swimming, boating, golfing, sailing are all examples of basic "ing" experiences you can build on. Can you create a great swimming experience with lots of cool water toys for options? What about packaging a great fishing experience complete with a fish fry to end the trip? We have a few resorts out there that are already offering some pretty unique experiences – float plane rides, waterskiing opportunities, sailing experiences, great canoe trips, and reflexology. One of his examples that seemed pretty crazy to me is a new concept out of New Zealand that offers a new sport called "zorbing." This involves rolling down an incline in an inflatable, usually transparent ball (an inflatable human hamster ball) – it seems to be the latest craze in "experiences" that people are willing to pay for. Which made me realize that even I enjoy these types of experiences as I recently had the opportunity to "experience" a new sport called "human bowling." What an amazing feeling to be strapped into a metal ball wearing a helmet and being at the mercy of the person who rolls you down the alley to knock down the life-size pins. In the photo below, you can see the "human bowling" apparatus with pins. I truly enjoyed this new "experience." People will open their wallets to have this kind of "experience."



2. Hit The "Sweet Spot" to enrich the existing experience.

How can you make your resort "experiences" more enjoyable? More of a place to "go to" or "a place to be." Are there unique stories or a history to your resort or the area that will make guests really curious and want to check it out? Do you have a great experience in your lodge or at the beach that makes your guests want to "be there"? With three children of our own, we are always in the middle of some sort of game down by our beach. We have impromptu kickball or extreme dodgeball games in the evening that kids and adults really get excited about – many times they choose to stay at the resort rather than go out fishing so they won't miss out on a nightly game of some sort. The beach is the "place to be" each evening.

3. Theme The "Experience" – Create a 3-word theme to create a more cohesive, compelling experience.

Many resorts offer different types of themes – "Scrap and Stamp" for scrapbook weekends or "Sewing Those Squares" for quilting weekends. At our resort, we have our own fishing tournament each September called the "Bailey's Perch Classic" – a 3-day tournament that is very low-pressure with unique rules and lots of fun, topped off with an awards ceremony and a fish fry. It's become a "we'd never miss this" and "can't wait for next year" experience for our guests - with a reservation waiting list to get in that week.

Vacation trends are changing and many guests are demanding better cabins and more amenities, but that is not always enough. They also want an "experience" that will stay with them when they leave. Cabins and amenities are easily forgotten – "experiences" are not. Develop an "experience" at your resort that your guests will take with them, tell their friends about and then return year after year to experience again.



Congress of Minnesota Resorts Member Only Benefits!

Low Credit Card Rates...

Contact Mike Osmond for low
CMR Credit Card Rates!
At his office 877-877-3737 ext. 1255
Home 507-532-4800
Or you can e-mail him at
mosmond@powerpay.biz



Buying a New Dock?

Contact Paul or Rob at
Hunt's Resort and Porta Dock
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info@huntsresort.com
320-634-3323

MARKETING

Did you know...

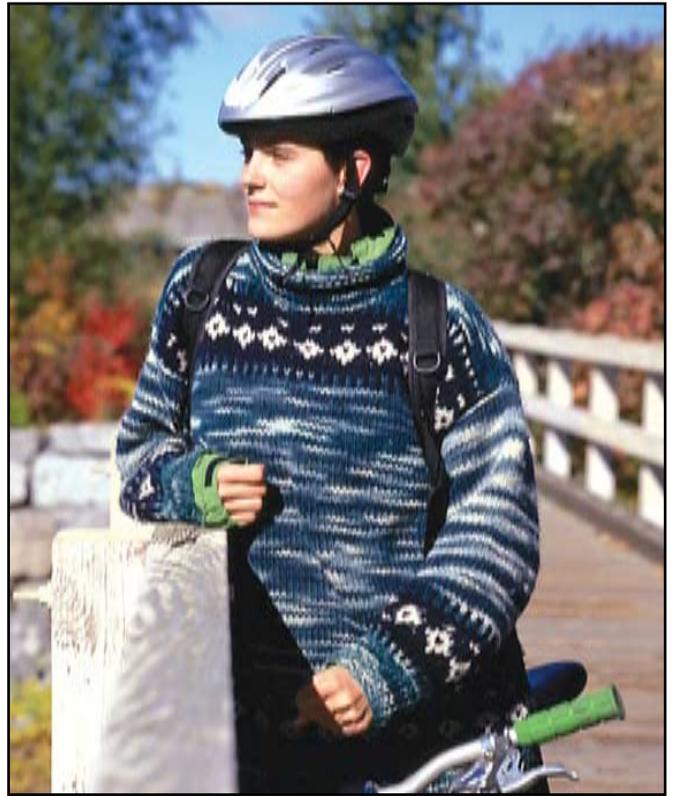
** Biking is the third most popular vacation activity in the United States. Minnesota leads the nation with more paved bikeways than any other state.

** Minnesota's State Trails contribute \$5 million annually to Minnesota's tourism economy between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

** Communities with trails can expect to generate between \$300,000 to \$1.5 million of economic activity between Memorial Day and Labor Day.

** Trails enhance property values, provide business opportunities and contribute to community pride.

(Source: "Contributions of the Minnesota State Park System to State and Regional Economies," prepared by the MN DNR)



Important Resort Dates in May

Sat, May 13

Walleye Sauger, Northern Pike & Lake Trout (summer) Fishing Opener

Sat & Sun, May 13-14

Take a Mom Fishing Weekend

Sun, May 14

Mother's Day

Sat, May 27

Bass Opener

Mon, May 29

Memorial Day



The Journey of the Hays Family

A New Resort Family Shares Their Story

By Tracey Hays, Bear Paw Resort

Joel and I have a unique history together. We were born and raised in Columbiana, Ohio on the east central side of the state and 1050 miles from here. We have been best friends since we were four years old.

My family vacationed at a fishing resort in Ontario, Canada since I was six years old. My dad learned to walk at a fishing resort, so resort vacations are a tradition that run deep in our family. One year I took Joel on vacation with my family and he was “hooked.” A few years later in 1988, Joel proposed to me at the resort and my dreams came true! We married in 1989 and a little later the children started to arrive. The poor things had to wear life jackets from the time they were newborns as we wheeled the stroller right into the boat. Our children loved every bit of the resort vacation and life. Joshua is now 13, Jacob 10, and Rebecca 9 and a complete joy and blessing to our lives.

While living in Ohio, I was a Sales Manager and Operations Manager for a packaging company. I quit when we had Joshua and became a stay at home mom. Joel worked at Hays Orchard and Cider Mill, the family business, in it’s third generation of ownership. When we purchased the business in 1999 we were the 4th generation to own and operate the orchard, which was the 2nd largest commercial cider producing company in the state of Ohio. We would produce and bottle an average of 500,000 gallons a year. We also had fifteen acres of orchard including many varieties of apples, peaches, nectarines, and plums, which we sold in our seasonal Farm Market Store. Our business required very hard, long and stressful hours in a seasonal environment peaking from July to November then slowing down a bit. Joel had worked for his family since he was ten and realized soon after we purchased the business that he was burned out, and as time passed his health was being affected. His heart just wasn’t in the business anymore.

We had a dream since 1997 that if we could ever be in a position to make a career change that it would be to own and operate a resort. In 2003, during our couple of months of down time, we started vacationing on Leech Lake and fell in love with Minnesota. The beauty, solitude, and the wildlife were breathtaking. Plus, I am a loon lover! So, we decided to put our Orchard and Cider Mill up for sale and found a buyer. We knew that North Central Minnesota was where we wanted to find our new home. Every time we vacationed there we would drive around, look at area resorts, and take notes for future reference.

We treasure the memories that we have made with our children on all of our resort vacations and we can’t wait to see other families blessed with the same opportunities we have had. This is why we feel it is crucial for the family resorts to survive. We think it is very important for families to spend time in the outdoors and with nature. God has blessed us with so much beauty that sometimes we only stop and think about Him when we are surrounded by His creations. We are very thankful to have found a Family Resort in such a wonderful area and with the best neighbors we could ever ask for. We are right between Dave and Mary Jane Keller at Brookside and Bob and Jennifer Bateman at Two Inlets Resort. They are very helpful, supportive and lots of fun to be around. We are proud to be members of the CMR where we feel we’ve been welcomed into the “Resorter’s Family.”

Joel and I were very active in a United Methodist church in Ohio and we found a church here in Park Rapids that has welcomed us into their community. Joel has been a Lay Speaker for five years and gives sermons when needed. I play the keyboard for the Contemporary Praise Band Service, as I did in Ohio. We also were very active in Disciple Bible study and are excited to have the opportunity to start a study here next fall.



We want to remind everyone: our Journey was at the hand of God. We learned with each business offer that fell apart, each spilled tear, shattered dream, frustration, disappointment and delay that this Journey would take place when God felt it was His time for us, not ours. When it was time, the buyer was for real and everything started moving forward. We sold on June 24, 2005, trained the new owners of our business, packed in two weeks and moved here July 11. We had fun living in our motor home with our three children, two 85 lb Labs, and an old cat until we purchased Bear Paw on August 12. Joel feels great and doesn’t have the health problems anymore. The children love living here, are doing great at school, and have made many friends. For me it is a joy to see my family so happy and I feel peace in the move we made. We may think that our Journey is complete now that we have achieved our dream, but we have to remember that our Journey is never finished; it just takes new directions in life. Moving to Minnesota wasn’t leaving home; it was coming home.



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Your customers want to tell you something.
Are you ready to listen?

**The Congress of Minnesota Resorts
Guest Approved Resort Program**

By Beth Madsen, Otter Tail Beach Resort

Remaining a resort in the resort industry is still the goal of many resort owners. Planning and budgeting for the future are components of operating a business in a profitable manner. Operating that resort in a profitable manner is an admirable goal and most often required. Ensuring that certain guests return to your resort year after year is a way to make life easier, more enjoyable, and even more profitable. Keeping a customer is cheaper than finding a new customer. Something to help improve your performance and keep guests returning to your resort is an anonymous survey of your guests. MOST people are generally too nice to tell you the truth. I've heard of guests staying an entire week in a cabin with a lost remote control for the television because they didn't want to bother the resort owners. I'm sure standing on a chair to surf the stations was not ideal. Resort guests generally are more likely to respond to a third party surveyor with suggestions for improvement.

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts offers a program for its members where-

by an independent and confidential surveyor, surveys guests anonymously. Since all the response cards are returned to the CMR member resort, the resort receives valuable feedback from its guests anonymously. The guests from the most recent resort season are surveyed to answer four questions regarding accurate advertising, cleanliness and maintenance, service, and if they would recommend your resort to a friend. Additional space on the survey card is provided for suggestions. This could result in tremendous feedback for a resort uncertain about "where to start" regarding improvements or for those who are uncertain about what amenities their guests value.

An optional second step to the program is having the approval statistics totaled and summarized risk free! A resort with a 90% approval rating in all four categories can be deemed a "Guest Approved Resort." This icon can be used in your advertising for four years to show potential guests that you care about them! Post your Guest Approved Resort Certificate at your lodge or resort office, and use the Guest Approved Resort stickers on your brochures at sport shows or the chamber office. Additional advertising can be done individually on your website and print advertising and in the text of the CMR website. All applicants and results are kept confidential. If you do not meet the 90% approval level, your "Guest Approved Resort" fee is returned to you; that's the risk free part!

So if you're proud of your resort and want to show potential and returning guests that you care about them, apply to have your resort surveyed, and check the box that says you want to apply to be a Guest Approved Resort.

To find out more information, write for an application at: CMR Office of Surveying, P.O. Box 1184, Alexandria, MN 56308 or email at otbeach@arvig.net.



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you to preserve
the future of
Minnesota's
resorts...*

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Minnesota State Record Fish

Species	Weight	Year
Bass (Large Mouth)	8-15	2005
Bass (Small Mouth)	8-0	1948
Bluegill	2-13	1948
Crappie (Black)	5-0	1940
Eelpout	19-3	2001
Muskellunge	54-0	1957
Northern Pike	45-12	1929
Perch (Yellow)	3-4	1945
Rock Bass	2-0	1998
Walleye	17-8	1979

Remember: Sat, May 13 is Fishing Opener



A Message From Explore Minnesota Tourism!

By Colleen Tollefson

For 2007, Explore Minnesota Tourism will publish a statewide travel guide that will include a grid-type listing of accommodations from the Explore Minnesota Tourism database. Listings in the grid will be free of charge. The purpose of this change is to better serve both consumers and lodging properties. Over 300,000 copies of the Travel Guide are expected to be printed. It is important that all lodging properties keep their listing in the database current so your information in the printed travel guide is correct.

Explore Minnesota Tourism recently mailed accommodations surveys to about 900 lodging and camping businesses to update their listings on the www.exploreminnesota.com website. Inclusion on the state's travel information website is free, and keeping your listing current is important. Listings can be updated by returning the survey form or by accessing the on-line Extranet website. For additional information, contact Kim Fitzgerald at kim.fitzgerald@state.mn.us.



A "Neat" Idea!

By Kim Jamtgaard, Wildwood Resort

I really hate bed skirts because they always get tucked up under the mattress. So, I started buying a fitted sheet to put over the box spring. I bought it in a color that coordinates nicely with the quilt/comforter and it works great. The fitted sheet is very neat looking and no fuss!



Get the Word Out! School Starts AFTER Labor Day!

It is now state law that public schools in Minnesota must start after Labor Day, but it is entirely possible that not all Minnesota parents know this. Let's get the word out! Be sure to put something on your web site or in your printed material reminding parents to check with their school districts to find out the school schedule. They should be thrilled to learn that their summers just got longer and that the end of August is now an option for a resort vacation!



Take Me Off Your List!

By Lois Huber, Big Lake Wilderness Lodge

I've received this information from a guest of ours.

Cellular phone numbers are being released to telemarketing companies and you will start to receive sale calls. **YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THESE CALLS!** These telemarketers will eat up your free minutes and end up costing you money in the long run. To prevent this, call the following number from your cell phone: (888) 382-1222. It is the National DO NOT CALL list. It will only take a minute of your time.

You can register on line at: <http://www.donotcall.gov>

It blocks your number for five years.



LEGISLATIVE

2006 Day on the Hill



Congress of Minnesota Resorts 2006 Day on the Hill

Our CMR Day on the Hill event for 2006 was again a huge success. For those of you who could not make it this year, you missed a great one. Along with a special name badge and neck lanyard, each attendee received a year pin for each year they have participated in our "Day on the Hill" event. This new feature will continue to be used to honor one's attendance at the CMR's Day on the Hill. The Legislative Team purchased 50 Big Bobber coolers for the attendees to carry as a tool to draw attention to our cause. Our group was certainly visible and received several positive comments as we made our way from office to office. Just walking through the halls of the Capitol with bobbers, facilitated our purpose of encouraging the State Government to help us preserve the state's resorts. We also left each legislator a small bobber labeled with the CMR logo to remind him or her of our visit.

The CMR Legislative Team provided transportation via motor coach, which started in Brainerd on Wednesday, March 8 and brought the group to the Days Inn Midway in St. Paul. Our program started at the State Office Building with a meeting with Explore Minnesota Tourism Director John Edman and Colleen Tollefson. At this meeting, John and Colleen highlighted this year's ad campaign and department budgets.

We then moved to the Capitol for a meeting with Sen. Larry Pogemiller. We presented Sen. Pogemiller with our prestigious Honorary Resorter Award for his many years of support for property tax reform for resorts. This effort was culminated last session by the passage of the Property Tax Reform Bill, which allowed a very large property tax reduction for Minnesota resorts.

Next we met with Governor Pawlenty's Deputy Chief of Staff, Tom Hanson. Mr. Hanson started the meeting with a Governor's Proclamation declaring March 8, 2006, as Dave Thompson Day! This unexpected tribute was in recognition of the CMR and Dave Thompson's dedication to the preservation and future of Minnesota's small resorts. Words cannot describe what an honor it was to receive this prestigious award. Mr. Hanson then outlined the Governor's budget and the possibility that a sales tax exemption for capitol improvements to resorts could be included. As of this article, that exemption has been announced. It is an initiative of approximately \$888,000. This plan would give resort owners a sales tax rebate of up to \$10,000 for improving or expanding their resorts this year.

We completed day one with a fantastic evening meal at Degidio's Restaurant before returning to the hotel.

Day Two began with a coach ride to the State Office Building and our home

base room. Resorters scurried about all day as we moved between the Capitol and State Office Building to meet with 30 legislators throughout the day.



At 10 am we attended the House Tourism Committee chaired by Rep. Larry Howes. Joel Carlson, CMR Lobbyist, Ed Fussy of Pimushe Resort, and Dana Pitt of Bailey's Resort testified on a bill to adopt the DNR Alternative Shoreline Rules as a state-wide rule for resorts. The CMR testifiers spoke about how these rules came from a large group organized by the DNR Waters Division and included all interested and affected groups living on and using Minnesota waters. The CMR wanted to communicate to legislators that we want to lead the way in determining the future of shoreline living and use. These rules include provisions to protect existing resorts by allowing for continued operation

with replacement and expansion of lodging units in the shoreline impact zone that comply with Government rules, meet the future needs of the tourism industry, and deal with natural loss from fire and wind. DNR Waters Director Kent Lockesmoe then testified that the Waters Division didn't even support its own alternative rules state-wide; they feel local units of government should still be able to be more restrictive. Hospitality Minnesota's Tom Day also testified that they participated in the two-year long process but could not take a position. Both nonsupporting testimonies were very disappointing. The CMR will continue to lead the way in protecting Minnesota's resorts and Minnesota's natural resources. To date, our representatives have spent over 3000 man-hours developing a set of shoreline standards that protect both. County government leaders and township boards can change directions at every election. If resorts are to remain a part of the "shoreline," we have to pursue statewide standards that are equally and fairly imposed in each county of Minnesota.

At midday we paused and listened to the Governor's State of the State Address. Six lucky resorters were invited to sit in the House of Representative's gallery during the speech. The rest of the attendees watched the speech on a special



web cast in our home base room in the State Office Building.

All Minnesota resorts owe a huge “thank you” to the attendees who invested two days helping to preserve resorting in Minnesota. Also, the bulk of the credit for another well planned and successful two days goes to our CMR Lobbyist Joel Carlson and his assistant Tammy Lefavor. They scheduled all the meetings and prepared all the legislative packets for each attendee and legislator. The size and scope of the meetings would not be possible if not for the quality of Joel’s service. The Governor and legislators alike comment each year about the respect they have for Joel Carlson and how fortunate we are to have him as our lobbyist.

Thank you to all of the 2006 attendees. Thanks to the CMR Board of Directors for its support of the Legislative Committee and our aggressive plan to provide this event at a minimal cost for each attendee. Thanks to our Legislative Committee for all the help in making the Day on the Hill a success and again our personal thanks to Joel Carlson for all he does for the CMR, above and beyond the call of duty.

Congress of Minnesota Resorts 2006 Day on the Hill Attendees

- Dave Thompson, Fisherman’s Village Resort
- Dana & Cindy Pitt, Bailey’s Resort
- Ed & Joanne Fussy, Pimushe Resort
- Mark & Collin Novotny, Hyde-A-Way-Bay
- Ed Becker, In-We-Go Resort
- Karen Kaehler, Pinedale Resort
- Karrie Ball, Cass Lake Lodge
- Jennifer Bateman, Two Inlets Resort
- Preston Turner, Big Timber Lodge
- Sue Paradeis, Shing Wako Resort
- Corby Niemeyer & Kelly Larson, Niemeyer’s Rugged River Resort
- Tom & Pat Ossell, Northern Lights Resort and Outfitting
- Sherm Anderson, Anderson’s Starlight Bay Resort
- Troy & Nancy Loren, Little Boy Resort
- Heather Sams, Country View Resort
- JoAnn Fallis, Finn N Feather Resort
- Tracey Hays, Bear Paw Resort
- Mary Smerling, Paradise Resort
- Tam Mahaffey, Lost Acres Resort
- Terry Duhn, Former Resorter-Bus driver



The CMR has been actively bringing issues to State Legislators and the Governor for several years. On March 8th, Governor Pawlenty recognized the CMR efforts, and the work of Legislative Chair Dave Thompson, by issuing this proclamation:


STATE of MINNESOTA

Proclamation

WHEREAS: Tourism plays a vital role in Minnesota’s economy, allowing residents and visitors to enjoy the beauty of Minnesota’s great outdoors; and

WHEREAS: Minnesota’s resorts provide opportunities for countless numbers of families to use our lakes and streams, building lasting traditions and memories that are the foundation and fabric of Minnesota’s quality of life; and

WHEREAS: The Congress of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) is dedicated to maintaining and preserving Minnesota’s small resorts so that future generations will have affordable access to our lakes; and

WHEREAS: The CMR advocates for legislation and state policies that will continue to make small resorts viable; and

WHEREAS: Dave Thompson from Fisherman’s Village Resort in beautiful Otter Tail County has served as CMR’s Legislative Chair for many years, driving thousands of miles and attending hundreds of legislative hearings to promote small resorts; and

WHEREAS: Dave has been a leader in promoting sound game and fish regulations by serving the State of Minnesota as a member of the Department of Natural Resources Fishing Roundtable; and

WHEREAS: Dave and Bev Thompson have also been recognized by their peers for their dedication to Fisherman’s Village and the resort industry by being named and Resorters of the Year; and

WHEREAS: Dave has announced that he intends to step down as Legislative Chair after the 2006 CMR Day on the Hill, having successfully completed a significant list of legislative accomplishments, and leaving CMR with a solid foundation for future efforts and some really lengthy e-mails.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, TIM PAWLENTY, Governor of Minnesota, declare March 8, 2006, to be:

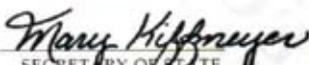
DAVE THOMPSON DAY

in the State of Minnesota.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Minnesota to be affixed at the State Capitol this seventh day of March in the year two thousand and six, and of the State the one hundred forty-seventh.


GOVERNOR


SECRETARY OF STATE

LEGISLATIVE

It's Not All Fun & Games

By Dana Pitt, Bailey's Resort

I guess nothing can stay the same - change is inevitable. The things I enjoy about resorting haven't changed - the lifestyle, the people, the atmosphere, etc. That part of it is still fun and exciting. Many activities and much of the work associated with resorting such as - the new construction projects, the boat or cabin repairs or updates, the purchasing of items for the resort and even general maintenance are all still enjoyable to me - and, I assume, most resorters. This is evident in much of what the CMR does through the School of Resorting, Conferences and Workshops. Most topics that include these parts of resorting are well attended and well received. It's why most of us got into resorting in the first place.

But a lot has changed in resorting in the past five years or so. Along with the "fun" part is a growing need to roll up our sleeves and get into the "dirty work", so to speak, of resorting - and I don't mean plumbing repairs. Like it or not, issues like shoreland regulations/zoning, government codes and regulations, property values and taxes, insurance, and even exotic species have become increasingly important to the survival of resorts over the past few years. Though this list is not complete, these "Big 5" (for lack of a better term) issues have become the biggest challenge and threat to our industry.

It's easy for us to ignore these problems and say we're too busy, or we're not well informed about an issue, or there's nothing we can do about it. While things like quilting or remodeling a cabin are also important to our businesses and certainly more enjoyable (we make the time for these jobs), over the long haul, those won't mean much if we lose the battles with the "Big 5."

These battles are won - not by sitting back and hoping others will take care

of it - but by getting directly involved and making it happen. These battles must be fought at state, county and township levels and even at a local lake level. Thankfully, the CMR's legislative team has been actively working on many of these issues at a state level for several years. And more recently, many resorters in Cass, Itasca and Becker Counties (and probably others I'm not aware of) have banded together to work on solving many of these issues on a local level. They've worked tirelessly and deserve a huge "thank you" from all of us. I'm sure these resorters can attest to the fact that it isn't always "fun" work. And just when you think the job is finished, a new challenge pops up that must be dealt with. The work can be intimidating, overwhelming, frustrating, exhausting and even thankless, but it's work that has to be done if we are to survive as resorts. If we resorters don't do it, who else is going to do it for us?

A changing marketplace has always been at the forefront of vital issues important to resorts and has been a rewarding challenge for our industry, but how we deal with these "Big 5" issues will ultimately determine the future of resorting. Getting "heads in beds" doesn't seem as important if we no longer have beds to put them in.

What can you do? Attend a CMR "Day On The Hill" event, contact your state and local officials, start a "tourism task force" in your county, go to DNR public input meetings, go to your county or township board meetings, get involved in your lake association - keep yourself informed on these issues. I would urge everyone to please make the time and force yourself to get involved in any way you can.



Building Our Legislative Fund

If you are not a resort owner or just don't want to join another resort association for whatever reason, you can still help our legislative committee specifically. Membership dollars alone do not cover the CMR's legislative budget. The 2006 Legislative Budget was submitted for over \$25,000. We are projecting a \$5000 short fall for this budget year. Please consider donating to the Congress of Minnesota Resorts legislative fund. If you are a member you can donate to the fund in addition to your dues, if you aren't a member but want to help support this "leg" of the Congress of Minnesota Resorts please send your donation to:

**Congress of Minnesota Resorts
Legislative Fund
PO Box 124
Spicer MN 56288**

Any Donation amount regardless of size is greatly appreciated!

For questions regarding donations, please contact:

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Life Jackets for Kids

By Tim Smalley, MN DNR Boat & Water Safety
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A law requiring children under ten years old to wear life jackets went into effect in 2005 on Minnesota waters. Since it is still a little hazy in the minds of some folks, I thought it might be worth going over for resort owners.

Called the “Grant Allen Law,” in memory of the child that died in a boating accident in 2003, the law requires that children younger than age ten wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (life jacket). There are a few exemptions to the law. For example, children are not required to wear a life jacket if they are in an enclosure or below decks such as in a cabin cruiser, or on an anchored boat that is being used as a platform for swimming or diving. Also, children on board commercial or charter vessels with a licensed captain are exempt from the life jacket wearing requirement. Violators are subject to a petty misdemeanor offense committed after May 1, 2006.

One of the more common questions we receive each summer goes something like, “My wife is at the hospital giving birth right now and we are planning to go wilderness canoeing in the Boundary Waters this coming weekend. Where can I get a life jacket that will fit our newborn infant?”

While I am being a little facetious, this really isn’t too far from the truth. It can be very difficult to find a life jacket that will fit an infant properly. The main problem is that an infant’s head weight compared to their body mass makes it very difficult to make a life jacket that will float a baby face up if they fall in or are ejected into the water in a boating accident. Parents need to read the labels very carefully to be sure that the child’s chest size and body

weight fall within the recommendation on the life jacket’s tag. Some manufacturers recommend no use by children under six months.

How do you get six-month-old Katie or Kyle to wear a life vest without screaming her or his head off? Well, you might not be able to, so you need to have a plan “B”; for instance, someone might have to stay back at the cabin to watch the little angel.

In addition to reading the label, there is an easy test to make sure a life jacket properly fits a child. While wearing the life jacket, have them stand with their arms raised. Try lifting the jacket by the shoulders. If it slips over their chin or ears, it’s too large! For younger kids, a life vest with a strap that goes between their legs will help keep the child from falling out.

When buying a life vest for kids, it is important to let the child have a say in which vest you get them. For young children, a brightly colored life vest with “Sponge Bob Squarepants” cartoon characters is a lot more likely to be worn than an old-fashioned orange horse collar device. For teens, I suggest buying a cool looking ski vest! Make it a fun experience for the child when you give them the vest. Maybe even wrap it up as a present. It does need to be a rule that when the children are in the boat, they **MUST** wear their life vest. In addition, you should set a good example by wearing your vest too!



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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!

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WHAT IS THE CONGRESS OF MINNESOTA RESORTS ALL ABOUT

MARKETING

A major benefit to our members is a listing on the CMR web site at www.minnesota-resorts.com. Members are able to easily edit and customize their listing. Our web site is promoted through print advertising, "rack cards" at Travel Information Centers and the Explore MN Tourism store, and through internet advertising such as links, banners and search engine placements. As potential guests click from the CMR site to yours, the results pay big dividends to you.

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 and just plain have fun! We also sponsor the online "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 Resorts' 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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