



Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters

Fall 2019 | Vol. 35 No. 3

2019 Session
Ends with **Just the Basics**

2019
CMR Fall
Conference

Response
Tiny to a
Rant



A Message to you from your Friends at...



**We've sold 49
Resorts & Campgrounds
in the last five years**

**Having said that, we are in need of Owners that want to sell...
And sell right. Our 3 full time offices serve the Resort & Campground industry only. We don't sell land, cabins, lakeshore or any other types of real estate, just operations like yours.**

Mike Anderson, Broker / Owner | Mike@MnResortSales.com | Office: 218.389.6305 | Cell: 218.213.1997

Mike takes care of the Brainerd Lakes region including Cass, Crow Wing, Aitkin & Mille Lacs counties as well as Kanabec, Pine & Carlton counties. Easy access to these areas via major highways makes for busy Resorts & Campgrounds. Typically less than 2 hours from the Twin Cities is a major factor when buyers are looking to purchase an operation from us. As of right now, we only have 2 operations for sale in these areas, which means we really need listings throughout this region so we have options for our buyers.

Mike Wolfe, Southern & Central MN Agent | Mike@WolfCamp.net | Cell: 507.473.0047

Mike Wolfe travels Central & Southern Minnesota helping Resort and Campground owners who are looking to sell their operation. He works an area of more than 55 Counties and is not afraid of traveling to any part of the State to help sellers identify a buyer. He is selling and listing properties throughout the entire year. The 2018 summer season has been an unusually busy year and he has helped close 4 properties even in the mid-season. Mike knows the area very well and is always looking forward to meeting new sellers.

Dan Houle, Associate Broker | DanielgHoule@Gmail.com | Cell: 218.235.0413

Dan has a background of Resort ownership and strong Resort Real Estate experience coupled with a Northwoods background of fishing, hunting, boating and Seaplane flying. Major Northern Tourism destinations such as Walker, Bemidji, Park Rapids, Grand Rapids, Voyageur National Park, Orr, Lake of the Woods, Ely, and the scenic North Shore are handled by the North Office staff. He specializes in Confidential Listings and has strong contacts with local lenders to get your property financed for the next generation of Resort owners.

MnResortSales.com MnResortSalesOutdoors.com

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Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters



A Community of Minnesota Resorts Publication

Fall 2019

Vol. 35 No. 3

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PRESIDENT'S PENPAGE 4
Tom Marnik, Timber Trails Resort

EDUCATION

CMR SPRING WORKSHOP SUCCESSPAGE 5
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2019 CMR SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS....PAGE 6
COMMUNITY OF MINNESOTA RESORTS SCHOLARSHIP NEWS!PAGE 8
2019 CMR FALL RESORT TOURPAGE 9
MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE 2019 CMR FALL CONFERENCEPAGE 10

MARKETING

BECOME A MEMBER PAGE 12
RESORTER RECIPES PAGE 14
Kristin Wherley, Sunset Bay Resort
WELCOME NEW CMR MEMBERS..... PAGE 15
RESPONSE TO A TINY RANT PAGE 16
Ryan Neely, Crow Wing Crest Lodge
HANDI-RESORTER'S TIPS & TRICKS PAGE 18
Jay and Kim Jamtgaard, Wildwood Resort
ABOUT HALF OF MN RESORTS WENT OUT OF BUSINESS IN PAST 32 YEARS PAGE 19
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LEGISLATION

2019 SESSION ENDS WITH JUST THE BASICSPAGE 20
Joel Carlson, Community of Minnesota Resorts Lobbyist
KATHY'S KRAFT KORNERPAGE 22
Kathy Marnik, Timber Trails Resort

About the cover: This photograph was submitted by Sue Springer, Pike Point Resort, Tenstrike.

The Minnesota Resorter is a triannual publication of the Community 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 inquiries to the committee contact. The Minnesota Resorter is printed by Arrow Printing.

From Your Presiden't Pen



President Tom Marnik
Community of Minnesota Resorts

Here I sit reflecting after another long, hot, deer fly infested change over weekend getting everything just right for the new batch of guests. There was an incredible amount of chores to do and I had a little set back on Friday. My father in-law ran over a water spigot attached to some very old plumbing and suddenly we had a new water fountain feature next to Cabin 10. During the middle of the summer grind you start to say *"Is this life choice I made to own a resort a good one? Is it all worth it?"* I would like to explore this a bit in this article. I can tell you right now there will not be a definitive answer at the

end of the article because I really don't know.

My biggest concern with the future of the viability of resorts in Minnesota comes from the ability of new owners being able to make a decent living in the first 5 to 10 years of ownership. A business should be able to provide compensation relative to the work effort put in both physically and mentally. There should also be a balance between the amount of risk involved verses the gain. This ability to make ends meet was a hot topic on our chat group this Spring and it bothers me that owners who are doing a great job - have to struggle financially in the beginning phase of ownership.

Scenario: Married couple in their 40's-50's with good jobs living in suburbia in a nice \$350,000 home making \$125,000 - \$200,000 doing white collar work, sick of their jobs and looking for a change where they can be their *own boss* and *reap the rewards* of their labor and good business sense. They say, "Let's buy a Minnesota resort, we can do it!"

The cost of the average resort that would enable both of them to make a *living* (not a hobby resort) runs from \$1,000,000 to \$3,000,000. That usually requires about \$200,000 to \$750,000 in a cash down payment. Having saved and made investments over time the couple goes all in, risking most all of their life savings, uprooting the family from the suburbs to become resort owners.

The down payments as a capital investment will most likely payout over time as long as they properly maintain the resort and update and improve the facility. The concern is - can the resort provide a yearly decent living wage in comparison to the effort put in. I don't know about you, but running a resort requires a lot of effort and not just physical. There is paper work (taxes, accounting, billing, confirmation letters, newsletters...); strategic decisions such as researching and staying up on the most recent trends (website, reservation software, new amenities); keeping the place supplied with goods (stuffed animals, fire wood, ice, bait etc.), along with interacting with a lot of people that have varying amounts of needs and wants namely your guests.

My experience is there is never enough time to do everything you want and need to do. So, what can the hypothetical couple expect for wages after a year of all-consuming labor at *their resort*? Well, one has to remember that if you live at the resort many of your regular expenses are paid for by the business. Here is an example of what amounts would be paid by the resort for our theoretical couple based on their past situation for comparison.

Mortgage	\$22,000
Utilities	\$5,000
Phone	\$1,200
Autos (Gas and Maintenance)	\$5,000
Insurance (Home, Auto, Life)	\$6,000
Medical Insurance	\$0 - \$20,000

In really round numbers, their comparable income would be \$50,000 after tax dollars if the resort broke even. The first few years most likely they will not break even and will probably have a net income loss. There are many reasons for this loss but typically you are putting money into the resort to improve it or building up your reservations on a previously poor performing resort. That's a big change from the \$125,000 - \$200,000 income that the couple was used to and on top of that they are now most likely working harder both physically and mentally than they ever had before.

Maybe you break even for a few more years after that and then finally you start to see real increase in income if you have been successful in your efforts. We are in our 8th season and this is the first year where we will hopefully see some fruits of our labor. This significant decrease in income is a big hurdle and life style change for our hypothetical couple. It also brings to light the reason for the decline in resorts and the fact that almost no new resorts are being built in Minnesota. It has to do with cash flow and net business income.

I often visualize myself on the TV show *Shark Tank* trying to convince the Sharks to invest in my business and having them laugh me off stage when I explain my situation!

What can the resort industry do about this situation? Charge a fair price for your accommodations and goods, even in the waning years of your resort career. Just because we are a seasonal business does not mean we put in a seasonal effort. Let's get paid what we are worth.

When Kathy and I were looking for a resort, we visited one resort where the owner said her motto was *everyone deserves a vacation* and hence, she kept her prices down. Six months later she defaulted on her contract for deed. My motto is *every resort owner deserves a decent income* relative to the effort they put in.

Is resort ownership worth it? Kathy, my wife, says I am being a Debbie Downer. This week the weather is not so hot, and the deer flies are better. I have lots of happy families really enjoying themselves creating memories and thanking me for my hard work. I am self-employed, create jobs for a lot of people and am a big resource for our small community. *I just want to be able to afford that fancy \$8,000 Exmark Zero-Turn Mower - I really need to make my life easier.*

How is resort ownership life treating you?

CMR Spring Workshop Success



The CMR Board Meeting is part of the Spring Workshop. CMR Board Members work tirelessly to provide the most effective leadership and innovation for the Community of Minnesota Resorts and all resorts throughout Minnesota. Their leadership has a three-prong focus Education, Marketing, and Legislation. They believe in and live by the motto Resorters Helping Resorters. Providing crackerbarrel opportunities, which provide a forum for fellow resorters and experts to have an open discussion while sharing their opinions and experiences on topics, during the spring workshop is one way the motto comes to life.



CMR members learned ways to enhance resort landscaping on a budget and explored rain garden designs as well as how to choose the best plants and trees for the specific climate zone where the resort is located.



The CMR Legislative Committee updated membership on legislative activities such as the continual successful legislative event - Day on the Hill (DOH). CMR works closely with Lobbyist Joel Carlson to promote important issues at the state capitol for the resorting community.



CMR continues to develop marketing strategies that promote and encourages resort adventures and memories. At the CMR Spring Workshop the new marketing effort - Loony in Minnesota - was introduced and will be appearing on billboards and arriving to potential vacationers via an email campaign. Explore Minnesota Tourism (EMT), Minnesota's statewide tourism department, updated workshop attendees on the statewide marketing efforts - What is True North?



Proud CMR Event Sponsor.

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COMMUNITY OF
MINNESOTA RESORTS
ASSOCIATE MEMBER.



CALL SHEILA, NIKKI, DAN
OR BETH, TODAY!

ALSO PICTURED: HENRY (NIKKI'S SON)
AND MAGGIE (DAN & BETH'S DAUGHTER)

We look forward to visiting with you at
Sugar Lake Lodge
in Cohasset, MN for the Annual
CMR Fall Conference and Vendor Show
November 3, 4, and 5, 2019.

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Congratulations TO THE 2019 CMR Scholarship Award Recipients

Each year the Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) offers scholarships to students in high school or current undergraduate or technical school students. 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 a member in good standing. CMR Associate Members are not eligible for scholarships.

The CMR Scholarship Committee - consisting of a number of your fellow resorters, and guided by your CMR Office Manager, reviewed the applications and chose this year's recipients. Your CMR is pleased to announce the following students have each won a scholarship:



Pine Insurance Scholarship Recipient

Gunnar Niemeyer

St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud

Major in Business

Son of Corby and Sheila Niemeyer

Niemeyer's Rugged River Resort, Brainerd

Minnesota hospitality has been a booming, successful and surprising industry for decades, and I am extremely proud to have grown up in and amongst this community. To be a resorter means always smiling, problem-solving, and maintaining a cool head in a less-than-ideal situation all while doing everything necessary to make sure the customer is having the most memorable and comfortable stay. The traits necessary to successfully navigate the hospitality industry are the same traits that are necessary to be successful in college, business, and in a social life. When I was growing up at our small, family run resort in Brainerd, Minnesota, I was oblivious to the way it was going to shape the way I handle my life. The skills of customer service, leadership, and problem-solving come naturally to me now, but as I reflect on my childhood environment, there is nothing natural about these skills. They take years of practice, which is something I was able to do on a daily basis. These skills have made me more successful than I would have thought possible at my age, helped me in my personal relationships, and opened numerous opportunities to me. The traits that I have developed will help me continue to further my education, further my career, and ultimately allow me to shape a meaningful and joy-filled life beyond my college education.

Interested in applying for next year's scholarship?

See Page 8 for 2020 CMR Scholarship Information.



Community of Minnesota Resorts Scholarship Recipient

Kenzie Christiansen

The College of Saint Scholastica in Duluth
Major in Biochemistry

*Daughter of Jason and Timberly Christiansen
Finn N Feather Resort, Bemidji*

Living on a resort has taught me many skills that I can use wherever I go in life. For starters it has taught me customer service skills. From working the front desk to scooping ice cream, dealing with customers always arises. I learned that the customer is always right and to represent the resort when people check in. Watching how my parents deal with distraught customers from time to time has helped me understand even more on how to run the resort efficiently and to keep the customers coming back year after year. Besides the service part of the resort, I have learned how to work under pressure when we have a bunch of cabins to clean in a short period of time. This has helped shape my character by learning to persevere through hard work and to have patience. Over all living at a resort has taught me to put in hard work for what I want in life and it has helped me to achieve the goals I set for myself. It has given me the opportunity to prepare myself for any job I decide to go after in the future.



Carol Kirchner Memorial Scholarship Recipient

Rebecca Triska

Viterbo University in LaCrosse, WI
Social Work

*Daughter of Mike and Jackie Triska
Voyageur Cove Resort, Cook*

It's hard to imagine the person I would be without my experiences from growing up on a resort. It was just my parents, my siblings until they moved out, and me running the resort. The limited amount of people helping out meant that hard work and determination was essential since there was always something to be done. I was responsible for anything from cleaning cabins to running the store to assisting my dad in general repairs. There was no end time and there was no start time, if there was a job that needed to be done then we did it.

When working on a resort, I also came to realize that many things can go wrong. Whether it is with a customer or in the cabins themselves, learning to work around problems is important to living on a resort. Through my experiences living on a resort, I have learned about the hard work and determination it takes to run a business and this knowledge will be with me for the rest of my life.

Congratulations Scholarship Recipients!

Typically, there are two-\$750, and two-\$500 scholarships available annually, but this year with three qualified applicants your CMR Board decided that **ALL THREE APPLICANTS WILL RECEIVE \$750!**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the CMR for their sponsorship of scholarships via membership dues, and the Pine Insurance Company and the Carol Kirchner family for making additional scholarship awards possible through their generous sponsorship donations.

EDUCATION

Community of Minnesota Resorts Scholarship News!

The Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) and its members have always been supportive of the ongoing educational pursuits of the children and grandchildren of member resorts. We are proud to announce a new scholarship sponsor and recognize our ongoing sponsors. With the support of the below sponsors, for the foreseeable future, the CMR will offer four (4) \$750 scholarship awards to assist eligible applicants in their educational endeavors.

New Sponsor

Minnesota Resort Sales to fund \$750 towards CMR Scholarships



Thank you to Minnesota Resort Sales for sponsoring a \$750 scholarship each year for the next two years. The \$750 will go towards the CMR Scholarship fund. This year the CMR offered two - \$750 scholarships and two - \$500 scholarships to meet the

education needs of our member's children grandchildren. Minnesota Resort Sales will be funding one of the existing \$750 scholarships. They have also committed to funding \$750 for 2020!

Existing Sponsors



Dan and Beth Borseth from Pine Insurance Agency in Aitkin have long been Associate Members and supporters for the CMR scholarship program. On an annual basis they provide a \$750 scholarship award that has assisted many children and grandchildren of resorters over the years.



The Kirchner family has for years provided the Carol Kirchner Memorial scholarship in the amount of \$500. Through CMR Board approval, CMR members will provide another \$250 to this scholarship contribution to bring it to \$750 total. Dave Kirchner was at the 2018 Fall Conference and extended the memorial scholarship contribution on behalf of the family for a number of more years into the future. This memorial is the perfect example of *Resorters Helping Resorters*.

Each year, you as members through your membership, have contributed to the CMR scholarships by providing two - \$500 scholarship awards (for a total of \$1,000). These funds will now be used to fund one \$750 scholarship and the other \$250 will be combined with the Carol Kirchner Memorial scholarship. This allocation of funds allows four scholarships to be \$750 to assist students in their educational pursuits.



HEADED FOR COLLEGE?



APPLY FOR A CMR SCHOLARSHIP!

Each year the Community of Minnesota Resorts offers four scholarships to a senior in high school, or a current undergraduate or technical school student. We are excited to now offer, through the generous contributions of our sponsors and members, four (4) \$750 scholarships for the coming year to meet the educational needs of our members' children and grandchildren. March 15, 2020 is the deadline for the scholarship application to be returned to the Community of Minnesota Resorts office. A scholarship application can be printed by going to the CMR website, www.Minnesota-Resorts.com, scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on Membership. Then by using your Login and Password you will be able to go to Applications and click on Scholarship Application and print a copy.

If you need further assistance please contact the CMR office at:
CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com or
320-212-5107

**DEADLINE TO APPLY:
MARCH 15, 2020**

2019 CMR Fall Resort Tour

*Cass Lake/Blackduck Area
September 10th, 2019*



Tour Lost Acres Resort, Cass Lake Lodge, and Joe's Lodge (and possibly one more) to see how they operate their successful resorts! Gather new ideas, share stories from the season, and learn from other resorts! Times and tour route will be sent out to Community of Minnesota Resorts members closer to the tour date. Non member resorts are welcome and encouraged to attend. Contact Jim Wherley, Office Manager, at CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com and he can email you the times and tour route information when they are made available.



Lost Acres Resort
26772 Birchmont Beach Rd NE
Blackduck, MN
lostacresresort.com



Cass Lake Lodge
16293 60th Ave NW
Cass Lake, MN
casslakelodge.com



Joe's Lodge
15228 Joe's Lodge Drive SE
Bemidji, MN
joeslodge.com



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Mark your calendar for the 2019 CMR Fall Conference



November 3, 4, and 5, 2019
Sugar Lake Lodge Cohasset, MN (near Grand Rapids)

Cost: \$150 per person (CMR member)
 \$200 per person (Non-CMR member)

Registration info available by contacting:
Contact Jim Wherley, CMR Office Manager
320-212-5107 or CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com

This year's Community of Minnesota Resorts Fall Conference will be full of opportunities to learn, gather information, and interact and relax with your fellow resorters!

Previous Fall Conference Fun Day Events



Mine Tour



Escape Room Scenario



Painting a Landscape

Community of Minnesota Resorts Fall Conference Saturday Fun Day

You won't want to miss it!

Watch your email for more details...

Speakers: A fantastic lineup of speakers covering a variety of topics that will both entertain and educate.

- Dan Houle: Minnesota Resort Sales
- Clifton Larson Allen
- Small Business Administration: Resort Succession
- Joel Carlson: Legislative Update
- Chad Conner, Widseth Smith Nolting: Dealing with county and local government approvals
- John Edman/Dave Bergman: Explore Minnesota Tourism Update



Plus many opportunities to interact, learn and relax with your fellow resorters:

- Resorter Panel: Hear from fellow resorters on a relevant topic of interest.
- Crackerbarrels: Impromptu questions from the group, that are discussed by the entire group.
- Hospitality Room: Relax each evening after the days sessions!
- Group Meals: Included in registration fee.
- Pre Conference (Saturday November 2nd) and Evening Entertainment/Event (still to be determined)

Events:

Vendor Show: Come see all the products and services offered.

CMR Annual Meeting: Review of the past year in the life of your CMR!

Silent Auction: To benefit Day on the Hill events.

Resorter of the Year Announcement



Registration info available by contacting:

Contact Jim Wherley, CMR Office Manager
320-212-5107 or CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com

Minnesota-Resorts.com

The Community of Minnesota Resorts

What the CMR Can Do for You!

BECOME A CMR MEMBER TODAY!

Print out an application
(or fill it out on-line) by going to
[Minnesota-Resorts.com/
membership/](http://Minnesota-Resorts.com/membership/)

When on the page, you can click to fill out an on-line application, or print an application to complete and mail in. (Are you a vendor offering products or services resorts would be interested in? Find a CMR Associate Member Application on our membership page also.)

Send printed applications to:
Community of Minnesota Resorts
PO Box 61
Dent, MN 56528



*Questions regarding Membership?
Contact the CMR office at
CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com
or 320-212-5107*

EDUCATION

- Fall Conference, Spring Workshop, Resort Tour, and School of Resorting Classes throughout the year
- Yahoo Groups Chatline and Facebook Group – resorters sharing resort experiences
- Members ONLY online resources on CMR website (templates for boat/motor contracts, AIS Guidelines, Employee Forms, Photo Waivers, etc.)

MARKETING

- New fully redesigned and mobile responsive website
- New branding campaign and billboard advertising – pooled and co-op advertising dollars go further with the CMR
- Flash Ads, Banner Ads, TV commercials and Pay-Per-Clicks in pooled advertising opportunities on our www.Minnesota-Resorts.com website

LEGISLATION

- Full time lobbyist working specifically for/on the interests of RESORTS
- Join fellow resorters for a Day on the Hill and meet legislators to get our issues heard
- Get real time updates all year long on legislative issues which affect resorts



EDUCATION



MARKETING



LEGISLATION

WHAT RESORTERS ARE SAYING ABOUT THE CMR

Yo, resorters – I enjoyed meeting new faces at the CMR Fall Conference! Thanks, Education Committee – really fantastic! I had the opportunity to be a part of the discussion “Filling Shoulder Seasons.” I spoke on trying to offer retreats. The best part for me was having to really think it through in order to communicate about what we do and why it works for us. All of us on the panel are unexpectedly grateful (although initially not very enthusiastic) that we agreed to be part of it. If the education committee comes to you next time and asks you to be on a panel about something or other, we strongly encourage you to say “yes!” It was a rather validating and insightful experience.

*Toodles for now... Kim Bowen,
Crow Wing Crest Lodge - 17th season*

This was my first time attending the conference even though we have been members for a while. The speakers and vendor show were great. The best part was hearing from other owners and the sharing of their experiences. Great networking! I highly recommend attending. I know we will be attending! Thanks for the great conference! Hopefully next year we will be able to attend all 3 days.

*Sharon Severance,
Barrett Lake Resorts*

Resorter Recipes

By Kristin Wherley
Sunset Bay Resort

This issue's recipes are all for different types of salsa. They are a good use of those items harvested from gardens and are always a hit at gatherings. Enjoy!

CORN SALSA

2 cans of sweet corn
1 can of hominy
1 can of water chestnuts, chopped
1 small chopped onion
1 chopped green, orange or red pepper
Mix all together in a large bowl.
Then make the dressing.

Dressing: Mix all ingredients together and pour over vegetables.

1 cup white vinegar
¾ cup sugar
½ cup vegetable oil
1 Tbsp salt



CUCUMBER SALSA

2 medium cucumbers, peeled, seeded and chopped
2 medium tomatoes, chopped
½ cup chopped green pepper
1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and chopped
1 small onion, chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
1 tsp minced fresh parsley
2 tsp minced fresh cilantro (or additional parsley)
½ tsp dill weed
½ tsp salt

In a bowl, combine the ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for one hour. Serve with tortilla chips.

Yield: 4 cups



CRANBERRY SALSA

1 bag fresh cranberries, chopped
1 Granny Smith apple, chopped
½ red onion, chopped
¼ cup cilantro, chopped
2 spoonfuls jarred jalapeño slices, chopped
¾ cup sugar
Juice of ½ lime (or 1 ½ Tbsp)
1/3 cup apple juice

Combine all ingredients and chill. This is a festive looking salsa, and we often serve it at Christmas with our family.



GRANDMA HULDA'S CHUTNEY SAUCE

This one isn't exactly a salsa, but it is pretty close. My grandma used to make this and served it with pork or other meats.

6 pounds ripe tomatoes, chopped
3 pounds apples, chopped
2 pounds onions, chopped
3 pounds sugar (or 6 cups)
1-quart white vinegar
1 Tbsp cinnamon
½ Tbsp black pepper
1 Tbsp salt

Mix all ingredients together in a large saucepan. Let simmer for one hour.

Yield: eight pints



Have a resorting tip or trick?

Contact Ann Warling
218-821-1031
ann.warling@gmail.com

**—Share Your Resort
Stories or Photos—**

Send your photographs of Resort Life and story ideas to:

CMR Resorter Editor Ann Warling
218-821-1031 | ann.warling@gmail.com

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW
COMMUNITY OF MINNESOTA
RESORTS' MEMBERS**

We'd like to take this opportunity to welcome these Resorters and Associate Members to the Community of Minnesota Resorts' family! If you have the chance, please get acquainted with them.

Want to become a new CMR member? Contact Jim Wherley at 320-212-5107 with your questions, and to sign up! We look forward to having you as our newest member resort!

New CMR Member Resorts

Stacey and Dan Angell

Angell's Hideaway Resort, Emily

Jody and Jason Ball

Cass Lake Lodge, Cass Lake

Mari and Ben Bull

Dreamers Resort & Campground, Bemidji

Tom Lantry

White Eagle Resort, Cook

Ann and Dean Dahlheimer

Woodhaven Resort, Bemidji

New Resort Owners

Craig and Cami Calhoun

Geneva Beach Resort, Alexandria

New CMR Retired Resorters

Tim and Karen Senger

Cedar Point Resort former owner, Marcell

Tim and Carolyn Aarsvold

Geneva Beach Resort former owner, Alexandria

Bob and Jennifer Bateman

Two Inlets Resort former owner, Park Rapids

Response to a Tiny Rant

By Ryan Neely, Crow Wing Crest Lodge



Sunday is Kim Bowen's day off here at Crow Wing Crest Lodge. As such, I tend to peruse her emails just to make sure none of our guests have sent comments or concerns in the interim between the time the lodge closed Saturday after check-ins and this afternoon. While scanning the subject lines, I saw an email thread from the Yahoo! Resorters chat group titled *Tiny Rant (well maybe a little more than tiny)* and was intrigued.

The *Tiny Rant* post was about guests attempting to check-in early. There were several great suggestions on how to dissuade our guests from feeling the need to arrive early and make all our Saturdays more of a headache while we attempt to juggle cleaning staff, horrible carpet stains, and now present the kindly innkeepers face in front of paying clientele when really, all we want to do is have an epic meltdown.

Karen Senger explained how she used to send out detailed emails to each guest the night before arrival listing all arriving guests, check-in date, and (especially) check-in time. Others have suggested they welcome the guest with open arms and a half-day rate for their early check-in.

Normally, I'm content to allow others to live their lives (and run their businesses) the way they want. We are all different, with different goals and different ideals so what may work for me might not work for you. However, there was one line—an off-handed remark—that compelled me to respond to the thread. The line was, *"I wish there was one good solution."*

I think, to begin with, communication is the first step in resolving this problem. Our guests cannot possibly possess the knowledge we need them to possess without communication. They are in a different world with different backgrounds so, for them, it might make perfect sense that they should be able to arrive at 9 a.m. and cruise into their cabin. Without that initial communication, we're fighting a losing battle.

That being said, I also believe there is strength in being unyielding with policies. This is the one solution. Being unyielding doesn't mean being rude. Think of any retail establishment you've visited. Just because you arrived at 8:30 a.m. doesn't mean they are going to unlock the doors for you when their posted hours say they don't open until 9 a.m. They aren't being rude when they ignore you, they are following a policy established for specific reasons. Those reasons might not be apparently

clear to an outsider, but they are very real and important, nonetheless. The difference for hospitality is that there often isn't a locked door to separate a guest or client from their point of ingress. Except, why can't there be?

This is my seventh summer working for Kim. Prior to my arrival, they had a large sandwich board-style banner built that says: *Welcome Guests! Resort opens at 4:30 p.m.* They used to set it at the mouth of the driveway hoping to communicate to guests that, if they're driving by intending to check in early, they shouldn't. Apparently, it never worked. Guests would drive around the sandwich board and straight to their cabins. (My theory is that people read the *Welcome Guests* part and disregarded the *Resort opens at 4:30 p.m.* portion because why would you place a sign at the end of the driveway welcoming me to your property if you're then going to tell me to go away?)

About five years ago, Kim started sending weekly emails to the arriving guests. These were very similar to the emails Karen describes (though less detailed). We also started putting that sandwich board back out at the mouth of the drive along with a chain that spanned the drive opening. It's not set up with a lock or anything, really, it's nothing more than a carabiner on a rope that my cleaning staff can easily unhook when it's time for them to leave.

When we first began this practice, there was a concern that we were being rude, that we were going to turn guests away because it seemed very exclusive. *Not welcoming*, I believe was how Kim put it. There could be some truth to that, however a review of the practices and policies of other establishments that require the kind of turn-around time we do proves that false. Thousands of people line up outside the gates of Disneyland or Six Flags waiting for them to open and very rarely do you hear stories of interlopers attempting to breach their gates.

It isn't rude, it's policy.

For us, a part and parcel to maintaining that policy (beyond the ever-important communication) is a strict adherence to the policy. Think about the non-verbal message you send your kids when you tell them they can't have candy before dinner one day and then the next day you buy them a Snicker's bar *just this once*, an hour before dinner. It suggests that the policy is flexible, that there's wiggle room to exploit the policy for the benefit of anyone who wants to get around the policy. Often that exploitation doesn't come from a place of malice, it's just human nature to find ways of getting around rules to better advantage ourselves*. By allowing someone to skirt the boundaries of the policy once it opens up that wiggle room. The next thing you know, they're going to want to do it again next year, then it's an hour earlier the year after, then it's their friend or relative who has rented a neighboring cabin, then it's some other guest who heard about a *loophole*.

As Americans it seems as though we find the word *No* to be just as dirty and unpleasant as any curse word (especially when it relates to any kind of public service), but all the word *No* does is set a boundary or a limit that helps your guests and customers understand how to operate within the structure of your business. "No, you can't check in early," for a resort operator is really no more unappealing than a Burger King employee saying, "No, you can't come into the kitchen to make your own sandwich and fries."

I've spent time discussing the need to be firm with policies here because we can send as many emails and speak to as many guests as we can in as much *Minnesota Nice* as possible, we can gate our driveways or create a blockade with tanks to keep them out until the golden hour, but the truth is it is the non-verbal communication we offer by breaking our own policies that allows our guests to take advantage of the wiggle room we are providing them because, well, we don't want to be mean or say, *No*. This is often the very root cause of these types of frustrations.

It's been five years since we've been putting the gate up across our driveway. In that time, we have had one guest "jump" the gate. They didn't drive through, they literally, physically, stepped over it with their body. The reason? He had a bathroom emergency and needed the lodge toilet. When his emergency had passed, he went straight back to his car parked along the road and waited for me to open the gate. Each week is different, of course. Some weeks, our guests choose to spend time in town or at Itasca until it's time to check in so that when I unlock the gate there is no one waiting to enter. Some weeks, guests line up 25 cars deep along the shoulder of the road waiting for the resort to open. They don't breach the gate and flood the resort early because our policy is that they must wait, and it is a policy on which we are unyielding.

Not once have I heard anyone complain about not being allowed to enter the grounds early. In fact, on several Saturday afternoons each year at 4:30 p.m. when I roll my golf cart down to the end of the driveway and pull that sandwich board away from the entrance, I am greeted with a fanfare of cheering and car horns honking because the anticipation of their wait has finally reached its inevitable conclusion: the start of their vacation.

I'm not sure if any of that helps, but hopefully there is a nugget or two you might be able to use.

**I once worked for a general manager in a major national corporation who espoused the following rhetoric upon everyone under his employ: "The customer is not always right, but they aren't often malicious."*



Guests line up patiently for their resort adventures to begin...at check-in time.

Haven't connected on the Yahoo! Resorters chat group?

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- Friday Turnover -

By Jay and Kim Jamtgaard, Wildwood Resort



This summer we moved to a Friday turnover and I find myself wanting to share our experience (so far) with all of you. Maybe a July Saturday is a good time to do it so you can compare our experience against the day you just finished!

I realize that by the end of summer we might have more negatives to share but so far, it's WAY more positive than negative. In fact, I'm kind a mad that we didn't make this change when our kids were younger!

Positives

Cleaning help – This is the main reason for our change, and it has proven positive. I just couldn't get enough help for Saturdays. The move to Friday has been really good for my key cleaning ladies because they can take advantage of the day care they already have lined up for the week days. Saturday babysitting coverage has always been a struggle for my key people. Also, I picked up some awesome people who can clean for me on Friday as well as another local resort whose turnover is still Saturday. Previously those people had to choose between the two of us. It has also virtually eradicated the "we're going to the cabin" excuse for not showing up to work! Everyone can still work for us Friday and be done in time to head to the family cabin on Friday afternoon.

Family life – So far this summer we've found that we're actually taking a full weekend to recoup. I know we always "could" have taken Monday as a second day of rest. However, we never did because it's a work day for the rest of the world and the phone rings and business happens and it was natural to jump back into the work week. We are finding that now we are taking 2 days of rest and (gasp!) actually going to church on Sunday mornings. Also, we've been able to attend several family events that we've always had to miss in past summers because of Saturday turnover. Twice we've made it to basketball tournaments for our youngest that happened over June weekends. We were still able to do our turnover, get our people settled and leave for the weekend. TWICE! Another crazy thought – we can actually attend weddings and parties on a Saturday now. We have had extra rest time by taking two (mostly) days of rest on Saturday and Sunday. Too bad we spent 20 years missing weekends in the summer. It makes me angry to think of the family time we gave up when our kids were little.

Professional help – Turning over on Friday means that we can take advantage of other professionals whose services we need on turnover day because it's their regular work day. Three weeks ago, I found red ants by a fire pit and was able to get our bug guy to stop by and kill those suckers because he was already out and about working that day. If we'd turned over on Saturday, he would not have come until Monday and it would have impacted our guests. (I've never had luck treating those red jerks myself.) That same day, Jay had motor issues with a boat and he was able to get it in to the dealership on a work day instead of trying to track down a service

guy on a Saturday. In addition, we had a huge pine tree taken down Friday while we were turning over the cabins. With a Saturday turnover it would have been a major disruption for our guests.

Positioning ourselves for splitting weeks – We have been seeing the day coming when we have to start splitting weeks to accommodate today's Minnesota resort vacationer. By moving to a Friday turnover, we are positioning ourselves to make that change in a way that will enable us to offer a full weekend as one of the split week options.

Guests actually like it – We had many people upset with us last summer when we announced the change. However, we have not lost one rebooking this summer because of it. In fact, many have stated this summer that they really like the idea of getting home on a Friday and still having the weekend ahead of them. Traffic has not impacted them (so far) and the traffic home on a Friday morning has been a breeze according to all of them we've spoken to. They also like the fact that if part of the family can't make it up for a full week the whole group can at least be here for a full weekend.

Negatives: (*I'm having to work to think of any*)

No one likes change - Last summer some of our guests were mad about the change and we had one guest who was new to us last year who did not rebook because of the change. No one likes change, and this is a big one. However, it's not the first time they've been mad at us for a business decision and it won't be the last. Last summer, we just listened to them vent their irritation and moved forward. It's for the best for us.

Difficult for adult children – We did have had one guest tell us that Friday turnover day just doesn't work for their adult kids, so they did not rebook. That was only one guest but even so Friday turnover was the reason they did not rebook.

It can be a negative for people still working and for out-of-staters - It could require people who are still working to take an extra day of vacation. And for out-of-staters it is an issue because if they are already taking Friday as a travel day (for a Saturday check-in) then this change requires them to take two weekdays off for travel for a Friday check-in. However, this fact has not affected re-bookings so far this summer even for our out-of-staters.

Transportation issue for the younger workers – A few of the youngsters I've hired have a little challenge getting out here if their folks work Fridays. This hasn't been a big issue but for one or two people it has affected them. Most have worked out rides now, though, and I'm not hearing too much about it. Again – my staffing is WAY more stable, so this isn't really affecting me, but it does affect some of the younger kids.

August staffing challenge - While I gained lots of June help by moving to Fridays our August help took a hit with sports starting the second week of August. All kids who play sports or are in marching band cannot work Fridays the rest of August. It isn't a huge issue for us, but Friday turnover is the reason we are losing most of them.

Overall, I consider our change to Friday turnover to be a really positive experience!

About Half of Minnesota's Resorts Went Out of Business in Past 32 Years

Reprinted by permission CBS Minnesota WCCO News from July 2, 2019

Written by John Lauritsen



The Fourth of July is a busy time at Minnesota lakes and resorts.

But research done by Explore Minnesota shows the number of resorts in the state has dropped significantly over the past 30 years.

Ben Lapinski and his family took a leap of faith in 2016.

They bought the former Walleye Dundee's Resort in Waukhon on Lake Milles Lacs.

"We saw a fun opportunity for a fun little place on a great lake with a lot to offer," Lapinski said.

They changed the name, and instead of focusing on walleyes, they reeled in customers by focusing on other fish.

"The bass fishing, the recreation, the muskie, you know, it's an hour and 15 minutes north of the metro area. If you really focus on those types of things, you'll bring in different crowds that historically haven't been here," Lapinski said.

Beachside's business has steadily gone up, but their story is a rare one in the Land of 10,000 Lakes.

"They've been declining about 30 resorts per year for the last 20 years," said John Edman, director of Explore Minnesota.

In fact, the number of Minnesota resorts dropped nearly in half from 1985 to 2017. Edman said there are several reasons for the decline, including an increase in the value of lakeshore property.

"Consumers are demanding different types of amenities at the resorts. Plus, there's a lot of different other options in terms of lodging besides just resorts," Edman said.

Edman said the resorts that have been doing well offer more recreation and family activities like hiking and golf. Still, he thinks the majority of destinations still standing are here to stay.

"We're just not going to lose as many per year, but I do expect that to stabilize somewhat," Edman said.

Because there are fewer resorts, Edman said that demand at many of them is on the rise, which is why it's recommended that if you have a place you like to visit and a time of year you want to go, you should book as far in advance as you can.

Nominating Resorters for the 2020 Resorter of the Year Award

SEPTEMBER 1, 2020 DEADLINE

The Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) selects, through nomination by its members, one resort and resort owner that has shown a dedication to the improvement of the Minnesota Resort Industry 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 involvement in community activities and by displaying a willingness to help other resort owners to successfully operate Minnesota resorts.

You can go to the CMR website www.Minnesota-Resorts.com, scroll to the bottom of the home page and click on Membership. Then, by using your User Name and Password you will be in the CMS (Content Management System) of your listing. On the Dashboard tab you will find the application under Educational Materials & Applications. Click on Applications then print a copy of Resorter of the Year nomination form.



Mail the completed form to:

Resorter of the Year Nomination Committee
Community of Minnesota Resorts
PO Box 61
Dent, MN 56528

If you need further assistance please contact the CMR office by emailing CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com or calling 320-212-5107.

2019 Session Ends with just the Basics

By Joel Carlson, Community of Minnesota Resorts Lobbyist

A careful review of the issues, players and politics of the 2019 legislative session will reveal a meat and potatoes affair served up by a Governor and Legislative Leaders that had a strong desire to complete the people's work. Minnesota started the year with the only divided legislature in the country coupled with a new chief executive and cabinet, a prescription for gridlock and acrimony.

The ability to lay down their swords and seek a solution that works for Minnesotans without the partisan rancor and finger pointing that has surrounded the issue for years was refreshing.

Yet, as the session progressed it was clear Republican Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka and new DFL House Speaker Melissa Hortman were more willing to work to compromise than throw stones. Many feel a turning point in the session was on May 1st when lawmakers and Governor Walz reached a level-headed compromise to address the lingering problems with the state's auto registration and licensing system. The ability to lay down their swords and seek a solution that works for Minnesotans without the partisan rancor and finger pointing that has surrounded the issue for years was refreshing. It was a *leap of faith* moment, and it worked.

While the ability to work together helped end the session mostly on time, the final bills that passed during the one-day special session covered the basics of state government - not much else. Getting a budget in place by July 1st as required by the constitution was the goal, and they got it done. No shutdown, no brinksmanship, no threats, but lots of issues left on the cutting room floor known as the 2020 election.

There were deal points each side needed to achieve, and they did. All sides can claim a

bit of success for their first session of divided government and are now plotting for the future.

Resort Issues get new Consideration?

A familiar news report to resorters, but clearly less so to the public and legislators, ran this summer in many area newspapers. The story covered a research report published by Explore Minnesota Tourism that detailed the 50 percent decline in Minnesota resorts over the past 30 years – a well-known fact to everyone working to preserve the family-owned resort business.

While detailing the decline, the report offered a hopeful outlook for Minnesota resorts. It noted the change in business practices, new amenities, and switching up fishing species to help keep resorting fun, fresh and viable.

The story is reprinted on page 19 of this magazine or click on the below link to access the story directly.

<https://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2019/07/02/in-32-years-half-of-minnesotas-resorts-went-out-of-business/>

Several legislators mentioned the report to me and to Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) members – asking the key question “*What can we do to help?*” While several resort issues stalled in 2019, like updating the resort property tax tiers, its possible the spotlight of this report may spur some legislative action.

We have raised the issue of greater flexibility in allowing 16- and 17-year-olds to perform more work at resorts to address a labor shortage. We know property taxes are an issue, but we also have asked to exempt resort improvements from sales tax so that cabin rentals can continue to increase (and generate more sales taxes). We know rural broadband needs to develop and support greater funding to increase access and speed. Unfair competition from unregulated lodging (Vacation Rentals by Owner's (VRBO) etc.) continues unchecked in many areas. And, at a time when we need to attract more visitors to Minnesota resorts increased funding for Explore Minnesota Tourism (EMT) and its grant programs are critical to tourism in Minnesota.

It's possible that a renewed emphasis on resort decline, and the negative impacts that has on all the supporting tourism businesses and local economies, can bring about some action on these issues. But we'll need CMR member help at the Capitol to make that happen!

Post Labor Day School Start Remains Intact

One perennial issue we've addressed for years did come up in 2019 – efforts to repeal or weaken the longstanding requirement that Minnesota schools start after Labor Day. We have struggled to maintain this law for many sessions – and it's a critical issue for tourism across Minnesota.

Unfair competition from unregulated lodging (Vacation Rentals by Owner's (VRBO) etc.) continues unchecked in many areas.

*...other
policy
bills that
got lost
in the
budget
debate
may
see
daylight.*

The Minnesota House education bill included a provision to repeal the requirement for two years, which CMR actively opposed. When the bill was presented on the House floor, an amendment to remove the provision authored by Rep. Rod Ecklund passed by a wide 93-38 margin. It was a huge success – and drew bipartisan support across the state.

The State Senate attempted a similar end run around the Post Labor Day requirement but allowing any districts to set their own calendar under the guise of a *flexible learning year* program. This is the same law that allowed 27 districts in southwest Minnesota to start before Labor Day – which they have all since abandoned because test scores didn't move. After some quick work by Sen. Carrie Ruud on the Senate floor, the Senate voted 47-18 to remove this provision from the Senate education bill. Another win and great work by CMR members and legislators!

Looking Ahead to 2020

The Legislature comes back to session on February 11, 2020 and, with a two-year budget in place, the legislature can attempt to work on policy items that were left behind in 2019. The session will attempt to pass a capital investment bill, and other policy bills that got lost in the budget debate may see daylight.

But it's not lost on anyone that all 201 legislators will stand for election a short 18 months away. Many Capitol issues will be closely studied through the lens of the election. But, as is common with Presidential elections cycles, it's impossible to know if the legislative session will even impact the election. The divided electorate will no doubt be focused on the Presidential race - and that may well determine the outcome of the legislative races more than any issue at the Capitol.

We will be making plans for CMR's annual visit to St. Paul during the legislative session – we are hoping to increase our attendance. Thank you for all you do to make CMR's legislative program a success – see you at the Fall Conference!

Joel Carlson owns a legal research and government affairs business in St. Paul. He has represented CMR at the Capitol since 1997. He can be reached at jdcresearch@aol.com.

Make plans to attend The Community of Minnesota Resorts Day on the Hill 2020 - Coming February 2020 -



Let's Get on the Bus!

We will be making plans for the CMR's annual visit to St. Paul during the legislative session – we are hoping to increase our attendance.

Kathy's Kraft Korner

By Kathy Marnik, Timber Trails Resort

Texas Flowers

Before You Begin

To create these lovely bouquets, you'll need the following materials:

- Texas Snowflakes (giant coffee filters)
- Pipe Cleaners
- Liquid Watercolors
- Sprayers and Droppers



Step 1

Apply Liquid Watercolor to Texas Snowflakes using droppers or sprayers and watch as the color spreads.

Step 2

Mix several colors to create a completely unique, one-of-a-kind flower.

Step 3

Allow the Texas Snowflake to dry completely.

Step 4

Once dry, gather the circle in the center of each Texas Snowflake and use a pipe cleaner to hold the flower together, leaving a stem.



Step 5

You may put the flowers in a vase or flowerpot or use another pipe cleaner to wrap around all the stems, holding the entire bouquet together.

Fun Flower Pots and Flowers

Before You Begin

Gather the following materials:

- Tissue Paper
- Pipe Cleaners
- Flowerpots
- Collage Materials
- Markers
- Paint
- Any other items desired for decorating the flowerpots.

Step 1

Create flowers by folding up to three pieces of tissue paper into one-inch accordion folds. If you so choose, you may cut the ends in half-circles to create petals.



Step 2

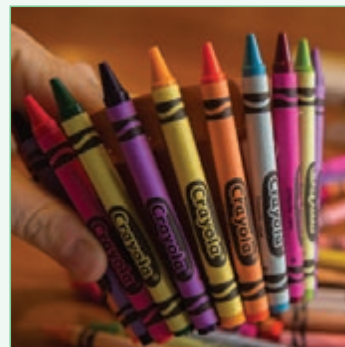
Wrap a pipe cleaner around the center of the folded tissue, leaving a stem. Fluff out the tissue paper like a flower.

Step 3

Decorate the flowerpot using paint, gems, crayons, glitter or any other materials desired.

Step 4

Fill the flowerpot with rice, stones or sand so that the flowers can stand upright.





The CMR would like to thank the above individuals for volunteering to be a member of the Board. We would also like to thank Kristin Wherley, who is a retiring board member, and Mike Schweiters Boyd Lodge, and Bob Schimerowski Diamond Lake Resort for renewing their board terms. Their time and talents will be put to good use as we further the Marketing, Education and Legislative initiatives of the Community of Minnesota Resorts!



Community of Minnesota Resorts' New Board Members (l-r): Mike Schultz Ten Mile Lake Resort, Scott and Jenn Tanke Wilderness Bay Resort, Bob Barton Hidden Haven Resort, Jen Bloomquist Cedar Rapids Lodge. Not pictured were Linda Schultz Ten Mile Lake Resort and Jim and Jill Dillon Whippoorwill Resort.

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Best season ever. We didn't spend months planning the perfect summer activities. Or drive to the cabin every Friday night with a kayak secured to the car's roof. But the crude oil we transport was turned into the equipment that makes summer... well, summer. When the energy you invest in life meets the energy we fuel it with, summer fun happens.



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