



# Minnesota Resort Congressional Log

Published in Boy River, MN

Summer 1984

Vol. 1, No. 1

## RESORT WORKSHOP III ANNOUNCED

### Membership Drive Paramont

You will find a membership brochure and application form with this newsletter. Our goal is to attain a membership of 100 before Labor Day. Consider the benefits to you and your resort which are outlined in the enclosed brochure. With your membership you will receive the Management-For-Profit manual which has been developed in our Workshops (if you don't have it already). This alone is worth your membership in addition to the other benefits outlined.

When you join we suggest that you find a neighbor to join also. This way we can attain our membership goal. Together we can make good things happen for all of us. Send in your application today. None of us can do as much as all of us together.

#### WORKSHOPS STILL AVAILABLE

Workshop I has been presented seven times in seven different resort areas since last October. Together with Workshop II it is still available.

Has your group had the benefit of these workshops? We have renewed our pledge to take these workshops to whoever wants them wherever they may be. All we require is a minimum guarantee of ten in attendance.

Speak to your association, chamber or resort group about a Workshop in your area. Let us know about it. We will work with you to make it happen.

The heart of the matter has been the Small Resorter's Management-For-Profit Workshops. No colleges grant degrees in resorting. There are no textbooks to teach us how to profitably run a resort. The expertise in our field lies in those of us who do the thing.

Workshop I and Workshop II have gathered the real experts together to share their expertise. In each case we have attempted to identify the chief problems and the main concerns of our resort operators and draw on their experience and to share it together.

Once again we will gather this fall to carry this process forward. Workshop III will meet for the first time on October 9th at Pleasant Acres Resort on Gull Lake to take up the next set of problems.

An agenda of topics will include:

The Brochure Problem- Creating an effective brochure for your resort.

Resort Improvements- Establishing priorities.

Marketing- Writing your marketing plan.

Our Image- An examination of resort signs.

The Cracker Barrel- Continuing our hot sessions on cost-savings and profitability.

Set October 9th aside to learn what your colleagues know, and tell them what you know.

# It's YOUR Newsletter

The CONGRESSIONAL LOG is your newsletter. We need your inputs. Do you have helpful hints, ideas, suggestions? We want to run a "Resort Swap Shop". What do you need? What do you want to get rid of that is still useful? Send ads and ideas to: Minnesota Resort Congress, PO Box 13, Boy River, MN 56632 and your Editor will find printing space for them. Remember, none of us is as successful as all of us together.

## FOOD for THOUGHT

by  
Bill Koch, President

Your Executive Board has been putting in many hours on behalf of MRC. We met each week this year until May. Since then it has been every other week for our deliberations. We have made MRC better known and we have stimulated the thinking of our legislators about small resort problems.

We have gone too long without a voice for the small resorter. If anything is to be accomplished at the state level we will need to speak in numbers. Tourism is recognized as the second largest industry in Minnesota. But resorts, which are mostly small and family operated, are not recognized as the core of this tourism, and we are disappearing fast.

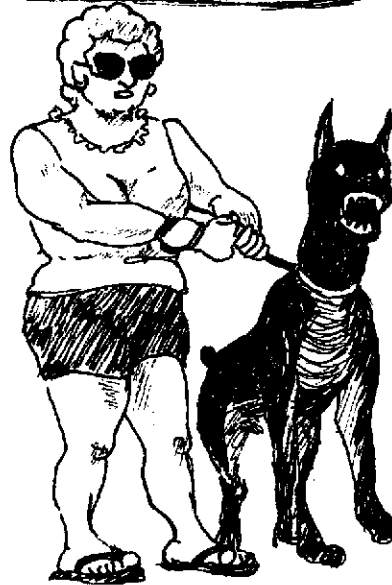
We need state help; tax relief, low cost improvement loans, marketing assistance, and many other areas. Only thru MRC can we be heard on these matters and find ways to turn our resorts into profit centers. As with any organization we need members to accomplish these things. To be effective we need numbers. If you want your small resort to survive & you want to learn from your fellow resorters what they do that is profitable, then GET INVOLVED. Join MRC!

Minnesota  
Resort Congress

Box 13, Boy River, MN 56632 (218) 889-2258

## KRABOWSKI's Kabin Kamp

with  
Cresty Rusty



I WISH  
I HAD A  
PANTHER



Amalle

*I DON'T UNDERSTAND-WHY YOU DON'T ALLOW PETS*

### RESORTER OF THE YEAR

The Minnesota Resort Congress wants to honor a "resorter of the year". This award will be made to the resorter who has most improved his resort and made the greatest contribution to the improvement of the small resort industry. Do you have a nomination for this award? We will vote on this at the First Congress in the fall. Let us know who you think deserves it, and why.

## the swap shop

Gas Tank for Sale  
Have 250 gallon  
standing gas tank  
for sale; \$50.00.  
Sofa bed, \$25.00.  
(218) 224-2577

Stove  
Combination wood-propane  
stove for sale, \$50.00.  
Good condition.  
(218) 889-2258



# Making Progress...

by Alan Gunsbury

Because of the interest and involvement of over two hundred small resort operators we are making things happen for the industry. The interest in the workshops, the interest expressed by legislators, the response of the tourism industry in listening to us and doing things which will help us are all responses to our decision to help ourselves.

Hank Todd, Director of Tourism has, for example, already extended the hours during which the public can obtain tourism information. Ginger Sisco, the Director of Marketing, has focused on small resorts in radio and TV spots.

The people who can bring the changes needed in our industry are getting tuned in to our needs. State Senator Florian Chemilewski has appraised the tourism program in Manitoba and has stated that the next session of the legislature should develop such a program for Minnesota. The publisher of In-Fisherman magazine has expressed an interest in helping us develop a complete program for the prosperity of the small resorts. By banding together and making ourselves heard where it counts we can help ourselves and the entire tourism industry.

It is imperative that we expand our membership and organize our Congress if we are to reverse the past conditions in our industry. We have real reason to work together for these changes as well as for our individual benefit. Our trading of ideas in the workshops have shown how each of us can save thousands of dollars for each of us. This working and learning together is the first step toward the strengthening of the small resort operator and the state tourism program. We have a big job to do. Now is the time to move out together and get it done. Your membership in the Minnesota Resort Congress will be a positive step in reversing the decline of the small resort. Recruit your neighbor too. We can do it, and with your enthusiasm, we will!

# the Cracker Barrel

A Barrel Full of Profit-making Ideas

A "Thank You" note to your guests, sent promptly, thanking them for their visit.

Give a brochure to your guests on departure with the suggestion that they give it to a friend.

A "Vacation Savings Plan", a printed offer for a discount to your guests when they refer a new customer to your resort.

Boat rental and other marina services can raise your annual revenue as much as 20%.

Fireplaces can extend your rental season.

Pop machines in outside traffic areas raise sales volume and bring a higher price.

Painting galvanized bait tanks with aluminum paint prolongs the life of your minnows.

Restricting bookings to one week blocks restricts your market.

Sign for your bathrooms, "If you didn't eat it first, don't flush it here!"

Stain formula for logs or rough lumber: (makes 5 gallons).

4 gallons Linseed Oil  
1 gallon Turpentine  
3 pounds of Beeswax

Aspirin in minnow tanks prolongs the life of minnows.

One bedsheet makes 4 pillow cases.

...and much, much more...

# *I May Be Wrong . . .*

some opinions from  
Chick Knight, Treasurer

MRC presented itself to the legislature at a hearing of the Joint Committee on Economic Development in Walker recently. Afterwards we were assured by some of our elected representatives that MRC should organize its objectives and present them. We had assurances that we would be listened to. As more of us get on the "band wagon" and proclaim the need for helping the small resorts we find more help in more places. This feels great, and we need all the help we can get. Lack of help for the problems of our small resorts goes back many years. Our pleas have fallen on deaf ears. Now that we are organizing to get something done we see those who would not listen begin to say they have programs to help. I am not convinced that they will seriously fulfill their promises. I am convinced that only MRC will seriously respond to the problems we share together.

The office of Tourism does not seem to have included the state's resorts in their marketing thinking. Perhaps they think that all that money spent promoting tourism in Minnesota is going to fill up our resorts by osmosis. The present programs seem to be directed at the 40 or so largest resorts with their multi-million dollar expansion of luxury facilities. This is just one aspect of tourism. The backbone of our tourism industry is the multitude of small resorts that cater to the clear majority of the state's vacationers. We are a majority silent too long. MRC speaks for us.

We have set the date for Workshop III for October 9th. These workshops are still the heart of the MRC Program. We will take the workshops, any of them, to any Chamber, Association, or resort group that wants to call for it. Ask us!

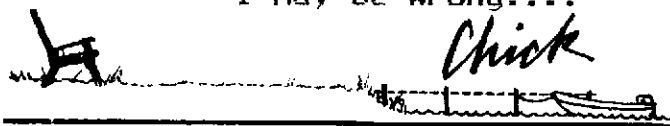
Workshop I has been presented seven times. Aside from time and

money saving ideas it contains information on resort evaluation, methods of setting rates and a marketing Cracker Barrel session. Everyone hasn't been there yet. What about your group?

Workshop II continues the Cracker Barrel sessions, deals with maintenance problems, insurance and writing a marketing plan for your resort. Have you been to it?

Workshop III is still in planning. What would you like to see in it? Something on brochures? Book-keeping? More rate information? Resort improvements? Legislative programs? Please let us know. These workshops always try to bring you the best information on the things you want most.

"Them's my thoughts....  
I May Be Wrong...."

*Chick*  


## The CHECKLIST

Checklists will be a regular feature of the CONGRESSIONAL LOG. Checklists are lists of questions, with appropriate answers. It is checklists that make airplanes safe. Checklists can make your business profitable. When all the answers to the questions are "yes" the bird is ready to fly. Use the checklists lest the ground come up and smite thee. Make up your own checklists for each of the following categories:

- Buildings & Grounds
- Marina & Docks
- Lodge/Inventory
- Marketing & Merchandising
- Signs & Access Roads
- Reservations
- Financial Management
- Maintenance & Repair
- Purchasing
- Personnel Management

There are more. In future issues we will develop checklists in these other categories. In the meantime, develop your own.

# DNR Report

## PERMITS AND LICENSES AD INFINITUM

There has been some confusion about the Fish Packer's License. First it was, and then it wasn't, and now it is again, but it is not the same. We hope we can clarify the matter. The following comes directly from DNR Headquarters and is the final word (we are told).

"The unintentional deletion of the "Fish Packer's License" passed in the recent legislative sessions is being corrected under the DNR Commissioner's administrative authority granted by the same bill. It was not the legislative intent to omit the Fish Packer's License, said officials.

The Department of Natural Resources has announced that Commissioner Joseph Alexander has issued a new order providing for a Fish Packer's Permit to be issued at no cost.

Persons having this permit will be able to provide fishermen the same services that were previously provided under the Fish Packer's License.

Until the permit is available, the DNR Conservation Officers will honor packaging of fish for transportation by persons who held a 1983 or 1984 Fish Packer's License.

Fish prepared and packaged for transportation must comply with the labeling and record keeping requirements."

So, it is no longer a license but a permit! We wonder why anyone would want one.

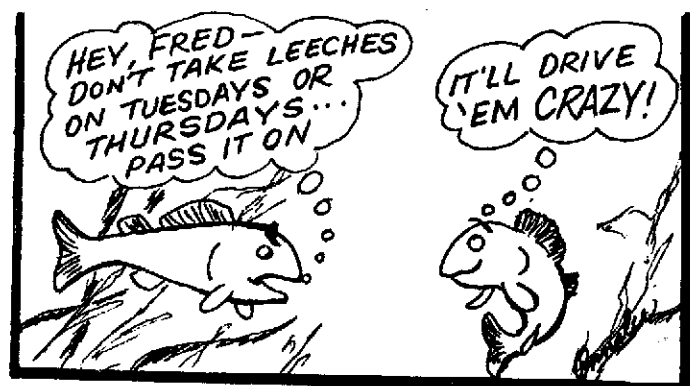
Another complexity is the collection of licenses & permits which we are required to buy for the privilege of losing money on bait. Here is the latest DNR memo on this affair. The word is out that Conservation Officers are to start ticketing resorters this year for non-compliance.

"The LOCAL MINNOW DEALER'S LICENSE has been changed to MINNOW RETAILER'S LICENSE. This \$10.00 license entitles the holder to sell minnows only. It is unlawful to transport (seine or trap) minnows under this license.

An additional license, a MINNOW RETAILER'S VEHICLE LICENSE is available at a cost of \$10.00 for each vehicle. This license allows for the transportation of minnows by a licensed MINNOW RETAILER from the minnow dealer's place of business to the retailing place of business by the most convenient and direct route. Thus a minnow retailer has the alternative of either securing delivery service by a MINNOW DEALER, or purchasing a MINNOW RETAILER'S VEHICLE LICENSE and hauling his own minnows.

The ITINERANT MINNOW DEALER'S LICENSE has now been changed to the MINNOW DEALER'S LICENSE. The price for this is \$70.00 plus \$10.00 for each MINNOW DEALER'S VEHICLE LICENSE, and \$5.00 for each MINNOW DEALER'S HELPER LICENSE requested."

This is not one of those parodies of bureaucracy that goes around from time to time. It is a real quote from a real directive, and we are expected to comply. Most of the bait we buy dies off before we can sell it. Perhaps we should suggest to the DNR the creation of a MINNOW SLAUGHTERING LICENSE which requires holders of MINNOW DEALER'S LICENSES to pay us for our losses. We hope that the pollution people don't decide we need a MINNOW BURIER'S LICENSE as well. This whole business could be a good subject for resolution by our Minnesota Resort Congress.



REMARKS TO LEGISLATIVE HEARING  
WALKER MINNESOTA  
May 16, 1984

by  
Robert W. Graham, Secretary  
Minnesota Resort Congress

I have been asked to make a few remarks this evening on behalf of the Minnesota Resort Congress. On behalf of our resort-members I want to welcome you to the land of morning thunderstorms, high winds, big fish, and vacation delights. I also want to introduce you to our Executive Board, Bill Koch, of Shorecrest Resort, our President; Alan Gunsbury of Pleasant Acres Resort, Brainerd, our Vice-president; Chick Knight, our Treasurer, from Pinehurst Lodge at Benedict. I am Robert Graham of Cwmry Cove Resort at Boy River, and I am Secretary of the Minnesota Resort Congress. We all want to thank Len Zimmer of Merit Lodge for bringing you all together here tonight. We appreciate your concern for our problems.

When you come to Cass County you come to the land of the small, family operated resort, to the heart of the Heartland, where thousands of hunters, fishermen, and family vacationers annually spend over 100 million dollars, creating over 5000 jobs with a 21 million dollar payroll. We are now told that tourism is the largest industry in Cass County, as it is in 12 other Minnesota counties. Here the tourism volume is over eight times greater than that of agriculture. This fact does not diminish the economic importance of agriculture, but only serves to illustrate the critical importance of tourism in this region.

There are severe problems in this vacationland. The resort industry is in a state of crisis. Tourism has been well described as an invisible industry. It does not create the visible and impressive signs of itself that factories, skyscrapers and other symbols of commerce do. It consists of thousands of quiet, obscure, low visibility providers who attract little attention.

In the case of Cass County the tourism industry is centered around hundreds of small, family operated resorts without which tourism would collapse. On the average these consist of eight cabins, or cottages. They gross less than \$20,000 per year each, and generally are unable to operate profitably. We may characterize them as the invisible core of a low-visibility, key industry. Nevertheless, they are the region's main attraction to vacationers. They collect only 17% of the tourism dollar, but without them 83% of this county's 109 million dollar tourism trade would be lost.

We are losing these resorts. In the last 15 years half of Minnesota's resorts have closed forever. It is projected that in the remainder of this decade half of those remaining will also close. Some of them should. Some won't be missed. Many others will strive for survival and profitability. If they cannot, Minnesota's tourism industry will be severely crippled or will collapse altogether.

We are grateful and enthusiastic about the new 8.8 million dollar state tourism promotion program. But it appears to us that while this program seeks, at last, to repair the leaky roof over Minnesota tourism, the floor of the structure is collapsing. We may all wind up in the basement. It is the rebuilding of that floor, the state's small, family operated resorts, that has been undertaken by the Minnesota Resort Congress. In this task we will need your help.

It is the task of the Minnesota Resort Congress to organize these many small resorts into a grass-roots organization. Within this organization these resorters have found that they can ventilate their problems and share their expertise with one another. They are also developing solutions to their problems. Since last October the Minnesota Resort Congress has held nine workshops in seven different locations and worked with nearly 300 resorters. In doing so we have tried to isolate and define the most serious problems of these operators. We have gathered them together and

encouraged them to use one another as a resource. Several themes have emerged. We have attacked the problem of unprofitable low rates, maintenance problems, buying problems, asset evaluation, the problem of cost-effective marketing, and better management. Response and participation have been positive and enthusiastic. The workshops will continue, a newsletter is forthcoming and elected representatives of the membership will convene in the fall for the first Congress.

We are committed to the precept that small resort operators can and will help themselves out of this crisis. They also need your help. They cannot do it alone. As we bring rates into line with economic realities, strive to re-educate the banking community, struggle with the mercantile community, and devise better marketing we will call on you to involve yourselves in two key problems.

First we will call for recognition. We expect that the small family resort should be acknowledged for what it is; the core of Minnesota tourism. We will strive to educate the legislature and the bureaucracy about our importance. We will insist on being acknowledged, on awareness that we count, that we make a key contribution, that we support the economy in a significant way. We will not accept the image of ourselves as a moribund, inconsequential economic anachronism. We will not accept the notion that the future of Minnesota tourism lies exclusively in the Resort-o-minium, the high finance luxury complex or the two hundred dollar a day accommodation. We do not believe that the interests of this state and its people are served by allowing the small resort to become an anachronism as it slips into limbo. We believe that tourism is a growth industry and that Minnesota has room for every kind of tourism provider, but we hold, also, that the small, family operated resort is, and will continue to be, the heart and core of the tourism economy if we work together.

Secondly, we will call upon you for legislation designed to help us with those problems which we cannot solve by ourselves.

We will call upon you for a program that will identify those resorts who want to remain in business and will endeavor to render an improved facility to the touring public on a profitable basis. Such as these should be aided. Well run, progressive family resorts need aid in restoration and rehabilitation.

Legislation is needed which will discourage the liquidation of good resort properties. A resort generates three and one half times the dollar volume of trade annually as will that same property subdivided into private use.

We will call for the expansion of tourism extension and broadened resort education programs through county extension.

We will offer the Department of Tourism every assistance in developing a comprehensive and complete directory of all of the state's resorts.

We will work to develop models of successful and profitable small resorts and endeavor to apply their principles to pending legislation.

We will create and sponsor an All-Minnesota Resort-Vacation Show annually.

We will foster the development of an integrated, computerized, full service vacation reservation system in conjunction with the office of tourism.

We will participate fully in any program designed to reverse our present national image as a "tumbleweed place" and a state for a "vacation on the cheap".

As these, and other, programs develop the Minnesota Resort Congress will expect your help and cooperation.

We thank you kindly for hearing us this evening and hope that you now know who we are and what we stand for. We express the sincere hope that we may, in the future, work closely with you to re-vitalize the core of our state's growing tourism industry, its small, family owned resorts.



Minnesota  
Resort  
Congress

Box 13, Boy River, MN 56632

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## Minnesota Resorts Full?

The recent legislative hearing in Walker heard comments from legislators suggesting that urban dwellers generally regard our resorts as filled from beginning to end of season. This was in contrast to testimony that average occupancies do not exceed 70% at random peak periods. A recent news release carried by TV stations and print media declared that Minnesota tourism is enjoying a 21% increase this season. Our own casual polling of Heartland area family resorts shows a softness in May/June bookings and a marked weakness throughout July. These discrepancies in reported volumes may depend on what segment of industry is doing the reporting. Some of it may be sales psychology. Large, corporate/luxury resorts may, in fact, be showing increased volume based on improved business conditions. The upturn seems slower where the small resort is concerned. Some operators are reluctant to admit that trade is slow on the grounds that such admission is bad for business. This can even go to the extreme of reporting full occupancy when business is actually slow. This tends to obscure the facts. Fallacious reporting and reporting for select industry segments results in consumers assuming that there is no space available. Unfortunately, it becomes difficult to deal with the real facts when they are obscured or when the media report the facts for one segment of our industry as though it spoke for the whole industry. The small, family operated resort is not being heard. The Legislature and the Office of Tourism can only hear those who are talking to them. The majority may rule, but a silent majority doesn't.

### *Did You Know?...*

What Minnesota has to offer and what people want on a vacation is not a solid linkage? Minnesota has poor market visibility.

People now demand a greater variety of activities when on vacation?

Only one in three vacationers are likely to return to the same resort.

Most people say that distance traveled is not a major factor in their vacation.

The main concerns of most vacationers are quality of lodging and variety of activities.

Resorters lost \$175,000 in 1983 when the legislature repealed the marine gas tax refund.

The Department of Tourism will publish a complete resort guide next year and you do not have to belong to any organization to be listed. If you have not heard from them, let them know that you want to be in it.

Bait, tackle, and liquor sales are down in 1983.

