

# Minnesota **Resorter** *Resorters Helping Resorters*

**Education:**

*Virtual CMR Spring Conference • March 27<sup>th</sup>*

**Marketing:**

*Blogging: Read Them, Write Them*

**Legislation:**

*Virtual Day on the Hill • March 9–10<sup>th</sup>*



Winter 2021 | Vol. 37/No. 1

**A PUBLICATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF MINNESOTA RESORTS**





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**PROTECT YOUR SEPTIC FROM WINTER**



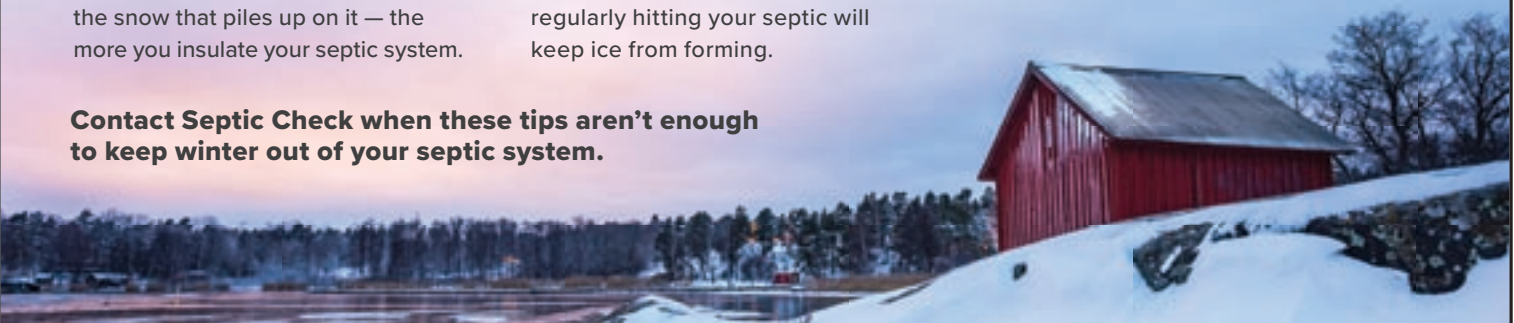
As winter approaches, take the necessary steps to protect your septic system from the harshness of a Minnesota winter. Follow these simple steps and keep Septic Check in your contacts list. The rest will take care of itself.

**INSULATION** Stop mowing your drainfield in late fall to keep an insulating layer of grass. Add 8-12 inches of mulch. Dump autumn's leaves on it. The more you cover the mound — even by not packing down the snow that piles up on it — the more you insulate your septic system.

**WATER USAGE** Don't keep water running. That just causes problems. Instead, use your dishwasher daily. Stagger laundry so that you do a warm load every day. Take hot showers. Hot water regularly hitting your septic will keep ice from forming.

**STEER CLEAR** Keep traffic off of your septic mound. Don't pack down the ground, walk on your septic mound, or ride snowmobiles or tractors over it. Keep the snow from packing down and you'll keep the insulation intact.

**Contact Septic Check when these tips aren't enough to keep winter out of your septic system.**



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# Minnesota Resorter

Resorters Helping Resorters



A Community of Minnesota Resorts Publication

Winter 2021

Vol. 37 No. 1

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**About the cover:** This photograph was submitted by Patty Mueller, Balsam Beach Resort, Bemidji.

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 PRESIDENT'S PEN



President Clint Mueller  
*Community of Minnesota Resorts*

Finally, with 2020 in the rearview mirror and a lot of questions heading into this next summer, what will 2021 bring?

Many of us ended up having a good year, which was surprising with the way April and May started. We all had a lot of new first-time resorting guests show up at our resorts this summer being it was one of very few safe options for people who were tired of sitting at home in isolation. Even with limited activities at most resorts

due to COVID-19 restrictions, it seemed like people still really enjoyed their time in the outdoors and reconnecting with family, friends and Mother Nature. After talking with a lot of resorts it sounds like many of our new guests rebooked for 2021 and are excited to return to the waterfront for another vacation.

Is this just a one- or two-year short-term influx of vacationers that had no where else to go, and now with a vaccine on the horizon and traveling restrictions soon to be lifted, will they leave us as fast as they came? I think 2021 will be a repeat of this last year for most resorts, excluding the April and May cancellations that most of us encountered. A lot of people are still gun shy of planes, trains, and cruise ships and from listening to people talk, they seem unsure and have a wait and see attitude with a rushed vaccine. So, here is something to think about, what are you doing at your resort to retain all your new guests? Were you watching their reactions and facial expression as they got

to their cabin and walked the grounds for the first time? Were you listening to the conversations they had with fellow guests and with you as their host as they commented good or bad? Are you making changes that will ensure their return year after year? Are you planning short- and long-term ideas, options, and goals for your resort, your guests, and of course for you?

The success of your future planning and goal setting will be determined by many things, some we have control of and some we do not, for instance, the success of the vaccine, the new leadership in Washington, the restrictions imposed by the Governor, which way will the economy swing, the people's trust in the government, and our own personal attitudes to name a few. All will help determine our final accomplishments for the coming year. That's why it is so important to take control of the things you can and make good decisions that will positively affect our business.

In a couple of years, vacationing families will be going back to their old lifestyles including how they were going on vacation, pre-COVID-19. Some will stay and you will retain them as long-term year after year repeat guests that invite friends and more families to join them, and some will go never to be seen again. So, as resorters, we need to take advantage of the times and continue to build our customer base with resort improvements, customer service, lots of fun activities, family memories, and the WOW up north experience. Thanks to COVID-19 a lot of people decided "Let's go to the lake for a vacation!" and stay right here in our home state of Minnesota, I'm going to do everything I can to keep them coming, whether it is at my resort or yours.

Patty and I wish you all a Healthy and Prosperous New Year!  
STAY SAFE

Clint Mueller  
Balsam Beach Resort

## Submit Your Nominations for the Community of Minnesota Resorts 2021 Resorter of the Year



Sign in to the Membership area at [www.minnesota-resorts.com](http://www.minnesota-resorts.com) for information.



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# EDUCATION

## CMR Fall Gatherings

By Timberly Christiansen, CMR Education Committee Chairwoman



The Annual Community of Minnesota Resort's (CMR) Fall Tour was a little different in this year of Covid. The CMR Board still wanted to find a way to get resorters together, in a safe atmosphere, because let us be

honest, we all needed a little camaraderie! No one truly understands the issues and day-to-day craziness that a resorter goes through other than another resorter! So, to make this happen and to try to encourage new CMR members to get out and meet up, the board came up with the new idea of Fall Gatherings.

This was a new way for all of us. But in the end, it worked out great! Not only did we get to spread out around the state, but we also got to meet some new faces. Held at four different resorts, in a BYOB-type atmosphere, resorters came together for some downtime to ask questions, reflect on how the season went, tell crazy *covid* stories, and just get away from it all for even just a few hours. All gatherings were well attended by new and seasoned resorters! Will this be the *CMR Resort Tour* from now on, probably not, but we do feel the *CMR Fall Gatherings* will stay in addition to the annual tour!

### CMR Fall Gatherings were held at:

- Cedar Point Resort, Marcell,
- Diamond Lake Resort, Atwater,
- Ten Mile Lake Resort, Dalton, and
- Two Inlets Resort, Park Rapids.

### Cedar Point Resort – Mike & Tracy Boldt

Cedar Point Resort hosted the 2020 CMR Fall Gathering for the Northern Region. This year has brought resort owners much uncertainty with so much to be thankful for. Owners Mike and Tracy Boldt opened their lodge to local resorters as well as board members for fellowship around the warm campfire. The weather was perfect, and the conversation was fruitful. Everyone agreed they were thankful for a successful summer and ready for a much-needed rest. As reservations were up so were cancellations which in a normal year *never* happens. COVID has brought so many opportunities for change both forced and welcomed.

Those in attendance agreed that they made changes to the check-in and check-out process, cleaning processes, staffing, and face-to-face time with guests. All and all everyone made it through with new lessons learned. Here at Cedar Point Resort, we look forward to 2021 with a new pool, the opportunity to bring high-speed internet to the cabins, and joining the CMR Board. Mike and Tracy are closing their 2<sup>nd</sup> resort season and looking forward to a successful 3<sup>rd</sup> season. Never stop improving and embracing change in the resorting world as guests love to watch you grow. If you are interested in hearing our story, as we are always interested to hear yours, reach out anytime.

### Diamond Lake Resort – Bob Schimerowski

CMR Members were treated with a beautiful Fall day for a small CMR Fall Gathering. The conversation focused mostly around how everyone's season went with the new challenges that were faced this season and the initial fears with cancellations early on. CMR Members all had added work to their schedules with disinfecting and making sure guests were kept safe during their stay. CMR Members enjoyed a meal together and Bob Schimerowski cooking lakeside; pulled pork, salad, and side dishes. Participants were able to have a campfire and it was nice to connect and share ideas.

### Ten Mile Lake Resort – Linda, Mike, Ben, & Celeste Schultz

On a crisp Fall evening, Ten Mile Lake Resort hosted 14 fellow resorters for a lively regional gathering. After an enjoyable meal and a tour of the cabins and surrounding property, the members shared their experiences regarding the unusual past season. The group represented six area resorts all a part of the CMR. They discussed topics such as extra cleaning and sanitizing requirements along with cancellations and deposit returns. A number of them shared their specific plans for making their guests feel safe and comfortable including social distancing and signage according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. The members were encouraged as they shared their successes along with some frustrations that accompany each season. One of the most important aspects of the organization is the opportunity to exchange ideas, hopes, future goals, and most importantly deepen our friendships. While we all missed the large group conference setting this was a great and enriching alternative in this challenging time.

### Two Inlets Resort – James & Kayla Daigle

James and Kayla Daigle hosted one of the CMR Fall Gatherings at Two Inlets Resort. There were about 12 area resorts totaling approximately 35 individuals in attendance. It felt so good to be able to connect with others who went through the same craziness. Two cabins on the resort were open for participants to walk through. Participants shared and discussed a variety of topics including how the season went, different procedures that were implemented, buying new boats, and sanitation equipment, plus much more. The weather was wonderful allowing the group to grill and relax around two bonfires. Participants felt the gathering was a great success.



# *CMR Spring Conference and Annual Meeting*

By Timberly Christiansen, CMR Education Committee Chairwoman

**March 27th**  
***Spring Conference – Zoom***

**March 28th**  
***Annual Meeting – Zoom***

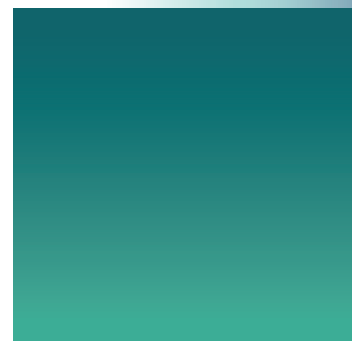


Coming soon, Spring Conference, Zoom style! Because of the current Covid-19 situation, the Community of Minnesota Resorts' Board felt it was necessary to make a decision based on the safety of all our members. Although this is not the forum we were hoping for, it is what we needed to do.

We have already begun scheduling a great line up of speakers. From topics about social media to passing the resort to a family member and exit strategies. There will be crackerbarrels, Resorter of the Year Award, vendor show, and silent auction! Yes, things will look a bit different, but we are still going to find a way to give you a great educational experience! Not to mention, adding some fun!

Keep checking the CMR Facebook page for any updates on the CMR Spring Conference as well as other School of Resorting classes. Once we get the schedule of events for the day, we'll post them so you can make sure not to miss any of your favorite topics!

Mark the date on your calendar now! We'll see you there!





# EDUCATION

## CMR Crackerbarrels

### *Promoting the Resorters Helping Resorters Mission*

By Lynn Scharenbroich, Black Pine Beach Resort

According to *Southern Living* magazine (January 9, 2018), the term *cracker-barrel* was first used in 1916, and it emerged from the country stores of the era. The phrase cracker-barrel was inspired by the barrels full of soda crackers that were for sale in those country stores. Visitors to the stores sat around the barrels chatting and catching up on the day's news. Dictionary definitions tout the *friendly homespun character* of crackerbarrel chats; also noting that these conversations were plain, simple, informal, and unsophisticated.

Who knew that crackerbarrel style chats would *grow up* over time to become an actual teaching/learning design, but it did indeed happen. Our Canadian neighbors have been about this since at least 2012. (Read more about it: <http://www.mcgill.ca/stlthe2012sapes/program> and <https://catr2019.wordpress.com/activities/workshops/teaching-and-learning-cracker-barrel-designing-effective-assessments/>)

Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) has woven crackerbarrel style discussions into conference and workshop agendas for over 20 years. Attendees then and now look forward to the friendly, informal exchange of information that is the historical hallmark of crackerbarrel chats. As time passed, the unassuming crackerbarrel gained a kind of reverence among CMR members that likely assures it a place on every foreseeable future agenda.

If there's a secret to the staying power of CMR's crackerbarrels, it might indeed be, as some of our Canadian neighbors have discovered, the success of the format itself as a learning style. Most of us who attend a workshop or conference, say we want to learn at least one new thing. It's one of the reasons we pay the money and take the time to be there. But, it's well known that adults learn differently than kids do. Deb Calvert of People First Productivity Solutions out of New York (<http://www.managingamericans.com>) says this, "It's been said that you can't teach an old dog new tricks. This would be a true statement if it were slightly modified to read, "You can't teach an old dog new tricks the same way that you'd teach a puppy."

Raise your hand if, when you were a pup, you had a teacher at any level who taught you new things through the crackerbarrel style. Now, your grown-up self and crackerbarrel learning look like a pretty good fit.

What's really happening below the surface of the crackerbarrel style? Why do so many of us in our industry regularly report enjoying this part of workshops and conferences so much? Some studies indicate four main reasons. You might see one or all of these reasons as yours, too.

- Crackerbarrels emphasize engagement.
- Crackerbarrels allow some degree of control over the content.
- Crackerbarrel style encourages *helping* (a colleague shares a problem; participants suggest solutions).
- Crackerbarrels are reliably fun.

Interestingly, the most important feature of the list appears to be the last one, *Crackerbarrels are reliably fun*.

*Brain Science Engagement*, in an August 2020 blog states, "Fun has a positive effect on motivation levels, determining what we learn and how much we retain. Learning needs fun, if learning isn't fun, it won't be effective. That's not just a sneaking suspicion – it's a cold, hard, scientific fact."

Winston Churchill once said, "Personally, I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught."

The 'fun' attribute of crackerbarrels effectively neutralizes the negative feeling of, *not always liking to be taught*, and keeps everyone ready to learn from each other. Beyond the obvious *helping* feature of this, it also puts into play another good-to-know axiom of adult learners. Adults prefer to learn from those who know the same work so they can immediately put their new knowledge into practice at their own workplace. In our case, at our own resorts.

Crackerbarrel topics over the years have covered so many things, it's almost hard to imagine there's more to talk about, but there is never a shortage of topics. As an actual crackerbarrel participant over many years, I recall those early crackerbarrels being more oriented toward the simple and homespun side with topics inspiring so much enthusiasm, it was hard to make room for everyone's comments and sometimes almost impossible to even close conversation. Resorters have the corner on the joy of good conversation! Starter topics and a more organized design are a relatively recent adjustment.

As an educational tool for resorters, the crackerbarrel has earned the appreciation it enjoys. Skilled facilitators provide a snappy, somewhat choreographed networking opportunity through conversational interaction, which is almost sure to yield learning at least *one new thing* in a fun and engaging format. CMR's crackerbarrels will likely never go out of style.

## *Excerpts through the years from CMR publications*

**June 1984\***: Volume 1, Number 1, the first CMR Newsletter was published and sent out. It included what would be a recurring column called, **the Cracker Barrel**, described as, "a barrel full of profit-making ideas." Later issues also included short paragraphs describing ideas. This column appeared for about three years. Some examples from the first list are:

- Fireplaces can extend your rental season.
- Restricting bookings to one-week blocks restricts your market.
- Aspirin in minnow tanks prolongs the life of minnows.
- Give a brochure to your guests on departure with the suggestion that they give it to a friend.

\*Full article reprint appeared in the Spring, 2004, *Minnesota Resorter*

**Fall 1987**: Discussion-style cracker barrels, similar to what we have now, first appeared on the workshop agenda; an hour for a regular cracker barrel, and then tacked on to the end of the agenda, an hour and half for what was called, *An After-Shock Cracker Barrel and Workshop Critique*.

**Spring 1988**: Cracker barrel

- Recycling cans,
- Toilet seats,
- Pest problems, and
- Interviewing for employees/Qualifying ads/Qualifying prospects.

**Spring 1990**: A portion of the Cracker barrel was devoted to questions from new resorters. This spring workshop was held twice; March 31 in Grand Rapids and April 5 in Detroit Lakes.

**January 1992**: Now-retired resorter, Steve Addler, provided an insightful review of crackerbarrels held during the 1991 Fall Funshop held in Duluth (Congressional Log, Volume 8, No.1). *Note crackerbarrel became one word.*

**July 2000**: Vol. 16, No. 3, recap of the Spring workshop stated, "The focus of the workshop was on crackerbarrels." There were men's and women's crackerbarrels during this workshop, as well as some for everyone together.

**October 2001**: Vol. 17, No. 4, Fall conference agenda boasted crackerbarrels on all three days covering an array of topics including:

- Docks,
- Motors,
- Plumbing, and
- Cleaning.

**2018 Membership survey**: Nearly 90 percent (59 out of 66) of respondents answered *yes* to, "Do you value Crackerbarrel Sessions?" This was part of a 33-question survey sent to members.

**Fall Conference, 2019**: Crackerbarrel topics:

- Online bookings and
- Reservation software.



# Why a CMR Member Should be Involved

By Casey Jones, Arcadia Lodge



My name is Casey Jones and I run Arcadia Lodge in the Marcell, MN area. I have been a resorter since the age of three when my father bought Arcadia Lodge after serving in the air force as a captain. We

just finished our 29<sup>th</sup> season and this is our first year as Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) members. I took the opportunity to watch the last board meeting via Zoom and volunteered to write this article. Now being very new to this group, I can't tell you about every area in which you can be involved. As well, without knowing you personally making a recommendation is difficult. What I can do, is explain why I feel it is necessary to be involved.

With close to 30 years of resorting under my belt, you may be asking why I would be involved now. The short answer is that there is always something to learn. Why remake the wheel if you can pick the brain of someone who has already tried it? Attending group meetings, activities and events will allow me to learn from a wide range of different resort owners.

It's true that we all run different businesses with different guests, lakes, amenities, etc. If you're considering joining but think: there's nothing I can learn; I've been doing this for a long time or; I'm new with brand new ideas so I'm going to go it alone. Well, from personal experience through other groups Arcadia Lodge has been a part of, I can truly say that no, you don't know everything; and for those that are new, how do you know your *new* ideas haven't been tried in the past?

During the last board meeting, I learned that group members can volunteer on four committees: marketing, membership, education, and legislative. I watched members volunteer to run or help with committees they have personal experience in, putting their time and experience to work for the betterment of the resort industry. I also watched members volunteer in areas they had little experience in but wanted to learn more. This is a very important area for me. I have a belief that I call the *Vegas Effect*. Las Vegas is *Vegas* because of the Strip, having block after block of casinos and hotels. Imagine Minnesota the same way. How much harder will it be to find new guests and inform these guests that yes, there are vacation opportunities close to home, when you're the last resort standing? If this group can help, even in a minor way, to keep a single resort alive then it is worth a little bit of my time.

I am personally looking forward to the crackerbarrel meetings being offered through Zoom this winter. In every group that I have participated in, the most helpful parts have come from the small groups chatting before a meeting, or as a meeting is breaking up; catching tips like a new advertising trick another resorter tried or comparing notes on guest demographic shifts. It's often the small things, not the big, that help out the most.

I hope you will become involved with the CMR and give me and all the other resorters the opportunity to learn from you. I also hope you have enjoyed my article (passing it off to my wife now for proofreading) and I look forward to reading your article.

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# EDUCATION

## A Day in the Life of Resorting

By Kim Bowen, Crow Wing Crest Lodge

I have nothing pithy to say today for writing class. No funny or interesting stories are knocking on my brain wanting to be relayed on the page, skewed through my point of view. I have the time. I have the energy. I haven't the creative push this afternoon. I sit in a recliner, staring at a Kindle Fire screen, feet up after a long morning of running errands. I need to get finalized year-end figures to the accountant yet today. I need to process three more cabin deposit checks. There are a million tasks to do in my home office. \*sigh\*

The fountain splashes in the corner, the whoosh of the furnace just kicked on, and a wild turkey suddenly flutters up and thuds onto the bird feeder, right outside the dining room. I have a clear view out the pane from this angle. It cackles and clucks in curiosity, settles its wings, and pecks through the snow for non-existent sunflower seeds.



I hear a semi-truck crossing the lake a mile away, slightly off the highway and onto the rumble strip; the grumbling reverberation vibrating the window next to me, the loudest sound in this rural Minnesota setting.

The snows keep coming, week after week. Yesterday's fluff resembled pillow fight residue. The crystallized particles were so big, each individual flake with feathered veins in stark contrast to its neighbor, laying together in prideful individuality, not ready to be a pile of white. I could almost hear the murmurs and mewls, "look at me, I am so pretty, cool and chic! I am the most unique! Do not mistake me for another, or I will be piqued!"

It was -5 below zero this morning when we left for eye doctor appointments. The truck started fine and the automatic window didn't freeze up when we dropped bills off at the drive-by mail container. My husband mentioned we might need to start raking down snow layers on a couple of cabins, at least the ones with shallow-pitched roofs. We read in the newspaper on Monday that a shed collapsed from snow weight in Nevis, five miles away.

Yesterday I slogged through three-foot drifts to Cabin #15 and Cabin #18 to collect rocking chair cushions (which I dropped off today to get re-upholstered.) I almost didn't make it to #18. I fell several times. Putting a hand down to push my body up didn't help much when the appendage kept embedding down through another layer of snow. Mostly it was a struggle pulling whichever leg was behind high enough to move it up, out, and forward a step. It was a bit of a workout. I enjoyed it immensely. The muffled silence of a walk at the resort in winter is wondrously peaceful.

I recalled strolling the same path last summer. Barefoot, picking my way through the hard-packed dirt drive, holding up a long handmade skirt in one hand to stride more quickly, I heard shrieks and splashes on the beach to my right. Clinks of glass, muttered voices and heavy grill covers grating closed sounded to my left. It was supper time and I was on my way to give a phone message to a guest in Cabin #12. A loon wailed. A pileated woodpecker jack-hammered a metal band on a light pole just ahead. Ahhhh.

No matter the season, resort life is good.

*NEW for 2021 Winter Season!*

## Crackerbarrel Zoom Sessions

By Kim Bowen, Crow Wing Crest Lodge

Crackerbarrel Zoom Sessions are intended to curb the craving for community due to having cancelled the Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) Fall Conference, we have developed four crackerbarrels via Zoom. *Crackerbarrels are the most popular portion of CMR Workshops and Conferences. They are simple forums for resorters to ask questions of other resorters.* They will be moderated by volunteer resorters to help keep a bit of structure. The topics listed are just starter topics, we welcome any and all resort questions. Zoom invitation links will be emailed to all CMR members within a week of each date.

### Utilize Your Resort Community: Let's pool our knowledge!

**Thursday, January 7th  
9 a.m. – 11 a.m.**

*Dual Topic: Reviews and Feedback/  
CMR Legislative Issues*

How can we handle negative reviews on Trip Advisor, Airbnb, Google, etc.? Have you continually asked for feedback from your guests and was it helpful? (Verbally? In writing? Via email survey? Which is most effective?)

What legislative issues have the CMR worked on the last few years and which ones will we be focusing on this year? (e.g. child labor laws, property tax relief, short-term rentals - Vacation Rentals by Owner (VRBO) leveling the playing field, post Labor Day school start, etc.)

**Sunday, February 21st  
2 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

*Plumbing/Heating/Air Conditioning*

The best tricks and tips to address plumbing/heating/air conditioning issues learned over the years in resorting.

## CMR School of Resorting Classes

By Kim Bowen, Crow Wing Crest Lodge



### Reservation Software Group Demonstrations

When viewing a system demonstration, it can often feel overwhelming. It can be helpful to have others raising a question or clarification you didn't even think to ask as you process other information you were just shown. Use the group to help you make an informed decision whether to try out a new reservation system, simply scope out a possible future system, or if you already have one of the following systems; learn about new, updated, or existing features you may not be fully using. **Zoom invitations will be e-mailed out to all Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) Members the week prior to demonstration dates.**

### Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. FREE

RezStream, a CMR Associate Member, will be demonstrating their platform. If you are already using this system and have ironed out issues, or apply certain parts in an unusual way, please share that which may be of use to others! Use this time to understand new ways to process a reservation or keep track of information more efficiently. Acquire skills on features and updates you haven't yet tried. The group will be happy to learn along with you.

### Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 9 a.m. – 11 a.m. FREE

Cloudbeds, a new CMR Associate Member, will be demonstrating their reservation software system to anyone looking to scope out a possible new system. Cloudbeds makes advanced hospitality software for independent properties that manage guests and reservations, room availability, inventory sales, and payment collections. Ranked #1 for ease of use two years in a row by Capterra, this system is simple to learn and easy to train on. Cloudbeds delivers a true return on investment (ROI) unmatched in the industry. Through a browser-based system, they believe they are able to simplify the working lives of independent hoteliers everywhere.

### Wednesday, January 27<sup>th</sup> at 8 a.m. – 12 p.m. \$79

**Register at <https://pinnaclemarketingkit.com/cmr-customer-journey/>**

Marketing Workshop with five expert speakers, the Pinnacle Marketing Group will help us make the most of our marketing efforts. *Knowledge is power. You don't have to know it all, but every little bit can make a difference.* Focusing on four topics:

- **Awareness:** When you know what your potential customers are thinking about at this stage, you can start to tailor your touch points.
- **Consideration:** Your business needs to be found when it matters most, as well as provide the content your customers are seeking.
- **Purchase:** Do you have what it takes to provide a seamless purchase process?
- **Service and Loyalty:** Learn what you can do to make sure customers become your ambassadors.

### Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup> at 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

**Show and Tell Kid's Crafts Class** – A panel of resorters will be walking us through a number of simple kids' craft ideas to try out at your resort. We welcome the opportunity to chat about other resort topics while we hone our skills. **Zoom invitation and list of supplies to have on hand prior to class will be sent via email to all CMR Members within a week of class.**



## Instagram 101 Class

By Kim Bowen, Crow Wing Crest Lodge

Pinnacle Marketing Group presented an engaging class for beginner and intermediate users of Instagram on November 18<sup>th</sup>. The attendees decided to form an *Instagram Support Group* and chose to meet once a week for four weeks (including a free follow up class with Pinnacle Marketing Group.) This helped us all be accountable for homework developed during class: e.g. find three other businesses doing posts you'd like to emulate, try a contest or giveaway, edit a video clip with InShot app demonstrated during class, implement posts as seen in examples and share your experience with the rest of class. If you are an interested Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) member and were unable to attend this last class, please contact CMR Education Committee Chair Timberly Christiansen of Finn 'N Feather Resort, [finnfeather@hotmail.com](mailto:finnfeather@hotmail.com) with your request to see another Instagram program scheduled. Or simply suggest other class ideas!



## Six Tips for Resort Facebook Pages

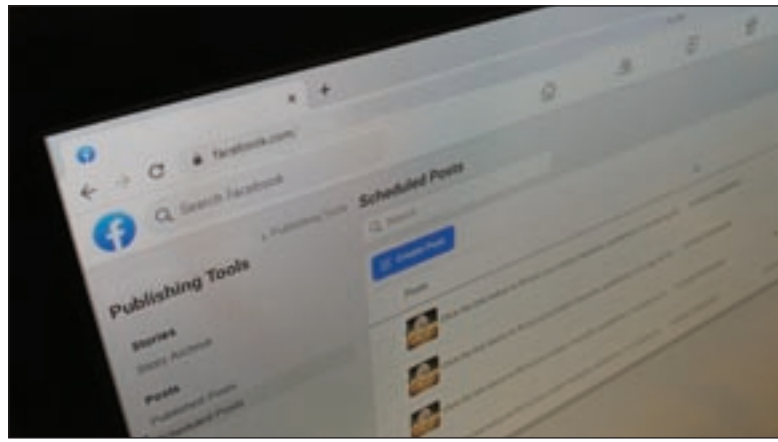
By Rich Swenson, Great Places Minnesota



1. Post new and recent pictures and videos. In your posts, add a comment or question that encourages response.
2. Post about your vacancies, specials and events at your location and in your area.
3. Use post scheduler, but also publish as you go for a higher reach.
4. Ask guests to check in, review and post photos during their stay. Interact when you are tagged in a post. Reply to reviews.
5. Engage with other business pages around your area from both your personal and business page. When you see their posts - like, comment, and share as the business page.
6. Mix it up! While your business information is important, post something NOT about you sometimes. Share something like a meme or a seasonal post or something from another page.

## How to Use Facebook in Ten Minutes per Week

By Rich Swenson, Great Places Minnesota



- Schedule a couple of posts a few days a part. A pretty sunrise/sunset is always a good one. A short comment of how nice it is will work fine, or if you have openings, say something like, book this sunset, call now. Put your number in. This way you do have content going out.
  - If you do have openings, post about them, what cabin, dates, cost and your number. Put a link into that cabin on your website.
  - Ask your guests to check in, make a post with pictures and tag the resort. Also ask for reviews on Facebook and google with pictures. Our reviews have been seen by over three-million people on Google.
- Check your notifications. You might have a message or comment with questions from someone. If you are a partner with us (Great Places Minnesota), you will see notifications of each time we talk about you and you can comment back.
  - Like media pages from Minnesota, Twin Cities television stations often do stories about your area, you can make a comment when they do. Those stories are seen by a lot of people and they do read the comments.
  - Take pictures throughout the season to have a catalog to use. Facebook likes new pictures. In the slow season, you can make slide shows and videos for posts about the coming season.

Resorts normally have a very active fan base and their likes and shares tend to drive your posts to far more people than you have fans. One post can be seen by three to four times your fan base. Take advantage of that.

## Blogging: Read Them, Write Them

By Karen Senger, CMR Digital Marketing Liaison

Have you been reading the blog that your Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) Marketing Committee has me produce for you?

The intent of the blog is to get potential guests to the CMR Website. One way to do this is by organic searches. What does that mean? It means that when your someone searches "Resorts in Minnesota with water trampolines" or "Minnesota Crappie fishing" or maybe "MN Resorts with yoga classes," if you have something on your website that addresses that, the likelihood of your resort (and in this case the CMR) being higher on the list goes up.

So, the CMR has used some of your marketing dollars to have blogs on the website. Personally, I enjoy writing blogs. Perhaps you do too? If you, your mother, father, daughter, son, friend, etc. would like to write a blog for the CMR, we could use your help. You don't have to commit to writing five blogs. Start with one and see where it goes. AND we pay \$25 per blog!

Do you have an idea for a blog? Great, contact me and I will check to see if someone has already written one or committed to writing one. Don't have ideas? That is OK too. Contact me, I have some suggestions to get you started.

We do have some general criteria that should be followed:

- At least 400 words,
- At least one photo or diagram (with approval and credit to photo owner(s)),
- One External link (to website other than CMR),
- One internal link (to page within CMR website), and
- Use keywords (words that potential guests would use when searching the internet).

Blogging is a good thing for the CMR and it can be a fun thing for you to spend some time on this winter.

Contact Karen Senger, CMR Digital Marketing Liaison at 218-256-2288 or email [ksenger56657@gmail.com](mailto:ksenger56657@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 Resort Members

Kevin & Lori Luksik  
Big Foot Resort & Campground, Alexandria

John & Lisa Dockstader  
Birchwood Resort, Sauk Centre

Jean, Brandon, & Maria Jestus  
Canary Beach Resort, Villard

Susan Paulson  
Cannon Falls Campground, Cannon Falls

Dan & Susan Branstad  
Graves Lake Resort & Campground

Gary & Linda Knox  
Minne Teepee Resort, Hackensack

Mike & Nancy Nies  
Nies Cabins, Hackensack

Rachelle Chase, Tim and Emily Norris  
Pimushe Resort, Bemidji

Brian Linne'  
Red Door Resort, Aitkin

Jamie & Angie Nelson  
Shady Grove Resort, Ottertail

Gary & Suzette Tedrick  
Silver Rapids Lodge, Ely

Kirk & Mari Petersen  
Sleepy Hollow Resort, Northome

Kevin & Patty Miller  
Woodland Beach Resort, Deerwood

### New CMR Associate Members

Jacob Wolf & Justine Hagness  
By the Yard, Inc

Jennifer Bateman, Tim Aarsvold, & David Moe  
Lake Country Resort Sales

### New Retired Resorters

Sue Malikowski  
Formerly of Shin Wako Resort



## BECOME A CMR MEMBER TODAY!

Learn more about membership by going to [Minnesota-Resorts.com/membership](http://Minnesota-Resorts.com/membership).

When on the page, click on the "Join the CMR" icon to fill out an 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](mailto:CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com)  
or 320-212-5107*

## What **RESORTERS** Are Saying About **THE CMR**

During the CMR Day on the Hill, it is such a breath of fresh air to hear the representative of the Department of Labor and Industry tell us that our request for them to consider child labor changes was so well received and her promise to get back to us with a response.

*Lynn Scharenbroich  
Black Pine Beach Resort*

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 - 17<sup>th</sup> season*



# SEE WHAT THE CMR CAN DO FOR YOU!

## 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 Guide lines, 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](http://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





## Community of Minnesota Resorts

[www.minnesota-resorts.com](http://www.minnesota-resorts.com)

Our Mission: The CMR exists to help small business/family owned and operated resorts in Minnesota to continue as a viable segment of the Minnesota tourism industry.

Hello fellow Resort Owner,

We want to help you out by offering a free membership to the Community of Minnesota Resorts until August 31st, 2021.

We hope everyone is staying safe in these unprecedented times. Not only physically, but also mentally. With everything going on right now, we as resort owners need to stick together as much as possible. Resorting is more than just waking up in the morning, putting on your shoes and heading to the lodge. Resorting is love, passion, work, tears, blood, and sweat. Resorting is not the kind of thing we do on our own. We all need a helping hand. That helping hand might come from mom or dad, brother or sister, and if you sweet talk your kids the right way, they might get into the mix as well. Neighbors and friends can even be called on when it's time to do some of the heavy lifting. Even with all that help, your biggest help might come from your fellow resorters. All resorters can relate in one way or another. Your fellow resorter has seen a lot of the same things, and we have all at one point or another reached out to another resort owner to bend their ear with a question or two.

The CMR is an organization that has been dedicated to helping each other out for the better part of our existence. 'Resorters helping Resorters' is our creed, and that's what we are planning to do on a much larger scale than we have ever done before. Our organization has had a couple of virtual meetings trying to figure out what we can do as a community to help out as many resorts as possible. Our goal is to band together during this event to ensure the viability of our industry and sustain what our families have worked so hard for. We can get through this event stronger, together.

As an organization we made the decision to allow any resort in Minnesota to join in on our Yahoo and our Facebook groups so they could be updated as well as we are. We have now made the decision to allow any resort that is not currently a CMR member to become a member, for free, until August 31st of 2021. There will be no cost to join the Community of MN Resorts for the remainder of this year and through August of 2021. This is a great way for your resort to get up to date information coming out, and the latest of what's happening in the world of resorting. This will be a great tool for your resort during these times, but also offers great information all year round. During "normal" times the CMR members are dedicated to helping out everyone in this community. We talk water toys to laundry, cabin cleaning to yard games, and slushies to boat rentals. If you have questions about anything resorting, any resort owner can chime in, and give you their thoughts on it. It is truly the Google of resorting! There is normally a weekend long fall workshop where we bring in amazing speakers from the DNR, financial institutions, legislators, marketing consultants, and motivational speakers. Our one day Spring Conference is a fun filled day packed with more of the same. Along with that the CMR offers in person and online education classes from quickbooks to building your own Adirondack chairs. The CMR fights for resorts legislatively as well with tax codes, labor laws, and post labor day school start. The CMR also works hand in hand with Explore MN for advertising tactics.

With that being said, our main goal is to help guide all resorters in the state safely through this event with an 'open for business' status for the 2021 season, and beyond. We hope this offers some peace of mind and community, we are very happy to be in a position to give back to you all as we enter the uncertainties of this season.

To facilitate you in initiating your free membership we are asking that you fill out the attached membership registration form with the information pertinent to your resort. You can then mail it to the address on the form, or scan and email it to [CMR@Minnesota-resorts.com](mailto:CMR@Minnesota-resorts.com). Once received, you will be sent additional information on how to fully activate all benefits of membership on the Community of Minnesota Resorts. We hope you take this opportunity to join us as together we will continue to sustain resorts throughout Minnesota into the future!

Thank you for all you do as a resort to keep this industry strong, and keeping our guests safe.

-Community of Minnesota Resorts



# Community of Minnesota Resorts

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please fill in form below completely)

Resort Name \_\_\_\_\_ Years in resorting \_\_\_\_\_

Owner and/or Manager Names \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip (9digit) \_\_\_\_\_

e.g. 56273-0358

Telephone numbers \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_      \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

Lake \_\_\_\_\_ Township \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Number of rental units (buildings) \_\_\_\_\_ Number of bedrooms \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Camping Seasonal Sites: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Camping Overnight Sites: \_\_\_\_\_

*Our mission statement:* "The Community of Minnesota Resorts exists to help family owned and operated resorts in Minnesota to continue as a viable segment of the Minnesota tourism industry."

During these unprecedented times, the Community of Minnesota Resorts is offering free membership to all non-member resorts through 8/31/2021. We desire all resorts in the state of Minnesota to join our community and make Minnesota resorts stronger moving into the future.

This offer is made possible through the membership fee contributions of our members throughout the years to assist resorts throughout Minnesota in a time of need such as this. It is truly "Resorters Helping Resorters".

(To make you aware of the value of this offer: Membership fees for our current fiscal year ending August 31, 2020 were \$20.60 per bedroom at your resort (minimum \$164.80 includes 8 bedrooms or less, maximum is \$1,071.20 which includes 52 bedrooms or more). We also offer an optional campground feature that is an additional \$50 annually.)

This offer includes all benefits and rights as members of the Community of Minnesota Resorts for the time period specified. Upon expiration on 8/31/2021, each member will be offered to extend their membership at the then stated membership rates. We hope you accept this offer, and become members for years to come!

Mail completed Membership Application to:

**CMR - Community of Minnesota Resorts**

**PO Box 61**

**Dent, MN 56528**

**Attn: Membership Division**

Or you can scan and email it to [CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com](mailto:CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com)

Questions?

CMR Office Manager, Jim Wherley

320-212-5107

[CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com](mailto:CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com)



# Resorter Recipes

Patty Mueller, Balsam Beach Resort

This issue's recipes are all about enjoying quiet moments with a warm freshly baked cookie.

## Grandma's Chocolate Chip Cookies

- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/3 cup margarine
- 1/3 cup shortening
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 1/2 cup nuts (optional)

Cream sugars and the shortening and beat well. Add the rest of ingredients and mix well. Bake at 375°F for nine minutes.



## Snow Balls

- 3/4 lb. butter
- 6 tablespoon sugar
- 3 1/2 cup flour
- 1 1/2 cup chopped nuts

Mix butter and sugar. Add flour and chopped nuts. Shape into round balls. Bake at 350°F until bottom edge is slightly brown. Cool slightly. Roll in powder sugar.

## Gingerbread Cookies

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1/2 cup shortening | 1/2 tsp ginger    |
| 2 eggs             | 1 tsp cinnamon    |
| 1/2 cup molasses   | 1 tsp cloves      |
| 1 cup sugar        | 1/2 tsp nutmeg    |
| 1 cup hot water    | 1 tsp baking soda |
| 3 1/2 cups flour   |                   |

Preheat oven to 350°F. In large bowl, mix all ingredients together. Drop by the spoonful onto a greased cookie sheet. Bake 12 minutes. You can use a cream cheese frosting on them if you would like.



Have a great recipe?  
Share it with your fellow resorters!



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

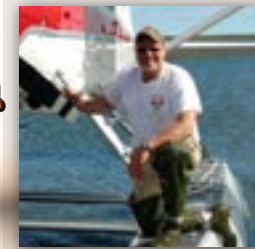
## We are Minnesota Resort Sales - North Office



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DanielGHoule@gmail.com

**Ross Coyer**  
Licensed Commercial Agent



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Ross@MNResortSales.com

**Tim and Karen Senger**  
Licensed Commercial Agents



Karen: 218-256-2288  
Tim: 218-256-4414  
Sengers@MNResortSales.com

**A big CONGRATULATIONS to the buyers and a heartfelt goodbye to the sellers of these three recently sold resorts.**



Minnesota Resort Sales is proud to have been part of the process that helped make each of these sales possible.

[www.MNResortSalesNorth.com](http://www.MNResortSalesNorth.com)



## Website Checklist: It Really Does Matter

By Karen Senger, Community of Minnesota Resorts Digital Marketing Liaison



The winter can be long and for many resorters, it is their slow time of year. For those of you that close up in the winter, it is a perfect time to sit back and recharge your batteries. BUT, once charged, it is a perfect time to dig into your website.

For some working on the computer isn't your thing. But, in today's digital world, your website is really important. If you don't want to or don't have to advertise, that is great. It is a lot easier. But, the reality is that you at least have a website. Below are some thoughts regarding how to go about keeping your website accurate, up-to-date, and fresh.

At least twice a year you should really look through your website. Below are some suggestions. Do you have to do it all? No! It is your website, but they are good suggestions. If you aren't a great writer or perhaps grammar and spelling isn't your thing, have your kids, friends, or other resorter help you.

If you have another resorter that you consider a good friend that will give you good advice, have them read through your website as well.

If you don't update your own website, make a list of the changes that you want to be done and give them to the web host or whoever handles your website.

Trying to tackle it all at once can (and probably "is") exhausting and overwhelming. But if you take it one step at a time, you will be better off. It is easy to overlook some things. Below are some suggestions as you take on this big project. Remember, your guests ARE reading your website. Make sure that it reflects just how wonderful your resort really is.

### Steps for a more accurate, up-to-date, and effective website:

- **Read Every Word:** Go to **every page** and read **every word**. Don't just skim over paragraphs that you know you have read many times. Sometimes those are the paragraphs that have typos, inaccurate or outdated information.

- **Check Every Link:** When you are on each page, if you have a link, check the link. Make sure it is still accurate. How many times have we gone to a website, clicked on a link, and found "Page Not Found" or, worse yet, an inaccurate or inappropriate page? Many times, when you have a link, you want it to open up in a new tab. You don't want the user to leave your website because it is hard to get back to your resort's website. So, if desired, when you have the link, make sure it opens in a new tab.

- **Add External Links:** Search engines like when you link to other websites. For example, if your page addresses fishing perhaps you want to add a link (to open in another tab) to the MN DNR fishing pages.

- **Add Internal Links:** Similarly, you can link to different pages within your own website. For example, if you are on your cabin page and mention boat or pontoon rentals, you can create a link to bring the user to your boat rental page. Or, if you are on our activities page on your website and you mention fishing or a fishing contact or the lake, you can link the user to your resort's fishing or lake page. It doesn't have to be on a separate tab.

- **Check Your Pricing:** Make sure that the pricing that you have on your website matches the pricing that you are using and make sure it is clear. Guests don't always know what "shoulder season" means or when "fall" starts. For resorters "fall rates" may mean after Labor Day but Fall actually starts Sept 22. Make sure you are clear. No one wants a guest to call you out with errors. If you have specials, make sure that they are pronounced. Perhaps you offer the 4th night free. Make sure it is highlighted. We do see websites that may still have the 2019 prices out there.

- **Add PDFs:** Sometimes it is nice to have a separate sheet that guests can print out. Consider making a rate sheet that a guest can click on (Make sure it opens in a separate tab). Then can save it or print it for their records. Maybe you have a "What not to forget when packing" checklist. If it is a PDF, they can open it and print it. Make sure you have your resort name and contact information on it. It is free advertising!

- **Add Photos:** Words are important (see below), but photos are eye-catching. When you look at your photos on your website some things to think about are: Are they blurry? Are they dated? Do they have a date printed on it (the date may read 2008... That's an old photo)? Do they accurately reflect your resort? Do you have enough photos (Guests really like to see what the cabins and facilities look like)? If you have people in the photo, make sure they are OK with that.



## HAVE A RESORTING TIP OR TRICK?

We'd love to share your tips and tricks in our Handy Resorter column!

*CMR Resorter Editor Ann Warling:*  
218-821-1031 | [ann.warling@gmail.com](mailto:ann.warling@gmail.com)



- **Check Your Wording, Add Keywords, Words Matter:** Words really do matter. You have already read through your entire website. That is great. Now, when you make time for it, read it again. Think about how things are worded. When you write something out, think about using “keywords” that will help with search engines. For example, instead of stating “Our cabins are all remodeled.” You can state “All our Minnesota Lakefront Cabins are newly remodeled.” Yes, it may seem a little awkward. But, really the purpose is to get people to your website. If they don’t get to your website, it doesn’t matter what words you use, they won’t see them.
  - **More Technical:** If you aren’t techy, that is OK. You can get help from others, especially your website person. Have your website host look at your pages and optimize them for search engines. You don’t need to know it all. You are already an expert on many things. If you are techy, then look at the back end of your website and review the pages from a technical perspective.
  - **Add Links to the Organizations that You Belong to:** If you are a member of the Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR), Explore Minnesota (EMT), local chamber, or other organization, find a place on your website (maybe on the bottom of the pages) to add a link to their website. Have them open in another tab. If you have them, use their logos.
  - **Add Links and Information to Local Attractions.** Every resort has some attractions in their area. When a potential guest looks at your website, they may ask, “What is there to do in the area?” If your website includes this information, it could be that selling point that makes them book a cabin or campsite. Again, make sure it opens on a separate tab.
  - **Make Users Return:** If there is something that you can do to have your current or future guests return to your website, it is a bonus. Perhaps you have a webcam by your dock. You may be surprised how many people look at that webcam. Or maybe you have fishing reports that people come back to, on-line shopping for resort clothing, calendar of events in your area. Think outside the box.
  - **Review It Like a Potential Guest:** Finally, look at your website with the thought of being a potential guest. You know what questions guests have. It may be helpful to answer those questions on your website.
- Do they ask:
- if they have to bring towels? Make sure that is clear.
  - if you have a boat launch? Add a photo of the launch or mention it in a couple of places.
  - if you have electricity by the dock? Add that information to your website.
  - what there is for kids to do? Add information about your amenities.
  - if you have WIFI? If you have it in your cabins add it to the cabin pages and resort page.
- You know what questions people ask. Rest assured, if you get calls about it, there are potential guests out there that won’t bother to call or email you. Anticipate their questions.
- Is this a lot? YES. But you don’t have to do it all. It is your resort. You get to make the choices! It is a good checklist to work on all winter. But, it’s also a good idea to read every page again in the spring.

## Minnesota Resorter Friends,

***Orion is a resort selling service that saves more than it costs.***

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## Time for a project? Start with a Survey!

By Joanna Wallenberg, Brookside Resort



Winter projects have become a highlight of our year. They are a fun way to use some different skills, be creative, and improve the overall guest experience.

When we started resorting 10 years ago, we sat down with the previous owners (aka our parents) and made a five-year plan of projects. They ranged from a specific

cabin remodel to rip-rap on the shoreline to a major update of our pool area.

Once we completed that initial five-year plan we were excited to make the next five-year plan. But, as they say, three's a crowd and our management group is made up of three people. While we all generally agreed on which projects to put on the list, we did not agree on the order.

Our solution was to take a summer to survey our guests. Like most Minnesota resorts, we have lots of returning guests who feel connected and opinionated about our resort and they are eager to give us their opinions.

This is probably a good time to mention that surveying your guests could be a good strategy for you – but it requires some thick skin. While we got lots of positive feedback and great ideas, we – like all humans – are wired to remember the negative feedback. (Full disclosure: I'm still kind of mad at the lady who said I talk too much at Bingo).

The feedback from these surveys led us to change our strategy and make the first year of this new five-year plan into a *small-projects* year. We worked hard to address every single cabin issue that guests told us about. We replaced toilets, beds, furniture, fixed dripping faucets, added reading lights, fixed outlets and bought new carpet.

It ended up being a TON of work and a big financial investment. But when our guests came back the next summer they were thrilled. Because, unlike when we do one big cabin project, every guest who returned had something new or fixed or upgraded. This was such a positive experience that we committed to prioritizing *small projects* every five years.

We used the rest of the survey input to prioritize the remaining projects. And while a lot of the responses reinforced what we already planned (for example: we knew that Cabin #15 was the next one to get a major remodel and our guests were pretty blunt in reminding us why...) we got some ideas that we hadn't thought of.

Surveying our guests worked so well for us the first time that we have used it several times since then. When we knew it was time to remodel our three identical riverside A-frames, we asked the guests who stay in them to rate the importance of different design elements we were considering (for example: full-size tub, safer stairs, bigger kitchen). This information helped guide our design (and FYI: a full-size tub was priority #1).

Most recently, we have been doing some less formal surveying using Instagram polls. We did this in preparation for the 2020 housekeeping changes – asking our guests how many of them bring their own blankets and which activity they hoped we wouldn't have to give up.

So, if you are considering a project but don't know where to start, try asking your experts! If your experience is like ours you will get some great ideas, some validation of what you were thinking, and a sprinkle of harsh (but honest) feedback.

# HEADED FOR COLLEGE?

## APPLY FOR A CMR SCHOLARSHIP!

To build on our motto of *Resorters Helping Resorters*, one of our goals is to provide scholastic achievement within the resorting community. There are four scholarships available: the Carol Kirchner Memorial Scholarship (since 1999), the Pine Insurance Scholarship (since 2012), the Minnesota Resort Sales Scholarship (new in 2020), and the CMR Scholarship (sponsored by our members). Plus, through the generous donations of our sponsors, ALL four scholarship award amounts have been increased to \$750 to better assist applicants in their academic endeavors. The scholarships are to be used for tuition and/or related fees for students in pursuit of their academic or vocational advancement. The scholarship funds are made available to children and grandchildren of CMR members. An eligible member is one who has been a member for at least three consecutive years. Associate Members are not eligible for scholarships.

Who is eligible to receive a scholarship?

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

Specific submittal guidelines are provided on the scholarship application which can be found on the CMR website at <https://minnesota-resorts.com/scholarships/>, or by contacting the CMR office at:

*CMR@Minnesota-Resorts.com* or  
320-212-5107.

Applications are being accepted  
now up through the  
DEADLINE TO APPLY OF MARCH 15, 2021.

## Green Cleaning

By Timberly Christiansen, Finn 'N Feather Resort



Green cleaning, it's the talk of the town. Right now, people are paying more and more attention to the things they use while cleaning and products they use on or put in their bodies. Green cleaning is not only smart for the environment but also for your health.

Think about your skin as your body's largest organ. Anything you are using to clean with absorbs into your skin and your blood. If you think wearing gloves is enough, think of the fumes you're breathing in.

These have been proven to be worse on your lungs than smoking cigarettes! Something to think about!

With a wide range of products on the market, many touting *green cleaning, natural ingredients, no harsh chemicals*, it can be very

hard to figure out what is best for you. I have found an App called Think Dirty to be very helpful! Simply scan or type in the name of the product you are looking at and it will come up with a rating. This rating is based on all the ingredients in the product. The other great thing about this App is it will also go through each ingredient and explain what it is and the dangers of each. Then you can see alternative types of products you may want to try. It takes the research out of reading labels. I mean how many of us really know how to pronounce those chemicals!

For our resort, we found using a plant-based cleaner has been key! We discovered Young Living Thieves Household Cleaner. If you aren't familiar with the history of Thieves, let me give you a quick background. Thieves is an essential oil blend, founded by Gary Young. Back in 1413 during the Bubonic Plague, four thieves were captured for robbing the dead and dying. These thieves were spice traders and had known that by rubbing their bodies with a combination of different spices, they wouldn't be susceptible to the plague. Their confession allowed others to develop different blends that have been used ever since. Gary Young, founder of Young Living Essential Oils, developed his blend called Thieves. It's composed of clove, lemon, cinnamon, eucalyptus radiata, and rosemary oils.

This blend has been used to make a household cleaner, that is as effective at cleaning as Lysol and Pinesol. We love the smell and the knowledge that we are not only NOT using harsh chemicals, but we are actually benefitting our bodies and the environment. It's been a great switch for us and cost-effective too.

Whatever you use, it's worth it to look into the ingredient list and know the real hazards of using harsh cleaners! Especially now when we all need to keep our immune systems running strong!



## HANDY RESORTER

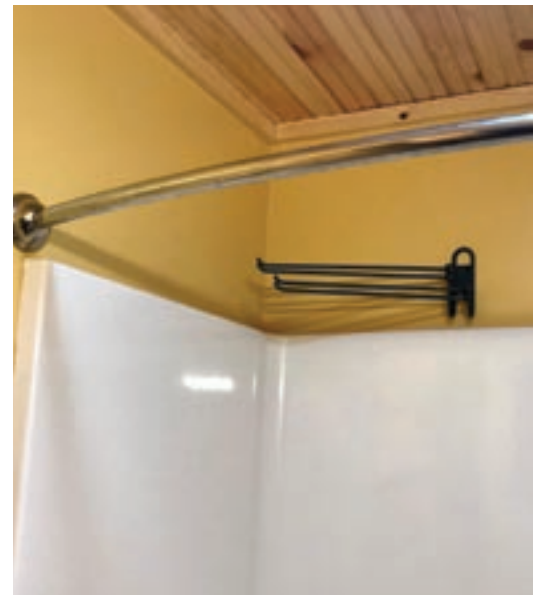
By Brian and Heather Sams, Campfire Bay Resort

### Towel Racks

One comment that we get from guests every year is that they need more places to hang things, especially wet things. When we saw these towel racks for sale at IKEA we thought, "What a great opportunity to get a lot of towel hanging area in a small space."

It was when we arrived back at the resort and began to look at where we could mount them that the idea struck us to mount them above the bathtub or shower so that they would drip into the drain and not onto the floor. They're much more durable than a retractable clothesline that hangs above a bathtub, and simpler to mount, as long as you can find a stud to screw them into.

We're happy with the type we get from IKEA, but you might be able to find them elsewhere. Definitely go for something durable, as you know not all guests are as careful they should be.





# LEGISLATION

## 2020 Election Recap

By Joel Carlson, Community of Minnesota Resorts Lobbyist

The 2020 election produced a record turnout of voters in Minnesota and across the country – but did little to close the sharp divide that grips our politics. As we march on towards a new administration

**THE PANDEMIC**  
is forcing legislative meetings into remote mode...

misinformation often seems to rule the day – or at least the daily news cycle. We are in the most unusual of times - mistrust in our elected officials and their motives is at an all-time high – and it's hard to know who (if anyone) is giving us the truth. Add the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic that continues to affect every aspect of our lives onto the great election divide. 2020 can't end soon enough.

We've watched significant attacks on the integrity of our elections, something never witnessed in my lifetime or

likely yours. Losing is never fun, but false challenges to our institutions of free and fair elections does damage to our standing on the world stage and democracy in general.

The election in Minnesota produced surprisingly little change. US Senator Tina Smith was reelected to a full six-year term, the legislature remained split between a Republican State Senate and a Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) House of Representatives, and Minnesota went for the Democratic Presidential candidate for the 12<sup>th</sup> time in a row. Republican Senators went down in number by one seat and the House DFL lost five seats. Change, but not much.

Minnesota's in the 7<sup>th</sup> congressional turned out 30-year incumbent U.S. Representative Collin Peterson. Despite serving as Chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, Peterson's margins of victory have steadily declined in the past decade and many felt 2020 would be his last election - and it was.

Again, a loss but not a surprise.

Minnesota remains the only state with a divided legislature. After the election, the Senate and House reelected its slate of leaders; Senate Majority Leader Paul Gazelka and House Speaker Melissa Hortman will again lead the legislature. Committee chairs have not been announced but we are not looking at significant changes in committee leadership either.

One post-election change is the move by Senators Tom Bakk and David Tomassoni to leave the Senate DFL Caucus and become independents. Both Senators are expected to chair committees in the Senate after the move and their votes will provide a little cushion for the Senate Republicans. The rift between Iron Range DFLers and their metropolitan colleagues has developed over several years, with mining and gun regulations being a significant wedge.

After the 2020 census is completed and legislative districts are redrawn the Iron Range representation may look considerably different. As

was the case in the 2012 election, several rural legislators may find themselves paired with legislators living in the same district, forced into early retirements or bitter primary fights. Having jumped the DFL party, both Bakk and Tomassoni will likely see opponents regardless of the district they live in.

## *Legislative Session Begins January 5, 2021*

The House and Senate will begin the 2021 legislative session in a manner unlike any other. The pandemic is forcing legislative meetings into remote mode; virtual committee hearings, remote meetings with constituents, and floor sessions devoid of members to debate bills. We had had some experience working remotely during the special sessions of 2020 and the campaigns, but there is serious work coming up that will require heavy lifting and cooperation.

The main task of the session will be to assemble a massive two-year state budget. Compiling a budget is never easy and it will be exceedingly difficult virtually as the state faces a significant budget deficit brought on by the pandemic. State officials have projected the pandemic's impact on employment and the economic shutdowns will produce a deficit more than \$4.7 billion. That is a huge hole to fill in a \$55 billion budget.

Governor Walz will propose a budget late in January and has said that all options are on the table to meet the budget. There are billions in request for new state spending ranging from K-12 education to redevelopment efforts for businesses hit by civil unrest over the summer of 2020. It will be difficult to meet any new spending request without assistance from the federal government or new revenue via taxes or fees.

Senate Republicans have been resistive to everything, but tax cuts and they will likely carry that theme into 2021. The small majorities in the House and Senate (34-31-2 in the Senate and 70-64 in the House) will make cooperation a necessity – at a time when that quality is in very short supply - here and nationally.

The 2021 session has not even started, and many Capitol observers are already thinking a special session may be needed to resolve the budget, which must be in place before July 1, 2021.

Many legislators are promoting a meat and potatoes session – concentrate on the budget, provide some economic development tools to boost jobs, and go home. With the inability to have active public participation in the legislative process, passing highly controversial legislation will be difficult, at best.

Because the budget is the main task to accomplish during this session, in order to get it done it may be advisable for legislators to hold off discussions on policy issues that sharply divide them for another day.

## *Resort Issues*

Part of the legislative task in 2021 will be to address the significant losses some segments of the economy suffered during the pandemic. The hospitality industry, including hundreds of tourism related businesses, are barely hanging on.

It is an open question if the legislature can address the ongoing problems in the tourism economy. The state budget deficit may hinder the legislature's efforts to provide financial assistance to strapped bars, restaurants, shops, and others that thrive on tourism.

## LEGISLATION

Legislators may seek out non-budgetary items to aid tourism. Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) has advanced legislation to adjust the property tax tiers for resort property, allow resorts to provide workforce housing outside the 250 days dedicated to recreational use, and to make sure the school calendar is consistent with our tourism traditions. All of these will be on the agenda for 2021.

We are also learning of new issues that have arisen because of the COVID-19 pandemic and are working to stay on top of them. Please email CMR Legislative Chair Mike Schwieters at [Mike@BoydLodge.com](mailto:Mike@BoydLodge.com) or me at [jdcresearch@aol.com](mailto:jdcresearch@aol.com) if you have issues you think we should be working on this session.

### *Virtual Day on the Hill Scheduled for March 9 - 10*

The pandemic has forced us all to do things differently – look at new ways to deliver services and information – and communicate with everyone on platforms we did not know existed a few short months ago.

CMR's Legislative Committee is going with the flow. We are planning the first ever Virtual Day on the Hill – and we think we might even have more participation than the fun we have driving in the bus to the Capitol.

Our goal is to link up via Zoom with our resort area delegation, speak to legislative leaders and the administration about issues we are working on, and also have a chance to connect with each other before the 2021 resort season begins.

Details will be coming along as plans are made - but mark your calendars now and help us make Virtual 2021 a huge success!

Be safe and see you soon - Zoom or otherwise.

*Joel Carlson owns a legal research and government affairs business in St. Paul, Minnesota, and has represented the CMR at the Capitol since 1997. He can be reached at [jdcresearch@aol.com](mailto:jdcresearch@aol.com).*

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## Virtual Day on the Hill Scheduled for March 9–10<sup>th</sup>

By Jim Wherley, CMR Legislative Committee Chairman

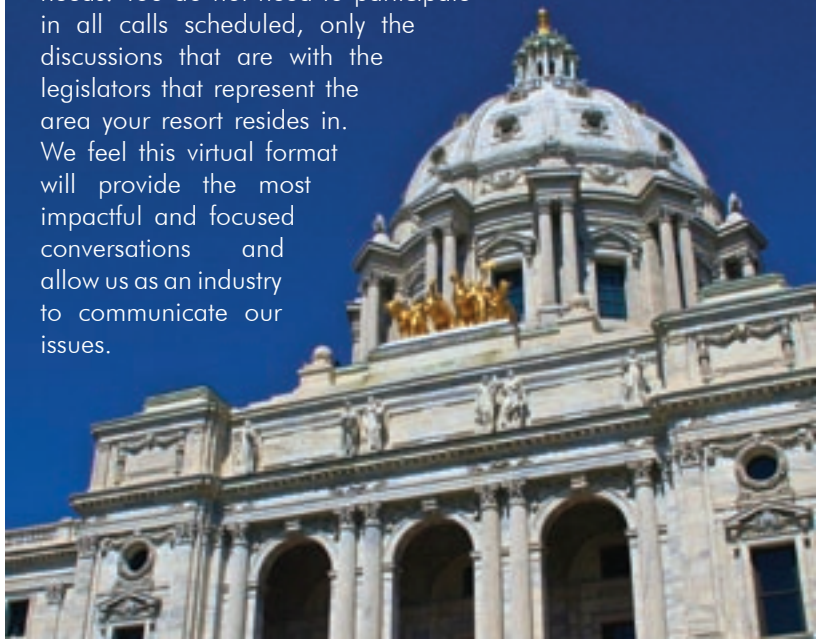
Each year members of the Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) take a trip to the state capitol to discuss issues facing resorts and the tourism industry as a whole. This year, due to the consequences suffered by many of our resorter friends because of COVID-19 and the pandemic, the need to get in front of legislators and discuss these issues becomes even more important.

Currently, the state has restricted visitor access to the Capitol because of ongoing concerns with the spread of the virus, and it is anticipated that those restrictions will continue into 2021. Therefore, we will be unable to visit with legislators face to face. However, we can and will meet virtually with the legislators via Zoom on March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> to discuss the issues and communicate the needs of resorters to allow us to prosper as an industry moving forward.

In addition to the issues surrounding COVID-19, we are in the process of accumulating a list of primary issues to present to legislators that allow resorts to continue in the best business operating environment moving forward. As those are developed they will be communicated to the membership. If your resort or area of the state is facing an issue that should be added to the agenda of issues please let any CMR Board member know so it can be considered.

Prior to our Day on the Hill event in March, we plan a general discussion with legislators to take place in January to enlighten them on issues facing resorts and the tourism industry and prepare them for our more focused discussions to take place in March. These discussions will be more of an open forum with multiple legislators and the entire group of resorts on the call. Once this is scheduled we will inform you of the date and time.

**For now, mark your calendars for March 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, and join us for our *Virtual Day on the Hill* discussions with legislators.** Zoom makes it very easy to participate. All we ask is for a small amount of your time. Our lobbyist, Joel Carlson, will set up meetings with legislators throughout the state on those days, and provide talking points on each of the issues on the agenda. We will ask members to participate in calls with legislators at the scheduled times by calling in via Zoom. Legislators always like to hear from constituents from the areas they represent, this format will make it very easy to participate in those calls with legislators that represent your resort and its needs. You do not need to participate in all calls scheduled, only the discussions that are with the legislators that represent the area your resort resides in. We feel this virtual format will provide the most impactful and focused conversations and allow us as an industry to communicate our issues.



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Send your high-resolution photographs of resort life and story ideas to:

**CMR Resorter Editor - Ann Warling**  
218-821-1031 or [ann.warling@gmail.com](mailto:ann.warling@gmail.com)



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*If you would like to be active on the Community of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) Board, or participate as a committee member, feel free to contact any board member with questions.*

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