

**Mississippi Valley Partners  
Meeting of: March 3, 2004  
At: MVP Visitor Center – Laura Ingalls Wilder Museum  
Pepin, WI**

Sheronne Mulry, President opened the meeting with 21 members present.

SECRETARY'S REPORT – reviewed with no questions, Donna Krebsbach moved to accept and Carole Moore seconded, motion accepted.

TREASURER'S REPORT – Larry reviewed the information presented; he had printed out a summary for 2003 with corrections and the expenses summarized. Information for 2004 was reviewed, Larry indicated he has a question about Check # 1659 and will call Tom Hanlon to clarify. Dan Fedie moved to accept the report and Bill Moore seconded, the motion was accepted.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

\*85- Mile Garage Sale Sheronne noted that the dates are April 30, May 1 & 2; it was also noted that calls are beginning to come in asking about the dates. No other information at this time.

\*Birding Festival: –May 14, 15, 16. Kelly reported that a birding while biking event has been added and they are hoping to add a birding while canoeing event also. The web site for the event should be up this weekend. Ads. are out in the *Audubon Magazine*, *Big River March-April Issue*, *Applause & Turtle River Press*. In addition, a special rate was able to be arranged in *Mpls. St. Paul Magazine* so an ad. will be in the April issue. Wabasha as a community is getting itself well organized for the event. The format for the coupon book is changed for this year – if a community wants to do one that would be placed in the registration packet, the fee is \$100 per community to the Festival; the community should then do 300 sets of the coupon in 1/6-page size so that all the coupons are consistent in form. Any of the 13 towns that wish to do this should decide ASAP as the packets are soon to be put together. If anyone needs to reach Kelly, has questions, whatever ..her email address is [larrison@redwing.net](mailto:larrison@redwing.net). Handouts available.

\*Garden: Carole Moore reported that the committee is putting together information regarding the gardens in each town that can be toured; they need more gardens ASAP to add so there are many opportunities for tourists to experience our villages – the brochure is planned to be available about the end of June. As always the committee needs donations of plants – perennials preferred, but will also look at putting in annuals this year. The help of Town Captains is requested to determine the gardens to tour – please send list of the locations to Sherrone, Bea, or Carole. The plan is to do a press release regarding the gardens; also they would like to emphasize that this is an additional way for each town to “dress-up” for the Grand Excursion.

\*Marketing: Sheronne mentioned that Herdie is checking with Coke regarding banner ideas and prices for Grand Excursion banners. She stated the Minnesota Dep't of Transportation has told MVP they won't allow banners on the bridges. Mary DeRoos said she had been contacted by *Journal & Topics Magazine* regarding an ad. that MVP had won in 2002 – is for a \_ page. Mary put together an idea for the ad. & passed on to Sheronne for the Board to complete, approve & submit so that we don't lose the opportunity.

\*Membership: Sherrone verbally reviewed changes in the Bylaws, which hadn't been updated in several years. The changes were to include items that the group had already agreed upon, to update verbiage or to reflect current practice by the organization. Upon review Kelly Larson moved to accept, Suzanne Reed seconded and the group moved the item.

\*Website: written information was passed out regarding the current status of costs with Voila. The website is set to go up this month and there will be additional information coming out as that occurs.

BUSINESS:

\*WI Governor's Conference on Tourism: Sheronne mentioned it is coming up March 14-16 in Green Bay. Sheronne will be attending; MVP does not have a booth there this year.

\*Town Captains: Town Captains are still needed for Wabasha, Maiden Rock, and someone is now needed for Red Wing as Bob Musil has resigned from the Red Wing CVB. Kelly read a letter from Bob to MVP members. Carol Wiersma will again be TC for Stockholm.

**\*Meeting Locations:**

April: Nelson, WI- J&J Catering	July: Lake City – Hok Si-La	October Kellogg – LARK Toys (?)
May: Alma, WI (location TBA)	August Stockholm–Maiden Rock Apples	November Lake City ?
June: Red Wing (location TBA)	September: Frontenac – Villa Maria	December Wabasha - AmericInn

**\*Membership Applications:** Sheronne mentioned that if anyone needs them, Membership Applications are right in the front of every Planner.

**\*Kelly Larson Education Update:** Kelly spoke regarding a graduate level class she is taking at UW – River Falls regarding Wildlife Nature Tourism. She states it is her intent to apply what she is learning in this class to develop additional ideas for wildlife tourism in the MVP area and thus is requesting that MVP pay some amount [possibly \$300] toward the cost of the course. Kelly had previously proposed this to the Board and Sheronne stated that the Board has decided that MVP will not pay anything as it is seen as a potential precedent for further requests. However, the Board suggests that if businesses or individuals wish to support Kelly that they do so. In the discussion by the membership present there were several questions raised as to why this kind of unusual request was/is not brought to the full membership for consideration? What do the bylaws say about the membership not being consulted? Many stated they felt there would be benefit to the organization and asked that the Board reconsider this decision.

**\*Travel Planner Distribution:** Mary Ann is sending out Planners in considerable numbers and a tracking piece has been put together to show where they are being sent. Sheronne asked that if we have information about Planner distribution we email those numbers to: \_\_\_\_\_ so the organization can have a better idea of where they are going.

**\*Around the Lake:** Sheronne thanked Dave Smith and the other members from Pepin for hosting the meeting and showing off the updates to the Visitor Center. Dave spoke about the museum and the Visitor Center and strongly encouraged towns to update and bring in their binder and any materials such as brochures, etc. to provide information to the visitors. Last year they had visitors from every state and 32 foreign countries – so they have lots of people coming through and want MVP members to take full advantage of the space by having their displays up to date. - And with the Grand Excursion this year there will be even more folks learning about the area. The Museum has recently lost staff – both paid and volunteer so the exact hours they will be open are not known, however the plan is to be open daily from 10 – 5 or 6 from May 15 to October 15. If anyone in MVP wants to volunteer to staff the building occasionally, minimal training is needed as there is always paid staff present while volunteers there, and all help would be more than welcome! Dave states the deadline for each town having it's binder done and in place is June 1<sup>st</sup>.

- It was recommended that MVP look at a plan for people to staff the visitor center – it would be to our advantage.

Alma & Wabasha- the eagles are more evident – 60 counted below the dam in Alma. Alma has more places opening later this month. Wabasha has it 1<sup>st</sup> Home and Garden Show this weekend at the high school. Soar with the Eagles is at the National Eagle Center on the 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> and Beth encourages members to attend the brunch on the 14<sup>th</sup> which is a fundraiser for the Center. The MVP Garden in Nelson is going to be next to the Cheese Factory and the area is beginning to be prepared. Eagles are fishing at Camp Lacupolis! Reads Landing has obtained a second grant for geothermal heating plant – at the school building, so work has begun there. As part of their Grand Excursion plans they are working on a yearlong genealogy focus and would like MVP to meet there this year to showcase all their efforts. Businesses are beginning to open in the smaller towns and tourists are beginning to drive the area.

Dan Fedie moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Larry Hovde, motioned passed.