

MISSISSIPPI VALLEY PARTNERS

Coffee Mill Inn & Suites
Wabasha February 4, 2004

Vice President Sheronne Mulry opened the meeting with approximately 23 members present. President Herdie Baisden joined us shortly after the start of the meeting.

New Members were welcomed. Cindy Gosse of the Wabasha Chamber introduced herself.

We thanked our hosts, Beverly Johnson and family, of Coffee Mill Inn & Suites for hosting the meeting.

SECRETARY'S REPORT was reviewed and approved as presented.

TREASURER'S REPORT – approved as presented. The current checkbook balance as of 1/31/04 was \$1,303.21 and the money market account balance was \$8,832.76. The Birding Festival checking account balance for the same period was \$800.78 and the money market account was \$3,018.21. Larry then reviewed overall expenses for 2003 and also account balance changes from January of 2003 to December of 2003.

85 MILE GARAGE SALE – The dates are on the website and will be April 30th, May 1st & 2nd, 2004.

BIRDING – The committee has selected Wabasha as the site for next year's festival, with the dates to be May 14, 15, & 16th, 2004. Kelly reported that an Ad will be running in the March/April issue of Big River magazine. The Committee will be printing the Festival brochures and mailers this week and they will be available as of next week. The Itinerary for the Festival is being finalized. Stan Tekiela(?) will be presenting on Saturday in Wabasha and hosting workshops. It was noted the registration fee will increase this year to \$30/individual. This would include the majority of the events; however, there are a few extra fee events available. It was determined this year there would not be a Coupon Book made. However, individual communities may still put together their own coupons for \$100 and the Committee will stuff them. Other communities were encouraged to participate with events. The Deadline for these events and coupons is March 31st. Maiden Rock and Stockholm will have live birds from the Raptor Center. The Friends of a Feather organization in Wisconsin is still available for that weekend. Maiden Rock will also be having a birdhouse contest. In Alma, Ken Selway and "Smoky" Jim Stokes will be putting on programs and the Talk-Walkers Band will be performing.

GARDEN – The Committee will be meeting soon in regard to the Garden brochure and the possibility of adding some additional private gardens.

MARKETING COMMITTEE – Sheronne reported that we are still researching the Grand Excursion banners. The research includes DOT location approval, costs for various materials and the possibility of obtaining sponsors. Herdie is looking into sponsors. Diana is obtaining some prices for existing banners. We are looking for additional Marketing Committee members. Kelly Larson suggested contacting Harry Roberts at Frontenac.

MEMBERSHIP - Larry reported we are currently at 147 members as of the end of January. This is up over 144 for the same period last year.

WEBSITE ACTIVITY - We do not have our 'normal' website activity report yet, due to the changeover in webmasters. The new contract with Voila Marketing was discussed. We had indicated to Voila to put their efforts 'on hold' until MVP was more comfortable they knew what the overall costs were going to be. The membership was asked to filter and requests and/or questions to Sheronne and she will work directly with Voila. Her email address is sheronne@pcchick.com. John from Voila is working on getting a test site available for MVP. Members want to get their web pages completed as soon as possible. MVP would like to get the Calendar of Events updated and running as soon as possible. The consensus was that membership would still like a better idea of the total costs and the monthly costs. After the Board obtains additional information, an email will be sent to the general membership and will include Sheronne's email address as a contact for questions.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Herdie presented the 2003 President's Report and thanked all Board Members and Committee members for their involvement. He highlighted and summarized some of the notable items of 2003. Our financial statements indicate that MVP is in financially stable condition. We held a successful (in the end) Membership Drive and currently MVP has 147 members. Website Activity is up overall, not just the Mississippi River or Grand Excursion hits, but also the individual communities' numbers. There were 24,600 average hits per month in 2003. The Toll-Free number continues to experience an increase in requests. The Marketing Committee came out with their 2003 Strategic Marketing Plan. A new logo for MVP was approved and is being utilized. A numbers of other good things took place - the Gardens continue to be worked on, with gardens in place in Alma, Wabasha, Read's Landing, Kellogg, Red Wing, Frontenac and Stockholm. The 2nd Annual Birding Festival was a success. Email communication had mixed results. Improvements were made throughout the year and email addresses of members are available to all general members. Around the Lake highlights included Wabasha's Soar with the Eagles event and the opening of the Fresh Wok Chinese restaurant. Reads Landing received a \$72k grant for a new overlook. Lake City held another successful Water Ski Days. Hok-Si-La had their best Memorial Day weekend in history. Frontenac stayed busy, despite increased fees. Red Wing held their first Morel Mushroom Festival. Alma received a \$530k grant for the dredging of Rieck's Park and 2 new art galleries opened there. Nelson had the Nelson General Store opening. Pepin has new owners for the Pickle Factory. Maiden Rock had the Gypsy Grill opening. Bay City had a successful In-Fishermen event and The Norton opened at the site of Lavender Rose. Stockholm had Ingebretsens opening, barn dances at Maiden Rock Apples and the reinvention Amish Country. The 85-Mile Garage Sale was a big success and generated some

big publicity. In the Not-So-Good news category, we lost Allie Hager in 2003. The Kellogg garden will be dedicated to her. The Town Captains function needs some work and the Pepin Welcome Center needs to be updated, open and available to people.

ELECTIONS - 2 Positions were Available - Member-At-Large and President-Elect

Mary Anne Collins-Svoboda was initially nominated for member-at-large but was withdrawn after it was indicated she was not interested in a position. Kaz Roslik of First Mate Gifts was then nominated and seconded by Carolyn and Bob, respectively. His approval was unanimous. James Grandy of the Nelson General Store was nominated by Diana Schmidt and seconded by Wayne Nelson. He was approved unanimously. The next Board meeting will be February 10th @9am at Eagles Nest Coffee House in Wabasha. Herdie then turned the meeting over to Sheronne Mulry as the 2004 President. A big thank you went out to Herdie for all his hard work as President.

TOLL-FREE – Mary Ann Pfeilsticker is still recovering from back surgery. A few global inquiries have been received recently by MVP.

TRAVEL PLANNERS – Travel Planners were distributed to Maiden Rock Apples, Hansen's Harbor and Bushel & Peck. About 5,500 have been distributed to the Metro area, Hudson, Dresbach and Albert Lea. Dave and Shelly have been to Rochester and again reiterated they need help in doing the Rochester area and will not be continuing it on their own. The Travel Planner cover is available as Poster for \$2.50. Contact Sheronne if you are interested in ordering some posters.

AROUND THE LAKE – Wabasha is having a Home & Garden Show at the High School on March 6th & 7th. February 20th & 21st is the Sno-Cross at the Athletic Field. February 27th & 28th is Grumpy Old Men Days.

Red Wing - Memorial Weekend, they are hosting the Commemorative Air Force show. The Grand Excursion calendar is available.

April 24th & 25th is the Women's Expo. Eagle Spot weekends are February 28th & 29th.

Frontenac is having its Candlelight Ski on February 7th.

Alma will have a public TV spot on Alma and the Tundra Swans on this Thursday @7, Friday @9 & Sunday @8.. Their Grand Excursion fundraiser will be May 15th.

Pepin has the Lions Fishing Contest this weekend. Forever Young Fitness Center recently broke ground.

Stockholm - the Jetty for their Grand Excursion Legacy Project is almost complete. They will be having live owls for the Birding Fest weekend.

The next MVP meeting will be March 3rd at the Pepin Visitor's Center/Laura Ingalls Wilder Center in Pepin at 7:00pm.