



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY PARTNERS

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Minutes of Membership Meeting November 2, 2005

The meeting was called to order by President Jim Grandy with about 34 members present.

Donn and Sarah Kreofsky welcomed everyone to LARK Toys, explaining their operation and made the big announcement that they are looking to sell the business in the next year.

Secretary's Report: The minutes of the October meeting were presented by Carol Wiersma, reviewed and approved as recorded. [A reminder that the approved minutes of previous meetings are available on the website in the Member section.]

Treasurer's Report: Larry reported that additional memberships are coming in so the balance has gone up [see report presented]; Money Market balance is stable and there are no changes in the balance for the Birding Festival. Report reviewed and approved as presented.

Old Business:

Marketing: *Planning Guide* – Herdie Baisden reported that an agreement has been made with Rivertown Publishing for 2006: they will print the planner on bright white paper, 100,000 copies to be delivered February 15, 2006. If enough ads are sold and there is space available, the plan is that features will also be included about the area. Ideas for these features include fishing, scenic vistas, birding, wildlife viewing/backroads. The group discussed pros and cons to some of these features and made various suggestions, including adding more graphics to the center map, including both trout streams with river fishing, etc. Herdie requested that each town look through their photos and please submit for inclusion in the planner. Additional suggestions for the publication include: noting where the bridges are on the center map, return the mileage information to the map, put the events on either side of the map as had been done in earlier planners – folks can then use the center as a pull-out. NOTE: The deadline for ads. is December 21.

Jennifer Stahley, Sales from Rivertown Publishing spoke to the group and explained her philosophy in proceeding with the ad. sales. She is committed that every business will see the final ad. copy before it goes to print. She recommended that everyone use color in their ad. even if just a single contrasting color – e.g. if copy black, use some red with it. She handed out packets of information about the ads to those who hadn't yet received it.

Harry Roberts reported to the group on the Press Release he had agreed to do at the October meeting in regard to advertising/membership. The PR had been sent to all the media on the birding festival list and he reported that a number of calls of interest resulted from the article. Harry also committed to being the lead on the feature articles for the planner about fishing and backroads and asked that pertinent information be directed to him.

Herdie stated his concern about the need to have a President for 2006 who would do the letter for the planning guide and encouraged everyone to consider someone for the position.

Welcome Center – Donna Krebsbach made an end of season report noting that the weekend staffing of the Center concluded the end of October. Among other statistics, Donna reported there were visitors from 41 states and 12 countries. Donna and Edna Hovde who both staffed the Center were enthusiastic about the response they received and encouraged all members to be sure to provide their brochures next year. [A complete copy of Donna's report can be obtained from Carol Wiersma, Sec'y.]

Membership: Bea Koch reported that she has been busy making calls to previous members regarding 2006 membership and has received a lot of positive response. She continues to contact businesses and encourages all members to talk to others in their towns.

Board positions – Jim spoke to the need for members to participate in positions on the Board, committees and town captains. There are currently two openings on the Board for the balance of this year and no one in the President-Elect position to move into the President role next year. Sign-up sheets were again circulated to have members sign up for committees for 2006.

Mike Kennedy suggested a way to move forward with Board positions for next year, he proposed that if Jim Grandy agreed to be President again next year he would head a nominating committee for the 2006 Board. A motion was so made and approved as Jim agreed to continue as President. Heather Stowe has indicated an interest in being on the Board and will be asked to attend the Board meetings for the balance of the year.

Jim raised the issue of voting and membership – it is important for members to remember that according to the bylaws they must be a paid member in order to vote on a motion; this rule is particularly important in the fall when many decisions are being made and some business representatives who attend meetings have not renewed their membership.

New Business:

Birding Committee – Mary DeRoos reminded the group the weekend of the Festival is May 13 – 15. Commitment is still needed from some member towns – meaning a representative for the planning committee and hopefully an event or more for that weekend. Each event will have a webpage to advertise; the committee is looking at selling buttons as a fund raiser. Mary wants every community to think about it's many natural resources and include those in your plans as a draw for the festival.

Member Webpage – Jim mentioned this benefit for each business and encouraged members to set it up. Carol let people know the user ID and password which will be provided to each member as they join. We are going to start taking names off the membership and webpages down for those businesses that are no longer members. Mike Kennedy requested that an in-service be done by Voila' at the membership meeting in February to help us all understand how to best use the benefit. In order to do this in-service we need a room with internet access – Heather Stowe agreed we could have the February meeting at the Quality Inn in Winona.

Garage Sale - The spring sale is May 5 – 7 and will be advertised as the 100-Mile Garage Sale, the phrase "World's Largest...." will not be used. Ron Schimbeno raised the idea of a fall sale when things are slow – possibly the last weekend of September. The idea was discussed and referred to the Marketing Committee.

Wisconsin Birding Brochure Release – Jim announced that the release of the new birding brochure for the western side of Wisconsin will take place December 4 noon – 4 pm and will be at the Alma Rod & Gun Club. He mentioned that there will be booth space available at no cost and wondered whether MVP should participate with a booth. No action was taken.

MVP Holiday Party – The 2005 party is December 7 at the AmericInn in Wabasha. The invitation will go out to all paid members and others will be considered. The time for the party was not set but will be emailed to members with the reminder of the gathering.

Up and Down the River –

- Camp Lacupolis – a 14# walleye was caught!
- Winona – A new member, the Maritime Heritage Society announced their plans for a new museum that is being developed on the waterfront highlighting the history of the river. MVP will have a membership meeting there later in 2006 to become acquainted.
- Shakespeare Festival staff let us know that the largest percentages of attendees at their performances last year were from Chicago and DesMoines and they are wanting to build on that. Also, they are trying to find ways in which they can pair with businesses in the area to extend the performances.
- Lake City announced that eh Lake Pepin Players are moving there from Pepin and a variety of musicals/comedys are being scheduled for 2006- among them a Huckleberry Finn musical.
- Kellogg – LARK Toys announced that the National Carousel Convention will be at LARK in September of 2006.
- Up-coming holiday events:
 - Stockholm, Pepin & Maiden Rock – December 3 & 4
 - Winona – last weekend of November
- Alma – Kate and Grace's a new gourmet restaurant is opening as of Nov. 5 and will provide another fine dining opportunity along the river.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes recorded by: Carol Wiersma, Secretary