



the bed & breakfast **voice**

Your Voice for Your Choice

August 2009, Volume 2 / Number 4

Ahh... it's all coming back to me now **Remembering the summer of '69**

"Back to the Beach", the 23rd Annual FOBBA Conference and General Meeting is set for November 1, 2 and 3rd at Wasaga Beach, Ontario. We're mounting a full slate of learning opportunities, new networking events, and live 60s-style entertainment to usher in next year.

that has changed, and FOBBA is pleased to be part of the transformation.

Back to the Beach will have a fun 1960s theme, with music, seminars, vendor trade show and some very special guests. Our time-limited Early Bird offer is in effect until August 31 only, at the great price of just \$85 per person, which includes ALL conference events, meetings, entertainment and meals.



Pamela Lanier—creator of perhaps the most successful and influential B&B guide and website in North America. Pamela will speak on a number of topics, including the green movement, tricks and trends and how to maximize your marketing.

Another key theme for this year is "Privacy, Personal and Property Rights." Who has the ultimate say in who can stay at your B&B? Who are you obliged to accept, and when is it alright to refuse? While the answers to those questions remain gray, we'll be addressing the issues and calling on the experts for their views, opinions and experiences when it comes to who gets a say in controlling your environment.

One seminar will focus on travel and tourism trends in North America. What's working today in marketing and why? What are visitors looking for these days and what will they pay extra for. It's the 2010 roadmap to putting more heads in your beds.

déjà **VU**

Where were you when that well-known Crosby Stills Nash and Young album—Déjà Vu—was released? Many of us were "at the beach" and the beach is where we're reconvening for our 23rd annual conference and general meeting.

Wasaga Beach is one of the most recent communities in Ontario to welcome and embrace Bed & Breakfasts. For years, B&Bs were not entirely understood here, but all

There's an "Association Reception" on November 1st at the famous Dardanella on Beach 1, where all are welcome. Registration also includes breakfasts and lunches on November 2 and 3, and a gala dinner on Monday night featuring that crooner of the 60s, none other than Neil Diamond himself*.

Education Day

Our Keynote Seminar will be a presentation by well-known author and travel writer

* Neil Diamond Tribute Artist Joey Purpura

...continued page 4



Accessibility News

A resolution has been reached in the recent case where a Bed & Breakfast found itself before the courts and the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario for refusing accommodation to a sight impaired person with a seeing eye dog due to allergies. The resolution was of a financial nature, and was not definitive about setting policy or official precedent for future complaints, as the settlement preceded any final ruling.

Learn more about this situation, and privacy, personal and property rights issues at the FOBBA Conference in November.

Notes from the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario

Some good news...

“The government does not plan to impose requirements for retrofitting existing buildings at this time. Also, the government does not intend to require Ontarians to make their existing or new single family houses accessible at this time.”

So said an email we received on July 14 from the Accessibility Directorate. It's significant provided it sticks. The email continues:

“The public review period to make comments on the SDC's Initial Proposed Accessible Built Environment Standard is from July 14, 2009 to October 16, 2009.

“Once the public review period is over, the standards development committee will reconvene to consider your feedback. They may make changes to their initial proposed standard based on the feedback prior to finalizing a proposed standard for submission to the Minister of Community and Social Services.

“Those interested in reviewing the SDC's proposed standard or participating in the accessibility standards development process can find more information on the Ministry of Community and Social Services' website at: www.ontario.ca/community

“In September, public consultation sessions will be conducted across the province. To participate in a consultation session please call 1-888-482-4317 or toll-free 1-888-335-6611, or email public.review@oliverwyman.com.”

OFCA Offer for Rural Properties

Ontario Farm and Country Accommodation is offering OFCA membership to rural FOBBA members at 50% off their regular membership rate of \$230. Membership includes an OFCA website listing, the 2010 OFCA brochure, Harvest Canada website listing, OFCA sign and voting rights at the Annual General Meeting. To take advantage of this offer, email paul.faires@sympatico.ca

Drinking Water

There is nothing immediately new on the drinking water front since our last report.

However, if you are contacted by the Public Health Unit regarding the planned Risk Assessment of your private drinking water system, please let FOBBA know, and tell us about the experience.

Ontario Reg. 319/08 is the new drinking water regulation, which FOBBA has lobbied for and provisionally supports. It will become standard practice for everyone who is not served by a municipal drinking water system.

We want to know how the regulations are implemented in practice, so if you are one of the first to go through a Risk Assessment, please contact us and tell us how it went!

Member Website Reminders

Last month, we launched our Brochure Builder Trip Planning tool. Be sure to login to the member pages and enter your “short description” in the new space provided. This is what the public will print out when they personalize their itinerary before setting out on the road. Make sure you're on it!

And while you're there

Check and update your Searchable Amenities so that you will show up on Advanced Search results.

Vendor members

Vendor members can now register online and choose between a small line ad, or a full page that provides them with virtually unlimited space to share the benefits of their products and services. When you're in the market for these services, please support our Vendor Members.

B&B Potential, \$459,900



Gorgeous century home located in Nestleton. Features a modern eat-in kitchen with state of the art appliances, formal living, dining and sitting rooms, guest bedroom with ensuite and 2nd stair case, hardwood flooring, and original tin ceilings. Property features a second (fully renovated) second building and indoor pool attached to the main house. 3 car garage. For details visit www.PortPerry-Homes.com or call 1-800-265-2888. *Frank Hocevar, Sales Representative RE/MAX All-Stars Realty Inc., Brokerage*

Scams

Extended stays and false invoices still fool some of the people some of the time

*Members have been reporting a high number of scam attempts, false invoices, and suspicious booking requests this summer. Some scams are obvious, though not all. Our Communications Director, **Melanie McLennan**, has prepared this overview on what to look out for.*

webwatch

You open your email and there it is... the “too good to be true” reservation! At first glance it may even look legitimate. In fact you scramble to get your reservation book and see if it just might be possible to snag this one.

But how do you know that this is for real? You don't want to assume it isn't either. What should you look for?

We are awash with email these days, and I get about three of these attempted frauds a week on average. After several years of receiving these (and actually having been taken advantage of by a professional fraud early on in our Bed & Breakfast years—but that is another story), I have gathered some tips that I would like to share to help you pick out the real requests from the scams.

First, read and re-read the email very carefully. We often tend to disregard the ones with bad grammar/spelling or poor literacy, but legitimate international visitors can present themselves this way when they

are trying to use their 2nd, 3rd or 4th language skills.

Here is what you should be looking for:

1. When you first look at these emails there is no mention of your location or B&B name. The email will be generic in nature. No mention of a specific town, country or area will be made. It will be phrased as “We will be requiring accommodation in your country (city, town).” There will be no specifics as to how many adults, couples, children, or how many people per room. They won't ask how many people can share a room, but seem to assume that all rooms are the same, much like a hotel.

If you look at the emails from your serious customers, particularly the longer stays, they nearly question you to death because they are trying to imagine themselves at your place.

2. The email is written in a professional voice and tries to come across as someone who is making arrangements for a third party, usually a group of 4 to 8 people, sometimes but rarely more. They will usually say that one person will be making the arrangements for all and all expenses will be paid with one credit card. Typically corporate types usually look after their own expense accounts and therefore want separate receipts. Occasionally they will look after one or two other colleagues but rarely a whole group. If they specifically ask whether you accept credit cards, be alert!

3. The proposed stay is for a longer than average stay, anywhere from a week to 6 weeks, with no request for a long term rate or discount. Legitimate guests would likely ask up front about a price break for a longer stay.
4. There is no inquiry as to what is included,

what food you serve, what amenities you have, arrival times, check out times etc. because for the purpose of the scam it is not important. Despite the obvious lack of information they appear to have—which they should already know from your website if they had looked through it thoroughly—

there will be no question asked as to what, if any, taxes may be applicable, what the price includes, what services or extras would be an extra charge etc. The lack of detail requested should present itself as a flag.



Afterword, by Garrett Klassen

I once pursued one of these scams to the point where I was able to get the address and banking information for the account where they wanted me to wire-transfer the money. It was in New York. I had given them a ridiculous quote: the total bill was for over \$12,000, of which \$9,000 was to be transferred back to them “immediately”, meaning, go to the bank right now! I tried to process the card number they gave, which failed. They called me on the phone repeatedly, 15 minutes apart, with different card numbers and demanded each time I go to the bank that very moment and send the wire transfer. Of course I didn't.

I did track down the issuing bank for one of the cards, in South Carolina, and spoke to an investigator in their fraud department. The details of this scam were new to her, she said, and she took all the information. I don't know if anything ever became of it, probably not. I did get a little worried when I realized the perpetrators knew where I live. I was comforted somewhat knowing they were probably in Nigeria.

Quite an experience that stretched over 14 days. I won't be repeating it. ★

Déjà Vu, continued from page 1...

There will also be a session on website maintenance 101, where the FOBBA Help Desk comes to you. Additional seminar topics and speakers will be announced soon.

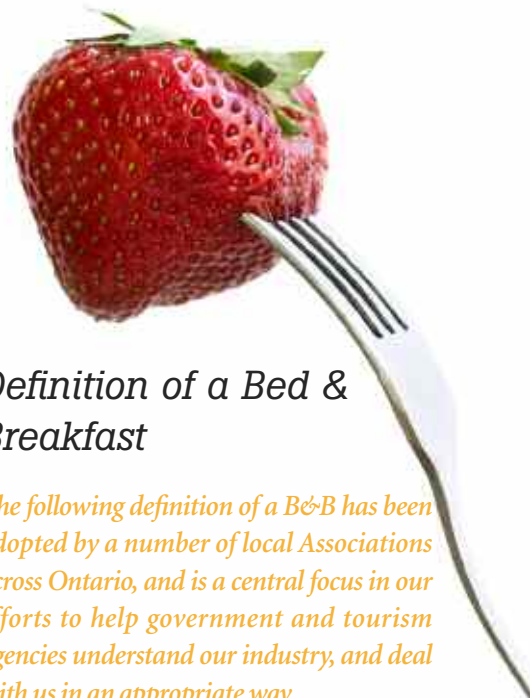
So plan a break now and recharge your batteries. Get away for a couple of days and talk with other grown-ups just like you. Share stories and guest experiences, the highs and lows, the funny and the facts of your 2009 year. You'll never have a better chance to network and learn from the best experts in the business: That's you and your

peers—the Bed & Breakfast hosts of Ontario! ★

Business Bits

FOBBA will be putting forward a number of changes to our Constitution for membership approval. These changes are being made to reflect current operating procedures and changing technology. A formal Notice of Motion will be distributed to members soon.

Register online. Visit www.fobba.com.



Definition of a Bed & Breakfast

The following definition of a B&B has been adopted by a number of local Associations across Ontario, and is a central focus in our efforts to help government and tourism agencies understand our industry, and deal with us in an appropriate way.

FOBBA defines a Bed and Breakfast as:

“An owner-occupied private residential dwelling that is the owners’ principal residence and in which the owner has control of the environment. It provides temporary accommodation not exceeding 28 consecutive days, and amenities and services ancillary to guest accommodation, including the preparation and service of breakfast for an all inclusive fee.”

Calling all skill sets!

One thing we haven't managed to do yet is take inventory of the unique skills of our members. And we're not talkin' cooking here. (*We can all do that!*) We mean specialized skills in things like accounting, communications, administration, negotiation, technology—whatever you happen to be good at, besides hospitality. FOBBA invites you to get involved. Run for a position on our expanded board, take a spot on a working committee, take a leadership role in your own area as a Regional Director. Volunteer and pursue whatever interests you. We need your help and involvement to keep growing and getting better as an organization!

email: vp@fobba.com, or call us at 519-568-8878

23rd Annual FOBBA Conference and AGM

Life's a Beach!



Mark your Calendar!
November 1st, 2nd and 3rd, 2009
Wasaga Beach. All B&B'ers welcome!

Join FOBBA!

Visit www.fobba.com today

Your FOBBA Executive

- Wendy Schuster, President
(Waterloo) info@hillcresthouse.ca
- Garrett Klassen, Vice President, Editor
(Elora) getaway@the3bears.com
- Merle Bezoff, Treasurer (Bracebridge)
treetops@muskoka.com
- Janis Topp, Secretary (Hamilton)
david.janis.topp@sympatico.ca
- Deb Schlieker, Membership (Fergus)
info@stonehurstbb.com
- Melanie McLennan, Communications
(Guelph) info@londonhouse.ca
- Denise Potter, Marketing, (Wasaga Beach),
denise@serenityinthebeach.com
- Linda Gelinas, Past President, (Kingsville)
weddinghouse@sympatico.ca