

Iowa Bed & Breakfast Guild

IBBG Spring Conference Review

Another Grand Time Inn Dubuque!!!

Submitted by: Michelle Bliss & Marie Fitzgerald

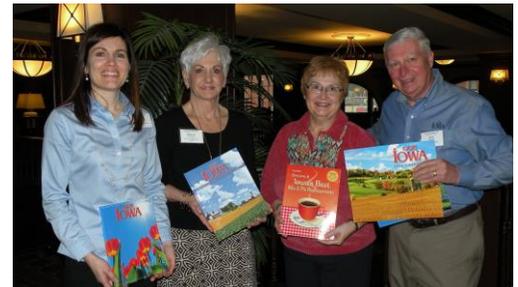
Our 2016 IBBG Spring Conference was held in the **award winning** city of Dubuque, Iowa, at the **award winning** Hotel Julien, and co-hosted by IBBG and our **award winning** Innkeeper, Marie Fitzgerald! Can it get any better than that!!!



Sunday began with tours of IBBG members in Dubuque; Four Mounds Inn, Hancock House, Mandolin Inn and Quiet Walker Lodge (Durango). We all gathered for a Social at Four Mounds for a wonderful pork loin dinner that included all the trimmings. Wine tasting was offered by Stone Cliff Winery of Dubuque. It was a great evening of networking and socializing. Dale and Judy Mills from Cupola Inn in Nora Springs led us all in a “speedy getting to know you game.” I think that was the favorite part of the evening.

Monday morning we got down to business at the beautiful Hotel Julien (you can read about this hotel’s very interesting history at: www.hoteljuliendubuque.com). The Hotel Julien was Iowa Lodging Association’s 2015 Star Award Winner for **“Property of the Year.”**

Again we were so happy to have Jerry Wiebel, Mary Reilly and Maureen Schocker from **Our Iowa Magazine** sponsor our continental breakfast and give us an update on the success and direction of this wonderful magazine! If you have never read this publication you need to take a look. It contains some of the most stunning Iowa photography ever seen. A subscription is only \$18 a year!! Pictured (L-R) Mary Reilly, Maureen Schocker, Mrs. Wiebel & Jerry Wiebel).



Our co-chair Clark Smith welcomed everyone and gave us an update on the direction of IBBG along with the *Legislative Update*.

Bingo has been a huge hit for the last four conferences and this year was no different. We had some doozies for prizes and we were visited by a clown (Judy Mills) to get the BINGO corn popping! Dale and Judy were so great at getting all of us engaged in the Bingo games!! (See pictures in this issue.)

Special **“thank you”** to this year’s vendors; Expedia, Sam’s Club and Verena Street Coffee Company. IBBG members that participated as vendors included; Blue Belle Inn, Harvest Moon Innkeeping and The Pryor House.

Spring Conference Review *continued*



Marie Fitzgerald (L) Four Mounds Inn and Susan Steffan (R)

Our first speaker was Susan Steffan from Galena, Illinois. Susan, along with her husband, Don are the owners and Innkeepers of the, “Farmers Guest House” in Galena right on Hwy 20, before you cross the bridge. Susan recently appeared on Food Network’s “Holiday Baking Championship.” From that experience she launched the “Breakfast Diva Cooking School.” Susan is a successful entrepreneur and offered some great advice for keeping things fresh at your Inn! She was definitely one of the most dynamic speakers IBBG has had and at the speed she shared ideas, you really had to stay alert. Her personality kept us laughing and bright-eyed throughout her session.

Shelly Turner (pictured with Clark Smith, IBBG co-Chair) was a guest speaker who shared with us how to target your most likely prospects with social media. Shelly spent her time helping us understand how Facebook works and ways to increase your exposure.



The attendees shared a delicious lunch with fellow Innkeepers while Colleen Murphy with the Iowa Tourism Division gave us an update on Iowa trends.

Congratulations to IBBG’s 2015 Inn-Credible Stays Award Winners

Facilitated by Roger Steffens - SF Martin House, Atlantic



“Best to Visit Again and Again”
Dale & Judy Mills
Cupola Inn in Nora Springs



“Best Overall Bed & Breakfast”
Dave & Michelle Stuart
Richards House B&B Inn in Dubuque

“Best Hospitality”

Al & Connie Mattison with Klemme House B&B
Belmond (not present)

“Friendliest Innkeeper”

Kim Briggs with Big Grove Village
Oakland (not present)

“Best Local Attractions”

Mark & Kayla Hawkins with White Lions B&B
Winterset (not present)

“Best Breakfast”

Inez Metzger with Squirrel’s Nest
Burlington (not present)

Spring Conference Review *continued*

"2015 Innkeeper of the Year" continued

Marie Fitzgerald with Four Mounds Inn in Dubuque was recognition for her award received in November 2015 at the Annual Iowa Lodging Association's Star Awards Event held in Des Moines at Prairie Meadows.

There were several breaks throughout the day allowing attendees to enter their bids on the silent auction items, which were fantastic this year! Thank you everyone who brought items and also purchased items from the Silent Auction! There were so many nice things to pick from.



Pam Mumm (L-R, Pam with Marie Fitzgerald) was the last speaker of the day. We all do the best we can with what we have to work with. We took a look at our big dreams. With that we can have even bigger results. We actually got into some deep thoughts and perceptions we create. Very interesting!

Last call was announced to bid on the Silent Auction items, visit the vendors and each other.

IBBG PARTICIPATED AT THE LEGISLATIVE SHOWCASE



***Clark Smith (Butler House on Grand, Des Moines & IBBG Co-chair),
Michelle Bliss (Harvest Moon Innkeeping, Altoona), Mark Ruggeberg (Brown Street Inn, Iowa City)***

The Legislative Showcase was held January 26th at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. This is an opportunity that IBBG participates in each year with tourism sites and organizations across the state. The event is held to showcase, to our legislature, tourism and what it provides to the state of Iowa.

"Message from the Chair"

First, I want to thank the planning committee for putting together a great program for our Spring Conference this year! It was an informative session, and a fun event!

My 21 year old daughter and I just went to Italy. We stayed in bed and breakfasts in Rome and Venice. They both were very nice. But it reinforced to me how much more of a local flavor you get when you stay in a B&B. They are always different and interesting. During our stay in Rome, the innkeeper was very accommodating and helpful. She gave us great advice and set up transportation for us. During our stay in Venice, the innkeeper spoke no English, so that was a bit more of a challenge. But we are easy going travelers and don't really need anything. It would have been nice to ask advice about places to eat and see, but we did just fine. During both of these stays, we were met with a warm welcome and a clean comfortable place to rest our head. That is all we really need to focus on as we think about our customers. If we do provide a clean room, comfortable bed and a great breakfast, we should have 99% happy customers. If you have been in the business as long as we have, you know you can never please everyone. But we try to do the best that we can.

Over the next two months I will be visiting all of our IBBG members. I am very excited to be working on this fun video project. We received grant funds from the Iowa Tourism Office to complete this project. The goal is to show we are fun and that we have interesting places to stay and see in the State. I will probably start the scheduling process next week, so I hope you will return my call or email as I try to get the logistics worked out.

Thank you for being a member of IBBG. I hope we can help you and your business to be better.

Clark

Clark Smith

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ServSafe Certification

By: Michelle Bliss



Every five years my Interim Innkeeping certification, through PAII and the Interim Innkeepers Network, requires me to renew my ServSafe (food safety) Certification. I am pleased to announce that this year I am able to do this online instead of spending the entire day sitting in a classroom.

I am not sure how long this has been offered online since I only renew every five years. I think it is great and I wanted to share this with you all.

I also noticed that they are now offering 2 "new to me" classes. One is **ServSafe Alcohol**, safe and responsible serving of alcohol in your establishment. The other is **ServSafe Allergens**. Since the number of Americans affected by food allergens is on the rise the NRA – National Restaurant Association decided to add this course which covers, identifying allergens, communication with your guest, preventing cross contamination, (very important if you have a guest with Celiac disease), reading food labels, and more.

If you have any questions or it's time for you to renew your certification just visit, servsafe.com. It is so easy to get started and so much more cost effective. You can do it on your own time! I love that. Remember, ServSafe courses are accredited by the National Restaurant Association.

Our State Fair is a Great State Fair

By: Michelle Bliss

That song says it all because “**NOTHING COMPARES**” to my Iowa State Fair!

This year will be so exciting as our “**Quiche Me in the Morning**” breakfast quiche contest enters its 8th year with judging on **Wednesday, August 17th at NOON.**

IowaStateFair

**NOTHING
COMPARES**

August 11 – 21, 2016

There are so many ways you can participate in this creative and delicious way to market our B&Bs. You can offer to help judge the contest (this year the dance card is full but please consider next year). How about entering the contest? Or enter any contest at the Fair. Just go to: www.iowastatefair.org. Check out the different contests (there are hundreds of them) and sign up.

You may want to consider sending me some of your B&B brochures. While the contest is going on I will have them on display for fair goers to pick up! Consider how many people are at the Fair on any given day...**potential guests!**

This year we want to give a big **THANK YOU** to the Brown Street Inn (Iowa City) Innkeepers Mark Ruggeberg and Bob Brooks for contributing an extra \$200 annually to help **increase** our prize money. First prize is now a \$200 IBBG gift certificate, second prize is \$150 IBBG gift certificate, and third prize is \$100 IBBG gift certificate! This is really great and will bring in more contestants! We usually average about eight Quiche for the contest.

If you decide you would like your breakfast culinary skills put to the test then please consider entering. **The deadline for the food contests is July 1st.**

If you would like to have your B&B brochures on display at the contest please send them to: Michelle Bliss, 700 5th Ave. SW, Altoona, Iowa 50009.

Last but not least, if you are interested in being a judge for the 2017 State Fair contest please contact Dorothy Spriggs at the Carriage House B&B at 641-236-7520 or send her an email.

See you at the Fair!!!

Dorothy Spriggs – Carriage House B&B (Grinnell)
641-236-7520 ♦ irishbnb@iowatelecom.net

Michelle Bliss – Harvest Moon Innkeeping (Altoona)
515-689-8915 ♦ michellebliss55@hotmail.com

Do you offer “Iowa Native Wine” for sale at your B&B?

If you are interested in partnering with a local winery, this is a great opportunity to promote each other. The Iowa Native Wine license is \$25 per year.

To apply go to the [Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division](#).

Click on the green box labeled “Log into eLicensing or Search Public Records.

Click on “Create Account.”

If you need assistance, call Shellie at the IBBG office at 1-800-743-IOWA (4692).

Does your B&B Offer Great Curb Appeal?

Guests are quick to judge a B&B by what they see on the outside. A B&B’s curb appeal naturally makes a critical first impression. If everything within the front space is well-chosen and in perfect repair, from the mailbox and house numbers to the walkway and landscaping—guests will think, ‘This B&B is obviously well-cared for.’ This message is imprinted on your guests’ brains, even if the rest of the B&B is actually not as well cared for. It is very hard to change a first impression. If your B&B’s curb appeal makes a great first impression, everyone -- including potential guests -- will want to see what's inside. That first impression can ensure getting those same guests coming back, year after year. Plus, great word-of-mouth by those guests will bring other potential guests to your B&B.

Front door

Once your guests get their first impression of your beautiful B&B their eye is normally drawn to the front door. With that in mind, step outside and take a sharp look at your front door. Is it inviting or is the paint peeling?

Front porch

For many years the front porch has been an iconic symbol of American living. Your front porch adds additional space where your guests can relax and enjoy the view.

Driveway/Parking

Is your driveway covered with cracks and oil stains? Just reading that does NOT sound very appealing.

After dark

Evening curb appeal also matters. Outdoor lighting can be very inviting for guests to spend some relaxing time outdoors. You can conceal a couple of portable outdoor lamps and aim them at the house or a beautiful tree for low-cost, high impact. You can have outdoor lights on a timer so they’re always on for nighttime. Interior lights on a timer can also be appealing to create a warm inviting glow from the curb. If your B&B isn’t wired outdoors, you can line a pathway to the door with solar lights.

Mother Nature's Microwave

Submitted by: Dale Mills, Cupola Inn - Nora Springs

Many fellow B&B owners would find breakfast preparation much more difficult, if not impossible considering the convenience, without the use of a microwave oven. Just a couple days after the IBBG committee meeting, held in January at Roger Steffen's SF Martin House in Atlantic, I was witness to a most unique warming method.



The temperature was 15 degrees below zero the morning I gathered a half-dozen bunny rabbits. I knew they would make a great meal for some other critter during this nasty, severe cold weather. Within an hour, a murder of crows was arguing and fighting over their find. That disturbance of the winter quiet drew the attention of an eagle. After much posturing and several small skirmishes, the eagle struggled to fly away with a frozen bunny.

Landing a couple hundred yards away from the perturbed crows, the eagle sat for an hour, looking around, surveying the desolate landscape, the wind chill factor minus 25 degrees.

Growing up with 2 parents and 4 brothers, I could not figure out why the eagle wasn't wolfing down his hardily earned and highly sought-after breakfast. The proud symbol of America just sat there, as if sitting on eggs in a nest. Finally when he started to eat, he most likely enjoyed his thawed, perhaps even warm breakfast as much as our guests would enjoy theirs. I do not recommend this warming method.



From the banks of the Winnebago River, many other first-hand Nature stories can be found on the Facebook page of the Cupola Inn B&B. Oh, and Judy has many breakfast and flower garden stories and photos. Become a fan today! You will be enlightened and share the jocularly that is the Cupola Inn B&B.



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IBBG currently has two open positions on the IBBG Committee, Northwest Region and South Central Region. If you are interested in hearing more about what is involved with serving on the IBBG Committee, contact Shellie at the IBBG office. 1-800-743-IOWA (4692) or email ibbg@netins.net.