

Resort's effort to make vacations fun pays off

Tim and Carolyn Aarsvold named 'Resorters of Year'

Editor's note: The Congress of Minnesota Resorts (CMR) presented its 2012 "Resorters of the Year" Award to Tim and Carolyn Aarsvold of Geneva Beach Resort in Alexandria. The CMR provided the following information.

He said, "Do you want to live on the lake and work on the lake?" She said, "I'd do anything to be back on the lake." So, they bought a resort.

Tim and Carolyn Aarsvold purchased the Geneva Beach Resort in 1996.

"Right from the start, we removed every negative sign and reworded everything into a positive, into the vacation mentality of having some fun," Tim said. "Our goal was to make the resort friendly for the people who come here."

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Tim Aarsvold
GENEVA BEACH RESORT

In their second year of business, they were the first resort in their area to add air conditioning to their cabins. Since then, they purchased a couple of adjoining properties, did extensive remodeling, and worked new units into the rental pool.

The resort currently includes two historical cabins built in the 1920s, a cottage annex built in the 1940s, and newer additions that total 16 lodging

options, plus a game room and office.

The couple's skills complement one another. His energy is best spent as handyman, grounds and cabin maintenance, and overseeing finances. She works on marketing, decorating and supervising the staff of about 20 part-time employees.

Carolyn also makes a conscious effort to build relationships with her guests. Early on, the informal feedback received from guests quickly became a guiding force she used to hone her approach to resorting. In a nutshell she said, "Relationships matter."

The Aarsvolds believe that education is important to running a successful resort. They regularly attend conferences and workshops and resort tours. They also gather regularly with a core group of progressive resort owners in their area to share ideas.

Because of their commitment to tourism, the Aarsvolds stay involved in area organizations. They are on the marketing board for the Alexandria Lakes Area Chamber of Commerce, and he received the "Friend of the Chamber" award in 2009. Tim also serves on the boards of their lake association, Alexandria Hotel and Hospitality and Kiwanis.

Having recently retired from teaching, Carolyn serves as a board member for the Lake Region Arts Council, and was recently appointed to be on the executive board of the Chamber of Commerce, representing area lodging facilities.

They joined the Congress of Minnesota Resorts in 2001 and have since provided help in many areas, from conferences to marketing, from



Carolyn and Tim Aarsvold

THE CONGRESS OF MN RESORTS

The Congress of Minnesota Resorts is an industry association with a mission of helping family owned and operated resorts continue as a viable segment of the Minnesota tourism industry. It assists members in marketing and education and gives them a voice at the state Capitol. Every year, it offers scholarships to members' children or grandchildren and presents its "Resorters of the Year" Award. The association is entirely supported by volunteers.

help with the *Minnesota Resorter* magazine to membership.

Tom is a long-time veteran of the annual "CMR Day on the Hill." He has served on the board of directors since 2006, filling the role of treasurer since 2006.

As if owning and operating a 16-unit, year-round resort weren't enough, they also own a smaller apartment complex and a motel that offers extended stay options. Among the three properties, they have experience in nightly, weekly, monthly and seasonal rental.

Now looking ahead to their 17th season, they're still enjoying living and working on the lake.