

# The History of Pathfinder Village

A successful publisher from the Twin Cities sold a portion of his company in the early '70's and decided to invest the gains in a quality family campground near the Twin Cities. Tom Nammacher, his wife Jo and five children had camped all over the Midwest in tents, tent trailers, campers and a motor home. They stayed in all kinds of campgrounds, mostly bad. So, he began to look for a special piece of land for a "dream" campground. He optioned the "Hay Creek Ranch" in 1971. After financing was secured, the deal closed in 1973.

The plans were drawn and Nammacher conceived the revolutionary "Circle Concept" of a privately owned club campsite. Because of this concept, over 80 percent of the land is protected for resource use, in common ground.

There was not a lake on this property so the developer built a two-mile long river. A dredge began working in 1973, six days a week for two years, to dig the Pathfinder River from the swamp area it used to be. It was finished in 1975.

In the spring of 1974, lot sales began at Pathfinder Village, but not without problems. The rain began in April and didn't quit until July. Prospective lot owners were transported in tracked vehicles because of all the mud and water.

John Hanlon sold the original lots at Pathfinder in the First Addition. The first owners were the Buerkles on August 2, followed by the Vogts and Milners on August 6th, Troutmans and Moores on August 7th, Brandls and Eschs on August 8th, and the Tollers, Gimpels, Bradachs, Zareckys and Steigerwalts purchasing from August 12th through the 22nd. (Most of these are still owners yet today.)

Dennis Malloy was the construction manager and worked with the DNR getting most of the approvals and Wally Summerland was the first employee. Wally was and is a Jack-of-all-trades.

Mike Gamble designed the Pathfinder logo and the entrance gate...and a whole lot more.

Lawson Baker became the first campground manager/recreation director and stayed until 1977.

The first "camper" facilities were the A-Frames and Hidden Beach (and the bushes closest by). The first bathhouse was the Depot, built in 1974.

Chapel Island was built. First a ferryboat was used to get across, but some of the older folks apparently didn't like it. So, Wally built a bridge over the Pathfinder River.

Members of the first Advisory Board were Richard Bradach, Vernon Lesewski, Richard Prowizor, Lowell Rife, Paul Wagener and Kenneth Yarborough.

# The History of Pathfinder Village

In 1975, Michael C. Miller was the Secretary/Controller. The Club House was built in that year.

By 1976, the Depot shower house had been insulated and the Firehouse built. Also in 1976, the Annual Meeting heard the first complaints of excessive drinking and the loud football games in the TV room. Wayne Bargren was Vice-President of Marketing with Dennis Malloy as Vice-President and Tom Nammacher as President of Pathfinder Village, Inc.

Pat and Mary Kay Brautigan came in 1977 to be the Camp Manager and Recreation Director, and a new spirit of fun, foolishness and action began. Vicky Hruska was also a Recreation Director.

There was talk of a store and laundromat. Our first 4th of July parade was started by Bob Troutman and Don Moore pulling a boat and trailer with a mini-bike. Ester Martini was Queen of Pathfinder Village in 1977, 1978, 1979 and 1980.

Believe it or not, complaints were being heard by the board about mini-bikes.

The Luau was conceived by three women sitting around the swimming pool thinking, "What could be done?"

The other side of the park had a bath house close by when the Opera House was built in 1978. The Opera House is the largest of the bath houses and was renovated inside and out in 1993.

Recreation Director in 1979 was Mary McCarthy. John Mount was Sales Manager and Susan Dunens served as secretary.

In 1980, Dennis Malloy, General Manager, and Wayne Bargren, Sales Director, left Pathfinder to start their own company. John Mount took over the sales operation which spent a quarter of a million dollars a year in marketing. We welcomed 150-200 new families to Pathfinder a year during the "Big Push".

Camp Coast-to-Coast began in 1980, there were concerns about the amount of energy being used, and the Pine County tax case began.

Boyd Chapman served as manager for two months and then in August of 1980, Don and Rosie Westmoreland took over as Camp Managers.

The Advisory Board became the Advisory Council and the first owners on the Board of Directors were Dick Prowizor and Charles Mann.

Early in 1981, Arlin Epperson became the Executive Secretary for the Association, and the Advisory Council Members were Howard Hodena, Rod Jenkins, Dave Burke, Doug Roseth, Bob Landecker, Ron Lindquist and Ed Ingstad. Darold Anderson was elected to the Board.

# The History of Pathfinder Village

Joan Lenhard and Scott McMartin served as Recreation Directors in 1981. Don and Rosie Westmoreland were the managers.

In the summer of 1981, the location for the Great Hall was determined and the "333" Program was begun. Construction began in August.

On October 6, 1981, Tom Nammacher announced that he was deeding all of the common areas to the Association effective immediately and was placing the Association on its own. A Transition Committee was appointed consisting of John Mount, Andy Anderson, Doug Roseth, Ed Ingstad, and Ida Rife. They became the first Board of Directors for Pathfinder Village-St. Croix Owners Association.

During January and February of 1982, the Transition Board interviewed management companies and selected Community Management Company. Arlin Epperson was hired by CMC to be the property manager. In April of 1982 the farm was purchased. Nancy Veldhouse was the Recreation Director.

The Great Hall was being built as funds were available. The "333" Program provided a considerable amount of money and the Women's Club and other recreation functions helped also.

Problems getting the dues payments were straightened out, and the challenges of self-association governance began to run more smoothly.

After several lawsuits, the stables were closed and most of the horses went to France.

The horse shoe pits were moved down by the river and the Penny Carnival net was up to \$690.00.

In the fall of 1982, the farm was paid for and became the Association's. The problems that faced the Board were illegal sewer holding tanks, getting money to finish the Great hall, energy consumptions, budgets, etc.

Mo and Lil Finseth were Assistant Managers for 8 years from 1984 through 1991. Don and Rosie Westmoreland left here in 1984 and the next year Larry & Nancy Veldhouse were managers. Terry Kostelnik and Karen Thormodson were the Recreation Directors.

1985 brought Dale Floyd and his dream of having a golf course in the park and the dream was shared by others. Donations of \$100 were solicited from interested parties. The rest was to be borrowed from the Association.

By 1986, there was a growing interest by the Association to move management to the park. Frank and Bernadette Washovitch were the Park Managers. Joyce DePover was the Recreation Director and Joan Wallace the aide. Weekender ads began in 1986.

# The History of Pathfinder Village

In 1986, the Golf Committee hired Don Westmoreland to construct the course. The course was to be completed by the middle of 1987. Work has been continuous ever since.

The golf course was supposedly finished in 1987 and was run by the Golf Committee.

In 1987, Dean and Rose Hauge became Park Manager and Recreation Director. As time passed and changes were made, their positions also evolved. Rose eventually became the On-Site Manager and Dean the Association Administrator.

Many changes took place in 1988. The manager's house was built and 40 pine county lots were purchased. The Sales Office (the trailer was the former manager's residence) was then moved to present site. (Now there is a new Sales Office building). Allen and Lyn Carlson became the full time sales team. The Golf Committee also turned over the operations of the course to the Association.

David Matthews and a few other owners got together in 1989 and discussed the idea of developing a mini-golf course. They began raising money and putting the blue prints together. Marilyn Randle, Kathy Tonn, Bonnie Hagen and Rob Randle were also involved.

Ground was broken for the mini-golf course the next year. The construction took a year and a half. David Matthews moved out in the middle of 1990, so it was left up to everyone else to see it completed. The number of people involved with this project goes beyond belief. If you walked by or stopped to ask a question, you were given something to do.....

The questions of a fair way to charge owners for electrical usage was solved by installing electric meters on each lot in 1989. Now each owners is charged only for the electricity usage on their own meter. A system of reading meters in the entire park and sending out bills twice each year has been developed.

Arlin Epperson left as Association Administrator in 1990 and Dean Hauge became the new Association Administrator.

The Golf Club House was built in 1991 by the members of the Golf Committee with funds they had raised from different events.

Campstead Watch was initiated in 1991. Mel Brandl went to the Board of Directors and asked if a Campstead Watch Program could be setup in the park. Two months later he held his first meeting and the response was great.....

# The History of Pathfinder Village

In December of 1991, Administration Office personnel were hired and began working. All records were brought on-site from Thayer Management. For the first time in the history of the Association, management and administration were here in the park. Everything was in place and ready to go effective January 1, 1992.

In 1992, A-Frames began to take on a different appearance. Now everyone wants one. Five a year are scheduled for renovation or replacement. There are 37 of them in the park.

Eighteen new lots were developed in C-1 and C-2 when the Board of Directors decided to complete that area. Electric and water were installed and even before the lots were complete, 2 of them were sold.

After the busy summer season ended in 1992, Rose Hauge got tired of working with her husband and went to greener pastures in Hinckley. Rose helped out with the recreation program occasionally afterward.

Sandy Guilliams worked with Rose during 1992 and took over as Recreation Director in 1993. The Board of Directors decided not to hire a new Park Manager when Rose left.

Without a Park Manager, the position of Maintenance Supervisor becomes even more important. Like father like son, Wayne Summerland is Pathfinder's current Maintenance Supervisor. Wayne and Dean and the staff seen to it that the park looked beautiful each and every time you drove in.

The front entrance to the park took on a new look in early 1993. The Park Office was remodeled inside and moved across the road at the front entrance, a new sign was designed and made, and asphalt was laid.

The Sales Office personnel changed at the end of 1993. Allen and Lyn Carlson retired from their sales efforts for the park and began training in Rod Sandmon. Lyn still worked in the office on a part-time basis and served as the broker for the Association.

In March and April of 1994, the Country Store serving area was renovated. Lighting has been installed for the Great Hall Parking Lot and asphalt chips laid on the lot. The Club House exterior will be pressure washed and stained just as the Opera House was last year.

Change is evident in all aspects of Pathfinder Village. From the first tours on tracked vehicles to the present-day tours in a van; from the "Old Maintenance Office" by the shop to the present day Park Office; from the old store by the shop to the present Country Store;.....and the list goes on.

# The History of Pathfinder Village

Campstead Development Guidelines from 1978, state that "all structures, including your RV, must be 5 feet from the property lines." It also stated "You may clear brush and undergrowth on up to 70% of your Campstead...you must leave 30% of your wild foliage. This is equivalent to five feet in from the circular property line...Or 850 square feet in various parts of your Campstead. Many owners desire wild foliage near their entrance in order to have privacy from the cul-de-sac. Clearing your complete lot is not allowed."

Other stipulations in 1978 included: "Sun porches are allowed. You may have 144 square feet of area covered by the sun porch roof. No walls are allowed. Only portable (readily removable and collapsable) screen houses are allowed."

At present time, 400 square feet of living space is allowed (with restrictions), sheds, decks, and roofs over trailers.

Other changes and improvements that have taken place in the park include a new Sales Office at the front entrance, new playground equipment, a siren in the Great Hall parking lot for weather emergencies, and many more improvements.

In the mid-90's Ron and Marcia Kircher were hired on as the new Sales Agents. They stayed on for a few years and then in late 1999, Sandy Guilliams became a Sales Agent and Ron Kircher was Broker.

In 2000, Andy Andrews was hired on as Association Administrator. Sandy Guilliams had hired Hans Hauge, as a Sales Agent.

In 2001, Todd Middlebrook was hired as Recreation Director. Sandy Guilliams is now the Broker for the Sales Office and Hans Hauge is still Sales Agent. Andy Andrews remains the Association Administrator of Pathfinder Village.

As we continue to venture forward in the 21st Century, there will be added pressure placed on keeping this style of camping viable. Pathfinder Village is one of the few success stories where Fee Simple Ownership has worked. Most others have fallen by the wayside, where this Association continues to prosper.

The owners of this Association have not been afraid to venture into new areas. The Great Hall, golf course, mini golf course, are all fine examples. What additions are yet to come, no one knows for sure. However, the Park's history shows us that a new venture is just around the corner.