



# Keeping Inn Touch

Newsletter of the Innkeepers Guild

Jan. - Feb. 2009

70 Years of Professional Innkeepers, and Quality Properties



## President's Message

Peter Sheehan

Over the past year, the Innkeepers Guild has tried to emphasize a "tourism economy" more than just an "industry". We believe it is important to focus on the economics of your business environment as much as we focus on accommodation products we offer tourists and visitors.

In Nova Scotia for the last three years, Innkeepers has tried to show that licensing has a beneficial impact on the economics of the tourism industry. We asked Minister Dooks, last April, to explain the rationale, in economic terms, for the government's belief that repealing the Act would improve business. There was no answer.

Our provincial governments are major stakeholders in tourism. They benefit from capital investment, the spin off of jobs, and tax revenue. If government has a dependency on the industry, government should move in the direction the industry supports. After all, it is the owners who have their investments on the line.

In 2009, the issue of unlicensed properties will be back on the table. No matter where you are, if you have unlicensed properties in your area, they are an ever increasing threat to your bottom line, especially when we expect there will be a significant impact on reservations and on traffic due to the general economic down-turn.

We urge you to visit the [Innkeepers](#) web site and take a look at members' listings. If you are able to refer clients to other members, promote their locations, why not print off a few copies

of their listings. For example, we have members near the Halifax and Moncton Airports, near the Pictou, Yarmouth, Digby, and Saint John ferries, on PEI, and near Marble Mountain in NFLD. Now is the time we should all pull together to help market each others properties.

The Innkeepers Guild wants to help you sell rooms, if you have suggestions on how we can support your marketing efforts, now is the time to send them in.

## Nova Scotia

### Unlicensed Properties

This issue is still on the radar. If 2009 is going to be a rough year, we have all the more reason to watch for anything that may hinder our businesses.

In Nova Scotia the proposed Bill 151, which was intended to repeal the existing Tourist Accommodations Act, was tabled in May 2008. It was withdrawn when the legislature ended its session. There were references that the Minister may come back to the industry for further consultations. That never happened. The Legislature was in session from October to December 2008, there is still no sign of Bill 151, the repeal, nor any further communications.

This will now be an election issue. This problem was first identified by the Auditor General in 2004. Here we are five years later, we still see unlicensed properties coming on the market, adding to your competition, not paying their fair share of taxes.

We have now added a dedicated page on the Innkeepers web site where you can look at the original act and follow the events and discussion taking place around this issue.

[Review the Articles on Licensing](#)



Corkinview Beach House, Point Prim, P.E.I.

## Annual General Meeting

Our Annual General Meeting will be held in early May, either the 2nd or 9th. Our focus will be "Selling Rooms, Promoting My Destination".

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## Ireland

### To License, or Not to License?

There is a discussion taking place in Ireland concerning the licensing of B&B's. There are over 5500 Bed & Breakfast accommodations in Ireland. Their association has now proposed a licensing system as a means to ensure fairness and quality, as well as the protection of the reputation of the Irish B&B product on the whole.

Click on the following article, which Innkeepers Guild did send to the NS Department of Tourism as they apparently used Ireland as part of their rationale to repeal the licensing process for Nova Scotia. [Read the Article](#)



## The Tourism Strategy

*Cape Breton's Room Sales Since 1999*

A picture is worth a thousand words. The Cape Breton Tourism Marketing Strategy started in early 2008. Their goal was to determine the trends in the past several years. Have a look at their charts, shown at the link below. If you are a accommodation owner on Cape Breton Island, you might be surprised. By the way, their strategy has been released, but only online, and they want to have comments by February 20th.

[Get the Cape Breton Tourism Strategy](#)

## Editorial: Tourism

"This editorial talks about topics our members have asked about, or in which they have shown an interest. All members are welcome to submit editorials, stories, questions, issues, or offer advice."

"It's the economy, Stupid" is a phrase that has become popular during some past election campaigns. Looking forward to 2009, "It is the Tourism Economy, Stupid" may be a phrase to keep handy.

As an owner of an accommodations property, you know this economic downturn is likely to affect you in 2009.

This is a good time to remind everyone just "who" is "who" in this tourist economy. Accommodation owners are the primary businesses, especially when your business is located in a tourist area, a rural or coastal area, or a seasonal location. Next would be the restaurants, gift shops, gas stations, and all those who provide attractions, such as museums or whale watching tours. A member-based association like the Innkeepers Guild is a third party.

The provincial government and municipal governments are also part of the a "who's who" in the industry, but for a whole different reason. If accommodation operators have a rough year in 2009, the government will not feel the impact nearly as much as accommodations owners or employees.

It is owners who have investments at stake. Owners still have to plan to operate and have everything ready for the 2009 season. We are like farmers, we have to invest in a crop without knowing if we have a crop to sell.

Where are the reservations for 2009? How are we doing compared to last year? There are actions we can take to try to create an advantage. In Atlantic Canada, each province is dependent on the other, each region is dependent on other regions in categories such as cot-

## New Members - Two more for Your Referral Lists

Both properties have access to 100 series highways and are near restaurants.

Heritage Hideaway B&B



Heritage Hideaway is a charming "heritage" property, fully restored with large rooms, lovely views, many antiques, and spectacular gardens. A good location for guests to easily reach the Halifax waterfront and to connect to the airport.

Hosts - Diane & Martin Gillis.

Web site: [www.heritagehideaway.com](http://www.heritagehideaway.com)

[View their Listing on Innkeepers](#)

Briarwood B&B



Briarwood B&B dates back to the original village of Elmsdale. Centrally located, guests can stroll sidewalks through Elmsdale and Enfield, watch the trains, or check out the local pubs and restaurants. A mere ten minutes to the airport, the town even has a dog wash!

Hosts - Con & Rose Seidl

Web site: [www.briarwoodbb.com](http://www.briarwoodbb.com)

[View their Listing on Innkeepers](#)

tages and motels. In other categories such as B&B's and Inns, there is a heavier dependence on the USA and Ontario.

So, what can you do now? Try to determine the pattern for your business. If you have repeat customers, then now is the time to try to secure their reservations for 2009. If you have a web site, think of how you display your rates, consider having a discount or a package deal. As an example: "15% Discount for Guaranteed Reservations Confirmed by March 31, 2009". This may be the time to spend a few more dollars on advertising.

We see Newfoundland & Labrador is first to be running their TV ads. On the Innkeepers web site home page, you can link to and read an article that shows how the Newfoundland Labrador marketing has increased their visitation by over 15% in the last five years. Regretfully, the NS Doers and Dreamers tour guide was still not available by February.

### Rack Cards

We have a special discount package for Rack Cards: 5000 4x9" cards for \$374.00.



Wilton's B&B, Steady Brook, NL.

### Follow the Money

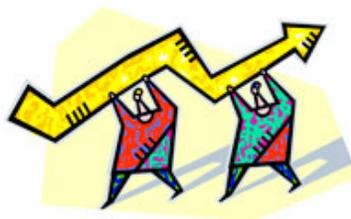
#### Credit Card Processing Increase?

An owner of a 20-unit property has advised their credit card processing costs quietly increased last fall by almost \$200 a month, due to changes made by their card processing company and their financial institution. These charges seem to apply primarily to properties with point of sale systems. Here is what has happened:

1. Visa appears to have added one percent across the board. Other cards have changed fees too.
2. There is now an extra \$2.00 charge if you process a corporate card. (You may not always know when you have been presented with a corporate card, but if you see a corporate name on the card, you might consider adding the \$2.00 to your bill.)
3. Some banks have added an "IDP fee" of \$0.08 for every batch closure.
4. Some banks are now charging an extra \$0.10 per transaction when the processed card is not theirs.
5. On top of the fees is the HST.

If you have encountered any of these fee changes and wish to share your experience, please send us an email at: [admin@innkeeperguild.com](mailto:admin@innkeeperguild.com)

For more on Credit Card Fee Changes, go to the [Retail Council of Canada](http://www.retailcouncil.ca) web site.



### Volunteers Needed!

Innkeepers needs a few volunteers to work on marketing and communications. Can you help? If interested please let us know at 1 (902) 425-2713 or email us at: [admin@innkeeperguild.com](mailto:admin@innkeeperguild.com)



Hotel Paulin, Ouest Caraquet, N.B.

### Transportation

#### Ferry Tales

Have a look at the "Atlantic Vision", the newest ferry for the Nova Scotia – Newfoundland crossing. Now this is a ferry that has the look and feel of a cruise ship!

<http://www.marine-atlantic.ca/en/NewVessel/gallery.shtml>

#### Nova Scotia - Shrinking Ferry Service?

In 2008, the Bay Ferries Ltd. was provided a subsidy by the federal and provincial governments to support its operations. The service was cut before Thanksgiving. The CAT announced in August it was reducing the number of crossings, to make things worse planned to end service early on October 5th instead of after the Thanksgiving weekend.

The government made an investment but did not ensure it had a protected schedule. We lost clientele who wanted to come to Nova Scotia, to the Celtic Colours Festival, and of course, to travel during the fall colours season.

To repeat, the Innkeepers Guild emphasizes, this is an "economic" issue. Ferries operate as "marine highways", they should be viewed as though they were a land link, essential in terms of the

economic dependencies and impacts.

We should not forget, part of the problem might be that the federal government has contracted out the ferry service, now that contract is not working. We have to ask some questions - "Which level of government is responsible?", "When will there be signs of a long-term business plan?"

The economic impact of a ferry link is clear. If the number of people arriving at Yarmouth decreases, clearly the number of people travelling to other destinations in Nova Scotia, to Prince Edward Island, and Newfoundland Labrador, will decrease too.

A reminder of how much the federal and provincial governments have subsidized the ferries so far:

Subsidies to the CAT - \$4.4 million from Province of Nova Scotia.

Subsidies to the Princess - \$15 million from Canada, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in August 2008, with an additional \$8 million from Nova Scotia, for a 2-year period that ends January 2009, and another \$600,000 in marketing support, for a of \$28 million. In 2009, Nova Scotia's Industrial Expansion Fund will cover financial losses for Bay Ferries Ltd, not to exceed \$12 million.

Now the total is \$40 million, (no one has mentioned the term "bail out").

As accommodations owners in Atlantic Canada we need your voice. We need you to voice your opinion on your business experiences, your dependence on the ferry systems, and to help explain why the ferry systems are so important.

[Ferries: Read the Article](#)

### Rail Connections?

Did you realize that you can land at the Halifax International Airport but you cannot connect with a train unless you travel to downtown Halifax or Truro even though the train tracks are within 5 kms at Enfield. Did you realize there is no public transit between the airport and either Halifax or Truro?

Do we have a problem here? Many Europeans are used to traveling by rail, and here we are with such a major faux

pas in terms of making sure one mode of transport links to another.

### Zoom Airline: Casualties & Cost

Last year, Zoom Airline stranded hundreds. Accommodations owners had stranded guests, and lost reservations due to cancellations. This situation shows our dependence on transportation links. Many owners helped their stranded guests, many did not penalize the clients who cancelled.

This type of "customer service" is valuable public relations and helps protect our reputations as quality destinations. It also shows how the owners and operators can be negatively impacted economically. Provincial governments are reminded that such situations are very similar to the negative economic impact caused by the increasing number of unlicensed and/or illegal tourism and vacation rentals.



### Web Site Update - 2 for 1

You now have two listings, one in the "Travel Guide", and one in the "Travel Planner".

We have added the Travel Planner, a second link to your property. This offers travelers a way to connect where they are staying, with what they can do, the Amenities and Attractions in your location. This second listing feature is added at no extra cost.

This means that you now promote your property, and the key attractions of your locale. As an example, in the Travel Planner, Margaree, Nova Scotia, has a link to the Margaree Salmon Association, to highlight salmon fishing.

Our goal is to have at least three links for local "Amenities and Attractions" listed for each community. To add links for your community, send the names and web site links to: [info@innkeeperguild.com](mailto:info@innkeeperguild.com)



Manor Inn Lakeside, Hebron, N.S.

### Potential SCAM

#### Potential Business Info Theft

Watch for this one! You receive an email that asks for a reservation and availability. You reply. A second email promises to send you credit card information. Now the scam starts. This second email asks that you charge for the rooms plus charge extra money for a travel agent, which you will transfer later in a credit card transaction. This email asks questions about your business in an attempt to have you reveal some personal or business information.

**Do not reply to such a request!**

Another hint: learn to check the "properties" of an email. The "properties" will show the "real" email address of the sender. In this case, the sender claimed to be in Ireland but, the email was actually from India.

### Publication Information

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To have your property featured in the next newsletter, send your request to: [info@innkeeperguild.com](mailto:info@innkeeperguild.com)