



the BEACON

The Newsletter of the Michigan Council of Hostelling International



July, 2011

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING JULY 30, 2011

JOIN US for our Annual Membership Meeting on Saturday, July 30, 2011 at the Rochester Mills Brewery in downtown Rochester.

Activities start the afternoon with your choice of a Historic Walking Tour of downtown Rochester or a Bike Ride along the Paint Creek Trail. Each option is two hours long and starts at 3:00 p.m. Please RSVP in advance for which activity you would like to do. Please arrive by 2:30 p.m. to check-in. FREE and open to attend. Bike riders will need to have their own bike and helmet. There are bike racks at

The Rochester Mills Brewery.

Dinner starts at 5:00 p.m. (right after the activities). Dinner is FREE for all current Hostelling International members (please have your membership card with you). All others are welcome to join us for dinner for a \$10.00 donation (cash or check). Buffet style. Alcohol is NOT included. Please RSVP for the dinner portion as well—thank you.

Business Meeting starts at 6:00 p.m. and everyone is welcome to attend the meeting. The state of the council will be addressed, as well as

voting in new board members to fill empty seats. Candidates should contact us in advance; however nominations are accepted from the floor as well.

The Rochester Mills Brewery has live music starting at 10:00 p.m. (never a cover charge) and is great way to wind down the evening.

See page 3 of the newsletter for instructions on nominating new board members. See our website for schedule of activities and to RSVP or e-mail us at HIUSAMichigan@gmail.com or call 248-302-8026 for more information.

The Michigan Council of HI-USA, originally American Youth Hostels, was founded in 1943.

THE MISSION of HI-USA

To help all, especially the young, gain a greater understanding of the world and its people through hostelling

Michigan Council Mission Statement

To help people of all ages gain a greater understanding of the world, locally and internationally, through educational programs, cultural connections, recreational activities and positive hostelling experiences

WARM & FRIENDLY CHICAGO

SOMETIMES, customer service seems to be a thing of the past. However, recent visits to Chicago has proved that it is alive and well there. Good customer service and friendly people are around every corner of the Windy City. Chicago is a busy town with lots of people—whether it is a cab driver, a front desk person, or a restaurant server—everyone is packed full of smiles and helpful attitudes.

One of the warmest and welcoming places in Chicago is the HI hostel. It is located in “The Loop” on Congress Parkway at Wabash Avenue with easy walking to many attractions. And with the wonderful mass transit system the city offers, a bus or a

train can get you almost anywhere in the metropolitan area.

Per night rates start at \$30.00 for a dorm bed and run up to \$79.00 for a two-bed private room. Bathrooms are shared and breakfast is included. More information about the Chicago Hostel may be found at www.hichicago.org.

For lunch, try Cafecito, connected to the hostel via the main lobby area. This Cuban-style coffee shop offers yummy treats for reasonable prices. The HI Michigan Board recommends the “Chivito” pressed sandwich for only \$5.99. Visit www.cafecitocihago.com to see a full menu, a video of



Art Institute; photo by Wally Gobetz

how they make a sandwich, and printable coupons.

~Michael Dwyer

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HI—MI HOME PAGE

www.hi-michigan.org

TWITTER

www.twitter.com/HIUSAMichigan

FACEBOOK

<http://on.fb.me/hi-mich>

MEETUP

<http://bit.ly/meetuphimich>



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DONATIONS

Yes, we still want your donations. Please include a short letter of intent with any monetary donation. For example: "Please use this donation toward hostel development in Michigan." Or, "Please use this donation for HI activities and events in Michigan." Thank you.

A Letter from Michigan Council President, Michael Dwyer

The Michigan Council of Hostelling International continues to operate with much success this year. We are fiscally sound, our programs and activities are improving, and we have several mission-based events on the horizon.

Mollika Biernat conducted three "Tips for Women Travelling Solo" presentations in June at area REI Stores. We are always looking for presenters and locations to host our Opening Doors, Opening Minds workshops. Passionate hostellers may inquire about becoming a presenter—it's easy & fun—and sharing your experience is very rewarding. Libraries, schools, and other interested groups may contact us to present a travel education program.

The Tuesday Midweek Meanders group and our weekend hikes are fluid examples of a strong, social network of active caring world citizens. They promote getting outdoors, learning new things, and going to diverse areas of Southeast Michigan. Visit our website hi-michigan.org and check out the "Calendar" for a complete list of all that we do.

We are currently exploring the idea of starting two groups: Biking & Paddling. Anyone with experience leading bike groups should contact us. Canoe or kayak enthusiasts are invited to organize paddling events and/or simple excursions to get out on the water. We have the resources—just give us a call to get started.

Overnight hostel stays are an obvious big part of what we promote. With limited options here in Michigan, we often lead trips out of the state to travel and stay in hostels. Two trips are in the works: A domestic destina-

tion here in the Midwest for a long weekend; and an overseas trip (7-10 days) to Ireland. Both will take place within the next 12 months—please let us know if you have an interest?

Once again we are sending all HIUSA Michigan members a printed newsletter. We've heard from a few of you asking to receive an emailed version only. Please bear with us as we streamline our efforts to provide you with the version that best fits your lifestyle. In the mean time, after everyone in your household has read The Beacon, please pass it on to a friend or neighbor to share and be green.

In the short time we have left in our present form, we would like to help build that network and support members in starting a "friends of" group.

In the last newsletter I mentioned the "bad news" of the National Council voting to "consolidate assets" and to create a "unified organization." Despite good efforts from the Michigan Council and several others throughout America, the resolution had enough votes to pass. By a very slim margin, the required two-thirds vote of the National Council passed to change the bi-laws and restructure the entire organization. Over the next two to four years the councils will be dissolved into a new central entity. Eventually, the Michigan Council will have to turn over our assets and with that, our freedom to run the activities and programs we want to. To replace the councils,

"friends of" groups and "free agents" may apply to represent areas of the country to engage and build a network of volunteers. Those groups may have an opportunity to receive funds to facilitate their programs.

In the short time we have left in our present form, we would like to help build that network and support members in starting a "friends of" group. If you have an idea and a desire, please contact us. The Michigan Council will continue to operate and run as many programs as we can to benefit the Michigan Membership.

With that being said, if the new national entity puts the right people in place, they have a chance to succeed. After attending the June National Council Meeting in Chicago and speaking with many of the stakeholders, it is my opinion that for restructuring to be successful, current leadership at the national level needs to change. Please understand that I feel everyone in the organization is passionate about the mission and hostelling. However, I believe many lack the skills necessary to orchestrate this huge undertaking.

For the preservation of hostelling in America, we encourage all members to be involved and to be part of the new formula. If their plan works and when the new structure is in place, the national organization should be able to respond more quickly to the needs and wants of incoming travelers to our hostel network, as well as our membership in America. Your voice is important. Keep your eyes and ears open and let the new HIUSA know what you want from it.

ROAD TRIP CHICAGO

RIDING THE RAILS

TRAVELLING BY TRAIN is something everyone should try at least once. The board members of HI Michigan have used Amtrak to travel from the metro Detroit area to regional and national meetings in Chicago this year. Passengers can read, use laptops, work, watch movies on portable devices, sleep, or eat while riding the train. Amenities include a snack bar that offers food and refreshments. Train stations vary from a booth along the tracks to a full-service station, and the Amtrak website offers descriptions and parking information for each location. The website also has information about multi-ride tickets, rail passes, group travel, and weekly specials. You can also learn about the rewards program, meals, baggage guidelines, sleeping choices (for longer treks), and tips for trip planning. Visit amtrak.com for more information.

The cost varies with weekends being the most expensive and midweek being more cost effective. One-way tickets run from \$28.00 - \$81.00 depending on where in Michi-

gan you begin your journey. Michigan has three lines that run to Chicago starting in Pontiac, Port Huron, and Grand Rapids. Book well in advance for the best prices and be aware that they often sell out. Be advised that Amtrak has been experiencing delays in the last several months due to track-work as well as heavy traffic that requires Amtrak trains to move aside to allow freight trains to pass. Some Amtrak routes have been up to two hours behind so be prepared to have flexible arrangements.

Rail travel is eco-friendly and most large cities are serviced by at least one railway line. Trains allow you to travel in safety and comfort and keep you in touch with the landscape along the way. Happy travels!

~Sonya Julie

GRABBING THE BUS

ANOTHER WAY to travel to Chicago is on the big blue double-decker transport, commonly known as the Megabus. Service was recently established from the Detroit's new Rosa Parks Transit Center to Union Sta-



Passengers boarding the Megabus

tion, located in Downtown Chicago's famous "Loop" area. You may also board at Cass Avenue & Warren Avenue or in Ann Arbor. Travel time is about 5 1/2 hours (4 1/2 hours, if you board in Ann Arbor.) including a brief pit-stop in Western Michigan.

The bus is quite comfortable and is equipped with an on-board restroom, reclining seats, and free Wi-Fi. One-way fares range from \$15.00 - \$40.00. For the best price, book early and ask about special promotional offers. For more information about the Megabus, visit megabus.com.

~Philip DeBlock



View of high-rise buildings in the Chicago Loop, bruo03_12_dF, C. William Brubaker Collection (University of Illinois at Chicago)

Board Nomination Process

If you are interested in serving on the HIUSA Michigan Council Board or nominating another member, please submit the following information about the nominee:

- 1.Name
- 2.Biographical Summary with signature of nominee

You may mail this information in or e-mail a scanned

copy of the signed bio. In addition, you may nominate on site at the annual meeting as long as the nominee is present and willing to serve.

Nomination information can be sent by e-mail to: HIUSAMichigan@gmail.com.

Hostel Detroit Tour & Corktown Walk with Lunch

Join us for a Detroit area Walking tour July 26, 10:30-2, to the new hostel in the North Corktown area. Meet at the hostel at 10:30 located at 2700 Vermont Street at the corner of Spruce Street to tour the hostel. We will then walk to a nearby restaurant for lunch and walk back.

Midweek Meanders

Every Tuesday we meet to Walk/Hike/Canoe (hence the name Midweek Meanders) somewhere in the Southeast Michigan area starting around 10:00 a.m. A complete list of activities, leaders, phone numbers and locations are on our web site under the Calendar tab:

hi-michigan.org

Weekend Hikes

Longtime trip leader and member, Peter Bolgar, leads day hikes on Saturdays and Sundays. Destinations include Belle Isle, Eastern Market, and Kensington Metropark. Optional carpooling and restaurant stop are often available. Call Peter at 248-539-9112 to find out where and when the next weekend hike will be.

GREAT DEAL TO MAKE NEW FRIENDS

HI Michigan has partnered with the SOLAR Club of Michigan to benefit both organizations. All HI Michigan members may now join the SOLAR Club for \$20 off any one of their memberships. For example, an individual annual membership costs \$40 with SOLAR – if you're a current HIUSA member – your cost to them is only \$20. You may also opt for their lifetime membership – you pay only \$155 – a savings of \$20 off the regular rate of \$175. They also have family memberships available.

The School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation (SOLAR)

provides many opportunities to experience the outdoors. Members may learn to lead trips or just learn how to backpack or kayak; building outdoor skills while protecting the surrounding environment is always a goal with this fun and adventurous group.

This is a one time discount that must be purchased by the end of 2011. An annual membership will be valid until December 31, 2012. You may want to take advantage of this right away, because it is only open to the first 100 members. A photocopy of your current HI membership is required, visit their web

site for membership and contact info: solaroutdoors.com

While both organizations are like-minded, SOLAR offers an additional variety of sought after activities. This is a wonderful way to be a member of both and fulfill all your cravings to get in tune with nature.

You may also contact us with questions: 248-302-8026.



CONNECT WITH US

HI-MI HOME PAGE

www.hi-michigan.org

TWITTER

twitter.com/HIUSAMichigan

FACEBOOK

<http://on.fb.me/hi-mich>

MEETUP

<http://bit.ly/meetuphimich>

E-MAIL

HIUSAMichigan@gmail.com

PHONE

248-302-8026

MAIL

PO Box 80816
Rochester, MI
48308-0816



Hostelling International | Michigan Council
P.O. Box 80816 | Rochester, MI 48308-0816