Look to Internet for Michigan travel tips

O&E ONLINE

EMORY DANIELS

A few years ago, my wife and I took up cross-country skiing and about that same time, my son was smitten by downhill skiing. As a result, at least once each winter we take a weekend trip up north with our skis.

One of our favorite spots is near Grayling/Gaylord because it doesn't take too long to drive to and because the Hartwick Pines are right there. What a great place for cross country skiing!

But skiing is like fishing, you always are checking out new courses, new hills or new holes. So I was intrigued upon learning that the Petoskey-Harbor Springs-Boyne County Visitors Bureau had a Website on the Internet. You can check it out as easily as I by pointing to http://www.boynecounty.com.

The home page allows you to check out activities for spring, summer, fall and winter and to get information on accommodations by type and by area. There's a calendar of events, an online press kit, and some information about the home where Ernest Hemingway spent 22 summers.

The Winter Activities link gives you the information you want to know about Nubs Nob and Boyne Mountain and Boyne Highlands. Boyne Highlands Resort, which has its own Website at http://www.boyne.com, has 40 runs, a snowboard halfpipe, nine lifts, uphill capacity of 17,050 skiers per hour, longest run of over one mile, skiable terrain of 280 acres, and a vertical drop of 550 feet, and some 28 cross country trails.

The page also gives information on cross country ski areas in Boyne County, which has 350 kilometers of trails through forests, meadows, bordering scenic lakes and streams. There's also sites for ice skating, sledding and sleigh rides, and a list of businesses that rent snow mobiles.

Travel in Michigan

Speaking of traveling in the state, AAA of Michigan now has a Website called AAA Access complete with information, products and services.

The home page, with a colorful Triptik design, offers a number of links, including: online traffic information (real time, updated regularly) from the Michigan Emergency Patrol; member discount listings; a coloring book for kids; Michigan Living articles; safety, security and travel information; online Tourbook or Triptik ordering capability; and travel information.

Personally, I was rather excited by the site. But check it out for yourself by pointing to http://www.aaamich.comTo help plan my summer vacation, I checked it out on a Wednesday and requested a Triptik and Tourbook and map. The next morning, I received an e-mail message confirming my request, and the following Monday everything I requested arrived in the mail. Nifty, huh?

The TripTik/Tourbook service is available only to AAA members, so have your membership card handy so you can type in your club membership number on the electronic form.

Just for kids

One other quick bit of information to share with you that has nothing to do with travel in Michigan. On March 23, I received an announcement that Yahoo is starting a new search service for kids called Yahooligans.

Yahooligans is a searchable and browsable index of the Internet specifically designed for ages 8-14. At present, the main categories are: Around the World, Art Soup, Candidates and Games, Entertainment, School Bell, Science and Oddities, Sports and Recreation and "The Scoop."

The site works much like the main Yahoo index. Kids and parents will want to check out Yahooligans at http://www.yahooligans.com/. Lynx users can check it out at http://www.yahooligans.com/text/. This has significant impact for those of us (hopefully, all of us) who want the Internet to be a wholesome experience for our young people.

You can direct questions to Emory Daniels by e-mail with emory@oeonline.com or fax number 591-7279. To sign up for O&E On-Line, dial (313)591-0903, at "log-in" prompt type "new" and at "Key:" prompt type GL6NY2. Past columns may be accessed on-line at http://oeonline.com/(tilde mark)emoryd/archive.html.

Keep watch for counter offers, illegal questions

JOB SEARCH

GEORGE HAYES

Q **I've heard that it's unwise to accept a counter offer. I'm looking at a big one! Please advise.**

A Let's define our terms. A counter offer usually refers to a salary increase, promotion or other incentive promised to an employee who has just given notice and is about to clean out his desk. It is an enticement to stay.

The conventional wisdom cautions against accepting a counter offer because:

- The problems that caused you to look for a new job in the first place will still be there.
- The company wasn't willing to reward you for your contributions until you decided to leave. Recognition Deficit Disorder is usually incurable. You'll probably have to go through this again someday.
- If you stay, your loyalty will always be questioned and you'll never be as highly regarded as you were previously.
- Your next increase will look like chicken feed because ". . . . we just gave you a big raise when you were going to quit."

Most vocational consultants believe the majority of people who accept counter offers end up leaving (or being invited to leave) the organization within a year or two anyway. Some suggest that the real motivation behind many counter offers is to buy the employer time to replace you.

Gee, that's all real negative. I can cite more than one case where a company restructured a position for a valued employee and the person is still there. Recently, a client organization came close to losing a key engineer because it simply didn't realize the person was earning $15,000 below the market rate. He was given a healthy bump and will probably retire from the place.

Here's a crude method of analysis that should be cautiously adapted to individual circumstances: If the issue is one of money or job tasks and the counter offer is acceptable and the employer was simply naive or ignorant of the situation (i.e., no ill intent), you might consider staying. If the issue is emotional and you have seriously tried to address the problem directly with your supervisor or by changing your own behavior and you are absolutely convinced that life in the new company would be better, you might lean toward going.

Q **Are there any rules for handling tasteless or blatantly illegal questions in an interview?**

A Usually, it boils down to a judgment call requiring a quick assessment of the situation and an educated guess regarding the consequence of a challenge.

What does the offending question reveal about the interviewer or the company? Does it suggest rampant bigotry or sexism, or simply conversational stupidity and a lack of polish? Is it consistent with the tone set by other interviewers, or just a reflection of one person who is out of sync with the rest of the organization? Importantly, would you be working closely with this individual or would contact be minimal? Some people try to put the conversation back on course with a mild rebuke, such as, "Well, I'm not sure that really relates to the job," or "Wow, we're getting a little off track. Tell me more about the responsibilities, if you would."

Be assured that if you protest the question in a confrontational way, you will probably diminish the odds of receiving an offer. Maybe that's okay if you don't want to work for the jerk anyway. Maybe it's more important to right a wrong. Legal channels are always available. It's your call. I'd like to hear from you readers on this one.

Do's and don'ts

It's amazing how many hiring authorities still don't know the basic do's and don'ts of interviewing. A few years ago, we sent a lady out to interview with one of our clients. During a tour of the shop floor, one interviewer said, "Honey, you gotta have hair on your chest to do this job." It took approximately 48 hours for the company to receive a strongly worded letter from a local compliance agency.

Send questions to George Hayes, Job Search, P.O. Box 2497, Southfield, MI 48037. George Hayes is president of Emplex Corp., an outplacement and pre-employment testing firm located in Southfield.

BUSINESS MILESTONES

***This column highlights** promotions, transfers, hirings and other key personnel moves within the Oakland County business community. Send a brief biographical summary — including the towns of residency and employment and a black-and-white photo, if desired — to: Business Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. Our fax number is (810) 644-1314.*

Williams

James Williams of Bloomfield Hills was named board chairman at Farmington Hills-based Michigan National Corp. He succeeds Robert Mylod, former chief executive officer, in a planned transition following consummation of the merger with National Australia Bank Ltd. in late 1995. Williams is chairman and president of Williams, Schafer, Ruby & Williams, P.C., a Birmingham law firm specializing in the legal matters of corporate, real estate and estate planning. He also is a director and principal shareholder in Metals Finishings Corp., Century Machine and Pioneer Industries. He chairs Henry Ford Hospital in West Bloomfield and the Oakland University Presidents Club in Rochester Hills. He's a trustee of the Oakland University Foundation. He was appointed to the bank board in 1989.

Farmington Hills-based A.O. Smith Automotive Products Co. Sales and Engineering Center has announced these appointments of Bloomfield Hills residents: Michael Fasiterasck, new business development director, Ford Business Unit; Mark Davison, director, General Motors Business Unit; Rodney Holmes, director, European Business Unit.