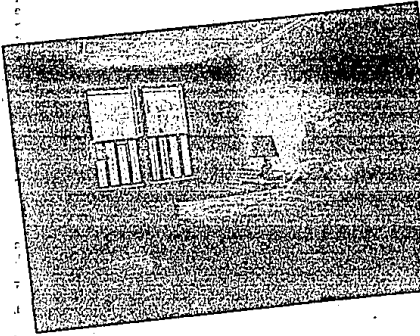


Travel



Thursday, February 5, 1987 O&E

(F-6D,6D*,R,W,Q-4C)*#50



Turn-of-the-century bedrooms, a porch dining room and the friendly Sunday brunch line are just three of the features that make a traveler feel at home at Stafford's Bay View Inn in Potosky.

The northern LP—and 'homey' Stafford's

had already eaten everything on the Sunday buffet tables, but I couldn't resist soaking one more blitz as I waited to say goodbye to Stafford Smith at Stafford's Bay View Inn in Potosky.

Stafford was in a black tuxedo at the end of the hot food table, regularly checking the Eggs Benedict, the tomato and bread puddings, and explaining the sauces made from Michigan foods and clustered around the home-made waffles.

He was also carving the ham and watching the batter overflow the old fashioned round waffle iron at his elbow.

Stafford 'Duff' Smith has been a famous figure at the end of the Sunday brunch line for a quarter of a century and all his regular customers know him well, so it takes a little time to say hello or goodbye, just long enough to sneak a last blitz or eye the nearby dessert table carefully.

Janice Smith was in the lobby, greeting guests exactly as she did in 1960 when she and Duff met here for the first time. Janice was a hostess and Stafford was assistant manager. They married and bought the inn in 1961, and have been part of northern Michigan history ever since.

1988 was their 25th anniversary and the hundredth anniversary of the inn, at least in its building stage. The summer of 1987 is the centennial of the actual opening so they plan to celebrate their hundredth birthday twice.

TRAVELERS COME to an inn

like this because the owners know the definition of the word host, "to greet or entertain in your own home, or elsewhere." The Smiths not only own this place, they have over the years been the plumbers, builders, decorators, cooks, so it is no illusion that they are welcoming you into their home.

As he carves the ham, Stafford swings right occasionally to point out an early photograph of the inn. It was built in 1886 as a 12-room boarding house catering to the summer residents of Bay View, the seasonal home of Chicago "cottagers." Even now, the three-story Victorian "cottages," with their gingerbread roofs, dominate the surrounding streets.

The name HOWARD is in the stained glass window over the entrance door. The inn started out as the Woodland Avenue House, became the Howard House and then the New Howard House until the bank foreclosed in 1918 and it reopened as Hotel Roselawn in 1923.

Joseph Graham, founder of the Graham Paige automobile, sold it to Arthur W. Twarz, who named it Bay View Inn. He sold it to Dr. Roy Heath, and when Heath was looking for just the right person to inherit his love for innkeeping, he sold the white clapboard hostelry to a young 22-year-old Stafford Smith for \$50,000 in June, 1961.

The place had 50 tiny bedrooms with common baths down the hall. Guests came by train, had their own reserved table in the dining room and stayed for the summer. When the trains stopped running the next year, the Smiths had to redesign their inn for modern, mobile travelers.

Travelers come to an inn like this because the owners know the definition of the word host, "to greet or entertain in your own home, or elsewhere." Duff and Janice Smith not only own Stafford's Bay View Inn, they have over the years been the plumbers, builders, decorators, cooks.

THEY HAVE been building, adding and renovating ever since. Stafford's Bay View Inn now has 20 guest rooms, each with its own bath. Everything is slowly being converted to the style of the 1880's.

Duff refuses to even consider putting telephones and television sets in the rooms. There is one in the lounge but Duff likes to put out a platter of complimentary hors d'oeuvres in the evening and watch former television junkies get to know each other, maybe even wander together into the dining room for dinner.

The small white clapboard hotel with the Victorian wallpaper and the antique beds was open summers only until 1963. During that first decade, the Smiths ran the inn during the summer and did other things in the winter. Janice taught English at Potosky High School, and still does.

Duff started a catering business, and took over the dining rooms at Boyne Highland and Nubs Nob in Harbor Springs and at the Weather-vane Inn, Charlevoix. In 1971 he started the Pier Restaurant in Harbor Springs. That is where I first

met him; I think he was painting the front door at the time.

The Smiths celebrated their 25th anniversary and the centennial of the inn by opening a restaurant called Stafford's One Water Street in Boyne City, their chance at last to build a place from the ground up. By 1990, they hope to have a 45-room inn next door.

OVER THE YEARS, Stafford has relinquished more and more of the innkeeping to others, to Dudley Marvin, general manager of the restaurant, and to Judy Honer, GM of the Bay View for six years and hospitality/catering expert for the whole organization.

Stafford accepted the centennial business award from the Historical Society of Michigan in 1986, and will become the first president of Country Inns and Back Roads Association Feb. 1. If you are an inn lover you probably own the guide book Country Inns and Back Roads, revised for the 21st year by author Norman T. Simpson.

I have visited only a few of the 210

inns described in that book, but my experience is that their success or failure depends on exactly that attribute of 'being a host' that typifies the Bay View Inn.

The beautifully renovated rooms, with their antique furniture and quilts, are an important part of that at-home feeling, of course. It is also very down-home to linger over pink tablecloths, with antiques and turn-of-the-century wallpaper around you, enjoying a view out the window of summer lake or winter snow.

GOOD FOOD makes you feel at home, even if the setting is more elegant than your own home. Stafford's Bay View Inn was one of three mid-west inns featured in the April issue of Gourmet magazine in 1985; the article included Stafford's recipes for chicken Dijon, seafood fettuccine and shrimp chinos.

As I stood in line on that recent Sunday morning, however, sneaking a final blitz and watching Stafford Smith carving ham and serving waf-

flies at the end of the table, I knew that rooms, food and even service were important, but not enough.

What it takes to be a great host in your own house. You make everything as fine as it can be and then you are a very personal host.

Stafford's Bay View Inn is fully open from May 15 to Oct. 3. You can rent a room and have breakfast year round, but the popular dining room is only open weekends in the winter.

There used to be three buffets a week in the old days: two on Sundays and one on Thursday, which was maid's night out. Now there is just the Sunday brunch buffet: adults \$11; children 7-11 \$6.50; children 3-6 \$3.50.

Room rates this time of year start at \$67 for one person, \$84 for two people in a room, including a full breakfast.

For more information contact Stafford's Bay View Inn, US-31 Bay View, Michigan 49770 or telephone (616)347-2771.

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150th to be big tourist year for state

The year-long sesquicentennial will help pump \$14 billion in tourism revenue into the state economy and propel Michigan to its fifth consecutive record tourism year, AAA Michigan is predicting.

With 150th anniversary celebrations and special events planned in nearly every section of the state, tourism should grow about 5 percent this year, said Peter Erickson, AAA Michigan member services director.

That would equal the increase registered last year when nearly 50 million travelers helped boost tourism revenue to \$13.3 billion. From 1983-1986, tourism revenues rose by \$2.8 billion, or 27 percent. Erickson attributed the record growth of 1986 to low inflation and the lower average gas prices in eight years.

Erickson said the cost of an average 4½-day trip, including camping and more expensive hotel stays, also equaled the figure of the year before, \$151 per person.

Erickson said self-serve, no-lead gas averaged 94 cents a gallon in 1986, compared to \$1.24 cents the year before. He said the average cost along state routes was the lowest since AAA began keeping records for self-serve no lead in 1979.

Figures from the state Department of Transportation for 1986 show a record 70.6 billion miles were traveled in the state, including a 4.4 percent increase at 22 major tourist attractions last summer, a 4.4 percent jump in state tax collections for hotel and motel room rentals for the first nine months and a 7

percent rise in Mackinac Bridge crossings.

Michigan is expected to spend

about \$12 million, same as last year, to promote the state's 36,000 miles of rivers and streams, 11,000 inland lakes and 19 million acres of forests.

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