

# OUR HERITAGE



RV/MH HALL OF FAME ♦ MUSEUM ♦ LIBRARY ♦ CONFERENCE CENTER

The Newsletter of the RV/MH Hall of Fame

Volume 2 – Number 1 Summer 2008

## Conference Center Area Opens

An exciting new era for the RV/MH Hall of Fame begins this summer with the completion of "Phase II" of its building. This new section includes the "Boots" and Betty Ingram Hall, the Grand Hall and the Champion Conference Center.

And no one is more excited than Becky Spence, vice president, Administration & Conference. Spence said, "With the opening of the conference facility, the Hall of Fame can now host dinners, meetings, and events for large or small groups – and even accommodate different groups simultaneously.

According to Spence, room facilities available for various types of functions are the Champion Conference Room, a formal room that can seat 250 -300 people for dining; the Ingram Hall, a less formal room that can seat 350 in a unique setting that includes viewing the David Woodworth collection of very early RVs; a library meeting room that can seat 50 persons; a 75-seat theater with DVD and PowerPoint projector; the Grand Hall, a formal hall

with large chandeliers for receptions, etc; the museum lobby area that can host up to 200 persons for receptions; and a small conference room that can hold meetings of up to 12 persons.

Spence said, "Almost overnight it seems, the RV/MH Hall of Fame has become one of the premier meeting facilities in Northern Indiana, and it not only offers excellent conference possibilities, it does it in a glorious and unique setting."

Several large events have been held in the facility including a fundraiser auction for the local American Red Cross to renew their disaster coffers following the Nappanee tornado that severely damaged many RV and housing manufacturers; the industry Designer Showcase where fabric and floor covering distributors introduced new products to the industry, and the National Driver Recognition event for Horizon Transport where over 600 drivers that deliver RVs and homes coast to coast

See Conference Center Page 3



## RV/MH Hall of Fame Featured in USA TODAY Article

Father's Day weekend, USA TODAY's Travel Section featured a story entitled, "10 great places to get your dad into a hall of fame" and the number one recommendation was the RV/MH Hall of Fame.

Travel writer Kathy Baruffi's list was based on Dave Blevins,' *Halls of Fame: An International Directory and The Sports Hall of Fame Encyclopedia*, a new book to be released later this year.

Baruffi's wrote, "Show Dad you appreciate him this Father's Day by visiting a place where the greatness of others is also recognized."

Blevin's listing said:  
**"Recreational Vehicle/Manufactured Housing Hall of Fame Elkhart, Ind.**

"Dedicated to preserving the history and honoring the pioneers who have made significant contributions to the RV and Manufactured Housing industries, exhibits here include the nation's oldest existing RV, a 1913 travel trailer, and Mae West's 1931 Ford House Car,"

The RV/MH Hall of Fame was in good company. Other places mentioned included the Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco, Texas; International Space Hall of Fame, Alamogordo, New Mexico; Intel Museum, Santa Clara, California; and the Automotive Hall of Fame, Dearborn, Michigan. ■



**Champion Conference Center** The 3000 sq.ft. Champion Conference Center presents an elegant setting for gatherings of up to 250 people.

# Congratulations to the Hall of Fame Class of 2008

The 2008 Class for the RV/MH Hall of Fame is being inducted into the Hall of Fame this summer at a gala celebration in the new Boots and Betty Ingram Hall. The class of 2008 includes:

**Wilbur Bontrager, Jayco, Inc., Middlebury, Indiana**

An RVIA board member and Past Chairman, also serving on the Standards and Legislative Affairs committees, he is recognized as a key leader in the development and implementation of programs to promote the RV industry. His company is recognized for its attention to quality and integrity with its dealers, consumers, and employees.



**Gordon Collins, Fleetwood Industries, Riverside, California**

For over 50 years he has been an active promoter of the manufactured housing industry in the US and Canada. He has served as an owner and as a national sales manager for housing manufacturers and as a successful retailer, always maintaining a high level of activity with industry associations. He continues to travel the country as an ambassador for the housing industry and a communication link between many of the industry pioneers.



**Edward Hussey, Jr., Liberty Homes, Goshen, Indiana**

A champion of legislation supporting the housing industry, he has led the campaigns to update the HUD code and was the key leader of the effort which passed the Manufactured Housing Improvement Act of 2000.

A long time board member and now Chairman of MHARR he is active on many state and national associations.



**William Kormeier, Nordyne, O'Fallon, Missouri.**

A long time champion for the manufactured housing industry, he has worked with numerous manufacturers to develop and promote a great many HVAC products to enhance the comfort and livability of affordable housing. He has been an advocate for the industry to the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Institute, he developed the only 90+ efficiency energy star furnace to fit in a manufactured home footprint.



**Don Magary, RV News/Web Site Management, Tempe, Arizona**

A strong promoter of the RV lifestyle as a writer and editor of RV News magazine, he is recognized as a champion of many industry causes always focusing on "what is best for the entire RV industry." He is also recognized as the key pioneer in the industry's use of the Internet designing and developing web sites for hundreds of industry companies and associations. He is also co-founder of one of the most successful portal web sites for the RV industry - rvamerica.com



**Darryl Searer, Ultra-Fab Products, Elkhart, Indiana**

A long time promoter of the RV industry he has served over 20 years on the RVIA Public Relations Committee, as President of the RV Aftermarket Association, member of the Go RVing Coalition and board member of the RV/MH Hall of Fame. He has been a Member of the Consumer Care Commission, FMCA Commercial Council, RVIA Public Relations Committee and Committee on Excellence, FVAA Board of Directors, and the Go RVing Board of Directors.



**Wade F.B. Thompson, Thor Industries, Jackson Center, Ohio**

He is the founder and Chairman of Thor Industries having built his company into America's largest RV and small bus manufacturer by acquiring Airstream, General Coach(Canada), El Dorado, National Coach, Dutchman, Four Winds, Komfort, Champion Bus, Keystone, Damon, Breckenridge,



Crossroads RV, Goshen Coach and the start up of Thor California. It is also recognized as the leading small passenger bus manufacturer making fuel cell powered zero emissions transit buses. He is a strong supporter of industry training and educational programs.

**William H. Turney, Florida Manufactured Housing Association, Tallahassee Florida.**

He is recognized as a dynamic leader as a housing retailer, association officer, Florida's representative on the National Manufactured Housing Federation, and Assistant Executive Director of the Florida MH Association.



**Donald W. Wallace, Lazy Days RV Center, Seffner, Florida.**

He is recognized for building the nation's largest RV dealership and for his years of dedicated support to the Florida RV Supershow, the Go RVing campaign, and many other RVDA and RVIA events for over 30 years. An early promoter of the Go RVing campaign, he conceived and built the nation's first RV retail Super Center with over 1,000 units on display, over 250 60-foot service bays, a Camping World store, a 300 site RV park, a Cracker Barrel Restaurant and a Flying J Travel Plaza included in his complex.



**Frank Walter, Manufactured Housing Institute, Washington DC**

A 25 year Vice President of Technical Activities for the manufactured housing industry he is recognized of his leadership of engineering, design and construction issues in the industry. For over 2 decades, he was recognized as the leading authority on HUD Code home matters. He served 7 years as Secretary of the Manufactured Housing Research Alliance formed to further advance technology in manufactured housing. For a dozen years he escorted HUD staff members on tours of manufactured housing plants to give them first hand knowledge of the industry. ■



**Our Heritage**  
*The Newsletter of the RV/MH Hall of Fame*  
*is published semi-annually by*

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# Conference Center

From Page 1

were recognized and had the opportunity to tour the museum exhibits. Also several industry OEM manufacturers and other community groups have held major meetings in the facility.

“What’s nice,” Spence said, “about the facilities is we can accommodate not only large groups, but smaller parties such as wedding groups. When these bride-to-be’s come in, it takes their breath away - especially, the Grand Staircase which is ideal for wedding party pictures.” ■

**For more information about scheduling an event, contact**

**Becky Spence at  
800-378-8694.**



**Horizon Transport** National Driver Recognition event for Horizon Transport where over 600 drivers that deliver RVs and MH homes coast-to-coast were recognized.



**Library** The library is an ideal setting for a more comfortable and intimate meeting. (Accommodates up to 50 people.)



**Grand Hall** (above) Truly, a grand entrance to the Ingram Hall or Champion Conference Center. Ideal as a stand alone area or can be rented in conjunction with the Ingram Hall or Champion Conference Center.



**Lobby Area** (far left top) For the less formal and relaxed get-togethers, the after-hours-only use of the Lobby accommodates up to 200 people.



**Ingram Hall** (far left bottom) The 7500-square-foot hall is a unique experience - featuring the David Woodworth Collection RVs. Accommodates up to 350 people.



**Theatre** (left above) Ideal for training seminars, movies, and projection presentations. Seats 75.



**Grand Staircase** (left below) accents the lobby area with two-story glass windows providing a panoramic view of the fountain and landscaping.

## Hall of Fame Launches “One Time - Lifetime” Gift Program

The “One Time - Lifetime” program is designed to give individuals and companies an opportunity to support the RV/MH Hall of Fame in perpetuity while honoring friends, family and employees as members of the RV/MH Hall of Honor.

Sue Bray, vice president/executive director of the Good Sam Club, one of the architects of the “One

Time - Lifetime” gift program, said, “It’s a great program because it gives the RV consumer the opportunity to be involved the Hall of Fame and gives them a sense of ownership.”



The Good Sam Club is a division of the Affinity Group, Inc., a major donor to the RV/MH Hall of Fame.

According to Tom McNulty, vice president, RV/MH Hall of Fame, the program gives people a way to honor someone special in their lives or just do something nice for themselves and while at the same time provide operating funds for the RV/MH Hall of Fame, Museum and Library.

Each membership comes with a membership card, lapel pin, and a decal. When a member visits the Hall of Fame, they can swipe their card at Hall of Honor kiosk for a special welcome on a large screen. The member also receives free admission to all areas of the RV/MH Hall of Fame.

McNulty said, “Imagine their pride when the Hall of Honor recipient passes their membership card through the electronic reader at the Hall of Honor kiosk and their name as well as the one who gave the gift appears on the larger than life display screen.”

McNulty pointed out that a membership is a thoughtful and unique gift idea for special occasions such as anniversaries, birthdays, or Christmas.

Individual and couples memberships are available and Good Sam Club members may join at a special discounted rate.

Another dimension of the program focuses on companies as a way to honor valued employees.

McNulty said, “All gifts are tax deductible and go to the RV/MH Hall of Fame Endowment Fund for the preservation and promotion of our industry’s noble heritage.”

Companies interested in honoring their employees can contact Tom McNulty at 800-378-8694 (574-293-2344); others may sign up at [www.rvmhhalloffame.org](http://www.rvmhhalloffame.org). ■



Swipe your card at the Hall of Honor kiosk and announce your arrival to all present.

### OTI's Lon Larson Elected

## Meet Our New Chairman

Lon Larson was recently elected chairman of the RV/MH Hall of Fame board of directors.

Larson, general manager, Oliver Technologies, Inc. (OTI), joined the RV/MH Hall of Fame board of directors in 2001, and prior to being elected chairman, he served as vice chairman since 2006.

A native of Chicago, Larson moved to California in 1970 and joined OTI in 1978 to work on manufactured housing earthquake bracing and foundations. When OTI went national in 1994 with new foundation products for the manufactured housing industry, Larson was responsible for marketing and code approvals.

Recently, OTI started manufacturing Oliver Camping Trailers, and Larson has been involved with the launch of this new product in the RV industry.

In addition to his service to the RV/MH Hall of Fame Larson also serves with the Manufactured Housing Institute on its board of directors and as vice chairman of the suppliers division. He also serves on the board of directors of CMHI



Lon Larson, chairman, Hall of Fame

and on the Governing Council for the supply division with FMHA. On behalf of OTI, he works closely with state associations across America. ■