

THE INNISFREE ALMANACK



Innisfree photo by Gail Wilson Brown

Vol. I, No. 3

THE INNISFREE ALMANACK

Editor: Tom Rue

The **Innisfree Almanack** is published from time to time by the Innisfree Youth Hostel and mailed first class from Milanville, PA 18443.

The **Innisfree Almanack** welcomes letters, announcements, short articles, or poetry which relate to the Milanville/Skinners Falls vicinity or to the Upper Delaware River or surrounding area.

A voluntary donation is requested of subscribers.
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Innisfree Corporation is a private not-for-profit corporation. All contributions are tax-deductible. The Innisfree Youth Hostel is a member of the Pocono Mountain Vacation Bureau and the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce.

Support this newsletter

Contributions — both literary and financial — by hostel guests and past guests helped make possible this issue of **The Innisfree Almanack**.

Advertisements by local businesses were also a great help. The cost is \$15 for a business card-sized space, more for a larger ad. We encourage Innisfree guests to support our advertisers.

Thanks to those who helped with this issue, and to **The River Reporter** for the use of its typesetting equipment.

Also, a special thank you goes to Rich McKinney, AYH hostel development representative from the Delaware Valley Council in Philadelphia, through whose voluntary efforts Innisfree moved through the lengthy inspection process to approval as an AYH supplemental accommodation.

Reaching AYH

Application materials and other information concerning American Youth Hostels (AYH) can be obtained from either of the two addresses shown below.

Readers may be interested to note that national AYH publishes a quarterly magazine entitled **Hosteler's Knapsack**. The local council puts out a quarterly ten-page newsletter called **Hosteling Along**.

American Youth Hostels, Inc.
National Administrative Offices
P.O. Box 37613
Washington DC 20013
(202) 783-6161

Delaware Valley Council American Youth Hostels
35 South 3rd Street
Philadelphia PA 19106
(215) 925-6004

Meeting hall and library

Local nonprofit community-interest or civic groups are invited to utilize Innisfree's recreation hall. When heat is necessary, a contribution will be requested. Users are asked simply to leave the room as clean as they found it.

The hall contains tables and chairs, a piano, tables for pool and ping-pong, a television set, and a Coke machine.

Innisfree also has a semi-organized library of over 2500 books on various subjects located on the first floor of the dormitory building, available for guest or local use.

Thanks for the parking lot

Just a note to thank you for the use of your parking lot during the shad fishing season. I didn't fish into June as I usually do, since I was in Canada a few weeks. However, next year I hope to do better and perhaps I can use your overnight facilities more.

I am so glad I subscribed to **The River Reporter**. I read every issue and I certainly intend to renew my subscription. It's interesting to read about what goes on up there the year 'round.

Thanks also for the picture you sent me. It is appreciated.
Gerry Hartzel
Souderton, PA

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Reaching us by phone

Please note that the new "business" telephone number for the Innisfree Youth Hostel is (717) 729-7197. Bud and Ann Rue are available at this number only on weekends during the winter and spring.

Weekdays, you can reach Tom Rue or his answering machine at Innisfree by calling (717) 729-7762.

To contact Bud or Ann during the week, call (609) 883-7601.

HOME SERVICES

Tater Bug's Handyman Service. No job to small. Phone after 4:00 p.m., (717) 729-7855.

'The River'

[Congratulations to Billy Webster of the Delaware Valley Middle School, Milford, PA, whose poem "The River" was published in *The Children's Album*, a national publication, in April of 1986. It also appeared in the October 30, 1986 *Pike County Dispatch*.

Bill was awarded a \$50 Savings Bond by the California based publishing company. The following is Bill's award-winning poem, reprinted here with permission.]

The river is a place you can go when you feel alone.
When kids have shut you out,
You can go to the river.
Today is one of those days.
And so I sit on the banks of the river.
There is a coldness in the air; the fog is thick
And the setting is mysterious
But I do not care.
I'll just sit on the rocks
And listen to the birds, the crickets,
And the rushing waters of the mighty river.
In my mind I hear kids playing soccer
And I turn around, but no one is there.
In the fog I see canoers, but when I get a closer
look, no one is there.
I guess I am just going crazy or something.
But when you feel left out
Your mind plays tricks on you.
I am alone, hands in pockets
On the banks of the river.

Innisfree hats

Baseball caps bearing the words "Innisfree Youth Hostel, Milanville, PA 18443" and the red, white and blue AYH logo are available at a cost of \$6.00 each.

Contact Bud or Ann Rue.

‡ Visit the Upper Delaware ‡

Response Card

Please send me more information on the following:

- Innisfree Youth Hostel
- American Youth Hostels (AYH)
- **Innisfree Amanack** subscription — \$5 contribution
- **The River Reporter** (local weekly newspaper) — \$15 per year
- **River Reporter** note-cards — \$3.50
- Other

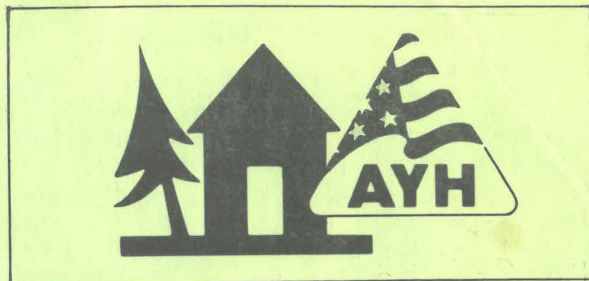
Contribution enclosed: \$ (tax-deductible)

Name

Address

Phone

The Innisfree Almanack, P.O. Box 47, Milanville PA 18443



Approved!

By TOM RUE

This past summer, the Milanville facility which for several years had been operating as the "Innisfree Hostel & Conference Center" officially became the **Innisfree Youth Hostel**.

It was on July 8th that we were officially added to the American Youth Hostels (AYH) international network.

As an AYH supplemental accommodation, Innisfree will continue to be open to guests who are *not* members of the larger organization. We have a sizable number of friends who have stayed with us in the past whom we do not want to lose.

AYH is a nonprofit membership organization offering opportunities for travel and outdoor recreation to all, but especially to young people. Hostels are simple, safe, overnight accommodations supervised by resident managers and located in scenic, cultural, or historic areas.

Also nonprofit, Innisfree's 1970 corporate charter was granted for the purpose of maintaining a camp-type facility "for recreational, education, and general health purposes."

Because both Innisfree and AYH are tax-exempt by ruling of the U.S. Department of Treasury, contributions to either organization are tax-deductible under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

111 WEST 11TH ST.
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(717) 253-6362

JAMES SAMPSONROBIN SAMPSON

Free maps

Several maps of the local area are available free. To get single copies, send a 39¢ stamped envelope to:

The Duff Map — Wayne Co., PA or Sullivan Co., NY. Write to: Innisfree Youth Hostel, P.O. Box 47, Milanville, PA 18443.— Highly detailed color road maps. Includes state and township roads, directory of local businesses. (While supply lasts).

Upper Delaware — Official Map & Guide. Write: National Park Service, P.O. Box C, Narrowsburg, NY 12764.— Color topographical map of the Upper Delaware National Scenic & Recreational River. Includes some highways, shows river access points, ranger stations, boat launches, picnic areas, public rest rooms, etc. on the river. Textual description of river attractions. Multiple copies, 15¢ each.

O&W Sno-Trails Map — Write: O&W Sno-Trails, PO Box 43, Lakewood, PA 18439.— Snowmobile trail map of northeastern Wayne Co., PA.



Signs of the times?



Innisfree Photo by Tom Rue

The great escape

By GREG SWOFFORD

Amy and Greg came to Innisfree in August to get away from everything one wants to get away from in Manhattan — The Big City. "It was an important time for us," said Greg: "We were trying to decide what to do with the rest of our lives."

As a matter of fact, the deciding had to do with whether or not we would do whatever it is — together — if you know what I mean. Well, I can tell you that if you are looking for a place to get the girl to say "Yesssss," it is Innisfree. And since we've decided to do whatever it is together, we just thought you ought to know that we see a lot of Innisfree in our future. Who knows, maybe it can do it for you.

And they lived happily ever after.

The End

Innisfree "bears" all

By DEB BENSON, MIKE HODKINSON and GERRI LOPEZ

One Thursday afternoon, while strolling through the woods behind Innisfree, three unsuspecting vacationers wandered uncomfortably close to a black bear.

Thoughts in motion:

"Oh, my God, RUN!!!"

"Where's the trail?!"

"No, not that way, this way!"

"This feels like a bad B-movie!"

"Who are we kidding? He doesn't have to follow the trail! Although comical in retrospect, this experience was enough to shake up these streetwise Manhattanites.

The moral of the story: Grin and bear it!

Visit the Upper Delaware

The Delaware River is the only major river on the North Atlantic coast that remains undammed along its main stem. In 1978, a 73.4 mile stretch of it, between Hancock and Port Jervis, NY, was designated by the U.S. Congress as a "wild and scenic river" and is now administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

Most of the land along the river is privately owned. Canoeists and others must secure landowners' consent before leaving the water, except in an emergency or at designated access points such as at Skinners Falls.

Canoeists, rafters and tubers are required by law to wear life preservers while on the water, but federal regulations do not apply on private land.

Law-enforcement rangers carry guns and have authority to issue citations and make arrests on the water and on NPS-administered property.

For information about the river, call the NPS at 717/729-7134.

The word is *hostel*, not *hostile*

Youth hostels are places where travelers of all ages, social backgrounds and nationalities gather to sleep, wash, eat, relax and socialize in a congenial setting.

We are pleased that Innisfree has been accepted into the international network of American Youth Hostels (AYH). We hope that that designation, as well as inclusion in the **Directory of Hostels in the USA** and other AYH publicity material, will increase visitation here.

But more importantly, the traditions and values AYH represents are consistent with our own nonprofit charter and beliefs. It has been said that Innisfree's major purpose is to **provide lodging and meals to young people of limited means who have an appreciation for the area.**

We appreciate diversity in human experience, and encourage a broad range of activities and types of groups to

Visit the Upper Delaware

make use of the Innisfree facility. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, religion, sex, or national origin.

Innisfree is located near Skinners Falls rapids on the Upper Delaware River, within the boundary of the "scenic and recreational" corridor administered by the National Park Service (NPS).

Innisfree guests — AYH hostellers and others — are invited to enjoy the peaceful atmosphere of the Upper Delaware region. Experiencing the continual rush of water over the rocks at Skinners Falls or the daily progress of the river's winter ice-flows, can captivate and quell even the most preoccupied city-dweller's mind.

Enjoy the area, but respect private property. As you walk or cycle along the roads or canoe down the river, keep in mind others' rights.

Such respect ranks high among the most important elements of the AYH "hosteling way of life".

Cottage winterized

The bungalow located behind Innisfree's dormitory building has been tightened up and electric heaters installed on the baseboards.

The setup proved effective this past winter when guests were comfortable staying there, even during the coldest months.

According to former owner Vivian Ropke, the cottage was once part of the original farmhouse which stood where the main house now is. When Mrs. Ropke's father, A. J. Thomas, moved the building using horses and logs, a portion of the kitchen broke off. The main part of the frame farmhouse now comprises the front third of the dormitory building and houses the Innisfree library.

Thomas hauled the kitchen portion further up the hill, and reconstructed it into a two-room bungalow.

Called the "Peace Cottage" by the Ropkes, the bungalow has a private kitchen and shower. It makes ideal quarters for a couple or a couple with a small child.

Innisfree rates

Main house:

Double (per night)	\$ 30.00
Single (per night).....	20.00

Cottage:

Weekly (7 days).....	160.00
Nightly	35.00
Bimonthly (60 days).....	900.00

AYH hostel

Dorm bunk (per night).....	8.25
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Meals available

Group discounts available

Prices subject to change without notice



Innisfree photo by Frank Ress

Lots'a snow

In winter months, the Upper Delaware region tends to get *cold*. Pictured above, a few years ago, a blizzard left Innisfree and its neighbors buried for several days.

Rooms in Innisfree's main lodge are available to guests year round.

TEDDY EISENBERG



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UNDERWATER
PHOTOGRAPHER



Innisfree file photo

A small gathering at Skinner's Falls during Innisfree's ten-year camper reunion in 1980. Pictured are (left to right): Tim Chamberlain, Ella Rue, Catherine Clifford, Bud and Ann Rue, Gay DeHart, Frank Ress, and Joel Bluestein Tobias.

A history of Innisfree in Milanville

The Innisfree Youth Hostel on River Road in Milanville sits on the north-eastern edge of Pennsylvania's Poconos, across the Delaware from Sullivan County, NY.

Many of our guests have asked about the history of the place, impressed not only by the majesty of the river valley, but by the workmanship of Innisfree's builder, a self-taught stonemason and carpenter.

Milanville was settled in the 19th century as a logging community due to its proximity to the Skinners Falls rapids. The oldest house in Wayne County, built by pioneer John Land in the mid-1790's, stands on River Road between Milanville and Damascus.

Massive quantities of timber, in the form of rafts and loose logs were floated downriver to Trenton and Philadelphia for milling. Milanville itself also had several mills on the river and along Calkins Creek.

In 1902, business leaders of the bustling community organized the Milanville Bridge Company for the purpose of constructing a bridge across the Delaware. Recently renovated and presently being repainted, this bridge still stands as a monument to the industry of its builders.

Over the years, as the logging industry waned, Skinners Falls became an attraction for recreationists. Numerous building houses dotted Damascus Township, including one built and operated by Milanville poultry farmer Anthony J. Thomas, called "Hillside Acres".

Families from the metropolitan area came to enjoy the Thomas family's hospitality and cooking, lodging mostly in a dormitory style building which Thomas called the "annex". A contemporary brochure described the facility as "a first class summer resort".

A. J. Thomas was assisted in the operation of the business — then including several bungalows on the rapids — by his wife Anna, son Alfred, daughter Vivian, and son-in-law Oscar Ropke.

Welcome to the camp. . .

In 1970, the center-piece of the Thomas estate was sold to a group of teachers and others from Montclair, NJ, for the purpose of running an alternative educational summer camp.

According to an article which appeared in the June 2, 1970 **Wayne Independent**:

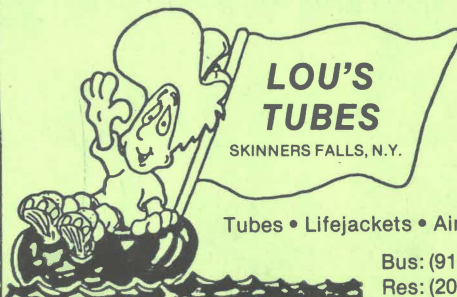
"The staff, under the direction of Bud Rue, Montclair, includes two mathematic teachers, an English and drama coach, musicians, school psychologist, a noted New Jersey artist, journalist, nurse and other professionals.

"The camp, named Innisfree after W. B. Yeates' poem 'The Lake Isle of Innisfree,' was founded with the intent of offering teenagers the opportunity to experience self-direction."

Most active among the promoters were three couples — Bud and Ann Rue, Bill and Gail Brown, and Clarke and Joni Maylone, though well over a hundred people of varying ages were involved in the original organization.

The camp was based on principles of self-government, group decision-making, and individual responsibility. Prior to incorporating, the collective was known as the Summer-hill Association. The program was modeled after a free-


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school in England described by A. S. Niell in his book **Summerhill**.

After two summers of operation, due largely to financial pressures, the original program folded. Several people, including Sarita Cordell and her son Rusty, Bill and Gail Brown, Frank Ress, Tom Rue, and others lived at Innisfree in an effort to continue what they called an "Innisfree living environment".

For a time, Milanville residents Andrea Henley and Michael Gutterman rented the Innisfree chicken-coop to house the "Hawkeye Candle Company", which consigned merchandise locally and job-lotted candles to the city. The company later rented space in the old Milanville creamery. Around 1973, the Innisfree board of directors approved a formal proposal which offered the facility to Wayne County for use as a group home for "pre-delinquent" adolescents. The county commissioners, however, opted to renovate the old poor farm in Beach Lake for the purpose, instead.

For varying reasons, most of the people living at Innisfree drifted on to other chapters of their lives. Frank Ress, a New Yorker who had come to Milanville in 1971 to recover from a serious motorcycle accident, stayed on and cared for the property on behalf of Innisfree Corporation.

As time passed, numerous groups ran programs at Innisfree, including a summer-long woman's theater seminar, encounter and other similar workshops, and a number of public-school groups from New Jersey.

In 1982, Ress was repaid by the corporation for various loans incurred to him over the years and he and his new wife moved to downstate New York.

Since then, the Innisfree facility has been operated, primarily by the Rue family, as a hostel for people of all ages to

come enjoy the scenic beauty of the Upper Delaware.

There remains a group of people who still return to Innisfree year after year. Some were early Innisfree campers; others have come since, either individually or as part of an organized group.

Over the years, some have joked about writing a book on the projects which have taken place at Innisfree and the people who have passed through it.

That book will probably never be written, but there is no question that it would fill many pages.

To hell and back through Skinners Falls

To upriver steersmen, Skinner's Falls was a holy terror and at this point many of them came to grief. To show how wildly the upriver men often approached the falls I will relate an incident to which I was an eyewitness.

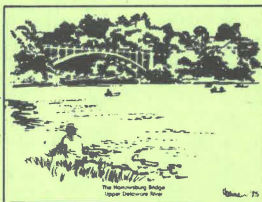
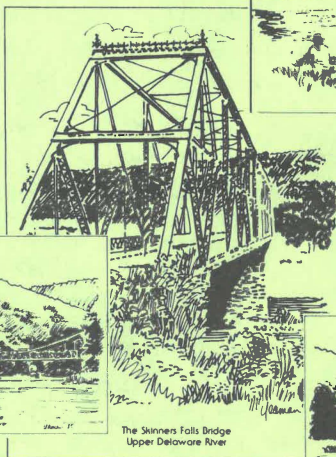
A heavy raft of logs rounded the "old fort bend" but was hugging the New York shore and the pilot continued telling his forward hands to "hold her up a little more." W. C. "Billy" Ross was near them, rafting behind the "ring rock" and knowing the danger the upriver raft was in shouted, "Where are you going, boys?"

"To hell," came the reply from the steersman. Billy gave one of his hearty haw haws and retorted, "I guess you'll get there all right."

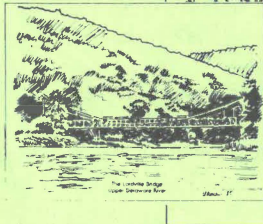
A few rods further ahead the smarty steersman saw where he was for the white water of the falls were then in view. He bellowed a counterpull command to the forward hands, but the heavy raft would not yield to their inferior strength as the

Continued on page 9

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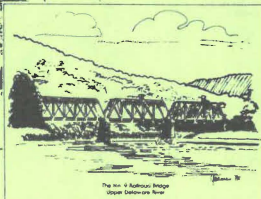


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The Skinners Falls Bridge
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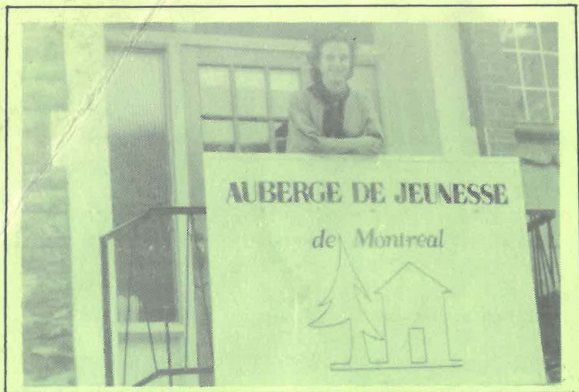
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Innisfree Photo by Tom Rue

"I'm better natural," asserted Elyse St. Amour, receptionist at the Montreal Youth Hostel, in a thick French accent as the photo was taken.

Milanville to Montreal

By TOM RUE

[Note: The following article is based on a trip to Canada last month. The drive from Milanville to Montreal takes about nine hours.]

MONTREAL, Canada — "*Je me soviens*," declare Quebec license plates. The expression, from a poem by Nelligan, begins: "I remember that, born under the lily, I was raised under the rose . . ."

Quebec's people have not forgotten their mixed French and English heritage, symbolized by the two flowers featured by the poet.

The province is unique in its duality of culture and language. Two European heritages and tongues exist side-by-side, though not always cooperatively. There is an on-going struggle to achieve a synthesis of the two different languages and cultures.

Despite the fact that the French language dominates Montreal, a visitor from the Upper Delaware might feel right at home. In the surrounding countryside near Mirabel Airport, nailed to trees and barnsides, are signs reading, "Federal Government — GET OUT!"

A few years ago the Canadian government decided to build an airport midway between Ottawa and Montreal

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connected by high-speed railways. Vast amounts of farmland were condemned, the airport was built, and then the funding for the railways was cut. Canadians are now stuck with a useless facility of mammoth proportions in the middle of nowhere. Former landowners are understandably irate.

But I digress —

I visited the *Auberge de Montreal* (Montreal Youth Hostel) on rue Aylmer. In many ways I found its general appearance and friendly atmosphere similar to American youth hostels. But the hostellers I encountered there, most of whom were bilingual, seemed more diverse in their backgrounds than I expected. Perhaps this was because, it was outside the often homogeneous and sometimes xenophobic U.S., or perhaps simply because Montreal is a major city.

The people who run the hostel offer free guided walking tours of the city every Friday. Inexpensive pastries, orange juice, coffee and tea are available for breakfast.

I was told that an American Youth Hostels (AYH) membership pass is as valid in Canada as in the U.S. or any of the 60 other countries belonging to the International Youth Hostel Federation (IYHF).

One of my last tourist stops was to visit *LeChateau DuFresne* (Museum of Decorative Arts) located near the Olympic Stadium. The museum is a Victorian style mansion, formerly the residence of two early 20th Century robber-baron.

What impressed me most were the highly detailed hand-painted ceiling frescos in the mansion's main parlor, depicting the classical legend of Orpheus and Eurydice. The orphic myth of the lyricist who almost succeeded in rescuing his wife from Pluto and Persephone, but lost her "among the shades" when he turned to look at her, holds personal significance for me. I was affected by the unexpected encounter with the paintings.

I enjoyed my stay, but the business I went to take care of was resolved early so I left a few days sooner than planned. Montreal is nice to visit, but Milanville is home.

MILANVILLE BRIDGE OPEN

The bridge over the Delaware at Skinners Falls, closed for repairs since last June, opened at the beginning of November.

MILANVILLE GENERAL STORE

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ROCCO DEGORI

Italian pizza in Milanville

Rocky and Maryann Degori, owners of the Milanville General Store, recently acquired a pizza oven and began selling pies to the public.

An 18-inch pie is \$6.00, Rocky said. Extra toppings are \$1.00 each.

The dough is made by Rocky himself. He said he learned from his mother, who was born and grew up in Calabria, Italy.

It takes about a half an hour to cook a pizza, so to save time it is best to phone your order in ahead. Call (717) 729-8390.

Fresh pastries are available at the store on weekends.

The Degoris fear that the closing of the bridge at Skinners Falls this season could cut into their business so much as to cause the store to close.

Innisfree guests are encouraged to patronize the Milanville General Store for groceries and other sundry needs.

A U.S. post office is located in the rear of the store.

Work around the place. . .

One of Innisfree's major purposes is to provide lodging and meals for young people of limited means who have an appreciation for the area.

If you fall into this category, contact Bud Rue about working around the place with us, in exchange for your lodging and meals.

"Those that live here and those that pay the bills can't do all the work to maintain this place; they just can't. I think it's fair that those that use it help," Bud said recently.

Innisfree asks three to four hours of work for each night's bed and board.



HELL — Continued from page 7

flow of the water had become too strong. The rear hands, steersman and all, rushed forward to assist and by that time the plugs were flying as the logs bumped over the "grass rock."

"Haw haw," laughed Billy, "I guess they see hell ahead of them now."

Had there been any less water, the upriver raft would have struck Entrance Rock. As it was, they got through by the skin of their teeth and hugged the rocks along the New York shore all the way until they hit the dead water below the falls.

[The foregoing is taken from Stories of the Raftsmen by Charles T. Curtis. The 25-page booklet was published in 1976 by the Town of Delaware Bicentennial Commission and is available in local bookstores for \$1.25.]



Innisfree Photo by Tom Rue

Hard at work

Joyce Horn Holloman of Orange, NJ is pictured painting the outside wall of the library on the first floor of Innisfree's dormitory building.

During spring, summer, and fall some Innisfree guests work in exchange for part or all of their lodging and meals.

Open year 'round

Innisfree is open all week, year 'round. However, winter accommodations are limited to the main house. In warmer weather (starting around the end of April), the dormitory building starts to again become habitable.

Meals, prepared by Ann and Bud Rue, are available on weekends; daily, during the summer.

Come see us!

Innisfree does not discriminate on the basis of race, nationality, religion, or sex.

Bonny Bank bed & breakfast

...on the Delaware

*A room on the rapids.
Private entrance and bath.
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EDITORIAL

Signs of the times?

The controversy over the Upper Delaware River management plan has led to some pretty unusual actions by some park service opponents.

Innisfree has never taken a position one way or the other about the National Park Service (NPS) here, but the apparent paranoia of a few people — well intentioned as they may be — never ceases to amaze us.

Last summer, for example, the Damascus Township supervisors received 46 letters requesting the removal of three local signs: that of the Innisfree Youth Hostel (pictured); a small black and white sign saying "Hocker" fastened to the home of George Hocker, our neighbor down the road; and one belonging to Curtis Nursery.

The people who wrote these letters asserted that the signs were not in conformance with a rather vaguely worded township zoning ordinance stating that signs in the river district "shall conform in color and appearance to those found in national park areas."

Of course, the situation was not helped by the peevishness of our local NPS superintendent who had previously written to the board of supervisors requesting the removal of several large orange and black signs reading, "NPS — Get Out of Town".

He evidently took personal exception to the signs' offensive nature, understandable since one of them faced the NPS headquarters office where he works.

But local people who had the anti-NPS signs and banners in their yards objected to having their First Amendment rights questioned by a representative of the federal government. It appeared that the superintendent's objections may have had more to do with the content of the message than the aesthetic appearance of the fluorescent orange billboards.

But why come after Innisfree or innocent citizens? Who organizes people to write letters like this — and why?

It makes about as much sense to us as attacking the news media when public events do not go the way a citizen's group would like them to.

As much as two years ago, some were questioning in local letters-to-the-editor whether Innisfree was in some sinister manner connected with the NPS. When people are frustrated, sometimes they do or say senseless things.

Like threatening to burn their neighbors out, or to wage a shooting war against the federal government and its supporters.

It seems to us that those who are attempting to fight the park service would make much more effective use of their time if they would stop attacking private people and enterprises they view as supportive of the NPS, and direct their energies into the governmental system itself — including the courts if necessary.

Until then, as someone has said, they're barking up the wrong tree.

People come here to visit because the river and the undeveloped natural beauty of the area are so beautiful. As local residents, let us show these guests the meaning of "country hospitality".

INNISFREE YOUTH HOSTEL
River Road (P.O. Box 47)
Milanville PA 18443

Letters to

Innisfree



I look forward to receiving the **Innisfree Almanack** "from time to time." I appreciate the amount of time and energy it takes to compile, print, and mail such a publication. I am enclosing a contribution towards future ones.

I've only been visiting Innisfree for a little over a year, but reading about it is like catching up with a good friend. I have grown to love both the people and the area. Even the commotion surrounding the River Management Plan can not squelch the feeling of peace and tranquility the place exudes.

I have been circulating your brochure and continue to encourage my friends, family, and colleagues to visit Innisfree and hope to bring a group up sometime in the near future. I trust that your AYH status has increased usage by such groups.

Good luck with putting together your next issue. Keep up the good work!

Miki L. Albanese
Coordinator, College Events & Conferences
Ramapo State College
Mahwah, NJ

I hope you are all well and thriving! I read in **The River Reporter** you received a new certification for "hostels." I hope that brings a great deal of business your way.

It was just a year ago I was staying at your lovely place and felt so welcome. There is a piece of land for sale (may be sold by now) not far from you. It has a mountain in it (probably more like a hill!). I was seriously tempted 'til I realized I couldn't get back in time to see it. I'm sure it's sold by now.

I've enclosed a check for \$30 as a contribution to your fund. It's a "small thank you" for looking after my flagstones. It may be another year before I am able to remove them from your property. I hope they aren't in your way. (That's sort of a silly remark They MUST be in your way!)

I've been drawing and painting a great deal — a very productive year all the way 'round.

My best to you all — AND INNISFREE.

Respectfully
Penelope Branning
Los Angeles, CA

It was indeed an exciting weekend. We will be back in the near future.

Cleveland & Cheryl Bonner
Philadelphia, PA

So hello and greetings from the wild frontier of Texas. You are probably wondering what I am doing in Texas. Well, I was offered a winter seasonal position in Big Bend National Park. I began in November and will be working until May.

The park is so different and beautiful. The park consists of three different environments — the desert, the Chisos Mountains and the Rio Grande River — all so different and gorgeous. I am enjoying my life down here in the desert as well as my job.

I am living in a mobile home with two other girls. At first I didn't think I would like the desert, but the more I spend time here, the fonder I am of it.

Since I am so close to the Mexican border, I have taken the opportunity to visit over there — quite the experience.

So how have you been? I received both of your letters and the pictures and I thank-you so much. I was sorry that I wasn't able to see you before I left, but hopefully our paths will once again meet, ... my friend.

For now —

Love,
Hilka Ahlers
Big Bend, TX

Congratulations on being chartered by American Youth Hostels! I was so happy to read that in the paper.

Thank you for sending me the *Innisfree Almanack*. I am sorry I have not kept in touch. It has been a crazy summer.

The plans my friends and I had with the youth did not work out. However, some other friends and I have opened a coffee-house in Hawley. It's called "Listening Inn," on 618 Church Street. There is live music (my friends play guitar and have written their own songs). If you would be interested in attending, it is on Thursdays and Saturdays beginning at 7:30.

With God's help I will get to visit Innisfree. Until then, best of luck.

Anna Muller
Greeley, PA

How are you? I am fine.

I wanted to drop you a line to let you know that I would be very interested in the Innisfree Growth Laboratory this fall if there was one. My thought was that if having the lab depended on interest level, I would let you know that I'm a definite "interested." I know it's a while from now when it's usually held but I figured I'd let you know while it's on my mind. Also, if you need assistance, maybe I could help.

Speaking of Innisfree, I've been receiving the newsletter and enjoying reading them. Thanks!

Anyhow, I hope all is well with you! Take care, and perhaps I'll hear from you!

Love,
Patty Zenchak
Union, NJ

Thank you for the time spent at Innisfree. The kids and I had a great time. Another week would have been ideal.

Love,
John Plotz
Ottawa, IL

On my first visit to Innisfree, being a stranger in this part of the woods, I found warmth and hospitality and the beginnings of friendship of an unsurpassed nature. Bud and Ann Rue who run the hostel exude extreme warmth and have made me feel as part of the family. Now that I have my own house across the river, I come over for showers and breakfast — dinner, occasionally. I now have neighbors on the other side of the river.

Peace,
Teddy Eisenberg
New York, NY
(alias Narrowsburg)

HOSTELER CLOSE-UP

"Honorary first"

An exchange of correspondence

October 15, 1986

I have been a hosteler (in the U.S.A.) for six years. Before I began hosteling around this country, I recall a trip I made to the West Coast, by thumb, back in the Summer of 1979. I have a cousin in the San Francisco bay area who at that time was just completing a guest house on his property.

Well, as it happened, I was the first guest to use the guesthouse, and I felt honored. Similarly, I understand that just now, in October of 1986, I was the first AYH hosteler to stay at the Innisfree Youth Hostel in Milanville, Pa.

For me, again, this has been a special event of sorts, and I am honored and privileged to have been the first. My thanks to Tom Rue, who made me feel most welcome, and who is also a contributing editor for the local paper, *The River Reporter*.

Incidentally, for those of us who are not from downtown Milanville, the hostel is not easy to find, and could really benefit from some signs and arrows placed in strategic places along the way! (I'm glad I found it!)

Ronald Kass
Greenvale, Long Island, N.Y.

October 15, 1986

Ronald,

I made a phone call last night and was informed that we had a couple of AYH'ers over the summer — sent here by the LaAnna Youth Hostel.

Sorry about the disappointment.

Still, I'd still like to use your letter in the newsletter. If you've already written it you may want to modify it somewhat, with the knowledge that you were not actually "the first." I suppose we could bestow an honorary title.

Maybe I'll see you this afternoon. Good luck in your travels, if not.

Come back sometime.

Best wishes,
Tom Rue

Thanks, Tom. As you see, I already wrote the article! By the way; I enjoyed *The River Reporter*. (The paper's Overweight Gourmet must be some eater!)

Ron

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INNISFREE
P.O. Box 47
Milanville, PA 18443

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