

RAY FAMILY REUNION 09



Logo by Janelle Alvstad-Mattson

Reunion newsletter, Volume 2, Edition 2
Edited by T.J. Ray

Welcome The Amazing Rays Family Reunion 09!! On behalf of the Reunion Committee, a hearty WELCOME BACK to all the Ray descendents of **John Sanford Ray**. To those of us last seen together in Kalispell, Montana in 2006, we say “we’re lookin’ forward to seeing ya again pardner.” To those who’ve never attended a Ray Reunion before, we say “ya ain’t gonna believe how much fun you’ll have!!”

This is the long-awaited, eagerly anticipated, SECOND NEWSLETTER with a lot more exciting content and detail. Many thanks to the literary contributions of: Michele Smiley and the Smiley Family, CA Ray, Steve Ray, Janelle Alvstad-Mattson, Karen Alvstad, Kathy Ray, Linda Ray, Penny Ray, and Jennifer and Mike McLaughlin.

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

DATES: Thursday thru Sunday, July 9-12, 2009

LOCATION: Heartwood Conference Center and Resort near Trego, Wisconsin.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW!!!!

Website: (www.heartwoodconferencecenter.com) More Ray Family Reunion information will be posted periodically on (www.myfamily.com) Ray Reunion link. I believe if you are not already registered, you need to get a password from Michele Smiley. (mcksmly@yahoo.com)

A MAJOR ADDRESS ON ADDRESSES

by Steve Ray

We are sending this Ray Family Reunion Letter by both regular mail and email. There are a couple things we would like you to do for us:

- If you got it by regular mail and not email, it means we don't have your email address. Please send your email address to steve@mnray.net so we can have a complete list and we will be able to notify you of any last minute changes.
- If you got the email and not a letter, it means we don't have your mailing address, or at least not your correct one. We know many Ray descendents have to keep on the move to stay ahead of the law, but send us your current address either by email or letter and we promise not to turn you in. Our mailing address is:
Steve Ray, 10390 Kahler Ave NE, Monticello, MN 55362
- If you got both the letter and email - great - we know who and where you are, so you had better show up for the reunion. Even if you can't come to this one, we will forward the list to whoever is in charge of the next one. Keep us informed of any changes.
- **Most important** – If you know any Ray descendants who didn't get either a letter or email, please let us know who they are. We know there are more of us out there somewhere.

I have asked for an electronic receipt for the emails, but that doesn't usually work very well for many email services so I would really appreciate it if you could take a second and just **hit the "reply" button** on your email and let us know you got it.

More Essential information and Exciting Tidbits

This Ray Reunion has the potential to be the largest ever. Steve and Linda have compiled a mailing list of over 150 families that are descendents of John Sanford Ray, many of whom have never been contacted and invited to a Ray Reunion. In that vein, we ask that when you receive this newsletter, please make a copy and pass it along to your family members who may not have received it.

Eric Ray (son of Steve and Linda) is developing an interactive Ray Family Tree. Please visit (www.mnray.net) to see where you fit in among the 4200 Rays and in-laws! Information about bygone ancestors is available to anyone, but you will need to get a password to see personal details about living relatives. To request an account, email Eric (eric@mnray.net) or follow the directions on the site.

Most of the information from the site was compiled by the tireless effort of our family historian, Diane Berg (pdberg@wavecable.com) We have definitely traced the Ray line back to one of two "Able Rays" who fought in the War of 1812. Beyond that, the history is unclear.

ABOUT HEARTWOOD CENTER

Heartwood Conference Center and Resort is located on 700 acres of natural woodlands surrounding two private lakes and the nationally protected Namekagon River literally “runs thru it”. There is a nice sand beach, tennis courts, many miles of hiking trails, ball field, good fishing, a weekly hayride, canoeing and kayaking literally out your doorstep plus lots of places to just sit and do nothing

Heartwood is easy to get reach by auto, located approx. 2.5 hrs. from Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN just east of Hinckley, MN off Interstate 35W. Although there is no “on-site” camping available, public and private campgrounds are nearby

Accommodations at Heartwood include hotel-like rooms in the Eagle Lodge, 5 individual lakeview cottages which sleep up to 6 persons, each with kitchen facilities, and 10 duplexes which sleep up to 14 persons each, each with 4 bedrooms, 3 with bunk beds. Each duplex also has full kitchen facilities. Catered meals will also be available.

We have tentatively reserved accommodations for 75 persons in a variety of their facilities. Please read carefully Steve Ray’s article on registration and rates, and get your registration in as soon as possible.

What’s the scoop on rooms and reservations for the reunion?

By Steve Ray

The Heartwood Conference Center has set aside a number of rooms for the Ray Family Reunion 2009. Many of them are already gone and we hear there is going to be another group there the same weekend, so you should move fast to make the reservations. Don’t put it off any longer, or you may lose out. Even if all the rooms we set aside get used up, they will let us reserve more if no one else has them. **CUTOFF DATE** to guarantee rooms is **THURSDAY JUNE 18**. Don’t be CUT-OFF!!!!

The Heartwood Conference Center is owned by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. They have a **HUGE** 50% discount on rooms if you are a member. It only cost \$10 a year to become an Associate Member. You don’t need to buy anything from them. Membership qualifications are quite liberal, so you may qualify. Go to www.thrivent.com to apply online or visit your local representative. If you don’t qualify, maybe you know a Ray descendant who does. If you want to stay in the same accommodations as them, just have them make the reservations. The best thing is, if 50% or more of the rooms are reserved by people who are Thrivent members, they give us the meeting room at half off also. The Thrivent discount is even better on the use of canoes, kayaks and tubes for the GREAT NAMAKAGON RIVER FLOAT, they are FREE of charge!!

We are counting on that discount to keep the cost of the reunion reasonable.

The conference center has three types of accommodations. We have set aside some of each type for the reunion. Go to their web site at www.heartwoodconferencecenter.com to see pictures and descriptions. The rooms are as follows:

ACCOMMODATIONS AT HEARTWOOD

Hotel-type rooms in the Eagle Lodge. Each room has two queen beds. The rate is \$135 for Thursday night and \$155 for each of Friday and Saturday nights. Remember – all the accommodations at Heartwood offer a 50% discount for members of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, so you can get Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights for a total of \$222.50. With four people in the room, it is less than \$56 total per person.

Duplexes in Pine Village. If you go this way, you will be renting one half of a duplex, so make some arrangements with family members to fill it up and share the costs. Each half duplex has 4 bedrooms as well as a living room and kitchen. Three of the bedrooms have four bunk beds in each and the other bedroom currently has 2 bunks. The conference center said they are putting a queen bed in that bedroom instead of the 2 bunks, so you should be able to plan

. The cost for the entire half duplex is \$220 for Thursday and \$260 for each of Friday and Saturday nights. If my math is right, at half price for Thrivent members, that would make it a total of \$370 for the three nights for space for up to 14 people, so it would be less than \$30 per person. These rooms would be great for getting together with your whole extended family and have some quality time (as long as a few nights in a bunk bed are OK. Make sure the “renter” is a Thrivent member!!

Cabins in Wild River Cottages area. These are two bedroom cottages with a living room and kitchen. One bedroom in each cottage has two twin beds and the other has a full bed. There is also a fold out sofa-bed in the living room, so the cottage can sleep four to six. Each cottage is \$195 for Thursday and \$240 for each of Friday and Saturday nights. Once again, there is a 50% discount for Thrivent members so, for example, for four people, it would be about \$85 total per person for the three nights.

To make your reservation, call 1-800-577-4848 and make sure to tell them you are with the Ray Family Reunion and that you are a Thrivent member (assuming you are by then). When I made my reservation, I told them I was a Thrivent member and they didn't even ask for my membership number when giving me the 50% discount. I imagine I will have to give them the number when I check in though. They ask you to put a 50% deposit for the final room rate on your credit card when you make the reservation. There is a modest penalty for cancellation as long as it is at least 30 days before the reunion.

Lets say you don't want to stay at the Heartwood. There are RV sites, campgrounds, and hotels in the area, but all of them are at least 10 miles or so from the Conference Center. You will be on you own if you want to make reservations at some place else, but we might be able to help with information if needed.

TENTATIVE (very tentative) SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Thursday p.m.: Registration beginning at 4 p.m. in Hotel lobby for early arrivals
Hot dog roast @ cabins
Informal visiting

Friday a.m.: Continued registration @ shelter
Catered Continental Breakfast @ Pine Lodge
MIXER EVENT @ SHELTER or BEACH—Smiley Family
Picture taking
Catered Lunch @ Pine Lodge

Friday p.m. The Traditional East vs. West Softball game: Mike and Neil coordinating this event!!
Free time in late afternoon to hike the trails, swim, play volleyball or tennis, fish, visit, have fun

Friday evening Catered Banquet in Conference Room
History update-Eric Ray and Diane Berg
Silent auction/live auction fund raiser-Smiley family

Saturday am: Catered NORTHWOODS BREAKFAST @ Pine Lodge
Tennis Tournament-Kathy Ray coordinating
Informal volleyball
Kids games and/ or scavenger hunt for both adults & kids-Janelle and Jennifer
Lunch: @ Pine Lodge

Saturday p.m. Great Namakagon River Float: Tim Ray coordinating this event.
Fishing, canoeing, or boating as desired
Informal visiting as desired
Any other kind of fun (LEGAL ONLY) that you can think of!

Saturday evening: Catered Cookout @ Pine Lodge
Paper bag skits @ conference room-Kathy Ray
Music Jam/Hootenanny: Chipper Ray coordinating this @ Pine Lodge

Sunday a.m.: Pancake Breakfast by Dayle Ray bunch @ Duplexes or Cabins
Wrap up meeting @ cabins
Passing of torch

FUND-RAISING AND OTHER WAYS TO HAVE FUN

By Michele Smiley

We plan to have an **auction/silent auction** during the Ray Reunion again this year. As you remember, the proceeds from this auction will be used toward putting on the 2012 reunion. So keep your eyes open for unique items to contribute to the auction. Maybe you have a talent, hidden or otherwise, and can make something fun or unique to contribute. We hope to have a descendant of C.A. Ray at the reunion auctioning off some of the nicer items.

ALL-AGES MIXER

Make sure you bring your building skills and creativity to the Ray Reunion in 2009. No, we will not be building a house or a piece of furniture. We plan to have a competition early on at the reunion that will test your ability to create and build. Let those creative juices flow!!

THE GREAT EAST VS. WEST SOFTBALL MASSACRE!!

By Mike and Jen

Calling all Softball players and fans! Be sure to bring any extra mitts, bats and other equipment that you have at home to the reunion for the East/West Softball game. Due to the aggressive nature of past games--(Leslie, Burr and others who have taken tumbles can testify to that) players are recommended to be 9 years of age and older. The dividing line will be West of the Missouri/East of the Missouri this time around. Beware as the McLaughlin trio will be nearly "semi pro" by July, as they will be attending Spring Training Camp in Barrett from April through June. This year the East Team will be led by West Central Area School's very own girl's softball coach Mike McLaughlin and the multi talented Alayna "Hammie" McLaughlin fine tuning her dual pitching/catching skills. Don't forget the big hitter that comes in a small package when Lauryn McLaughlin gets up to the plate. This triple threat is sure to strike fear in those coming in from the West.

The Western Team is in DIRE need of leadership!! We think that former UMD Bulldog's coach, Maurice Ray would be an ideal candidate for that position. If he's interested, please confirm by contacting Mike McLaughlin at mikenjen@runestone.net

TENNIS ANYONE? IT'S IN THE BAG!!!

By Kathy Ray

Paper Bag Skits – Saturday Evening.

Everyone at the Reunion is promised a great time during the Paper Bag Skits activity on Saturday night. We'll have a chance to co-create some very likely hilarious theatrical scenes with and for each other. It's a mixer activity where we'll all break into groups and be handed a paper bag containing a mixed and varied group of objects, such as a hammer, pair of panty hose, camera and bird's nest for example. Then the group members will have a set amount of time to come up with a plot that somehow incorporates every item in the bag into the story with every member of the group involved in the scene (even if they're just playing a chair). Then there will be a short time to practice before each group gets the chance to amuse the rest of us, with their skit. Kathy Ray will lead us in the activity and with whip in hand will insure that everyone participates and has a good time.

Tennis Tournaments – Saturday Morning

Be sure to bring your tennis rackets because there are two very nice courts at Heartland that will be beckoning to us to be used. Therefore, since competition is a family Ray trait, we'll be having a Tennis Tournaments with draws for Male's Singles (any age) and Female's Singles (any age) and Mixed Doubles, involving a team of an adult and a kid. Tournament play will be single elimination and include one set except for the finals which will be 2 out of 3. There will be single elimination with prizes for the winners and runners up. Kathy Ray is Tournament organizer, so be sure to contact her to sign up for the tournament unless you want her to track you down and drag you out to play.

THE GREAT NAMAKAGON RIVER FLOAT

by Tim Ray

SATURDAY AFTERNOON: Get out your cowboy boots and swimmin' suits, or for those more "sensible" Rays east of the Missouri River, bathing caps or wide-brimmed hats!

If more than half of us are registered Thrivent members (see membership instruction) this wonderful opportunity is FREE to all participants.

Board a solo-kayak, a tandem canoe, or a large inner tube, be shuttled to a put-in-point upriver from Heartwood, take a relaxing 2-3 hr. float on the beautiful Namekagon River past Heartwood Conf. Center to a take-out-point downriver!!

What a great chance for all ages to float thru the heart of Wisconsin's boreal forest country. Bring along a fishing rod (need a Wisconsin fishing license which you can purchase at Heartwood), a camera, cold beverages, and take nothing but photos and fond memories of the beauty and tranquility of the river. What a wonderful opportunity for quiet conversation, renewing old friendships or meeting relatives we have never met before.

Sigurd Olson, one of our country's foremost writers on the art of paddling, has said that "you never really know someone until you've paddled a canoe with them".

The mist was all gone from the river now and the rapids sparkled and sang. They were still young as the land was young. We were there to enjoy it, and the great machines seemed far away.

Sigurd F. Olson (Naturalist author of *The Singing Wilderness*)

HOMEMADE JAM

by C.A. Ray

Let's admit it, the Ray's are a bunch of hams right? Well the Reunion Committee has decided to use our family's propensity for upstaging each for the common good, by having a talent show/hootenanny/jam, or all of the above **on Saturday night** of the reunion.

So get your act together. Individuals, siblings duos, family bands, entire orchestras, theater troupes, magic shows, acrobats, jugglers and clowns, are all welcome to ply the boards at the Pine Cone Inn, so start preparing now!

The committee will provide the MC, a PA system and all the microphones needed, including a Karaoke machine (No VIDEO LYRICS) for anyone so inclined. There are a number of web sites where you can purchase a Karaoke version of nearly any song in the world for around \$10 each. Check out: www.karaoke.com; www.karokewh.com, or www.acekaraoke.com. Any of these Cds will work on the machine. THERE ARE RUMORS AFLOAT THAT JANELLE ALVSTAD-MATTSON IS GONNA CHANNEL JANIS JOPLIN AND CHIPPER RAY'S BOB DYLAN IS DEAD-ON!! (and this is only the teaser!!)

So tune up the guitar and polish up the old trumpet, bring your Karaoke CD, and let's do a show

CHILDREN'S GAMES with Janelle Alvstad-Mattson

The competition is on! Children 16 and under are invited to participate in an Amazing Race style competition on Saturday morning. Participating kids will be put into teams and asked to perform a variety of games and tasks for different legs of the race. Unlike the TV show, no one will be eliminated, but we will award points to determine an overall winning team!

The Amazing Rays Photo Gallery

Linda Ray

Last year Janelle Alvtad-Mattson came up with our clever 2009 reunion theme as a play on the title of the popular TV show The Amazing Race. Teams compete by solving clues and traveling around the world to see who can reach the secret destination first. We plan to have an informal slide show during the “cocktail” hour before dinner on Friday evening. To continue our world tour theme we would love to put together a photo gallery of Ray travel pictures. If you desire, please send or email me 5 or so pictures of your travels and adventures, recent or from years past, that feature Rays handsomely posing in front of landmarks, lakes, oceans, mountains, waterfalls, trains, trolleys, etc. from around the country and/or around the world! Let's see how many states and countries and modes of travel we can share stories about over hors d'oeuvres and dinner! These can include participating in unique events right in “our own back yards” like branding cattle in Texas, paddling down the Mississippi, attending a famous race, etc. Please email me your selections to linda@mnray.net or send photos that I can scan and return to you to at the reunion. Linda Ray, 10390 Kahler Ave. NE, Monticello, MN 55362 Please send by June 18th. Please take time to peruse over albums now during the winter and help make this a fun addition to our event!

WHAT TO BRING?

Family albums and photos_____

Lawn chairs_____

Bug Spray_____

Silent Auction Items_____

Musical Instruments and your own Karoake CD!_____

Swim Suits_____

SUNSCREEN_____

Bath Towels and Wash Cloths_____ (rental towels available)

Softball gloves_____

SNACKS_____

Adult Beverages and Soft Drinks (in lodging accommodations only)_____

And, last but certainly not least,

A sunny, spirited, fun-loving, RAY ATTITUDE_____

