

Bed, breakfast and beyond

Some owners didn't plan to host guests but love it just the same.

By Liz Welter
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When it comes to snuggling into a bed while on the road as a tourist or traveler, there are many more options than a motel or hotel.

Choices of a bed and breakfast, a guest cottage or a cozy inn are just some of the options in Central Wisconsin.

Dreams of Yesteryear, a historic home in Stevens Point, became a bed and breakfast when the owners agreed to take in the overflow from another area establishment.

"We never thought it would turn into a permanent arrangement, but we liked the experience," said Bonnie Maher.

"We've always loved historic things, and now we get to share it with others," she said. "You meet the most wonderful people. We've had famous people stay here that we never would have met otherwise."

But Bonnie adds that having a competent staff makes the bed and breakfast life enjoyable.

"If I didn't have good help, this would be impossible," she said.

Another prerequisite to being a successful host is a gregarious personality.

"It fits our personalities," said Tufts' Mansion owner James Voss of he and his wife Dawn's home and business in Neillsville. "We're both gregarious and outgoing."

The couple plan eventually to retire from their teaching careers and focus on the mansion's bed and breakfast business.

"But not for a while. We need to get this established first," he said.

Anna's Inn in Marshfield was never intended to be anything more than a farm house. But as Mike Albee worked to renovate the prairie style farm house three years ago, he thought about guest quarters above the garage.

"It was a weekend dream I just kind of came up with," said Albee. "The guys I was working with on the house were receptive to the changes, and it got snowballing. Now it has a whirlpool tub, a small kitchen. It's pretty nice."

Originally a working farm, Albee bought only a portion of the property and created a home for some sheep, cows and a donkey.

"It's pretty nice out here. Marshfield doesn't have anything like this. Guests like to feed the animals," he said.

A working cranberry farm west of Wisconsin Rapids is the site of the Stone Cottage, a guest house owned by Glacial Lake Cranberries.

"It's very popular during the harvest season. I think it's probably the only place where you can stay in a cranberry marsh," said Mary Brazeau Brown who owns the business with her husband, Philip.



The bedroom at Anna's Inn is in a renovated farm house outside of Marshfield on a hobby farm owned by Mike Albee. Photos by Laura Schmitt/Central Wisconsin Sunday.



Mike Albee stands on the steps of his Anna's Inn, outside of Marshfield. The front porch is accessible for guests at the renovated farmhouse.



Albee, owner of Anna's Inn, pets his donkey, Jasper, outside of the Inn on Monday. The inn is in a renovated farm house on a 12-acre hobby farm south of Marshfield.