

Minneapolis:

A Natural Beauty

by *Aimee Blatz and Janice Leichter*

Coming to the Twin Cities this July for the 2001 AALL Conference? Bring sunscreen, swimsuit, walking shoes, bicycle helmet, fishing gear, and golf clubs. Minnesota summer days are long, the weather is sunny, and there's so much to do and see.

The Local Scene

Catch a MTCO bus to the Uptown neighborhood and get off near Lake Calhoun, Lake of the Isles, and Lake Harriet. You can walk, skate, bicycle, fish, or just people-watch. Canoe, windsurf board, and bicycle rentals are available. Ride the RiverCity Trolley to view downtown. A local bus will take you anywhere within the downtown zone for 50 cents. Within a block of the Minneapolis Convention Center, you can board any bus going north on the Nicollet Mall to the other side of downtown and walk along the "Mississippi Mile" riverfront or over the Stone Arch Bridge (pedestrians only) to see historic St. Anthony Falls.

For the architecturally minded, visit the Minnesota State Capitol, designed by Cass Gilbert, or the Weisman Art Museum, designed by Frank Gehry. The Walker Art Museum and Sculpture Garden are a pleasant 20-minute walk from the Minneapolis Convention Center. For a skyline view of the city, go to the outdoor observation deck of the Foshay Tower, a grand 1929 skyscraper.

The AALL Conference coincides with the annual Minneapolis Aquatennial Celebration. Bring the children to see the Torchlight Parade, the Grande Day Parade, and the milk carton boat races on Lake Nokomis. Other kid-centric activities abound in downtown St. Paul at the Minnesota Children's Museum or the

new Science Museum overlooking the Mississippi River. St. Paul is also the home of the wonderful Minnesota History Center. One of the St. Paul excursions being offered during the conference is the Summit Avenue Walking Tour of one of the best-preserved Victorian-era neighborhoods in the U.S., including the mansion of James J. Hill, the railroad baron. Como Park in the St. Paul area has the closest zoo and it is free. The Park also contains an amusement park as well as a remarkable Conservatory, peaceful Japanese Gardens, and the restored Cafesjian Carousel, originally built in the early 1900s for the Minnesota State Fair.

In case of rain, Minneapolis is accessible via a skyway system that spans five miles. Shop downtown at Neiman Marcus, Saks, or Dayton's. Don't forget Knott's, Camp Snoopy, and the Underwater World at the Mall of America. Nordstrom, Macy's, Bloomies, and over 400 specialty stores are very popular with visitors. An express bus can get you to the Mall in 30 minutes; most hotels also provide shuttle service.

Remember no sales tax on clothes.

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There are plenty of opportunities to get out and enjoy the mild Minnesota weather. You can cruise the Mississippi River on one of the four river boats leaving daily from Boom Island in Minneapolis or from Harriet Island in St. Paul or take the sternwheeler around Lake Harriet in Minneapolis. Aside from the city lakes, Lake Minnetonka, just west of Minneapolis, offers summertime regattas, power boating, and fishing. Check out the Lake Minnetonka Web site (<http://www.lakeminnetonka.com>). A champagne brunch cruise on the lake will be offered as an excursion.

Golf is a Minnesota passion. Golfers of all ages and skill levels will find much enjoyment in the natural beauty of our 450+ courses. For a list of golf courses, check <http://www.exploreminnesotagolf.com/main.html>.

Minneapolis Convention Center, with flowers.

Photography by Stuart Lorenz



Day Trips

For the small town feel just outside the metro area, take a day trip to Stillwater in the St. Croix River Valley, a 19th century rivertown with antique shops, rare book dealers, and good restaurants (<http://www.ilovestillwater.com/> or <http://stillwaterguide.com/>). A longer drive down along the Mississippi brings you to Red Wing, home of Red Wing pottery and Red Wing Shoes. The town also has many antique shops and is the terminus of the popular 20-mile Cannon Valley Bike Trail heading west to Cannon Falls. This trail has gentle grades and beautiful views and was once the Chicago Great Western Railroad line. See the Cannon Valley Trail Web site for more information (<http://www.cannonfalls.com/trail.html>).

If you bring the family, you may want to spend a day at the Twin Cities Valleyfair Amusement Park in Shakopee. The park is about 25 miles south of the cities and offers thrilling rides on the new Power Tower and some old favorites: the Wild Thing, the Excaliber, Whitewater Country, Enterprise, and Hydroblaster.

Longer Trips

These include the North Shore of Lake Superior and the city of Duluth, a three-hour drive up north (<http://deckernet.com/minn/superior/>); the Sudan Underground Mine, 2400 feet

underground; biking or walking the Root River and Harmony-Preston Trails in southern Minnesota (scenic interconnected trails built along abandoned railroad beds and winding through many wonderful cozy towns). For more, see http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/trails_and_waterways/state_trails.

Make Your Plans Early

Lodging in towns like Duluth and Lanesboro or campsites in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area book quickly and July is the peak tourist month. Check the Explore Minnesota Web site (<http://www2.exploreminnesota.com>) for destination areas, events, and more fun things to do.

Minnesota is always a pleasure to visit, especially in the summer when the weather allows you to enjoy the outdoors. Experiencing the natural beauty of the Twin Cities and Minnesota is only one of 10,000 reasons why you should attend the AALL 2001. We'll offer you many more reasons in future AALL *Spectrum* articles and on the Local Advisory Committee Web site (<http://www.aallnet.org/events/locator>).

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Ride the
Riverside
Trolley
to view
downtown.



RiverCity Trolley by Convention Center.

Photography by Christopher Peters

Web Sites for the Scoop on Minnesota

The Web sites below, as well as those in the accompanying article, provide an abundance of online information on the state and city that will host the AALL Member Meeting. The MALL Web page provides links to all but the last three sites.

Padelford Packet Boat Co., Inc.
<http://www.padelfordboats.com>

Mississippi Mile Map
<http://www.mississippimile.com/map.html>

Explore Minnesota
<http://www2.exploreminnesota.com/index.asp?section=DESTINATIONS&id>

Public Transit—Metro Transit
<http://www.metrotransit.org>

Minneapolis Institute of Art. Welcome!
<http://www.artsmia.org>

Walker Art Center
<http://www.walkerart.org>

Weisman Art Museum
<http://hudson.acad.umn.edu>

Science Museum of Minnesota
<http://www.smm.org>

Minnesota Children's Museum
<http://www.mcm.org>

The Nicollet Mall
<http://www.nicolletmall.org>

Yahoo Travel Destinations: Minneapolis
http://travel.yahoo.com/t//north_america/countries/united_states/states/mi

Welcome to Downtown Minneapolis
<http://www.downtownmpls.com>

IloveStPaul.com
<http://www.ilovestpaul.com>

Mall of America
<http://www.mallofamerica.com>

Welcome to Saint Paul!
<http://www.stpaul.gov/welcome>

Guthrie Theater
<http://www.guthrietheater.org>

Boundary Waters Canoe Area
<http://www.gis.umn.edu/snf/bwcaw/index.html>

University of Minnesota BWCA site
<http://www.ely.org/bwca.html>

Lanesboro and Bicycling
<http://www.lanesboro.com>