



## Guest Services

by Jack Bosley

# Creating a personalized atmosphere to welcome returning guests

*Another great article from The Rooms Chronicle, the #1 journal for hotel rooms management! \*\*\*Important notice: This article is copyrighted by The Rooms Chronicle and may not be reproduced without permission of the publisher.\*\*\* College of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Niagara University, P.O. Box 2036, Niagara University, NY 14109-2036. Phone: 866-Read TRC. E-mail: editor@roomschronicle.com*

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*Editor's note: As a follow-up to the article "Personal touches can brighten a guest stay" which appeared in our September/October '03 issue, TRC invited Jack Bosley to share some of his thoughts about his hotel's personalized "Mackinac" attention philosophy.*

Here at Budget Host Inn & Suites, in the beautiful resort area of St. Ignace, Mich., we take a great deal of pride in the volume of return guests who stay with us from five to 20 or even 30 times throughout the year. Many of these guests stay for weeks at a time, which is especially good for us during our shoulder season.

We've come to know many of our guests as our extended family, and the entire staff extends that friendly and "family-like" warmth. Knowing our guests' likes and dislikes, as well as their interests and tastes, allows us to undertake a positive and proactive approach to their return visits by personalizing their rooms according to what pleases them. We look forward to seeing our returning guests and they look forward to coming back to see us. Some even think of the hotel as their second home.

We make a variety of changes to our guestrooms depending upon the individual guests who may be occupying them. Modifications may include changing pictures on the walls; placing books of specific interest that would appeal to that certain guest in the room; laying fresh lavender on towels and linens; setting out a basket of muffins, a plate of cookies, or a dish of candy; arranging a vase of fresh flowers; or offering hot chocolates, coffees and teas with fresh herbs to the guest. Scented candles and even rocking chairs, quilts and recliners, as well as pieces of artwork, sculptures or artifacts may be incorporated to customize the guestroom to a particular returning guest. We also encourage our housekeeping staff to get to know the names of these guests so they can greet them in a personal manner while the guests are on property.

There are many more "service-type" extras that our staff performs on a daily basis to ensure a more welcoming and inviting lodging environment. We have had guests' prescriptions filled and our staff members run errands for our special guests while they are out enjoying their day. We also like to send birthday and anniversary greetings to those guests for whom we have this information. Some guests even bring gifts to our staff members upon a return visit.

Referred to as our personal "Mackinac" attention, it goes far in creating that "home-away-from-home" atmosphere that keeps our guests coming back. We like our guests to check out so pleased with their stay that they, in turn, become an ancillary sales force for us through word-of-mouth advertising, which increases room sales. This makes our efforts in line with the spirit of hospitality and appealing for our guests, and also is good business sense for the hotel. ✧

*(Jack Bosley is the director of sales and marketing for Budget Host Inn & Suites in St. Ignace, Mich. E-mail: budgethost@sault.com)*

## Did You Know?

**That in 2002 the U.S. lodging industry was composed of 47,040 properties with 15 or more guestrooms; generated \$102 billion in sales; grossed \$14.2 billion in pretax profits, averaged a RevPAR of \$49.41; and sold 59.1 percent of its available guestroom nights?**