

We're having a party!

On the weekend of September 12, 13, and 14, 2008, at Templin's Resort Hotel in Post Falls, Idaho, the North Idaho Koi Keepers are hosting the Pacific Northwest Koi Clubs Association (PNKCA) convention. "CONNECTIONS THROUGH KOI" is the theme, and you'll soon see why.

This is not your traditional convention; this baby is going to be wall-to-wall fun, with a little (ok, a lot) of international koi wisdom tossed in. NIKK connections have secured the presence of Toshio and Miwa Sakai of Japan, Agnes Kan of Philadelphia, Russell & Kari Peters of Northern California, Mat McCann late of England, now of New Jersey, Dick Benbow of Benbonia, not to mention koi judges Ray Jordan of Texas, Bryan Bateman of Chicago, and other AKCA koi judges.

So, just by mentioning the above luminaries, you know that a substantial portion of the brain trust of this hobby will be there, but let's have a look at the agenda of the convention. The format is roughly the same as most of the PNKCA conventions you've previously attended: a "get reacquainted" social on Friday evening, workshops on Saturday, a banquet on Saturday night and a pond tour on Sunday. Now "supersize" everything. The "social" Friday night comes complete with a sommelier-led wine tasting, in a hotel (Templin's Inn) that is ALL OURS all weekend. Every room, every conference room, every RV hookup. Nothing but koi kichis (and hotel staff) on the premises. Who knows how long the social might last.

After we've filled our brains with international information in the workshops on Saturday, we'll board the 107 foot long, 33 foot wide Mish-an-Nock, a Lake Coeur d'Alene tour boat (for a "three hour cruise," honest.) It'll be set up for 160 diners, and we'll have our banquet and auction while cruising around the lake, with a live band playing. Sunday morning and early afternoon we'll visit some spectacular NIKK members' ponds. All events outside of the hotel will be chauffeured.

Being in one of the top vacation spots on earth this year, you might decide to come early and/or stay late, and enjoy some of the wonderful surroundings. Within Kootenai County there are 80+ parks and campgrounds, almost 50 hiking trails, fishing, swimming, golfing, horseback riding, amusement parks, and, of course, spectacular scenery at every turn. It's less than 30 minutes to downtown Spokane, where you'll find some excellent eateries, twelve different wineries and all kinds of entertainment. For the kids (and thrill seeking adults), there's Silverwood, a theme park about 30 minutes away (www.silverwoodthemepark.com). Or how about the longest gondola ride in the world at Silver Mountain in Kellogg, ID. I could go on, but there's not enough room on this page. Call one or more of the event coordinators, Dan Olson, at 509-928-9209 or Greg Linnebach at 208-661-1868.

This could be the prototype for all conventions that follow, or perhaps just a once in a lifetime event! You can tell all your friends you had the foresight to book early. (Only 120 rooms, at \$89 a night.) Limited RV parking is available for only \$25 a night. Call Templins at 800-Red Lion, www.redlion.com/templins.

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