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USA TODAY

Life

SECTION D

Friday, July 10, 2009

# Weekend

The entertainment section today starts on page 5D.

Movies

'Bruno' shocks it to you

Humor slaps homophobia in \*\*\* film, 5D



Sam Rockwell © 2009 by Universal Pictures

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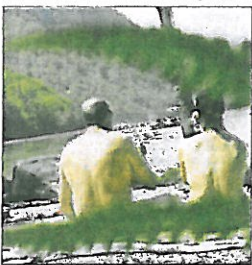
This promotion is valid for reservations made from Jun 10 - Aug 31, 2009 for international travelers who are at least 18 years of age visiting Costa Rica from Jun 10 - Dec 15, 2009. Only one coupon per reservation can be applied for each participating company. This promotion applies to reservations made by travel agents, tour operators or direct bookings. Participating companies receive the right to substitute the extra value, in which case the guest will receive a value offer of comparable value determined by the participating Company's reasonable discretion.



Cover story

## Malfoy vs. Potter

On the set of 'Half-Blood Prince,' 5D



Catching quite a few rays: In the altogether at Southwest Cove, a nude beach in Westmore, Vt.

Travel

### Here's the skinny on a record-setting dip

Naked alert! In case you missed it, Nude Recreation Week ends Saturday. But there's still time to observe the occasion — and even participate, if you're game.

Saturday at 3 p.m. ET, nudists across the land will set a new Guinness World Record for mass skinny dipping. The event, coordinated by the American Association for Nude Recreation, will take place in 128 locations in the USA and Canada at member resorts (which will be open to non-members who dare to get bare) and at some nude beaches and lakes.

"The faint of heart can get in the water, take off their suit and raise it above their head and still be officially counted," says AANR spokeswoman Mary Jane Kolassa.

Information: aanr.com/skinny-dip.html. —Jayne Clark

### Good deeds lead to great hotel deals



The Blackstone: Give eight hours of volunteer service and you'll be rewarded in Chicago.

has done eight hours of service for a registered nonprofit organization. For more information, visit [giveadaygetanight.com](http://giveadaygetanight.com).

In the nation's capital, The Savoy Suites Hotel and The Carlyle Suites Hotel have a "Serve America and Stay in DC" program that gives guests 50% off for five hours of proven volunteer work. Or guests can ask the hotel to contribute half of the room rate to organizations listed on [VolunteerMatch.org](http://VolunteerMatch.org). —Kitty Bean Yancy

## AFFORDABLE AMERICA

An occasional report on stretching your travel dollar



Great outdoors: Baltimore residents Cheryl Conway, her husband, Nathan, and son Gavin, 3, go for a walk at the Bartfield KOA Campground in Gettysburg, Pa.

# Tent REVIVAL

Camping is up in the recession, but today's vacationers don't have to sacrifice creature comforts

By Jayne Clark  
USA TODAY

GETTYSBURG, Pa. — At the Bartfield KOA Campground here, you can catch up on e-mail at your campsite, take in an evening movie on a 9-foot inflatable outdoor screen, lounge by the pool, play a round of mini golf or try your hand at *Extreme Hunting*, one of the arcade games in the game room. There's live music on Saturday nights and pancake breakfasts on weekend mornings, and if you don't feel like cooking, you can have dinner delivered to your RV door, tent flap or what-have-you.

### Cover story

Heck, you don't even have to really camp at this wooded 25-acre site, thanks to its growing inventory of air-conditioned cabins, cottages and lodges — essentially, tricked-out trailers done up to look like hand-hewn log dwellings.

"So much for getting away from it all," owner John Bergeron says with a laugh. But getting away they are. By many accounts, business is brisk this summer at campgrounds nationwide. The sinking economy may have put the brakes on taking the Grand Tour, but many

Please see COVER STORY next page ▶

## Moonwalk down this memory lane ...

Neverland, Harlem, Germany ... Iowa?

By Laura Bly  
USA TODAY

Michael Jackson fans are bringing new notoriety to sites associated with the late entertainer — from the Los Angeles sports arena where thousands gathered for this week's celebrity-studded memorial to the Berlin hotel where he dangled his infant son from a balcony.

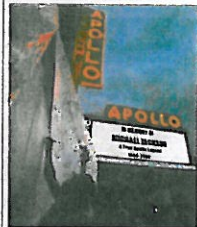
"It never fails to amaze me how people will go to great lengths to walk in the footsteps of their favorite stars," says Harry Medved of [Fandango.com](http://Fandango.com), which offers a slide show of locations tied to Jackson music videos.

Among the stops on a King of Pop memory lane:

► **Neverland Ranch.** The 2,600-acre spread, in Santa Barbara County wine country, had been expected to draw throngs of mourners for a commemoration last weekend. But thanks to strict zoning, the chances of Neverland becoming another GraceLand are "zero," predicts real estate agent William Eiting.

Meanwhile, a Chinese version of the California Neverland could open on a Yangtze River island within a year — complete with a cinema and zoo.

► **Gary, Ind.** Jackson's family moved away from this ailing Lake Michigan steel town when he was 11, and the singer rarely returned. (His modest childhood home is not mentioned on the local tourism website.) But Mayor Rudy Clay told the Associated Press that Jackson's death could inspire Michael mania in the place he left behind: "If they can do it for Elvis Presley in Graceland, we can do it for Michael Jackson in Gary."



In Harlem: Fans of Michael Jackson sign a wall outside the Apollo Theater.

► **Apollo Theater, New York City.** The Jackson 5 won an Amateur Night contest at the famed Harlem venue in 1967, and the not-for-profit theater still hosts the contests on Wednesdays.

► **The Los Angeles area.** Potential pilgrimage stops include the Staples Center, host to the all-star tribute Tuesday, Jackson's star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame, the Grammy Museum (where a Jackson wardrobe exhibit has been extended indefinitely) and Jackson's rented Holmby Hills mansion.

► **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum, Cleveland.** The museum has bolstered its display of Jackson items with a Memorial Wall featuring photos from his early career and additional pieces from his personal collection.

► **Hotel Adlon Kempinski, Berlin.** Jackson sparked worldwide outrage when he held his 9-month-old son Prince Michael Jackson II (aka "Blanka") over the balcony of his fourth-floor, presidential suite in 2002.

► **Iowa State Fair, Des Moines.** Moo-wee, Daisy? Already famous for its butter cow, the Iowa State Fair (which runs Aug. 13-23) had planned a butter sculpture in honor of the Gloved One. But the proposal churned so much debate that it's being decided by an on-line poll.

USA TODAY | tripadvisor

Reader survey

Results of this week's joint reader survey by USA TODAY and TripAdvisor.com

What do you find most annoying on a flight?

Cramped quarters	40%
Crying kids	37%
Bad seatmates	14%
Crotchety crew	6%
Bad food/no food	3%

What's the most important element of a great beach vacation? Vote at [travel.usatoday.com](http://travel.usatoday.com).

Next week

Daily green tips on your cellphone  
Send text message to 44636 (4INFO) with GREENTIPS.

# Campers go back to basics — but with Wi-Fi

Continued from 1D

Americans still want to get away. And with relatively low gas prices, more people are pulling into campgrounds.

Campground reservations through ReserveAmerica.com, which books campsites in most national parks, are up 8% over last year in the first six months of 2009.

KOA Campgrounds of America, a network of 460 commercial campgrounds, reports a 5% increase in June occupancy. REI, an outdoor-gear chain, says sales of family tents were up 17% in June over last year. The retailer also saw double-digit increases in sales of related products, such as air mattresses and campground stoves.

A recent survey by the Outdoor Foundation, a non-profit group that promotes outdoor activities, indicates camping's popularity rose 7.4% in 2008 after a decline the year before. Overnight backpacking grew by 18.5%, the group reports.

"People are returning to simpler lifestyles — the 'less is more' ethos," says the foundation's Christine Fanning. "And everyone is searching for vacations that fit with today's economy."

Indeed, ForestCamping.com, a comprehensive guide to U.S. National Forest campgrounds, where campsites go for \$10 to \$15 a night, has seen a spike in hits. Bookings for reservable Forest Service campsites were up 11% through May.

"When the economy goes down, camping goes up," says Suzi Dow, who with her husband, Fred, runs the site. "It's a David Berg, owner of the Red Apple Campground in Kennebunkport, Maine, echoes the sentiment: "I believe camping is a recession-proof business," he says.

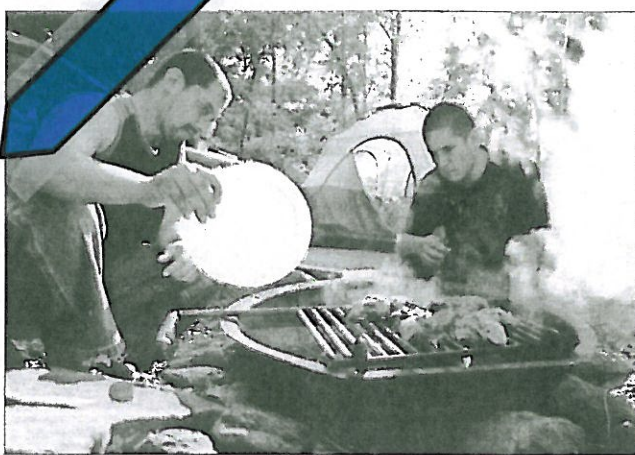
"When people can't afford \$200 or \$300 a night for a waterfront cottage, they opt out of the pop-up (camper) or get out the tent and spend \$50 a night on a campsite and maybe still go out to good restaurants."

At Yellowstone National Park, lodging bookings are down as well as the campground stays are up, says Rick Hoeninghausen, marketing director for Xanterra, which runs the park's concessions.

"This is an interesting summer because, even in April, reservations were trailing last year. Then it kicked in in May. There's more last-minute decision-making this year than I can ever remember."

As in other segments of the travel industry, campers are staying closer to home, but they're staying away longer. At KOA campgrounds, for instance, average stays are 2.5 nights, up from 1.7 nights three years ago.

RVTravel.com editor Chuck Woodbury has been traveling through the country this summer, and says he's struck by the number of rental RVs on the road. "It's



Tent city: Willie Santiago and Jake Smith, both of Harrisburg, Pa., grill chicken at the Battlefield KOA Campground in Gettysburg, Pa.

families, it's couples, it's everyone," he says. "RVing has become much more accepted. It's not just Grandma and Grandpa's playhouse anymore."

Nor are today's campgrounds necessarily like the ones you might remember as a kid. Food delivery, concierge services and lake parks are among innovative additions at some private facilities. In Columbia, Calif., the Marble Quarry RV Park features on-site gold panning. At Yogi Bear's Jellystone Park Hill Country in Canyon Lake, Texas, laser tag is all the rage. At Klamath RV Park and Campground in Klamath, Calif., the alder-smoked salmon served at the park's restaurant has won prizes in several competitions.

At Yogi Bear's Jellystone Camp Resort & Water Playground in Wisconsin Dells, owner Brent Gasser has gradually expanded what began as a campground with basic tent sites to a "camp resort" with a four-level water playground, boat and golf cart rentals, themed weekends (think Christmas in July), and \$1 rental units that range from \$39 to \$299 a night.

"The traditional camper has been requesting more and more accommodations that they'd find in a hotel," Gasser says. "And since we're in an area with many hotels, we have to compete."

And at the Red Apple Campground, the annual \$25 Maine lobster fest sells out two years in advance. This summer, bookings are up 9%, and the average stay has stretched from 2.5 to 4.5 days.

"You have to be more creative to get people in your park and get them to come back again," Berg says. "Today's customer wants it all. In the majority of campgrounds today, we have Wi-Fi and concierge services. There are (waterfront) campsites in Maine that go for over \$100 a night. And they sell fast."

But the constant buzz of organized activity can be a bit much, even for avid campers such as Brian and Michelle Gillespie of Brownstone, Mich.

"They're on the PA making announcements about putt-putt golf and the ice cream social at 3 p.m.," she says.

"There are too many activities at some of these places," he says. "To me, it's not relaxing."

What many campground denizens say they do like is the camaraderie of the camp. KOA president Jim Rogers calls campgrounds "the last small town in America. They're a live community, a social beehive. You're interacting with strangers and allowing your kids to."

avoid a passing car last night and ended up staying until midnight," says Lynn Booze, a camper at the KOA in Gettysburg. Booze and his wife, Rhonda, of McVeytown, Pa., are wrapping up their seventh annual week-long visit here. "We came for a weekend and got hooked," Booze says.

The couple, with their two young daughters and a granddaughter, are sleeping in a six-person tent, which puts them in the minority among the hitchhikers. Wolf Packs and other RV models that occupy most of the sites.

Across the way, Valerie and Bill Stack of Donora, Pa., have just arrived in their Ford pickup pulling a 12,000-pound, 38-foot trailer. This is one of five trips they'll make here this summer.

"Once you're addicted to this, you can't stay home," Bill Stack says. "You come back and say, 'Boy, did I have a great time,' and they ask, 'What did you do?' and you say, 'Nothing.'"

The trailer has a gas fireplace, queen-size bed and flat-screen TV, among other amenities. They'll spend the weekend swimming in the pool and maybe play some putt-putt golf.

"But we're here for nature," Valerie Stack says. "If I lost everything tomorrow, I'd go out and buy a tent."

## Camp in a yurt or hut

Camping out doesn't mean you have to pitch a tent or gas up the RV.

Modern options available in a growing number of campgrounds range from pre-fab cabins to Mongolian-style yurts.

So-called park models — wood-sided huts built on trailer chassis — range from simply furnished single-room dwellings to 400-square-foot cabins with kitchens, bathrooms and amenities like gas fireplaces. About a quarter of the nation's private campgrounds now have these accommodations, targeted at "people who don't really camp," says Jeff Crley, spokesman for the National Association of RV Parks & Campgrounds.

At the height of their popularity in 2006, about 11,000 of the units sold, though sales have slowed with the recession, says Bill Garwood of the Recreational Park Trailer Industry Association. The huts sleep up to six, but they're a lot pricier than a humble campsite. At the Battlefield KOA Campground in Gettysburg, Pa., summer weekend rates range from \$35.45 for a two-room cabin, to \$160 for a lodge with kitchenette.

When Alan Blair began making yurts 32 years ago, most of his customers were individuals in the market for an inexpensive second home. But by the mid-90s, more of the circular, wood-framed huts became destinations for campgrounds. Last, the owner of Pacific Yurts in Cottage Grove, Ore., figures there are about 200 in the Oregon state park system alone.

"State parks have led the way," he says. "But now, commercial campgrounds are getting in on the bandwagon. The beauty of the yurt is that it combines contact with nature with creature comforts."

At Uniqua Lighthouse State Park near Reedport, Ore., for example, six deluxe yurts have kitchens, bathrooms, a TV, VCR and beds and rent for \$66 from May through September.

## Book a park

For reservations at campgrounds on many federal lands, including most national parks, U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management sites, visit ReserveAmerica.com. The service also handles bookings for state park campgrounds in 19 states and two private campground networks.

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By Peter A. Collins

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10 Outline journal  
14 South-to-north flowing river  
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17 "Go, go!" + "It's 3:17"  
21 "I'm not a doctor, but..."

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