



Gaylord laid claim to the title of World's Largest Ice Tree many, many years before Clare ever did.



Promoting winter sports in the heat of the summer was former Gaylord Chamber of Commerce executive manager Doug Nash and a carload of local beauties.

## GROWTH SPURT

### *Harry Collins helps guide chamber through expansive period 1958-70*

**A**s executive manager of the Otsego County Chamber of Commerce for 12 years, the late Harry Collins held the position longer than any of the other eight managers.

Collins served as head of the chamber from 1958-1970, during what many consider Gaylord's first growth spurt.

"At the time, he was 'Mr. Gaylord,'" current chamber executive director Bill Wishart said of Collins when he first met in in 1961.

"He had a lot of contacts in Indiana, Ohio and Illinois and he encouraged people to come up

here," he said. It was Collins who promoted mushroom hunting.

According to Wishart, Collins spent a lot of time at promotional shows before they were the popular thing to do. "He had good foresight and encouraged people to come here and enjoy the north. He was an old Ohio boy.

"He was a dynamic little guy. Everyone knew Harry. He hustled around town and encouraged people to be members and enjoy growth together."

Ed Calkins, who inherited the chamber executive's job when Collins retired in 1970, noted Col-

lins navigated the chamber through a fast-growing, vastly changing period.

The community had adopted the Alpine Village motif and began its revitalization project; the construction of I-75 made Gaylord an accessible community; industries like Standard Products and U.S. Plywood found Gaylord, and the chamber established the Alpine Festival (later becoming Alpenfest).

Things began to happen under Collins' administration. "All these things came together in the decade," said Calkins.

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