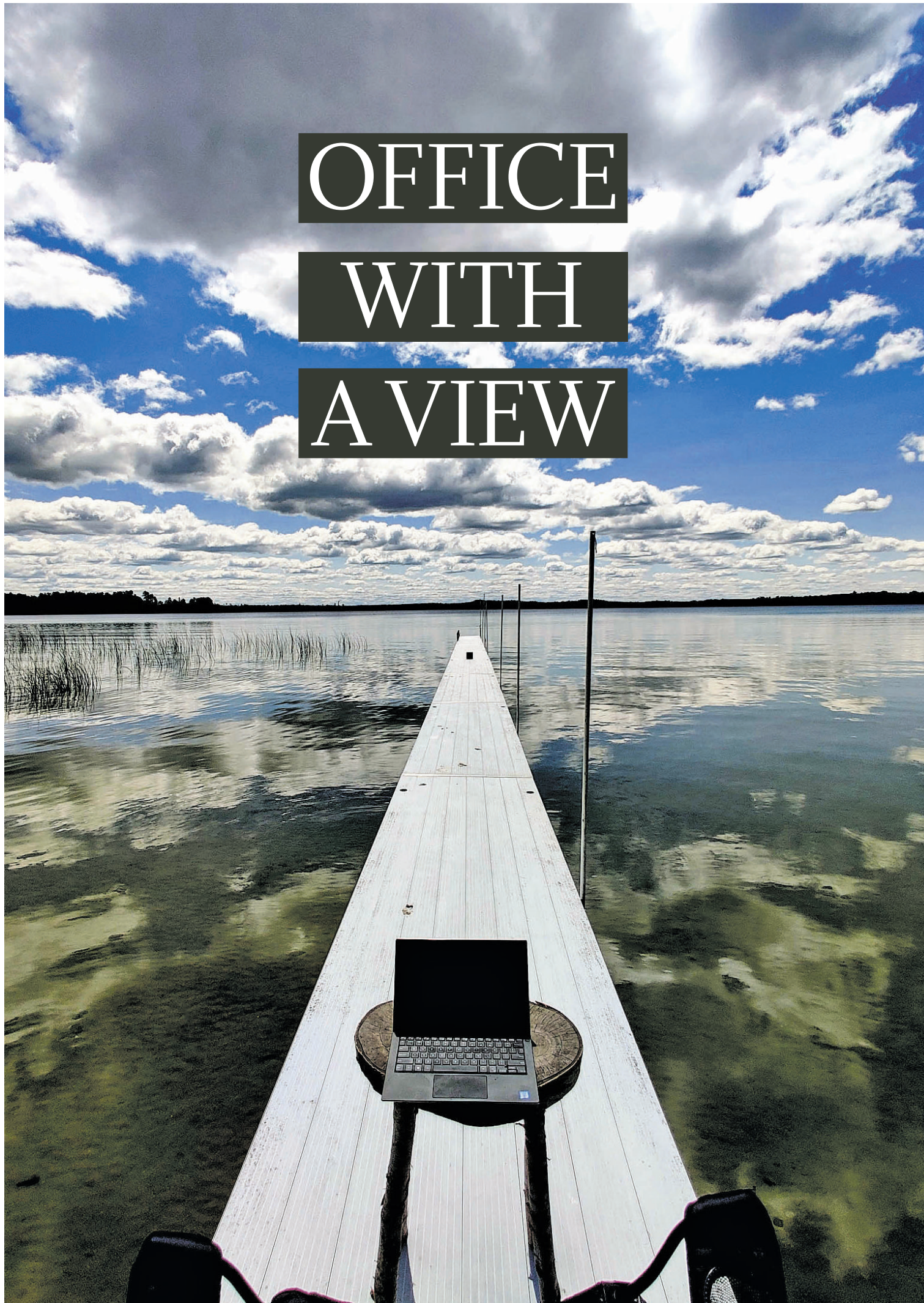


VARIETY



OFFICE WITH A VIEW

KAI LUCAS-BARADAN

When Deer Lake, in Minnesota's Itasca County, makes the backdrop for a work laptop, it's clear that business travel has taken on a whole new meaning. Kai Lucas-Baradan, a temporary digital nomad, hung out at the lake as he camped around the Midwest while also logging in to work.

A growing number of professionals are working remotely — really remotely.

By KERRI WESTENBERG • kerri.westenberg@startribune.com

Days before a bullet pierced the front door of his Chicago Avenue townhouse on the night George Floyd was killed, Kai Lucas-Baradan had already bought the pop-up trailer he would use to get out of town.

The Minneapolis office of Public Radio Exchange, where he is the IT director, had been shut down since mid-March. His wife, Dani, had been working from home, too. After a few months, it was clear that the pandemic had settled in for a long stay and that it hardly mattered where the two were, provided they had Wi-Fi. Their response to the unexpected new reality? Buy a Coachmen Clipper to hitch to their Jeep.

"With COVID and working from home, we thought, 'Let's buy a camper,'" he said from a cafe in Vail, Colo.

A grassy field on a family farm in New Glarus, Wis., was the first stop. There, Lucas-Baradan worked via remote login. Emphasis on remote.

He is part of a growing tribe of working travelers. They are people with the luxury of a flexible office job who have stretched the work-from-home model that emerged with the novel coronavirus outbreak. VRBO reports that searches for three- to four-week stays from March 15 to July 20 were up 15% over the same period last year. Airbnb data hints at the same kind of uptick. "Remote working" references in reviews on the homeshare site have nearly tripled since last year, and searches for homes that allow pets are up 90%. Meanwhile, hotels and entire countries are trying to lure these digital nomads with extended-stay offers and special long-term visas.

See **VIEW** on E5 ▶

A toast to women, bars and suffrage

Minnesota historian traces the lines between temperance and suffrage movements.

By JEFF STRICKLER
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A savvy storyteller is always popular in a bar, which makes Katie Thornton something of a watering hole superstar. She not only knows how to spin an enticing narrative — she's won a Fulbright fellowship for digital storytelling — but she knows a lot about bars.

Thornton, a multimedia journalist, is the guiding force behind the oral history "A Brief History of Women in Bars: A Minnesota Story in Three Rounds."

More than a run-of-the-mill drinking story, this one includes a complex twist. Thornton argues that the presence of bars filled with men led to women getting the vote.

"It's no coincidence that Prohibition and women's suffrage were passed in pretty rapid succession," she says in the documentary, noting that 2020 marks the 100th anniversary of both.

See **BARS** on E2 ▶



Katie Thornton

Forget 2020; next summer is gonna rock

After this year's bust, the 2021 concert season could be the most bang-up one ever.

By CHRIS RIEMENSCHNEIDER
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The only good thing music lovers can say about the summer of 2020 is that it's almost over, and ready for a do-over.

We've made it. We survived without any significant outdoor concerts, festivals, block parties or other big gigs. Now, with Labor Day's arrival, it's time to look ahead to what could be the best summer ever.

If optimistic readings of the coronavirus' slow fade prove true — and the music industry doesn't completely collapse in the interim — summer 2021 could see one of the busiest concert seasons ever.

That's a forecast supported by Ann Dunne, assistant general manager at the biggest venue in town, U.S. Bank Stadium. Why does she believe it?

"Because *this* summer was supposed to be one of the most rocking summers ever," Dunne said.

She was referring to the fact that the 2021 concert calendar is already loaded up with shows postponed from 2020.

See **CONCERTS** on E3 ▶

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TRAVEL



Cecily Cutshall, an employee at TCF Bank, works at a family cabin on Half Moon Lake in Wisconsin.

JASON CUTSHALL

Landing an office with a view

◀ VIEW from EI

The farm stay for Lucas-Baradan, which he pushed up a few days to escape the city, proved such a seamless work experience that he and his wife decided to take the long way home. Very long.

They motored up to Michigan's Upper Peninsula, scooted to Bayfield, Wis., relished the forestlands of northern Minnesota and explored South Dakota's Badlands before hitting their southernmost spot, near Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park in Colorado. "We were able to work and also drive to a national park every day last week. That's really cool," he said.

Most visitors consider these places vacationlands. To Lucas-Baradan, they were an office with a view.

Traveling with a Wi-Fi hot spot, solar panels for charging electronic equipment, a tent with screened walls and their Lab-mix dog, Talia, the couple opted mostly for inexpensive national forest campgrounds. During their three-month work adventure-cum-road trip, they covered more than 4,000 miles.

Cecily Cutshall logs far fewer miles to her remote work spot. The senior business analyst at TCF Bank has spent chunks of the summer connecting to work from her husband's family cabin near Luck, Wis., just over an hour's drive from their Minneapolis home.

Her husband, Jason, dubbed the family's Chief Growth Officer, stays with their three young boys so he has spent more time than Cecily at the getaway on Half Moon Lake. When she's there, Cecily generally works inside the pine-paneled cabin, where Wi-Fi is strongest, and watches from a picture window as the children jump off the dock into the lake. "It is everything I want for them, but I sometimes feel pangs of wistfulness that I am not able to be with them."

Cutshall's sister lives in Italy, one of the countries hardest hit in the early days of the global pan-



Kai Lucas-Baradan can set up shop wherever he can find Wi-Fi, like at South Dakota's Badlands National Park.

KAILUCAS-BARADAN

dem, so she saw the long office shutdown coming. She expects to work remotely — sometimes in her office-at-the-lake — for months to come. "I look to tech companies because they are leading the return-to-work prophesies. Many won't return until June 2021. I am taking that as my marker," Cutshall said.

Countries welcome workers

People who want to go farther afield than Wisconsin or Colorado are getting a boost from services attuned to the needs of wayfarer office workers. Zoom conveniently provides fake backdrops that obscure palm trees and other sights that might bring on envy from co-workers. The Airbnb app has a special search devoted to stays of 30 days or longer. Hotels from Los Angeles to Nantucket offer discounts for people who book 30 days or more, while touting cleaning protocols that keep travelers safe.

Some countries that would otherwise be off-limits now to Americans are offering special visas to people

who want to stay for months and bring their work with them.

At the end of August, Georgia launched its "Remotely From Georgia" program, which allows citizens from the U.S., who can't visit as tourists, to stay at least 180 days and up to a year. Freelancers, remote employees and business owners are invited to fill out an application form. They can enter the country, free of a visa, once they receive a preliminary confirmation.

Estonia offers a Digital Nomad Visa. Applicants must have a gross monthly salary of at least 3,000 euros (about \$3,500) and quarantine for 14 days upon arrival. Barbados has the Barbados Welcome Stamp, which gives individuals who have filled out an application form and paid the \$2,000 fee up to a year to stay in the island nation. Jamaica and Albania also have special programs for foreigners who want to work remotely.

Winter prompts plans

Cold, dark winter may entice more people to work in a home far

from their own. When temperatures drop, gathering with friends in the relative safety of outdoors and engaging in mental health-boosting open-air exercise will be more difficult.

"Hiking outside has been our saving grace for mental health and physical health," said Mo Perry, who runs the communications company Logosphere Storysmiths, with her husband, Quinton Skinner, out of their Columbia Heights home. "Wanting to do that safely — without ice — is part of our plan, to keep that lifestyle going in the winter," she said. The couple hope to spend four weeks or more in a temperate place, such as New Mexico, come January.

Perry said they haven't nailed down a destination, but they have certain parameters.

"It needs to be pet-friendly, it needs to have a hot tub, and it needs to be sunnier and warmer than Minnesota in January."

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IN BRIEF

Airlines drop change fees

Four of the nation's largest airlines — United, American, Delta and Alaska — have permanently dropped change fees for domestic travel, a sign of an industry desperate for customers as the pandemic lingers on. Air travelers have long disliked the fees, ranging from \$125 to \$500, but they were a huge moneymaker for airlines. Southwest Airlines is the only major U.S. carrier that has never charged change fees. Delta, the dominant airline at Minneapolis-St. Paul, is immediately eliminating change fees for all standard airfare on flights within the U.S., Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. Exceptions include Basic Economy tickets and SkyMiles award tickets, but Delta will extend its previous waiver on change fees for international flights and Basic Economy fares through the end of the year. If you switch to a cheaper flight, Southwest and American will issue a travel credit for the difference, but Delta has not said whether it will follow suit.

STAFF REPORT



DREAMSTIME • TNS

Autumn in the Smoky Mountains.

Fall colors U.S.A.

Good news for fans of autumn: The 2020 Fall Foliage Prediction Map is out. Now in its eighth year, the interactive map was developed by SmokyMountains.com co-founders David Angotti and Wes Melton using public data to predict when peak fall colors would happen, county by county, for the entire United States. Each year, Angotti says, their model gets more and more accurate as they work out kinks in the system. Angotti's first recommendation for fall foliage tourism is the 11-mile Cades Cove Scenic Drive in eastern Tennessee. According to the prediction map, parts of Tennessee should begin to peak in October (smokymountains.com/fall-foliage-map).

WASHINGTON POST

Liberty, liberty, liberty

Lady Liberty is welcoming visitors again. The Statue of Liberty Museum and the Ellis Island National Museum of Immigration swung their doors open in late August as part of New York City's plan to reopen museums and cultural institutions. They are now operating on reduced capacity and following health and safety protocols for face masks and social distancing. There also are staggered entry times and tickets must first be purchased online. New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art also reopened, and the American Museum of Natural History will open Sept. 9. The 9/11 Memorial Museum will reopen on the anniversary of the terrorist attacks. But New York currently requires travelers from 30 states, including Minnesota, to quarantine for 14 days.

TRAVELPULSE/STAFF REPORT



DYLAN TRAVIS • TNS

Masking up in New York City.

TRAVEL TROUBLESHOOTER CHRISTOPHER ELLIOTT

Airline cancels their trip home from Scotland

Q: I visited Scotland with my family. It was an amazing trip, except for our return flights, booked through Orbitz.

The first segment of our outbound flight from Los Angeles to London was delayed. American Airlines rebooked us on another flight from London to Glasgow through its code-share partner, British Airways.

The night before our return flight, I was shocked to learn that our tickets had been canceled. Somehow, British Airways thought we had been a no-show for our outbound flights. It automatically canceled our returns. To get home, we had to rebook new tickets with Air France, which cost \$8,500.

I would like this amount refunded, plus maybe something extra for the stress and anguish. Can you help?

A: Your flights to the U.K. should have been smooth and uneventful — not the chaos you describe. This is easily one of the most complicated cases in recent memory. Let me try to untangle this no-show flight case for you.

American Airlines caused the first problem when it delayed your first flight from Los Angeles to London. It looks like it failed to notify British Airways that you would be on the next flight to Glasgow. Unfortunately for the traveler, airlines automatically cancel the remaining itinerary when you're a "no-show."

It looks like Orbitz tried its best to fix the problem but couldn't. This case is even more maddening because American Airlines has a code-share agreement with Brit-

ish Airways, which is supposed to mean you're dealing with the same airline. Instead, American and British Airways played a game of ping-pong, bouncing you between their customer service departments as you tried to get this fixed.

I can't believe anyone allows airlines to operate a code-sharing agreement like this without some accountability. To think that you might be on the hook for \$8,500 for new plane tickets is just absurd!

After a lengthy investigation, my advocacy team got to the bottom of it. It looks like American Airlines erroneously processed changes to your ticket. That sent the wrong message to British Airways — that you'd missed your flight — and it automati-

cally canceled your return tickets.

Your case is an important reminder for the rest of us that if you miss a segment of your flight, you can't just continue your itinerary. Your airline will cancel the rest of your flights because it assumes you're a no-show, and it won't tell you about it.

American Airlines offered you four \$100 flight vouchers for the trouble. Orbitz kicked in another \$200 in vouchers. British Airways refunded you for your return tickets and cut you a check for the money you had to pay out of pocket to fly home.



Christopher Elliott is the founder of Elliott Advocacy, a nonprofit consumer organization. Contact him at elliott.org/help or chris@elliott.org.

Use them or lose them

When it does come time to book a trip, should you use frequent flier miles when ticket prices are at record lows? Brian Kelly, founder and chief executive of the Points Guy, discourages hoarding miles because if you don't use them, you could lose them. While the risk of that happening because of an airline bankruptcy during the pandemic is low, Kelly says, a stronger concern is an airline changing the rules of its mileage program because they're not regulated. In the past 10 years, U.S. airlines have made it more expensive to redeem trips by increasing the number of points needed to do so. "There's a moving needle, and the airlines have all the power," Kelly says. "So my recommendations for people during a pandemic is to use your miles, get value today, because you could be disappointed if you wait a long time and the rules continue to change." As a general rule, if a flight is super cheap (anything around \$100 or less), you should use cash, Kelly said.

WASHINGTON POST