The highly anticipated San Diego Visitor Information Center opened its doors the last week of April to an eager crowd and an excited community. Old Town Trolley Tours of San Diego was chosen by the Port of San Diego to operate the Center located in the newly redeveloped North Embarcadero area of its downtown waterfront. The building itself is considered an iconic work of art by Pae White where the transparent building, made of colored glass in dawn and dusk hues, mimic the San Diego Bay.

The center is staffed by four full-time and three part-time personnel along with other CAST members from our depot sales rep team. In fact, their combined experience totals over 90 years of visitor and guest services in San Diego! OTT San Diego’s experienced sales staff also shares the space as visitors enter to receive information on things to do, see and experience while in America’s Finest City. Tour and area attraction tickets are sold at the Center along with San Diego logo’d merchandise.

A very special thing has been happening since we opened. Local residents and people who work downtown have been coming in to see our new Center saying that they’ve been watching its construction and couldn’t wait to see inside! The Center is not only a feather in our company’s cap but something that our entire community is proud of.

The San Diego Visitor Information Center, located at 996 N. Harbor Drive, is open 7 days a week from 9 AM to 5 PM and will have extended hours during the summer months.

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People always ask me questions about the beginning of our company. They ask how we selected the colors orange and green or where the name Old Town Trolley came from and how we came up with the motto: Safety First ... Courtesy A Close Second. Well, here is the story.

Back in 1980, we had just completed our new car barn, a steel building on Roosevelt Boulevard here in Key West. One day, before the trolleys arrived, I was in the barn when it started to rain. No, it didn’t rain, it deluged. It was one of the most horrific rainstorms we have ever had in Key West, dumping 22 inches of water on the island! I remember I was trapped in the car barn. It gave me the opportunity, being all alone with nothing else to do, to reflect on what we were about to do which was open up a brand new business and one in which we had very little experience. We had been operating a cut-down bread truck and a boat trailer with a plywood platform and garden bench seats on it, but now we were going into operation “for real”.

I had a sense that this was the business for us. It did many things for our first company, which was a real estate development company, by bringing guests to our stores which were, at that time, in a not-so-good area of town. Anyway, Ed and I liked the business and decided we would invest in it since our then competitor, the Conch Tour Train, seemed to be doing so well (they were and still are). Anyway, we were about to go into business big time.

So there I was, in a metal building with 22 inches of rain pouring down on me. You can imagine it was a bit loud. I started to think about what we were about to do and what were the things that were important to make it succeed. Restaurants need great food. Convenience stores need great locations. What was it that we were going to do that would make us different. Certainly, being courteous to visitors was right up there but was that the only thing? No, of course not. The fact was that our conductors were going to be carrying around 36 souls on board and that one serious accident would literally put us out of business, not to mention ruining a lot of vacations. In my mind, we would not be able to operate unless we were a safe company. So there you have it: Safety First ... Courtesy A Close Second.

As you know, Historic Tours of America is all about recognition. The concept of the Chief Conductor’s Trophy came up as a way of recognizing the best results for our companies which obviously came after we opened up several cities. Notice I say “results” because it does not reward or recognize effort. I believe all our companies put an extraordinary amount of time, energy and thought into safety. We mention it in our briefings and recognize accident-free driving. We do, in fact, put safety first.

By 2007, however, the Chief Conductor’s Trophy became, more or less, an afterthought which was not a good thing. I must take my hat off to Bill Meagher who recognized the Chief Conductor’s Trophy as being an important award of recognition for safety results. Bill started recording the frequency and severity rates of operations and the cup was packed up and shipped off to San Diego in 2010 for achieving the highest ranked company in Historic Tours of America for 2009. After that, there was a tie in 2010 between San Diego and Boston who shared the Number One spot.

Bob Ross, who is an extraordinary Safety Officer, probably kept it as a dare, but anyway the cup stayed in San Diego in 2011 but, more than that, San Diego earned the Number One ranking every year after that until they were upset by Boston in 2014.

The rankings are determined by developing the frequency and severity rates for all lines of insurance including auto liability, workers comp and general liability, which is a pretty daunting set of circumstances. The Chief Conductor’s Trophy went to Boston for the year 2015.

Safety? Ho hum you might say? Well you shouldn’t. Safety is one of those inconvenient things that most companies do not think about until it is too late. Then, it is, “Oh, I wish we had ...”. In our business we cannot afford that. Making it all the more amazing is the fact that in 2014, Historic Tours of America vehicles drove 2,436,706 miles! That’s more than 97 times around the earth in just one year. We also increased our CASTmember count to over 1100 and, in the process, hosted in excess of 2.5 million guests!! Folks, I don’t care what anybody says, that is an astonishing level of business that started with 6 trolleys and 13 CASTmembers in 1980. We have grown for a lot of reasons but being a safe company is certainly at the top of the list.

Congratulations to the entire Boston team and certainly to Safety Officer Sue Pye. Taking the trophy from San Diego is no mean feat but I am pretty confident that Bob Ross is keeping the spot open for the return of the Chief Conductor’s Trophy at the end of this year.
Making Vacations Better- An HTA Tradition

Ed Swift; President of Historic Tours of America

March 31st, is the end of the year, at Historic Tours of America. April 1st is the first day of the new year. A chance to start over and an opportunity to get better, to give our guests better service, better products and better tours. It’s all in the hands of our CAST Members, especially those who interact with our guests in presenting our products and delivering the “front line” services that “Make Vacations Better®.”

It was announced at last week’s executive staff meeting that our CAST count is now standing at one thousand one hundred fifty-nine. That means we are delivering 1,159 pay checks to 1,159 CAST Members every pay day. It means that our impact on American tourism, while still slight, is a growing force for those better vacations for those guests who choose us. We, together, have a profound impact on how much enjoyment our 2,662,999 annual paying guests will get on their vacation time. Collectively we hold in our hands something precious, their time, their attitudes, and their expectations. How we do our jobs matters. What we do, how we perform matters a lot! And we 100% guarantee to deliver these products flawlessly.

What a responsibility! What an opportunity! To do our job well will bring joy to millions of people. Many of them traveling in a family are sharing more continuous time together than they do at any other time during their year.

I’m so proud at being a small part of this company I could burst. This must be why I was born. I have an increasing pride in the fact that while we have a growing audience we have a declining total refund level. In total dollars returned to unhappy guests we paid out this year is less than last year. This year we carried on tour 2,662,999 people compared to last year’s 2,415,549 and we paid out on our 100% money back guarantee $322,799 compared to $355,004 in 2013. That represents a 10.9% increase in ridership and a 10.2% decrease in refunds. WOW!!

For this I have to say thank you Historic Tours of America CAST. We are indeed getting better at what we do and you and I each play a part in this incredible work. Also I want to especially thank Jennifer Gregg who heads up our comment card program. What she does is probably one of the most difficult roles in HTA.

Along with the refund we also send any unhappy guests, a letter that specifically talks frankly about “how we screwed up” and how we are going to fix it. Then we give them free passes for their entire family and implore them to give us another chance anywhere in the country. That is a guarantee with teeth and it showcases our commitment to service and guest satisfaction.

Recently our company honored Greg Curry, Sr. here in Key West after 40 years of service. His son, Clinton Curry is now heading up the Shipwreck Treasure Museum and the Ghost and Gravestones Tours and acts as one of our ambassadors to the Key West community and our guests. In thousands of ways both of these men, father and son, represents the generational impact of giving kind, personal and guaranteed service throughout our company. It is truly my hope that Ed IV, Christian Belland, Vince Leone (my stepson), Debbie Swift Batty, Jennifer Belland, Ben McPherson (our CFO) and Antoinette McPherson, his mother and his assistant and our partner Moe Mosher and his daughter Pam Perez, in accounting, and all the other father and mothers to sons and daughters within our company and every other CASTmember will continue to help us define and make our culture of meeting and exceeding our guest’s expectations each year.

At the end of 2014, our best year ever, and at the beginning of our next corporate year 2015 I am.
Sincerely yours,
Ed Swift III

facebook.com/historictours
twitter.com/historictours
Little Italy Art Walk  
_by Erica Frost, Group Sales Manager_

Once again Old Town Trolley San Diego was a participant in the 2015 Mission Federal ArtWalk event! It was truly a wonderful weekend (despite a little rain and a lot of wind) but that didn’t get the crowds down! Event organizers estimate about 100,000 were in attendance over the weekend of April 25th and 26th.

The event fills 15 city blocks with international and local artists, sculptors, artisans and the like and brings together all facets of the arts for free public relations. This year they are celebrating 31 years of ArtWalk! Founded by local artists in 1984, ArtWalk now attracts artists from across the globe and art lovers travel to San Diego to immerse themselves in all things creative during the festival.

CAST Night Out in the Gaslamp  
_by Scott Schwarz Advertising Sales Representative_

San Diego Conductors were invited to a night of hospitality at Rei do Gado in the historic Gaslamp Quarter. Thirty OTT staff took part in a private party which included a private room, dedicated attentive staff, drinks, seafood, and long spits of meat parading through the room to be carved at the table. Many staff sampled exotic fare like Acai soda, humorously called the Brazilian Champagne.

The Rei do Gado Brazilian Churrasco barbecue steakhouse boasts an open mesquite flame, one of only three such permits in downtown San Diego. Top quality meats are slow-roasted on spits then brought out to be served in small portions table side. The dinner menu boasts 26 types of meats and most conversation was about which meats were the best. Later, conversation was about which were the best three. Then five.

Newly Refurbished Horton Plaza Ticket Booth Opens!  
_by Teresa Lampert, Depot Sales Manager_

The newly refurbished Horton Plaza Ticket Booth opened April 20th. The booth was originally at our Star of India location next to Maritime Museum for many years. After the opening of the new Embarcadero location in February, the old booth was brought to the “Barn” and upon its arrival, our talented maintenance team went to work to renovate the beautiful, but aged Trolley Booth.

The new Horton Plaza Booth is strategically located in the heart of the Gaslamp Quarter just outside the Convention Center. The booth is in a central location to the Waterfront and Convention Center Culture. The booth helps facilitate the distribution of information and tickets to our valued customers. We look forward to the continuing success of this location.

(Pictured Carmen Thulin, David Thornton, Erica Frost, Sebastian Biagioni, Erin Smith, Carrie Nunez and Teresa Lampert.

Top: The new Horton Plaza booth.  
Bottom: Saul prepping the booth.)
of San Diego on the iconic Horton Plaza, on Broadway Circle, next to the Horton Plaza Park. The Park is undergoing a $17 million expansion and will eventually feature an amphitheater, a projection wall, restroom facilities, tables and chairs.

The newly restored booth is conveniently located adjacent to our Trolley stop. It is equipped with a ticket menu board, as well as internet connectivity. A side door was conveniently added for our sales reps to easily access the Trolley loading zone, which is phenomenal, because being so close to the trolley loading zone enables us to serve our guests better.

Also, being next to Horton Plaza Park gives us increased visibility from the street level, as well as from walking guests from the Park and the Horton Plaza shopping mall. Due to all these factors, our Sales Team has been able to provide more guests with better service levels with the result being increased sales and many more inquiries about other San Diego attractions and general information.

Sales Representative Lauren Judal, stated “I love the appearance of the new Horton Plaza booth, it draws attention to local residents as well as business people and tourists and it is very comfortable to work in”.

Katherine Brecka, a sales representative, commented “I love working at the Horton Plaza Booth because it is so clean and new inside and it looks professional, it so much easier to serve our guests now. “

So, the next time you travel to San Diego, please come and visit us at Horton Plaza in beautiful downtown San Diego.

Walking for my Healthy Heart
by Erin Smith; Office Manager

We have begun the nationwide Wellness Challenge to start tracking our steps in efforts to improve our heart health. We have an ambitious group of 17 people who are wearing the pedometers or tracking their steps on their smart phones, and every day gets us closer to our goal. We are striving to improve our health and beat the other cities at the same time! Some of our walkers spend quite a bit of time frequenting gyms or doing their routine jogs, while others are just starting to be aware of how much they actually walk. We are all pulling together as a team and we have high hopes that even if our city doesn’t win the challenge, our health wins no matter what!

La Jolla / Mission Beach Tour Changes
by John Barton, Lead Conductor

San Diego’s La Jolla/Mission Beach Tour is about to re-launch with an added stop, some route changes, and other new features, all designed to immerse our guests in the sun-and-fun atmosphere that they expect to find when visiting America’s Finest City. Currently, the tour leaves Old Town and travels to Mt. Soledad, allowing guests a unique 360 degree photo opportunity from 822 feet high. From there, the tour continues down to the coast, past the idyllic beach where seals and sea lions are known to bask in the sun, and into the famous village of La Jolla where guests can hop off and shop the “Rodeo Drive” of San Diego. After travelling through affluent neighborhoods with multi-million dollar dwellings and past some of the most well-known surf spots in the world, the tour will now stop at Pacific Beach, where guests can disembark and walk along the ocean boardwalk and out onto the 872 foot-long Crystal Pier. Before returning to Old Town, there is one more chance to hop off at Mission Beach, where the oceanfront Belmont Park Amusement Center features a restored 90-year old historic roller coaster.

Besides the new Pacific Beach stop, the tour will now bring guests closer to the water activities of Fiesta Island and Mission Bay Park, in addition to cruising further down the coast in La Jolla and also past the lovely oceanside Palisades Park. Tours will begin at 9:15am, an hour earlier than at present. Our entertaining conductors will dress in festive beach attire, give the daily surf report, and relate the fascinating history of the sport of surfing... and they will be playing even more beach music to sing along with! The new tour begins Monday, May 4th.

Old Town Celebrates Cinco de Mayo
by Sebastian Biagioni, Old Town Market Operations and Leasing Manager

People got into the fiesta spirit; they gathered together their amigos and headed to Old Town San Diego for the ultimate in Cinco de Mayo fun.

This year thousands flocked to Old Town, San Diego’s oldest, historic neighborhood, to take a step back in time and celebrate! The annual Fiesta Old Town Cinco de Mayo celebrated 32 years of tradition packed with activities and entertainment! Old Town transformed into the largest Cinco de Mayo celebration north of the border, filled with mariachis, cervezas, great food, and more!

The Fiesta featured four stages with live entertainment, over 40 bands, including vibrant, traditional ballet folklórico performances, lively beer and margarita gardens and of course, Low Rider Lane! Guests fed their appetites by feasting at over 15 delicious restaurants and tequilerias.

Cinco de Mayo’s history has its roots in the French Occupation of Mexico. The French occupation took shape in the aftermath of
the Mexican-American War of 1846-48. With this war, Mexico entered a period of national crisis during the 1850’s. Years of not only fighting the Americans but also a Civil War, had left Mexico devastated and bankrupt. On July 17, 1861, President Benito Juarez issued a moratorium in which all foreign debt payments would be suspended for a brief period of two years, with the promise that after this period, payments would resume.

The English, Spanish and French refused to allow President Juarez to do this, and instead decided to invade Mexico and get payments by whatever means necessary. The Spanish and English eventually withdrew, but the French refused to leave. Their intention was to create an Empire in Mexico under Napoleon III. Some have argued that the true French occupation was a response to growing American power and to the Monroe Doctrine (America for the Americans). Napoleon III believed that if the United States was allowed to prosper indiscriminately, it would eventually become a power in and of itself.

In 1862, the French army began its advance. Under General Ignacio Zaragoza, 5,000 ill-equipped Mestizo and Zapotec Indians defeated the French army in what came to be known as the “Batalla de Puebla” on the fifth of May.
New Hydra-Terra Joins SEAL Fleet

While the Maintenance Department works feverishly to install the new transmission and outdrive, a contest was held to give the SEAL from D.C. a new name. It was a tie. Carrie Nunez and George Adams both entered the name: “Presidential SEAL” and split a prize of $100.00.

(L to R) John Savage (San Diego Operations Mgr.) shakes hands with co-winner Carrie Nunez (Administrative Sales Assistant) and co-winner Capt. George Adams shakes hands with Mark Keeler.

San Diego Called a World Class Smart City by National Geographic

Eliderio Gomez III
Danielle Lindsey
Jeanette Perez
Victor Santana
Patricia Harper
Ariel Alexander
Nuala Kelly
Jacqueline Matthews
James Kressley
Melissa Sewell
Douglas Ault
Stacy Bridges
Dennis Fox
Lynn Loeb
Vanessa Laniawe
Wendy Persson
Heath Houseman
Richard Killingsworth
David Berg
Jay Bernstein
Kevin Parker
Harold Webb Jr
James Davison
Heather Davidoff
Susan Durnford
Meggie Moore

APRIL
Carmen Thulin, 17 years
David Aptaker, 11 years
Richard Smith, 10 years
Peter Corcoran, 9 years
Oscar Alfaro, 7 years
Orlando Montano, 5 years
John Barton, 5 years
Arthur Burgess Jr., 5 years
Philip Fondaw, 5 years
Jon Laws, 5 years
William Walker, 5 years
Kenneth Hill, 3 years
Susan Vetter, 3 years
Lynn Harris, 3 years
Rodney Foster, 2 years
Thomas Salter, 2 years
John Lindsey IV, 1 year
Patrick Nettles, 1 year
Patricia Vanderwerff, 1 year
Katherine Brecka, 1 year
Robert Miller, 1 year
William Price, 1 year

SEALS
Mark Keeler, 11 years
Tomi Niezgoda, 5 years
George Adams, 3 years
James Merten Jr., 1 year
Charles Chittim, 1 year

MAY
Nancy Nuhaily, 26 years
Robert Ross, 16 years
Michael Devin, 14 years
Francisco Noguez-Ballesteros, 13 years
Heleodoro Gonzalez, 12 years
Chris Chiotras, 11 years
Inocente Briones, 9 years
Donald Kaye, 8 years
Robert Hatcher, 8 years
Linda Florentino, 6 years
Cristina Valenzuela, 5 years
Robin Russell, 2 years

SEALS
George Elmies Jr., 6 years
David Lavigne, 5 years
Miguel Rosa, 4 years
Tracy Ibarreta, 1 year

OLD TOWN MARKET
Christian Perez Navarro, 6 years
Janet Kroupa
Embassy Suites San Diego Bay
by Rod LaBranche; Director of Travel Industry Sales

This Embassy Suites San Diego Bay in downtown provides 321 all-suite accommodations in a convenient location, only minutes from San Diego International Airport, the San Diego Convention Center, the Gaslamp Quarter District and the Headquarters/Seaport Village where the Trolley and SEAL Tour pick-up. The Chief Concierge at the Embassy Suites is Janet Kroupa. Janet has been working at the hotel for nine years. Originally from New Jersey, she has lived all over the country, but loves San Diego and is proud to call it her home. Janet is one of the top sellers of Old Town Trolley Tours and SEAL Tours. She is a very important part of the staff there as guests are always looking for top concierge services. The hotel has recently undergone an 8 million dollar renovation of all the common space and updating the outside of the property. The Embassy Suites also has the only Dunkin’ Donuts in San Diego!

Thank you to Janet and to all the staff at the Embassy Suites San Diego Bay – Downtown for all their support for Old Town Trolley Tours and SEAL Tours!

Janet Kroupa, Chief Concierge at the Embassy Suites San Diego Bay - Downtown

Q | What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A | Peace within, staying centered, knowing everything will be okay, love, fun, and laughter.

Q | What is your greatest fear?
A | The possible inadvertent burp on mic while giving a tour.

Q | What is your favorite vacation spot?
A | Las Vegas. Not to party or gamble, but to walk around and enjoy the various ambience, art, food, lights, and architecture of the hotels and venues. It’s only a 5-hour drive or quick flight away.

Q | What three things will you always find in my refrigerator?
A | Peach Iced Tea from Captain Jim, veggies, and Post-It notes to my family, usually “Tracy’s. Do Not Eat,” or “Anyone can finish this.”

Q | Who are your favorite writers?
A | Doreen Virtue and Louise Hay
Giving Credit Where Credit is Due
by Jerry Miller; General Manager

Abe Burgos, Charter and Group Sales Manager, is a charter and group-selling machine. He consistently hits his goals and does so with a cheerful demeanor. He is often the class clown in the office and is a joy to be around...most of the time. Abe’s comment cards rave about his organizational skills and the professional and courteous manner in which he deals with his guests. Abe also handles all of our website inquiries and our social media. Check out our Facebook page sometime. He’s a hoot!

Bob Norris, Business Manager, or “By the Book Bob” as many call him, is the silent guy who sits quietly in his office, making sure everyone gets paid, CAST members and vendors alike. He controls the money coming in and the money going out. Even I get frustrated sometimes at his determination to do things the right way, but if you need someone to watch your bottom line, By the Book Bob is your man!

Dwon Gillis, Arlington Cemetery Assistant Operations Manager, the “Most Senior CAST Member in DC”, is one of our new Leadagers, and has already proven to be such a valuable asset to the Arlington operation. Dwon hunkered down and did whatever we needed him to do to get that operation up and running. What a find in this guy!

Eric Chapman, Trolley Operations Manager, seemingly never takes a day off. This guy is up at god-thirty in the morning and is still here many nights making sure our Monuments by Moonlight tour is running without any hiccups. He is always trying to find ways to do things better and possesses guest service skills that I marvel at.

Eric Holmes, Assistant General Manager, is my right arm around here. He is another one who never seems to take a day off. He’s been here in DC for 19 years and I can’t imagine having done what we have done without him. What an incredible gift to this company! I am tasked with running three separate entities and if it weren’t for this man, I’d be pulling my [already gray] hair out.

Captain Larry Warren, Ducks Operations Manager, is another sun-up to sun-down worker who runs his operation like it’s his own.

I only hear from Captain Larry in two situations, (a) when he needs to put a purchase on my American Express, and (b) when something is happening internally that impedes his operation. He is definitely a “steady as he goes” Leadager.

I’ve known Loretta Pinkney, Arlington Cemetery Operations Manager, since 2007. I hired Loretta when we both worked for Premier Exhibitions in Atlanta. I immediately saw her leadership skills and asked her to relocate and run an exhibition for me in Dallas. From Dallas, the company moved her to New York City to run a dual exhibition there. When we both became casualties of the recession and I subsequently began working at HTA, I vowed to bring her on as soon as something became available. When Ed IV approached me back in 2013 to see if I had anyone in my past who could join our Manager Training Program, Loretta was the first person who came to mind. With Dwon’s help, she led the charge of getting a complete tour with annual forecasted ridership of 500K, up and running in 21 days. She and I carry on like an old married couple sometimes, but I have the utmost respect for this dear friend and she has made the impossible possible.

Malcolm Barton, Facilities and Fleet Manager, has been dealt an impossible hand over the past few months. He is tasked with maintaining a 65-year-old building and a 91-piece vehicle fleet. I’m not sure how he does it, and I’m not sure I want to. His is often a thankless position because he’s never in the spotlight until something doesn’t work. Eric Holmes calls him “White Shirt” because he is the only Facilities and Fleet Manager that we know who often wears a white shirt that actually stays white.

Nazha Salhi, Human Resources Specialist, works alongside Bob Norris with all of our Human Resources issues here in DC. From recruitment to onboarding to disciplinary to benefits, Nazha is the one making it happen behind the scenes. I kid around that Nazha has an opinion on everything, but it’s also her opinions that make me sit back and think about why we do what we
do. She questions decisions and she often questions our policies and procedures, and with a 35-year-old company, sometimes that’s a good thing!

Steve “Mr. Holiday” O’Brien, Training and Safety Officer, has another thankless job. Steve has attacked our safety record with a vengeance and we have made noticeable improvements. Steve is another “by the book” kinda guy. He was a conductor prior to becoming Safety Officer, winning “Conductor of the Year” six consecutive times. Let me tell you a quick little story about when Steve met Jerry. At our first meeting, I told Steve that he had whatever authority he needed to get our safety under control and not even I could override one of his safety decisions. Well, I had been GM for only a couple weeks and Steve had been Safety Officer for only a month when I got sick at work. Without getting into the details, let’s just says it was bad enough that I had to go home. Steve didn’t quite know how to tell his new boss that I couldn’t take my company car home in the condition I was in, but he did. He walked up to me and after a couple stutters and stammers, managed to verbally prohibit me from taking my company car home. What he doesn’t know is, from that moment on, I have had the utmost respect for him.

Terrie Thomas, Director of Advertising and Vendor Sales, is another no-nonsense type of Leadaager. She, too, has been with the company for a long, long time and is a wealth of procedural knowledge. It often amuses me how Terrie can convince me to do something that I had adamantly been against. She works me like a puppet. I truly believe this woman could sell a Ford to Lee Iacocca (for those who don’t “get” this reference, Lee Iacocca worked for Ford for many years. He was the brain behind the Ford Mustang. In later years, Ford fired him and he went on to become the CEO of Chrysler).

Willie Dennard, the newest member of the OTTDC leadagement team and Depot Sales Manager, came to us from the Savannah operation. The first time I met Willie, I instantly saw what our depot sales team had been missing for so long. I saw a sales-hungry leader who would get our sales team back on track selling tickets. Willie has done a phenomenal job already and I only expect bigger and better things from him and the depot ticket sellers.

I also have a superb team of leads and supervisors who complement the Leadaagers in making me look good day in and day out. Eric “Mr. E” Whitehead and Phil Beckmann are the Lead Conductors, making sure our loops run smoothly every day while Lead Mechanics Doug Dorsey and Greg Riley, make sure the 91-piece fleet continues to be up and running.

And finally, let me brag about my FRONT LINE CAST. As I have stated before, these individuals come to work when it is 98° or 8° and never miss a beat. Their hands may be cold and numb on January 15 or they may be sitting in a pool of sweat on July 15, but they still show up and give an incredible tour to their guests.

You know, it’s easy to look good when your support team is as gifted as mine….and I thank you all.

A Culture of Safety: Whose Job Is It?
by Stephen O’Brien; Safety Officer

Millions have heard us tell the nation’s story. We preserve a culture as our guests discover the compelling richness of our past. Many discover an actionable sense of obligation to the “gifts from the past.” They return home and become participants in sharing and furthering our cultural heritage. What an honor it is for us to be a part of that dynamic!

There’s a culture of safety too! We learn the rudiments of safety in the earliest phases of our employment. Then the “rubber hits the road” and we apply the rudiments and discover the countless ways that safety keeps bad things from happening. We discover that the feeling of safety is visceral, and that it makes everything more enjoyable. We begin to share our thoughts and observations with other CASTmembers, and begin to really feel a part of the safety community. There’s a synergy in showing others that safety is on our minds. A culture of safety can exist no other way.

So as you enable our guests to participate in a national culture, take your place as an active member of HTA’s…and life’s…safety culture.

We’re Not a Player, We Just Crush a Lot
by Abe Burgos, Charter Rep

Every two months, I brag about how great our charter department is going. And quite frankly, the pat on the back is not mine for myself. Yes, I sell the groups. But honestly, when you have the greatest tour in the history of Washington DC tours, selling is not what I do. Customizing is more my job.

For example, three months ago, I received an email from a lady who has a number of working dogs in her group. 15 of them as a matter of fact. And she was wondering how she could get everyone on the night tour. We could have easily put them on the public tour. That would have been easy, but it also could have been distracting to the tour. Imagine, 23 humans and 15 working animals with 15 other paying public.

For just a few bucks more, we were able to accommodate the group on a charter. How cool is this picture? 

old town trolley tours of washington dc
BACKGROUND

Kari “Ms.Harriet” Fulton is a world traveler who calls the international city of Washington, DC home. Fulton is a native of Denver, Colorado and has always had a love for history, advocacy and speech. “I’m one of the only people geeky enough to letter in Competitive Speech in High School.”, Fulton recalls of her early years that led her to where she is today. Her love for Washington, DC grew out of traveling to the nation’s capital for Academic competitions like National History Day. Fulton would permanently move to DC in 2003 to attend Howard University where she earned a Bachelors of Arts degree in Communications and Culture.

When not offering historical tours of Washington, DC, Fulton is engaging in being a mom, a partner, and advocating for Environmental Awareness. Fulton has traveled across the United States, Europe, Latin America and South Africa attending and reporting on International Environmental Conferences. Her work has been featured in various media including Black Entertainment Television (BET), Glamour Magazine, the Washington Post and Chinese Cable Television America (CCTV). Nevertheless, with all the travelling she has done there is still no place in Fulton’s heart like Washington, DC.

Q | What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A | Being with happy people, being warm,sun and nice scenery, not having to worry about the stresses of paying for things because everything you want and need is already taken care of in abundance

Q | What historical figure do you most identify with?
A | Harriet Tubman. We were around the same height and she always made sure to get folks to where they needed to be.

Q | What superpower would you most like to have?
A | The ability to teleport.

Q | What do you consider your greatest achievement?
A | Giving birth to my son.

Q | If you could choose one reality TV show to be on what would it be?
A | I would be on a reality TV show about being a tour guide and all the random shenanigans of trolley world.
WE ARE ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY TOURS!

On two beautiful Spring days in April, Monica Munoz from Historic Tours of America’s Marketing Department and John Penney traveled to Arlington Virginia to take photos of our newest tour at Arlington National Cemetery. Because we just started touring at the beginning of 2015, we had virtually no photos in our library to use in our advertising pieces. As you can see the beauty in such a somber place was captured during this photoshoot.

Thank you to the Arlington National Cemetery crew along with Loretta, Dwon and especially Omar!
Happy "Budget" New Year
by Charlie Brazil; General Manager

Happy New Year! For many of us in the HTA Nation, this is the real beginning of our new year, as we close one fiscal year and start fresh on another. FY2014-15 was the best in Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah’s long history, and this General Manager could not be more proud of the team that made it happen. To carry over 340,000 guests (30,000 more than the next closest trolley tour operation) is quite a feat, and to do it with the high level of guest service and consistency we have achieved is truly a herculean task. APPLAUSE, APPLAUSE to each and every CASTmember and sincere thanks for making it happen day in and day out.

In April I also perform all of the Leadager Performance Appraisals for our operation. This is a great time to reflect on the things our Leadagement Team has done well and where we can continue to improve and innovate. I can tell you with great pride that these appraisals were overwhelmingly positive, which had me reflecting on the great blessing I have in the form of this team. All of my Leadagers are passionate about their roles, as well as being part of a team, and this makes for a well-run operation where people have play days instead of work days. Thank you team, you are APPRECIATED!!!!

Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah was also fortunate to get a visit from some VICs (Very Important CASTmembers) in the form of our Corporate Leadagement Team, Chris Belland (CEO), Ed Swift III (President), Ms. Nancy Swift, Ed Swift IV (COO) and Christian Belland (Trusted Tours/Call Center Manager). The visit was a great opportunity to explore the future of our operation and to highlight the great success we have cultivated. The entire CAST appreciated their presence and valued their feedback, encouragement and praise.

As you will see below, we have much going on as we head into the New Year, and much to be thankful for as we leave good ol’ FY2014-15. Here’s hoping you find yourself similarly blessed!

Operations
by Jon Watkins; Operations Manager

There have been lots of things going on at OTT Savannah over the last few months. This week we are experiencing our first 90 degree temperatures of the year with plenty more of those to come. The mantra for the next four months is hydrate...hydrate...hydrate.

We had our first ever rodeo at Red Gate Farms ST. Patrick’s day March 17th. This is only day each year that we do not do tours due to the inability to navigate the historic district so it was the perfect time to do this. We had a team that included Marcie Covington, Dennis Pelligrino, Larry Floyd, Wanda Raimo and Kenny Gresham that met to plan the event. Red Gate Farms, which is one of our vendor department partners, was the perfect location. Bruce Smith and Larry Strong from our Maintenance Department cooked up a great picnic meal for everyone that day. Wanda Raimo was leading the charge on the family events. The weather was ideal for the rodeo with sunny clear skies. We had a good turnout of Conductors to try their hand at the driving skills course which included the first use of Safety Manager Kenny Gresham’s plywood car training aid. It was used in a simulated Pirate’s House (stop 10) skills test. The events started off with a quiz of company procedures and tour ordinance regulations that was taken by one team member from each team of three. Nothing like a little pressure for the team. After that we got started on the timed obstacle course. I can tell you that it wasn’t easy! Coming out on the winning end were the team of Tony Hall, Jim Beam and Dennis Pelligrino. Congratulations to everyone who participated and took on the challenge. Next year we hope to include our competitors, Oglethorpe Tours and Old Savannah Tours, and have the trolley rodeo championship of Savannah.

Our GPS system has been rolled out to the guests and is now included in all of our marketing materials. We took a few weeks for the Conductors to get used to the system and for us to resolve any implementation bugs before we went “live” to the guests. In the month of April we had 4,585 guests visit the site. The guests can see how long before a trolley gets to their nearest stop with 95% time accuracy or a map of the route with each trolley and stop indicated. The trolleys locations are updated on the map every four seconds. This is a real game changer for the guests as we are the only trolley tour company in Savannah that offers anything like this. It is also a great tool for our dispatchers to better utilize our assets to help make the guest experience a better
We now have the largest American flag in the Historic District at our Welcome Center. It was pretty amazing to watch the installation of the flagpole. I would not have thought it would have taken as deep of a hole or as much concrete as it did for the pad. When the flag was being hung for the first time it took five CAST members to hold the flag as it was raised up the pole. The flag is a beacon for the folks coming over the Talmadge Bridge to help locate the Welcome Center. The flagpole is 60 feet tall and the flag is 20’ x 15’. It’s beautiful blowing in the breeze and lit up after dark!

This season we will have an ice cream vendor at the Welcome Center with some super premium cold and refreshing treats. Jack Frost ice cream will be renting space at the Welcome Center for their ice cream cart so the guests can have some cold treats as they ride the trolley on our hot and humid summer days. David Folts the owner was recently at the office giving our folks a “taste of things to come”.

Congratulations to all of our rookie daytime tour conductors who have certified in the last few months. They include, George Hickman, Ellis Cook, Andrew Hill, Colin Saxon, Emily Mason, Heidi Zoll, Kevin Dills, Lea Adams, Richard Bruneau, Scott Leekley, Ted Wall, Tom Jacoby and Travis Easter. Kayla Black, Carl Williams, Ralph Cowart, Tony Hall and Vee Williams deserve our appreciation for the great training job they all did getting them ready. Congratulations to everyone and we are really glad you have joined the OTT family.

I never really know what kinds of interesting things that I am going to see when I am going about my job each day. Recently I saw the Oscar Mayer weinermobile parked one morning at the Thunderbird motel. It made me smile as I drove by and took a picture.

Safety
by Kenny Gresham; Safety and Training Officer

Greetings from Savannah. Pictured once again is our Safety VW. We used this as a prop in our trolley rodeo in March trying to simulate a right rear accident. I thought with this plywood cut out and all the enthusiasm it generated, we could fix accidents and maybe save mankind. I believed I had stumbled onto something akin to Ponce de Leon finding the Fountain of Youth. Alas, accidents, like baseball, have a way of humbling you.

Our little orange VW was going to be used in training to create the right rear accident scenario, but it found a permanent home in front of our mirror check station as a reminder of the constant threat of losing focus while maneuvering a large vehicle and subsequently striking parked ones. Doesn’t seem like much of a reminder, but the signatures of those conductors who have erred this year (there are three) help to remind us. The drivers call it “the wall of shame.” Maybe pushing the HR envelope a little here, but all who sign it are told that this is a learning lesson and their contribution, so that others can learn from their misfortune and not have to learn the hard way.

On another note, we have successfully completed our City of Savannah inspection and the yearly DOT inspection. Kudos to Bruce and his team for having our best DOT audit ever. Only three trolleys with issues and of those only one is major; a G&G trolley with a broken leaf spring from endless trips down bumpy River Street.

Our fist really hot day is almost here and the cool pops have been stocked at our Welcome Center. We found out last
year this was the best solution for the hot and humid Savannah temperatures. We tried cool seats, scarfs and bandanas but found the pops to be the best if not the sweetest remedy.

At this writing we are trying to cross the t’s dot the i’s for Jim and Liberty Mutual’s annual visit. Keeping my fingerers crossed in Savannah!

Vendor Happenings
by Bob “Colonel” Hunter; Vendor Representative

Everything is still full steam ahead in the vendor department in Savannah, Georgia.

We added a new person to our ranks, Stephen Plunk, New Vendor sales representative. We are looking for a lot of great things to come out of the vendor department with the new addition. Welcome aboard!

Greetings from the Grave
by Garry Patrick; Ghosts & Gravestones Manager

Well the Spooktacular season is underway and we were all thrilled to see our ridership numbers for the last fiscal year rise above 61,000 guests! That worked out to an amazing average of over 170 guests per night for the entire year.

Well done to all the Ghost Hosts and Ghost Drivers for delivering a top notch performance every night.

Special thanks to Mike Harris and Kristina Prince, my two MOD’s for the work they do each night. Savannah is an interesting and evolving city and our route is often changed due to construction, parades, fireworks and festivals. When I implement the changes it’s these guys that have to help carry them out and it’s never easy. However, we always pull through with glowing praise. Well done to all and let’s make 2015-2016 even better. “Operation 65k”

Maintenance
by Bruce Smith, Maintenance Manager

The service truck freshly painted and ready to get to work!

The season is here, and the temperature is rising. The fleet has been freshened up and ready to roll. Even the service truck received a fresh paint job and is fully stocked. Hopefully we don’t need it. HTA #126 and #250 will also receive new engines and transmissions this year.

Were also going to be installing a rubber roof system on the roofs on the older fleet to help control some of our leak issues we have had trouble repairing.

The Molly trolleys are doing well, along with the propane conversions we completed in the last year or two. So bring it on, were ready. Have a great season.

Depot Sales
by Jim Rafterly; Depot Sales

March and April were fantastic months for Savannah. We had a great Easter and Spring Break season and were flooded with tourists. Daily revenue records fell at three depots and we had some excellent ridership days. The weather was perfect Savannah spring weather and it paid off.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the sales reps who have achieved the Half Million Dollar Club. Wanda Raimo, Tim Conway, and Rance Shell for the second consecutive year, Janice Emerson, Jane Erskine, Tramaine McCombs, and Willie Dennon. Great job! Looking forward to adding more next year!

I would also like to congratulate our Goal Beaters. Cathy Vaccari, number three in the company, with honorable mention to Kim Story, Wanda Raimo, Maggie Benevides, Tramaine McCombs, Jennipher Laraway, Michael Lenze, and Tim Conway. Outstanding!

I also had the honor of winning Goalie of the Year for 2014 – 2015. This was possible because of an outstanding sales and concierge staff. Thank you for all your hard work.

Human Resources
by Renee Mercer; Human Resources Manager

For all of our efforts this recruiting season, which included sifting through over 350 applications and resumes, 23 people were chosen as the best-of-the-best and have joined the ranks of the best historic tour in Savannah! We whole heartedly welcome everyone to the team and look forward to a great, although hot, season ahead!

Holy Mackereel!
by Kayla Black; Training

Rookie Training Season is still in full swing here in Savannah. Warm weather means more guests to the City, so we will need all hands on deck very soon! Congratulations to Emily Mason, Travis Easter, Kevin Dills, Tony Luckett, Colin Saxon, Ted Wall and Andrew Hill for surviving and thriving through the Six-Week training program! Good luck in your rookie season!

Groups and Charters
by Marcie Covington; Group Sales Manager

The trees and flowers are in full bloom. What an amazing time to visit Savannah! Of course being in the Groups Department I am encouraging you to have your family reunion, wedding, conference or just a group getaway in the most beautiful city in the U.S. There is no better way to see the city than aboard and orange and green trolley.

Start with a historic tour and we can fill your day with all the local events such as:

- The Tybee Wine Festival is one of the Tybee Post Theater’s major fundraising events. Now in its seventh year, the festival will
VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

KOA Campground
Richmond Hill

by Robert “The Colonel” Hunter; Vendor Sales Manager

Pictured are Rose Leviti & Jackie Watson from the KOA Campground in Richmond Hill

These two fantastic ladies were winners of the contest we held recently at the KOA Campground for our ticket sales. We are so proud for what they do for our company.

APRIL
Irenette Clarke, 10 years
Joyce Stuckey, 5 years
Kimberly Evans, 4 years
Jennifer Jaeger, 3 years
Ruben Alegria, 3 years
Eric Haley, 2 years
Holly Edenfield, 2 years
Charles Cheely, 2 years
Carole Kennedy, 1 year
Janin Irby, 1 year
Priscilla Mills, 1 year

RETAIL
Charles Holmes, 12 years
Carol Overby, 3 years

MAY
Lillie Shaw, 6 years
Craig Armstrong, 3 years
Tramaine McCombs, 2 years
Adam Blankenship, 1 year
Ellis Cook, 1 year
Judith Trahan, 1 year

RETAIL
Nicole Reddick, 3 years
Heather Lee, 1 year
Whitney Threatt, 1 year

Savannah Continued...

feature five fun and unique wine and food experiences – all taking place within the beautiful surroundings of Tybee Island, just a few miles east of Historic Savannah.

SCAD’s annual Sidewalk Arts Festival draws thousands of visitors each year to view temporary chalk masterpieces created on the sidewalks of historic Forsyth Park. Participants represent SCAD’s many areas of study; different artistic styles are inspired by different cultures, interests and disciplines. In its 34rd year, the event features a chalk art competition, children’s drawing areas for young artists, food, drinks and music. The best part is it’s free admissions.

Celebrate all of the visual arts at River Street Art Fest. The Plaza will be filled with select local, regional and national artisan exhibitors displaying an array of fine arts with interactive activities for families and kids, community performances and live music featured on the Arbor Stage throughout the weekend with First Friday Fireworks.

Whatever brings you to our WONDERFUL city, OTT will help you with all your “transportainment” needs.

facebook.com/savannahtours
twitter.com/savannahtours

Our Savannah team included Tim Conway, Jim Rafferty, Rance Shell and Garry Patrick
I was born in Amarillo Texas and raised between Texas and Kansas in farm country. I left home at an early age and moved out of the south to the big city of Pittsburg Pa. and lived there for about 13 years, studied architecture and interior design. I Moved back to another part of the south, Florida in the 80’s, and became a police officer in Ft. Lauderdale for about two years. Went back to design and worked in architectural glass for about 30 years. I met my husband in Ft. Lauderdale in ’89 and we have been together ever since.

I have been in Savannah for seven years and really enjoy being in such a beautiful historic town. I heard about OTT being a fun place to work and being able to meet people from everywhere and that sounded like something I wanted to do.

I really enjoy working with my OTT family and being able to show our guests a great way to spend their vacation. Working with a team of wonderful cast members is a great way to live, not alone work.

Q | What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A | My husband, our pets, family, friends and of course latte’s.

Q | What is your greatest fear?
A | Losing any happiness.

Q | What is your most treasured possession?
A | The old corvette my husband is restoring for me.

Q | What three things will you always find in your refrigerator?
A | Hot sauce, peppers & cheese

Q | What talent would you most like to have?
A | To be a writer.

**Vegetarian Chili**

*This is my favorite chili recipe. You can serve it as a main dish, over fries, or tots. It is easy to make and freezes well. Enjoy!*

**Ingredients**
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 ½ cups chopped yellow onion
- ½ cup chopped red bell pepper
- ½ cup chopped green bell pepper
- 2 tablespoons minced garlic
- 1 jalapeno pepper, stemmed, seeded and finely chopped (I usually leave the seeds in ½ of the pepper for extra heat)
- 1 medium zucchini, stems trimmed, medium dice
- 1 medium squash, stems trimmed, medium dice
- 2 cups of corn (fresh if available, frozen if not)
- 2 - 15 oz. cans black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 - 28 oz. cans of diced tomatoes
- 1 cup vegetable stock
- 2 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 tablespoon ground cumin
- 1 ½ teaspoons salt

**Directions**
1. Chop all the vegetables and premeasure all other ingredients.
2. In a large pot, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the onions, bell peppers, garlic and jalapeno peppers. Cook, stirring, until soft, about three minutes. Add the zucchini, squash and corn, stirring until soft, about six minutes. Add all of the seasons and stir for about 30 seconds. Add the tomatoes, black beans and vegetable stock. Stir well and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally for about 30 minutes.

   At this point you can add adjust the seasoning.
   Ladle the chili into bowls and garnish with sour cream, cheese or avocado.
The Nation's Storyteller

**Easter Parade**

*by Brittany Martin; Administrative Assistant*

The annual Easter Parade has been held in St. Augustine for over 50 years to help celebrate the Easter Holiday. This year Old Town Trolley helped organize the festivities, which was attended by over 30,000 residents and guests alike. Our very own General Manager in St. Augustine, **Dave Chatterton**, was the parade director. The Easter Parade is the biggest parade in St. Augustine with over 30,000 in attendance each year. It couldn’t be done without the wonderful support of the Historic Tours of America CASTmembers that come out to help. They all enjoy putting smiles on the faces of the many children who come out to see the parade.

Horses and carriages, floats from the Fernandina Pirates, The Gator Clowns, and The Catty Shack, and even a few storm troopers, thanks to the 501st, made their way from the Old Jail down the bay front and through the downtown.

The parade was a huge success and we are excited to participate again next year.

**Creature from the Black Lagoon**

*by Jeanne Coyne; Asst. to the General Manager*

Potter’s Wax Museum is getting a new figure added to their collection. The Creature from the Black Lagoon! The follow-up movie to the Creature of the Black Lagoon, “The Revenge of the Creature,” was filmed at Marineland, located here in St. John’s County, in 1955. To help announce the new figure at Potter’s, in partnership with Marineland and the Corazon Cinema & Café, we held a re-release of the Revenge movie at the famous Corazon Cinema and Café. We invited local concierges and front desk personnel from area hotels and Beds and Breakfasts as well as some of our local leaders within St. Augustine. We also invited the Kilted Creature, seen at Monstercon and Comicon events nationwide. (A picture is worth a thousand words in this case) It was a fun event to help welcome Potter’s Wax Museum’s newest creature to the Chamber of Horrors. It was a great chance to partner with other local attractions. Even Ed III got into the Creature groove with his t-shirt!

**May is Field Trip Season in Old Town**

School Field Trips and Charters kept us busy in April and May. Kathy and Tyna have done a wonderful job of organizing the school groups and itineraries. The kids love our actors at the Old Jail, Ghosts & Gravestones and the Oldest Store Museum. Here is a picture of **Derek Moore**, aka Charlie Powell, as he is met by a crowd of his fans. Derek had previously hosted a charter tour with this school group the day before. When they saw him the next day, they all ran to him to tell him “Thanks for a great tour!”
CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Jeanne Coyne
Asst. to the General Manager, St. Augustine

BACKGROUND
I was born in E. St. Louis, Illinois, but my family moved us to Altamonte Springs, Florida when I was little. I grew up in Seminole County, Florida. My first husband was in the Navy, so I moved all over the United States for over 20 years and raised three awesome boys. From Virginia to New York to Idaho, we lived in more states than I can list here. I am now happily married to a retired Philadelphia Fire Fighter and was able to convince him to move to Florida last year. Lucky for me, he has the same love of Florida and Disney that I do. In my spare time I love to bake, travel and tailgate at Jimmy Buffett concerts. Most of my years I have spent working as a paralegal for attorneys, but when I moved back to Florida, I decided I wanted to enjoy going to work. I quit working as a paralegal and was fortunate enough to be hired as the Assistant to the General Manager of OTT St. Augustine. I now work with the best bunch of people and enjoy every day! Each day is different and it’s great to work for a company where our goal is to make people happy!

Q | What is your favorite vacation spot?
A | It’s a tie between Walt Disney World and Hawaii. I have loved Disney since we first visited in 1972 and I also worked there during my high school years. My sister has been there now 38 years and counting. My husband and I have annual passes. It never gets old for me. But I also love Hawaii. It is the most beautiful place on earth.

Q | What do you consider your greatest achievement?
A | My 3 wonderful sons, I am so incredibly proud of the young men they’ve become. I enjoy raising them everyday and being their Mom.

Q | What three things will you always find in my refrigerator?
A | Real butter (never margarine, it’s not good for you!) Almond milk (don’t knock it until you try it), and organic cream cheese (it makes the best cheesecakes!)

Q | Who are your favorite writers?
A | Edgar Allen Poe and James Patterson. I could read them over and over. I also like reading true stories. Sometimes real life is better than fiction.

Q | What living person do you most admire?
A | Paula Deen! I have admired her since I read her story in her first cookbook. I probably was one of her first fans, before she was famous on t.v. I admired how she was a divorced mom with two sons trying to support her family and bag by bag built an empire. She has shown how strong and resilient she can be. Not to mention her recipes helped me become an even better baker.
Meet Potter’s Wax Museum’s NEWEST FIGURE

THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON

[Images of people posing with a creature from the Black Lagoon]

[Image of a poster for the movie "Creature from the Black Lagoon"]
VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Old City House Inn and Restaurant
by Melissa Mezick

This spectacular Bed & Breakfast entitled, Old City House Inn and Restaurant is nestled right in the heart of the Historic Downtown area, located on Cordova Street. Juan Solano and Christopher Tur purchased this charmer in February 2013 and haven’t stopped running since they became the owners. Both the Bed & Breakfast and the Restaurant have received numerous awards for their outstanding service and the quality of their food.

Juan came to me in the spring of 2014 and asked if we would place a sign outside stating that Old City House Inn sells trolleys. Of course I said, “YES!” There is a lot of foot traffic in front of his Inn and made perfect sense to have one installed there. Please continue to read what the Old City House Inn offers their guests. Thank you Juan and Chris for selling Old Town Trolley tickets, but more important, thank you for your wonderful gift of friendship!

Step into the 1873 Old City House Inn and Restaurant and you’ll be swept away by its historic relevance and distinctive legacy to St. Augustine. Pair the historic Bed and Breakfast Inn with its charming new innkeepers, Juan Solano and Christopher Tur.

The Old City House Inn and Restaurant is one of historic St. Augustine’s premier Bed and Breakfast Inns, and has been serving St. Augustine Bed and Breakfast guests for over 20 years. The Old City House Inn features seven Bed and Breakfast rooms decorated to reflect old classic but elegant.

All of our Bed and Breakfast rooms have queen size beds, private entrances, en suite bathrooms, cable TV and free WIFI. Bed and Breakfast guests are treated to a complimentary full cooked breakfast in the mornings and a glass of wine in the evenings. A cheese and wine social is held on weekends and holidays. Onsite parking for Bed and Breakfast guests is included, and complimentary bicycles and soft drinks are available. Our Historic Inn is located on all sightseeing trolley routes, so you can park your car and enjoy easy transportation around our Nation’s Oldest City.

Our award-winning, Historic Bed and Breakfast is pair with an award-winning Restaurant; making the Old City House Inn and Restaurant the only Bed and Breakfast in historic St. Augustine with a full service Restaurant and Bar. Our Restaurant is open for lunch, and dinner 6 days a week.

We look forward to hearing from you and making your visits to Historic St. Augustine memorable ones! – Juan and Christopher

• Voted Best of Florida Inns – Florida Monthly Magazine.
• Voted Best B&B in St. Augustine – Jacksonville’s Folio Weekly.
• Voted “Best of St. Augustine” Bed and Breakfast – St. Augustine Record.
• Winner of the Taste of St. Augustine: “Best Upscale Taste” and “People’s Choice” Awards.
CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Michael Brown
National Call Center Sales Representative

BACKGROUND

I was born in Miami Florida.. Yes that’s right a real Florida native. I’ve been lucky enough to have been able to travel extensively from my time in the service and while working in the medical field. After my time in the Marine Corps I returned home and went back to school. My father owned a trucking company and I went to work there until after he passed away and sold the business. I was fortunate enough to be hired in the medical equipment business and absolutely loved it. Until government budget cuts and changes in the laws essentially caused many in this field to close their doors. I started my own trucking business until I realized that having your own business means you never have any time off. So as I pondered what I was going to do with my life I visited a few cities and of course fell in love with St. Augustine and rode the trolley a few times when I would visit. I really thought the way the employees treated everyone and how happy they all seemed made me think that this looks like it would be something for me. Dave Chatterton and Terry Akars were kind enough to give me a chance to show them what I have and it has truly been an amazing experience. Then the National Call Center came along and I happened to be in the right place at the right time and Lauren gave me another opportunity to help build a Great Team here and a chance to continue to grow here.

Q | What is my greatest fear?
A | Snakes.
Q | Who or what is the greatest love of your life?
A | My wife and grandchildren. They are amazing!
Q | If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city where would it be?
A | San Diego, California
Q | Who is your favorite action hero?
A | Spiderman
Q | Which talent would you like to have?
A | To be invisible

All I Needed Was the Pickle
by Nikki Weekly, Senior National Call Center Representative

I began working for HTA’s new National Call Center in January 2015 after running my own Personal Concierge service. I remember feeling much trepidation and wondering if this company was going to be a great fit. It wasn’t until I sat alone in an office to watch the new hire videos that I began to understand the history of the company and the people I was to work for. The “Give Them the Pickle” video in particular solidified that I had made the right decision in joining as a Castmember. You see, Historic Tours of America had adopted the exact customer philosophy in which I had lived my entire professional career by. I’ve always believed that providing great customer service was an innate characteristic deeply imbedded in the core of an entity, including the people who work to maintain the reputation of that company. With my worries assuaged, I began my work in the call center with both feet in, determined to showcase my talents as a Customer Service Rep, with the never ending understanding that we were doing something very important in this office. We were hired to be the first customer contact, the path in which guest would begin their historic journeys and disembark with a greater understanding of the past.

Being one of the core five employees in a new call center has always been a journey of its own. I work with a fantastic group of people who have their own stories to tell, their own backgrounds with a wide span of education and experiences which help to enrich a growing department. We learn something new from each other every day and feed off of the drive that exist in us all. Our manager Lauren is smart, talented and had the intuition to hire people that couldn’t be any more different from one another and I have a lot of respect for her because she allows me to be me. She understands my drive and determination and gives me the autonomy to lead such an awesome group of people.

As The Call Center expands, (10 strong now) we are evolving as a department. We cover all 6 cities. We must be swift, knowledgeable, accurate and understand the differences and similarities between each city. We handle a plethora of calls daily, including complaints, praise, sales, directions, hotel information, shuttles and reservations. We must be aware of the varying demographics in each city; tours, traffic, weather, local events and attractions. We handle each call with enthusiasm, integrity, professionalism, all the while remembering the philosophy in which HTA stands by. We are ever mindful of the daily daunting task that awaits the Castmembers on a local level and we truly try our best to help facilitate a smooth guest experience.

As I continue my professional career with HTA, I too will evolve as an employee. Already, I have learned the importance of great leadership, organization, adaptability, strong interpersonal relationships as well as a cohesive and efficient working environment. I hope to play an integral role in the growth of the call center and as I endeavor to grow as a person, employee and Lead of the Call Center, I will always remember to “Give Them the Pickle”.

April - May 2015
We’re Open!
John Welby; General Manager

So, last issue was all about the snow and I am happy to report that although we didn’t think it would, it has finally melted! Thank goodness it did because we had a lot going on at OTT Boston in the month of April getting ready for season, such as: we switched to our in-season hours (last tour at 5:00 pm), the Prudential Sales Depot reopened, Ghosts & Gravestones reopened, our hotel shuttles began operating again, the Chocolate Tour ended, The Boston Marathon took place, the Red Sox started playing again and we had a photo shoot. In addition to all that, our hiring season was in full swing adding conductors, sales reps, actors and admin staff.

Welcome on board to:
• Administrative Assistants: Anna Bohrer and Erin DiFranco
• Sales Reps: Zach Desanty, Monica Bylsma, Julie Crowe and Karen Bonilla
• Conductors: John Hamilton, Henry Brier, Nick Harding, Larry Lafontaine, Olga Solomita and Jan Taylor
• Actors: Kim Barrett and Ryan Jennings
• Mechanic: Philip Sherwood

Bringing that many people on board is no easy task, so it is important to thank Charles Person (Head Conductor), Bernie Casco (Depot Sales Manager), Steven Johnson (Tour and Entertainment Manager), Bob Gibson (Maintenance Manager) and, of course, Tracey Paturzo (Office Manager) for getting all that paperwork done!

We were honored to be able to celebrate a very special milestone with one of our CASTmembers on April 8th. Leslie Nagy, Director of Group Sales, celebrate her 25th Anniversary with Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston. You can’t help but think she must have started here when she was twelve years old, because there no way she looks old enough to have worked anywhere for twenty five years! She was recognized at our April CASTmeeting and presented with a beautiful plaque and a few other gifts thanking her for her dedication to OTT.

We know it’s April in Boston when the Ghosts & Gravestones tour starts up once again. Normally it starts out operating just Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays until Memorial Day, but this year we tried something new and offered tours on Thursdays as well. In addition to that, we opened a second depot in the evening to sell G&G tickets. It is our booth at Faneuil Hall (we call Sam Adams booth) and at night it is transformed into a G&G booth. Thank you Steven Johnson and his team for making this vision a reality.

On April 15th, the Greater Boston Concierge Association hosted their annual industry trade show at the Black Falcon Cruise Terminal. HTA was well represented at the event with booths for Old Town Trolley, Ghosts & Gravestones and the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum. Being that hundreds of people showed up, most of whom work as concierges at the many hotels in and around Boston, it was the perfect place for us to debut our new Stadium trolleys. With the help of the wonderful folks from Massport who run the cruise terminal, we were able to park one of the new trolleys in a prime location on their property between the elevator and escalator, which were the only ways in and out of the event. Needless to say, it was the talk of the night. We even had an employee from one of our competitors get on board the new trolley to tell me how beautiful it was and told me as she was leaving, “You know you guys are the best, right?”! How’s that for an endorsement?

At the end of April we were honored to have two very talented folks come to town; John Penney of Black Dog Advertising and Monica Munoz, Marketing Coordinator, HTA. They were here for several days taking thousands of photographs of our new stadium trolleys, our sales depots and Ghosts & Gravestones Tour, to be used for our new website and marketing pieces. Thank you John and Monica, can’t wait to see all those pictures.

Memorial Day weekend was when we finally got to put those new stadium trolleys into service and they made quite an impression to say the least. They look spectacular with their iconic Boston images on the sides and delighted our guests.
Adriatik Calaj has worked as a concierge at The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common since 2007. He came to his position from working as a sales representative for Pepsi, a most unusual job switch. He started in the Club Concierge Lounge and was quickly moved to the concierge desk in the lobby. What Adriatik likes best about being a concierge is the empowerment that The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common provides him. He is given the opportunity to do whatever it takes to make his guests happy. In turn, he has made a guest for the hotel and a friend for life. It is also nice that he is encouraged to advance up the hotel ladder and has a little fun doing it along the way.

When asked what he likes most about Old Town Trolley Tours and Trusted Tours & Attractions, Adriatik says that he believes in the product and that it brings a great value to his guests. He likes the versatility that our hop on hop off tour offers to the leisure time of Boston’s tourists, as well as free admission to the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum and the free Boston Harbor cruise. Adriatik also said that he would like to buy stock in Historic Tours. Maybe someday Adriatik.

On his days off Adriatik enjoys spending time with his wife, son, and two daughters. One night a week is family dinner night out. He gets to spend time with them as well as check out restaurants in the greater Boston area. Between family time and work he likes to go to the gym, run, and bike.

I would like to thank Adriatik Calaj, as well as Gabe Presman and Ryan Pavao for all the support they have given Old Town Trolley Tours over the years. I look forward to working with them and The Ritz-Carlton, Boston Common, for many more.

Welcome Aboard

Tabitha Lily Melocarro
Scott Wilson
Veronica Rios
John Hamilton
William Harding
Henry Brier
Zachary Desanty
Ryran Jennings
Phillip Sherwood
Kimberly Barrett
Olga Solomita

BTPS
William Pentleton
Luis Cardona
Daniel Dowling Jr.
April Singley
Timothy Lawton
Kaitlin Tredway
Leah Belcher
Monica Haberny
Mitchell Buckley
Rachael Macaskill
Richard Rininsland
Kimberly Salvato
Jacob Cooper
Armando Rivera-Pomares
Briana Palmarin
Nancy Sanders
Samantha Graudins
Joshua Marshall
BACKGROUND

For the longest time, I didn’t know what part of America to call my home. Officially, I was born in Berkeley, California, but I don’t remember it at all, because I was only there for about a year as an infant. It wasn’t long before my family moved to Acworth, Georgia, where I spent my kindergarten years playing in the dirt and catching anoles and skinks in my back yard. When I was 6, we moved yet again, this time up to a town in Bristol County, Rhode Island, where there was a notable lack of lizards around for me to catch. That turned out to be an acceptable loss, apparently, because I haven’t moved from New England since. I stayed in that same house with my family—Mom, Dad, younger brother, two dogs and a cat—up until I graduated high school in 2009 and started attending college here in Boston.

I enrolled as an animation student at the Art Institute of Boston at Lesley University, and spent the next four years learning that trade, while also enjoying the sights of Boston and Cambridge in my down time. I graduated with my BFA in 2013, and now I live here permanently in an apartment with five of my best friends, their pets, and my own pet lizard named Dog. I’ve been bouncing around, trying out new things to help figure out what the heck to do with myself. It hasn’t been easy, picking a focus. I have a lot of interests, from cartoons and video games, to animals, and natural and American history.

HTA seemed like a great fit for me because I’ve always been a big advocate of travelling. Nearly every school break, my family and I spent out of town, whether we left to enjoy the beach near my grandparent’s house on the eastern end of Long Island in New York, or hit the road and travelled further south. Down there we’d visit my dad’s family in beautiful Paw Paw, West Virginia, or explore America’s history with my mom’s family in Virginia, Maryland, and Washington D.C. Wherever we went, my parents always made sure that my brother and I got to experience our nation’s beautiful national parks and historic landmarks along those 8-12 hour drives. What better way is there to spend my time not travelling, than helping visitors enjoy similarly enriching experiences right here in my home city? Boston has so much to offer, and I want to help everyone see it all.

Q | If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?
A | I’d want to be a dog, OR a dinosaur (Utahraptor), because they’re awesome.

Q | Who is your favorite hero of fiction?
A | Commander Shepard, because she kicks all kinds of tail and has cool alien pals.

Q | Which living person do you most admire?
A | Jon Stewart. Also, although he’s sadly no longer living, Steve Irwin is my hero and deserves a mention.

Q | If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city, where would it be?
A | My hometown in Rhode Island.

Q | What is your favorite vacation spot?
A | It’s probably a tie. I have many fond memories of visiting family and seeing all the amazing museums and monuments Washington D.C. has to offer, but I’m also a sucker for Disney World. My favorite place that I ever visited though was Alaska.

CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Anna Bohrer
Administrative Asst.; Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston

twitter.com/bostontours facebook.com/bostontours

APRIL
Leslie Nagy, 25 years
John Welby, 18 years
Michael Chandler, 14 years
Steven Johnson, 12 years
Charlotte Dore, 9 years
Fred Gefteas, 6 years
Stephen Soverino, 6 years
Sheila O’Loughlin, 5 years
Kris Fabroski II, 4 years
William Munoz, 4 years
Samuel Joyall, 3 years
Timothy Carr, 2 years
Donald Little, 2 years
Michael Long, 2 years
Amanda Greer, 1 year
Bernardo Casco, 1 year
Russell Kelley, 1 year
Philip Ribeiro, 1 year

BTPS
Ted Galo, 14 years
Raymond O’Hare, 6 years
Michael Hogan, 6 years
Jillian Couillard, 3 years
Sean Lawler, 3 years
Holly Schaff, 3 years
Audrey Stuck-Girard, 3 years
Conor Walsh, 3 years
Daniel O’Neill, 3 years
Robert Doyle, 2 years
Meaghan Dutton-Blask, 2 years
Lauria Kincaid, 1 year
Stephanie Romero, 1 year

MAY
Sue Pye, 20 years
Cathy Hutchinson, 10 years
Robert Eaton, 6 years
Maureen Marotta, 5 years
Roger Dumont, 4 years
Jonathan Norcross, 3 years
Gregory Twombly, 3 years
Geraldine Tappan, 3 years
Patricia Hoversten, 2 years
Barry Costello, 1 year
Bernice Kinyanjui, 1 year

BTPS
Christian Masters, 3 years
Cliffor Hilaire, 3 years
Kathryn Banks, 2 years
Kevin Welch, 2 years
Stephen Chueka, 2 years
Joslyn Rodriguez, 1 year
At the end of April, Marketing Coordinator Monica Munoz and Blackdog Advertising’s John Penney traveled to Boston to do a citywide photoshoot with the newest vehicles in our fleet... The stadium trolleys! Thank you to the entire CAST of OTT Boston for your hospitality and assistance in making helping us get the best possible shots. Despite the unseasonably cold temperatures, here is a teaser to our newest library of photographs.
We Made It!
by Linda Test, Key West General Manager

We made it through season! Record levels of hotel visitors, thousands of cruise ship visitors, and a never-ending stream of buses and drive in guests kept Key West extremely busy throughout the winter. Add a little (lot) of road construction, and it was hectic, to say the least. Thank you to the CAST members who managed to pull off the unimaginable and do it with such ease that it looked simple.

As we coast out of season, we welcome new leaders to the Key West Operations team. Leslie Allen has done both sales and driving roles during her time with the company, and has taken over the OTT Head Conductor role. Tommy Allen has stepped up to the Depot Sales Manager role, and Jessica Staats has moved into the Lead Sales Rep position. We are so excited to have these team members taking on their new positions!

And Now...Up to Bat
by Tommy Allen, Depot Sales Manager

Here we go! It’s the top of the first and our best hitter is striding to the plate with the famed piece of lumber in their hand, ready to knock it out of the park. Just a little baseball analogy, that pretty much sums up how I feel about my sales team here in Key West. Everyone on my team has the ability to be that “clean-up hitter”. My name is Tommy Allen, I just took on the Depot Sales Manager position here in Key West and I am so excited to have the opportunity to work with a GREAT cast. We are getting back to the fundamentals and in my third week here I am already feeling a change in the atmosphere in the clubhouse. I have a great staff and every one of them is working hard. We are in spring training here in Key West as our season has wound down. Everything we do now is fine tuning for next season by selling tickets and serving our guests with new enthusiasm and zeal. We are teaching each other new best practices and making sure that our guest are having an excellent experience. By the time our next season gets cranked up everyone will be swinging for the fences and sliding hard into home.

New Roles
by Leslie Allen, Head Conductor

In April of 2015, I started my new position as Head Conductor here in Key West. April typically signifies the tail-end of our thus, incredibly busy, season - I had my work cut out for me! From my very first day dispatching from Mallory Square I was witness to how well our drivers had been handling the sudden changes to our daily route caused by a massive road construction project that coincided with our busiest four months; a road block might appear where only an hour before there had been none causing unsuspected code whites. Still, our Drivers navigated themselves, and their passengers, around the trouble spots in a seemingly effortless manner, all the while continuing to give a great historic tour! I knew from the start that I was very lucky to be in a position to direct such a professional group. Their patience and kindness towards me during this learning curve has been much appreciated and I look forward to a long and rewarding partnership with them all!
CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Leslie Allen
OTT Head Conductor; Key West

BACKGROUND
I grew up on the mean streets of Plymouth, Massachusetts, attended art school in Boston, made art in Seattle, WA, and then returned to Plymouth and made more art whilst also working as a Colonial Interpreter for Plimoth Plantation where I developed a love for all things preindustrial. In 2009 I moved to the Florida Keys and by 2011 was employed by Old Town Trolley here in Key West. It was my love of history, and a love for interpreting history, that steered me in Old Town Trolley's direction. I’m very thankful I get to work in an environment that keeps history alive. I’m also thankful for the incredible people I get to work with everyday.

Q | What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A | Navigating a kayak on the leeside of a secluded mangrove island. This would be at high tide with the winds at 5mph or less and the temp hovering just around 80 degrees.

Q | What or who is the greatest love of your life?
A | My brother Christopher.

Q | Which talent would you most like to have?
A | To be dedicated enough to learn to play any musical instrument beyond The Farmer in the Dell.

Q | If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?
A | A Great White roaming Cape Cod Bay.

Q | If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city, where would it be?
A | Any place with more land than people, rich, fertile soil and hardwoods.

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April Showers

With low elevations, Key West is known to get a flash flood from time to time. But, as you see, we always make it fun.

CASTMEMBERS OF THE MONTH

MARCH
Louie Cabrera, Conductor
Ramon Richardson, Supporting

APRIL
Grace Spencer, Conductor
Jason Sisco, Supporting

APRIL
Veronica Brown, 14 years
Cesar Moreno, 12 years
Jose Santiago, 2 years

MAY
Roger Harmon, 3 years
Carole White, 2 years

A little throwback to the late 1970’s! Before we had Old Town Tours, we had the Conch Town Trolley Tours. An old breadtruck where the windows were cut out and seat put in. Just the beginning of our fabulous company we have today!

WELCOME ABOARD
Richard Gray

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Located in the heart of Old Town, the Truman Hotel is a convenient one block away from famous Duval Street, an easy walk to restaurants, attractions, activities and sightseeing.

Recently renovated, it is unlike any other hotel in Key West. It features three floors with sundecks, an elevator and covered parking. The room décor is South Beach hip with Key West flair. The bright color palate, local art and unusual pieces make it unique. In the courtyard, a serene and sparkling clear pool with jets at one end and a waterfall at the other is surrounded by native palms and tropical plants making it the perfect place to read, sun or visit with friends.

Tables and chairs outside each room make a relaxing place to enjoy the continental breakfast provided each morning. Choose from a selection of local fresh French pastries, fruit, juice and coffee.

The knowledgeable and friendly staff will help you plan your daily activities. Ask Martin Nemcek about the best first thing to do in Key West and he will tell you to take a Trolley tour on the Old Town Trolley and he will happily sell you your tickets.

Not every day is filled with hectic rushing around. Sometimes, it is ‘hurry up and wait’. When a ship docks at the Navy Mole, we shuttle the guests into town. At the scheduled time of arrival, we are lined up and ready to go, but have to wait for the security teams to announce they are ready for our vehicles. On the left is Eduardo and right is Glenn. Photos courtesy of Mark Drais, CTT Tour Engineer
CONCH TOUR TRAIN

Take the Time, to Say “Thank You”
by Andy Kirby; CTT Cruise Ship Liaison

Cruise Ship Season is over until November. Now the season for the summer will be the family tourist. In the hustle and bustle of the season, we are always on the run. Now that we have a chance to refresh ourselves and take a fresh breath, I would like to thank all of the HTA CASTmembers for making the show go on. It is not always easy, and there are times when it just gets crazy business wise. But I really would like to thank the sales reps that go above and beyond to push to make that sale. The drivers that deal with the headaches, still delivering the story to our guests. I appreciate your efforts especially for those of you that get that one more sale. I would also like to thank Kevin for his skills in making the cruise ship excursion team run smoothly.

We do not appreciate life until we feel that we may lose it. Appreciate the little things. They become important when we lose them. There are three little things in life that leave and never return; words, time and opportunities. So I wanted to take the time, in words to say thank you all for the opportunities we have shared making a memory.

Simply You Weddings is a destination wedding planning firm that is passionate about providing exceptional service for the most important day of your life. Their goal is to create a unique, custom event that is indicative of your dream wedding. They use the Conch Tour Train and Old Town Trolley to add a special touch to their Key West Weddings. Thank you to the ladies at Simply You Weddings!

Yoshi
Proud Owner Sabrina Johnson; Conch Tour Train

Yoshi is a rat terrier who was my daughter’s dog when she was growing up. When my daughter went away to college, guess who got the dog? I was happy to take her as I live alone and really appreciate the company. Although she is an older dog, she still has energy to chase her tail, and the roosters Key West is famous for. Of course I never let her catch them, she might get hurt.

CHARTER SHOUTOUT!
Simply You Weddings

We wish a fond farewell to Ben Phillips, as he and his wife return back to their home in Mississippi. Y'all come back soon!

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April - May 2015
BACKGROUND
I was born at the old Balboa Naval Hospital in San Diego, California in 1967. After San Diego, the family moved to Oak Harbor, Whidbey Island, Washington, where my father was stationed at NAS Whidbey Island. Upon being discharged from the Navy, the family moved to Roggen, Colorado and onto the family farm. The Shoeneman 5M Ranch has been in the family since 1891. Currently my Uncle Joel Shoeneman lives on the family homestead. After a four year stint in Kimball, Nebraska, I moved to Brighton, Colorado where I graduated from Brighton High School in 1986. Within a month of my high school graduation, I moved back to San Diego, California to attend college. I attended San Diego State University before receiving my degree from the University of Colorado. By the time that I had graduated from college, I had already started my career in real estate and development.

I worked in commercial real estate in Denver, Colorado specializing in vacant land, brown fields and land development. During my real estate career, I also did several fix and flips. I made my first trip to Key West in 2000 during a sailing vacation. The next year I made a week long vacation trip and would eventually buy a time share here that I would spend three weeks a year in. In 2011, after twenty years in real estate, I was looking for a change of pace and decided to make the move to Key West. I have always enjoyed the history on the island and in 2012 went to work for the Conch Tour Train telling others about the island history.

Q | Which historical figure do you most identify with?
A | I have always found Nikola Tesla fascinating. He spent his entire life studying, experimenting and constantly learning. By the time of his death almost 300 patents were attributed to him.

Q | What is your favorite vacation spot?
A | It used to be Key West until I moved here. Now I enjoy vacationing in other locales with lots of history to explore. I have not found a new favorite yet. But it is fun looking.

Q | What three things will you always find in my refrigerator?
A | I always have multiple hot sauces, cheese and a decent IPA in the refrigerator.

Q | Who are your favorite writers?
A | My current favorite author is Erik Larson. He writes nonfiction books about historical events. Devil in the White City talks about the intersection of the 1893 World’s Fair and Dr. H. H. Holmes, America’s first serial killer. His novel Thunderstruck’s subjects are Guglielmo Marconi’s work during the invention of wireless radio transmission and its use during the trans-Atlantic manhunt for Dr. Hawley Crippen.

Q | Who is your favorite hero of fiction?
A | I always liked Batman. He didn’t really have any superpowers, just really cool toys.
Since 2003, the Truman Little White House in Key West, FL has hosted the annual Truman Legacy Symposium Conferences ranging from, in 2003, Truman’s Legacy on National Security, in 2014, his Nuclear Legacy with his decision to use the bomb. Other subjects showing Truman’s legacies have included civil rights, the Middle East, the environment, immigration, civil liberties, and, in 2012, foreign aid.

This year on May 15-16, the 11th Annual Symposium subject was “America’s Great National Health Care Debate and the Legacy of Harry S. Truman.” Physician’s Money Digest was invited to attend.

Roosevelt was the first to look at questions on America’s healthcare and all 7 recent presidents have tried to address the issue. Archivists found in Harry Truman’s memoirs “the greatest disappointment in his presidency was his failure to pass comprehensive health reform.” It surprised them that so successful a presidency could not rise above how Truman saw its possible failures.

The symposium began Friday evening at the Truman Little White House, where Clifton Truman Daniel, President Truman’s eldest grandson introduced the Keynote Speaker, Robert M. Wah, MD, the president of the American Medical Association. Clifton Truman Daniel has written two books about his grandparents. He didn’t know the significance of his family until he’d reached the age of 6. Wah was the same age of six when he came to the United States. It was a bit confusing for Wah until his father explained, “We are heading for Alcatraz Prison then taking a left; that’s where Asian immigrants are received.”

And now he is the first Chinese-American president of the AMA, one whose grandfather was a Chinese herbal doctor with 5,000 years of Chinese heritage.

Wah explained the structure of the AMA to the lay members of the Truman Foundation who had gathered on the north lawn to hear him. He was proud that its membership, now 230,000, has increased in number for the last 4 years. He talked about the AMA’s push to improve medical education way back in 1847, how it had raised the bar more than other professions. He also discussed how the quality of medical education was now established, how the AMA offers tools for practicing doctors, and how, especially, the AMA advocates for both patients and physicians.

Asked about healthcare reform, he responded that, as a physician, he understood that evolving societies become protective of each other to overcome challenges. We, doctors, fight that battle every day, and if we ask, “How can a society protect itself against its vulnerability?” Well, one way is by insurance.

Some people see government-assisted insurance as a flawed concept but, says Wah, did you notice the tribute Britain gave to its National Health Service at the recent welcome to the London Summer Olympic Games. That shows how proud the British are of their health service. But health delivery has really changed over the last 100 years: At the end of World War II healthcare was #7 on an American’s budget long after food and clothing. Now costs have more than doubled.

He was asked his thoughts on prescription drug abuse and countered the AMA policy was the appropriate use of all doctors’ tools. He was asked to comment on the MedMal crisis and replied vehemently. “That term should be eliminated; what we have in America is a professional liability crisis. Ninety percent of all doctors have been sued before they reach the age of 55. We feel questions about the quality of the delivery of medical care should be left to those delivering medical care.”

The next day at the Key West Marriott Beachside Hotel, we heard from academics who had worked with Harry Truman.

The nonpartisan Institute of Politics, University of Chicago, “is an extracurricular program designed to ignite in young people a passion for politics and public service.” The moderator of this Historical Perspective on United States Healthcare, Steven Edwards, told the audience how presidents had tried and failed to create comprehensive health reform before Obama, and how a staffer whose child suffered seizure disorders openly wept when Obama’s ACA passed.

Edwards introduced Dr. Raymond Geselbracht, former Assistant to the Director of the Truman Library who reminded us that Harry Truman had been a farmer who had no ideological fears and who probably was not influenced by “progressives.” Truman felt the Presidency was a tool to solve problems and felt the government had a role to create solutions. Truman never felt government help corrupted Americans. “He had no anti-government rhetoric!”

Truman, who had served as a captain in the artillery in World War I, was particularly appalled to find the health of American males was so poor—35.5% failed their induction physicals for military service in World War II.

Says Geselbracht. “President Truman felt the indigent and rich were well-treated” with health issues but not those in between. Truman had an orderly mind and wanted to see the financial repercussions from any health bills passed. But he had difficulties with Congress: Because FDR had pushed too hard in 1938 with his New Deal, the public believed too much help was going to the cities and thought the policies were too liberal. Truman insisted his
program was not socialized medicine but the AMA claimed the opposite.

Yet when LBJ finally was able to sign the Medicare Bill, he chose the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, MO, for the ceremony and gave the first pen he used to Bess Truman and the second to Harry, saying, “The people of the United States love and voted for Harry Truman, not because he gave them hell—but because he gave them hope.”

Claudia Anderson, The Supervisory Archivist at the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library had some fascinating long-forgotten information about LBJ. In front of the current president of the AMA she reminisced how her president essentially outfoxed the AMA’s threat of a national boycott of Medicare, holding out the possibility that as many as 95% of American doctors would follow suit. Johnson met at his ranch with 11 AMA officers ostensibly to ask AMA support for a program rotating doctors into Vietnam to serve the civilian population. “When they agreed to the latter, Johnson ordered an impromptu press conference, where he praised the AMA for its commitment to the Vietnamese. When a reporter asked whether the AMA would support Medicare, Johnson declared, ‘These men are going to send doctors to Vietnam where they may be killed. Medicare is the law of the land. Of course, they’ll support the law of the land.’

“He then turned to the AMA group, ‘You tell him.’ Put on the spot, the AMA president replied, ‘Of course, we will. We are law-abiding citizens, and we have every intention of obeying the law.’ Within a matter of weeks, the AMA formally endorsed Medicare, with 95% of doctors following suit.”

The next speaker, Dr. Victoria Harden, Former Director of NIH History, talked about the creation and success of the National Institutes of Health dealing with mental and dental health, neurological and cardiovascular disease, and allergic, arthritic and infectious disease, although as infectious disease was tackled, so chronic disease became more an issue.

New NIH targets? DNA and genetic codes, home pregnancy tests, expanding rural health care—and a path to precision medicine.

Dr Harold Pollack, Helen Ross Professor of Social Service, Administration and Public Health Sciences, University of Chicago then discussed the Affordable Care Act—and the current state of healthcare in our country. “It has been a wild ride” [to bring health care where it now is], he says. “We thought it would be like this... (showing a slide of Margaret Thatcher and the Falklands War), but it was more like World War I—but lasting longer.” (He then put up a slide to show trench warfare in WWI)

Pollack must be a popular lecturer at the university; he has an easy manner and shows a slide of how when talking about Obamacare, he chose to wear a police bulletproof vest. Now ACA has some years behind it, Obama might well be acknowledged on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel.

Why is healthcare reform important? Pollack asks and answers his own question. Because 16% of the GDP is not sustainable, although young people pay more for their cell phone bill than for healthcare.

Why don’t we simplify healthcare and get rid of complications? He answers with: It’s never going to happen. It would disrupt the lives of too many people. And who says we have the best medical service in the world? Answer: Some of the proponents of medical marijuana!

Yet, says our final speaker, AMA President Wah, the problem with health insurance is that the industry regards any payout for service as a “loss.” If a company takes $1 in premiums and pays out 98 cents for treatments, the 98 cents is seen as loss.

He talks, too, about “what happens when you stand on a spider; it goes ‘Splat’ all over.” To illustrate, Wah shows a slide of Hillary Clinton’s secret attempt to reconfigure healthcare in 1994—the plan that excluded physicians from discussions. He feels physicians should know that when it comes to Affordable Care Organization (ACO) discussions, “If you are not at the table, you are on the table!” (as an entrée).

Asked about medical malpractice reform he feels there is some progress at state level but does not see it happening in federal law because in the USA we foster an environment that allows persons to speak their minds and are now so involved in disagreement we forget the subject of the original disagreement. I would have liked to have heard something about the AMA’s concerns about the Independent Payment Advisory Board and would welcome some insider information about the mysterious committee that decides on the relative value of medical procedures.

He ended the symposium by saying, “I believe a lot of Democrats now regret they didn’t cooperate better with President Nixon in his health initiatives.”

The Andersons, who live in San Diego, are columnists for Physician’s Money Digest. Nancy is a former nursing educator, Eric a retired MD. The one-time president of the New Hampshire Academy of Family Physicians, Eric is the only physician in the Society of American Travel Writers. He has also written 5 books, the last called The Man Who Cried Orange: Stories from a Doctor’s Life. Member since 1989 of the Society of American Travel Writers Travel & Cruise Columnist at http://www.hcplive.com/physicians-money-digest/columns/anderson-travel

Top left clockwise: Moderator, Steven Edwards, Executive Director, Institute of Politics, University of Chicago. Dr. Raymond Geselbracht, Former Assistant to the Director of the Truman Library. Claudia Anderson, Supervisory Archivist, Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library. Dr. Victoria Harden, Former Director of the NIH History. Dr. Harold Pollack, Helen Ross Professor of Social Service, Administration and Public Health Sciences, University of Chicago.
A Florida native, I had the pleasure of growing up on the coast near the fishing village of Cortez, FL. I attended Ringling College of Art and Design where I studied Fine Art with a focus on painting & printmaking. Following school I moved to New Orleans where I had the unique opportunity to teach printmaking classes for corporate events and work as a full time studio artist painting Woodgraphs of city’s historic Street Scenes. After seeing the millennium in, I returned to Florida to curate art shows and open my own studio in downtown Bradenton, Fl. It was in 2007 while visiting Key West; I applied for an artist in residency program. I was accepted and two weeks later moved to the island.

During the time I was working for the Key West Art and Historical Society’s East Martello Museum, I was recruited to be a part-time Storyteller for the newly formed Ghosts & Gravestones. Seeing a new creative way to cultivate an untapped potential within myself, I eagerly signed on as a ghost host. A year later I graciously took the position as Operations Manager for G&GKW.

Q | What do you consider your greatest achievement?
A | I believe my greatest achievements are still to come. Artistically speaking, I was a founding member of the grassroots Artists’ coalition The Edge, a recipient of the Martha Summer Fine Art Award and a featured artist in Chirshawn Studios Inc. annual catalog. My work has been exhibited in various solo, juried, and group shows, including works at the South Florida Museum with personal representation by the Meyerhoefer Galley Inc.

Q | Which living person do you most admire?
A | Our niece Aurora Phoenix, she is the embodiment of tenacity and the will to live. Born 4 months premature and weighing less than a pound, for 4 months in NICU she overcame life defying obstacles and fought to survive. Now home happy and healthy, with every checkup she continues to prove to doctors and family alike, how much of a miracle she rightly is.

Q | What is your greatest fear?
A | Oddly enough it’s dying. Over the past several years with G&GKW, I’ve had my share of personal “experiences” with the unknown. I’ve find it comforting working alongside the dearly departed as it has provided validation that we are not alone.

Q | What or who is the greatest love of your life?
A | My greatest love is my fiancé Dylan Vader. He is the kindest, most loving person and everything I could ever hope for in a best friend and partner.

Q | If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city, where would it be?
A | I have always loved the variety of what the big city lifestyle has to offer. Factor in my love for living on the coast; it’s difficult to pick just one. The cities that top my list are New York, Washington DC and San Diego.
LET US BE YOUR GUIDE

Don’t leave Key West without one! In February, Mike Gibson sold 111 Essential Guides from his booth at the Key West Aquarium and the Key West Shipwreck Treasures Museum. Here Mike is pictured with Shipwreck Operations Manager Jesse Panrock. Great job and thank you!

THANK YOU G&G VENDORS

Just days before Friday, March 13th, Pamela Seiber and Mindy Tucker made a surprise visit to our area vendors and concierges. Fresh baked cookies, thank you cards, welcoming letters and new marketing materials were well received! The picture on the left is Tracey Maguire from the Galleon Resort and Mindy Tucker. The right picture has (l to r) Marie Ottosson, Pamela Seiber and Caren Cone. Marie and Caren are concierges with the Casa Marina and Reach Resort. Thank you to them and to all the vendors and concierges in Key West and the Fabulous Florida Keys!

STORYTELLER FOR LIFE

During a recent trip to Disney World, Clinton Curry had the pleasure of playing the part of Belle’s guard in one of their new experiences. While he would have preferred to play the Beast in this fairytale story, the joy in watching his wife and daughter turn red with embarrassment (seemed he took the dancing segment of my part a little too far) drove home the absolute love of what we do. Unfortunately, this is the only picture he has from this experience, but one that personifies him. When he looks at this picture and remember the absolute joy he felt during the experience, he was reminded of one of my favorite P.T. Barnum Quotes...Men, women and children who cannot live on gravity alone need something to satisfy their gayer, lighter moods and hours, and he who ministers to this want is, in his opinion, is in a business established by the Creator of our nature. If he worthily fulfills his mission and amuses without corrupting, he need never feel that he has lived in vain. Storyteller for Life, he thinks he found a bumper sticker slogan.

TROLLEY OF THE DOOMBED GETS MAKEOVER

From the team of Ghosts & Gravestones Key West...Thank you, thank you, thank you to all who had a role in our most recent trolley conversion. Trolley 83 entered into service last night with a 38 passenger charter and tonight assumes the 8pm and 10pm tour times, from Trolley 29. Our nightly ridership potential has now moved up from 112 seats to 132 seats! Believe me, these seats will go to good use as the ghost tour season is well underway in Key West. While there are still more items to add to enhance the overall guest experience, the Victorian Parlor conversion is a hit. The hosts are blown away by the décor and are eagerly waiting their turn.

APRIL

Gregory Curry, 40 years
Alexandra Dorsena Jeune, 4 years
Julia Benner, 4 years
Pamela Seiber, 4 years
Edward Goldstein, 2 years
Mykhailo Fouryk, 2 years
Jean Valeus, 2 years
Melson Maxime, 1 year
Kirk Zimmerman, 1 year

MAY

Maria Kuc, 13 years
Michele Ross, 10 years
Praskovia Fourik, 8 years
James Mira, 4 years
Chrisla Jean Pierre Germain, 3 years
Rick Kushman, 3 years
Robin Kligo, 3 years
Jane Perry, 1 year
Yvette Wolf, 1 year
Charles Grayson, 1 year
Vladimir Remond, 1 year
Nancy Arndt, 1 year
Elise Kubisch, 1 year
Thomas Lockyear II, 1 year

RETAIL DIVISION
Isabel Valdez
Laycee Fidler
Olga Guizado Ortiz
Stephana Cidelus
Ivenson Gourgue
Diana Llagostera
Jennifer Llagostera
Brian Hagon
James Hayes
Eric Fitzer
Irina Trostianskaia
Kianna Woods
Emily Craig
Vasty Jean Pierre
Charles Zenter
Quentin Morris
Damian Jones
Danylo Khodosevych
Denise Watanabe
Leonard Allen
Joshua Compton
John Miller Jr.
Adrienne Delia

ATTRACTIONS
Terry Flynn

WELCOME ABOARD

HAPPY anniversary
When Layfield and Janice Long returned to Key West, after his retirement from Ma Bell in 1998, he first went to work at Erv Higgs Tax Appraisers offices and then Historic tours of America.

Layfield, was raised in Key West, grew up in a trailer at the back of the Islander Drive-In Theater on Stock Island and graduated from Key West High School in 1965.

He joined the Army in 1968. While in the Army he was a proud member of the U.S. Army Signal School Ceremonial Unit and received a commendation for outstanding performance. He received many certifications in industrial electronics and radio engineering. After being honorably discharged from the Army he began his career in Key West with Southern Bell/Bellsouth and in 1978 was transferred to Atlanta. While in Atlanta he met and married the love of his life, Janice. In 1986 Southern Bell President Frank Skinner presented Layfield with an award and a $10,000 check for his mechanized innovation which saved the company a quarter of a million dollars a year. That was a lot of money back then! The idea was so successful it was implemented company-wide at Southern Bell. In 1997 Layfield was awarded a Master’s Certificate in Project Management from the George Washington University School of Business.

In 2002 Layfield joined Historic Tours of America as Chief Information Officer. His accomplishments in making us a fully integrated cutting edge company are too numerous to list.

In 2007 Layfield was battling a kidney disease and received the Gift of Life – a kidney from Dale Lockwood. Dale became a part of Layfield’s family and they were forever grateful for Dale’s kindness and generosity.

Janice and Layfield moved to St. Augustine, FL in 2014 to oversee the move of Historic Tours’ Data Center from Key West to St. Augustine. He was with Historic Tours of America until his death on June 10, 2015.

The Key West Years

Layfield and Janice also became the next door neighbors of Ed and Nancy Swift building a magnificent home that was the gem of Key Haven.

Ed and Layfield also became the second best Iguana hunters on Key Haven by bagging 234 Iguana’s in their back yards. Ed said that “not only did Layfield teach him how to shoot but that he immensely enjoyed the hunt.

Janice worked as Nancy Swift’s co-agent in Location3 Realty and Janice and Layfield became regulars at the Swift parties and family gatherings.

Layfield, Janice and Buffie were always welcome and Layfield was always ready to advise Ed on yard work, machinery etc. that as we all know “Ed is not very good at”.

During his life Layfield was an avid hunter, fisherman and diver and he and Janice spent many lovely days on the water in his Mako boat.

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Chris and Piper, Ed and Nancy and all our families and the Executive Staff and the many CAST members that Layfield directly had contact with are devastated by his untimely death. We reach out to Janice (and of course his favorite animal friend Buffie) with our heartfelt sympathy and condolences.

IN MEMORY OF LAYFIELD LONG
June 17, 1947 - June 10, 2015
by Ed Swift; President

When Layfield and Janice Long returned to Key West, after his retirement from Ma Bell in 1998, he first went to work at Erv Higgs Tax Appraisers offices and then Historic tours of America.
Thank you to all our CASTmembers who participated in the Walking for my Healthy Heart – Healthy Walking Challenge.

We have completed seven weeks of tracking our steps, and hopefully have gained an awareness of the importance of healthy living and the FUN of walking. You are all on the road to a healthier life! Most of our walkers showed an improvement in their walking from the beginning week to the last week. We had phenomenal participation from all our locations. Celebrate this important “step” toward healthy living with your fellow CASTmembers and keep on walking!

A total of 236 CASTmembers participated across the country. A special thanks to all our Wellness Volunteers and Office Managers for recruiting, supervising, tracking and reporting the steps each week. We hope you all enjoyed this challenge!

**Individual Winners**

- John Jeffress – Arlington National Cemetery Tours
- John Clifford – Conch Tour Train
- Dell Lunsford – Historic Tours of America Corporate Offices
- Ryan Darrah – Historic Tours of America – St. Augustine Offices
- Leslie Nagy – Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston
- Stephen Chueka – Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum
- Kevin Delahanty – Old Town Trolley Tours of Key West
- Cathy Vaccari – Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah
- Greg Coleman – Old Town Trolley Tours of St. Augustine
- Adam Johnson – Old Town Trolley Tours of Washington DC
- Karen Brandt – Tropical Shell & Gifts
- Jesse Panrock – Treasurers of the Florida Keys

**Overall Individual Winner**

Sebastian Biagioni

Old Town Trolley Tours of San Diego; with the most steps – 1,738,218!!

The bragging rights for the location that had the most average steps in six weeks is:

**Company Winner**

The Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum

With an average step count for the six and a half weeks of: 550,817

(an average of 77,800 steps per week/per CASTmember)
The individual winner from the Corporate Office is Dell Lunsford. Dell attributes his win to his trip to Washington, DC where he walked to all of the attractions instead of using the metro. Way to go, Dell!

Sebastian Biagioni was the overall individual winner with 1,738,218 steps in six weeks.

Jesse Panrock from the Key West Shipwreck Treasure Museum received his award.

Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah winner Cathy Vaccari

IT Computer Specialist Johnny Earls took 5 months off from work this last winter. His wife and him spent the holiday season with family in Ohio preparing for their new baby. On February 9, 2015 they finally got to meet her. Allow us to introduce their little girl, Sena Ann Machiko Earls (and Wifi Dog). She is the love of their lives. Congratulations... She's gorgeous!

Sebastian Biagioni was the overall individual winner with 1,738,218 steps in six weeks.

Gigi is three years old and is a rescue from the SPCA, here in Key West. She is in her forever home and loved very much. This is our first rescue, and she is the funniest, most loving dog. We are planning on adopting a sister, when found.

Proud Owner Rosemary Pumar; Tropical Shell and Gift