HTA General Managers Hold Annual Meeting in St. Augustine

More Photos Inside on Page 35
Something happened to me today that seems to be occurring more and more in my life. I’ll bet it is happening to you, too.

While visiting operations in one of our cities which I won’t name, although it happens to be the same city in which the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum is located (haha), I noticed a storefront location that was of great interest to me for our business. I thought at the time it would make a great retail location for our so-successful Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum store. I made a note and returned home.

Upon arriving home, I called the company, which I definitely won’t name, and the phone was answered by the most dry, unenthusiastic, unfriendly, unhappy, wish-I-had-another-job, who-are-you-to-be-bothering-me, is-it-time-to-go-home … voice I have ever heard. I imagined her to be about 23 years old, out of school and not doing what she got her degree in because there are no jobs. Therefore, she took this job to pay the rent, but certainly something better was going to come along. I wish I could have grabbed her by the shoulders, shaken her (like my mother used to do), looked her in the eyes and yelled at her, “THIS IS NOT A REHEARSAL FOR TOMORROW! Whatever you are acting like, whatever your work ethic is now, that is what it is going to be for the rest of your life and guess what, the results are going to be the same. A dead end job at which you pretty much suck.” Boy! It felt good to get that off my chest.

Now, HTA is not the biggest company in the world and I am certainly not the most important CEO in the world, but I know the difference between having a business in which my people understand the importance of serving our customer base, and one that doesn’t. That company definitely doesn’t. We definitely do, as seen by the fact that we have grown from a very small company of 13 employees to 1,300 CASTmembers serving 3.5 million guests each year. That kind of success comes from remembering that, “The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing!”

We have made it our business in this company to own the “50 yard line” locations for our business which goes a long way to guaranteeing our success. We take very good care of our equipment and have entered into a long-term program of acquiring new vehicles on a more frequent basis. With this being said, however, the most important element of our success has been that our CASTmembers have been vetted during the hiring process and have been taught during the training process and have been judged in the field as to their ability to provide the kind of service that meets the criteria of the Platinum Rule which is, of course, “Treat people the way they want to be treated”. In short, our CAST has collectively bought into our company philosophy and we enjoy a shared vision of what we are about.

There are great companies in this country like Ritz Carlton, Delta Airlines, United Parcel Service, Disney and too many others to name that get what their “main thing” is. Then, there are other companies like Wang Computers, Eastern Airlines and RC Cola that did not understand what their “main thing” was and they are, therefore, no more. It is incredible to me how companies like Disney are able to establish a culture early on and keep that torch burning for so many years, but then again, that is exactly what we are doing.

By the way, I am still waiting on a call back from the company which purports to want to rent their property. Cultures run deep.
On the evening of January 23, 2016, Vice President of Marketing and Advertising, Piper Smith, received the prestigious ATHENA Award from her old boss Sue Barroso at the annual Key West Chamber of Commerce Gala. The ATHENA Leadership Award® recipients are individuals who have achieved the highest level of professional excellence. Contribute time and energy to improve the quality of life for others in the community. Photographed here are Sue Barroso, Monica Munoz, Nancy Aspinwall, Chris Bethand, Piper Smith, Ed Swift III and Hope Casas.

Wake Up Your Life
by Ed Swift III, President

Dear CAST, I read this book in 1988 and I think it still applies today. I hope you like it.

Rod Visits the Southernmost City

Another annual visit was had from Rod LaBranche who is Historic Tours of America's... The evening was enjoyed by Tammy Oosterhoudt, Piper Smith, Rod LaBranche and Monica Munoz.

Wake Up Your Life
...and smooth the wrinkles from your soul

Condensed from Catholic Digest
BARBARA BARTOCCI

It is this childlike wonder that gives enthusiastic people such a youthful air, whatever their age. At 90, cellist Pablo Casals would start his day by playing Bach. As the music flowed through his fingers, his stooped shoulders would straighten and joy would reappear in his eyes. Music, for Casals, was an elixir that made life a never-ending adventure. As author and poet Samuel Ullman once wrote, "Years wrinkle the skin, but to give up enthusiasm wrinkles the soul."

How do you rediscover the enthusiasm of your childhood? The answer, I believe, lies in the word itself. Enthusiasm comes from the Greek and means "God within." And what is God within but an abiding sense of love—proper love of self (self-acceptance) and, from that, love of others.

Enthusiastic people also love what they do, regardless of money or title. Elizabeth has rediscovered her enthusiasm. We can't afford to waste tears on "might-have-beens." We need to turn the tears into sweat as we go after "what-can-be."

We need to live each moment wholeheartedly, with all our senses—finding pleasure in the fragrance of a back-yard garden, the crayoned picture of a six-year-old, the enchanting beauty of a rainbow. It is such enthusiastic love of life that puts a sparkle in our eyes, a lift in our steps and smooths the wrinkles from our souls.
Two College Football Bowl Games Bring Excitement and Tourist to San Diego

by David Thornton, General Manager

San Diego hosted two national college football bowl games in December, the Poinsettia Bowl game and the Holiday Bowl game.

The 11th annual San Diego Credit Union Poinsettia Bowl game welcomed the 8-4 Boise State University Broncos and the 5-3 Northern Illinois University Huskies at Qualcomm Stadium. This was the first time the two teams have met on gridiron. Boise State University went on to win BIG, 55-7.

This year the game was followed by the inaugural fireworks show, Stadium Spectacular, a first-of-its-kind display featuring pyrotechnics never before seen in North America.

The Festivities for the Poinsettia Bowl kicked off in downtown San Diego’s historic Gaslamp Quarter. Marching bands and spirit squads from the participating universities paraded from each end of 5th Avenue performing holiday classics, meeting up at Market Street for a heart-pounding Battle of the Bands!

The following week, the National Funding 38th annual Holiday Bowl game featured the USC Trojans vs. the Wisconsin Badgers at Qualcomm Stadium. The week-long event featured team days at SeaWorld, San Diego Zoo, Navy and Marine Corps luncheons and the Port of San Diego Big Bay Balloon Parade.

It marked the first trip to the Holiday Bowl for the Badgers who faced the reigning 2014 Holiday Bowl Champion Trojans, making their second appearance in the bowl game. Though it was a close game, Wisconsin went on to win a thriller, 23-21.

Old Town Trolley’s participation included trolley transportation for the famous “Balloon Platoon” for the 23rd Annual Port of San Diego Big Bay Balloon Parade. Recognized as “America’s Largest Balloon Parade,” the event features more giant helium-filled character balloons than any parade in the country.

Coronado, La Jolla and Ocean Beach Holiday Parades

by Erica Frost; Group Sales Manager

December was a time to be merry and bright and showcase a few of our different Trolleys in three local Holiday Parades that we participate in every year. There was the 40th annual Coronado Christmas parade and this year’s theme was “Making Seasides Bright!”. Old Town Trolley was representing in our Holly Jolly Trolley in the parade; a great way to promote our Holly Jolly Trolley tour! We also participated in the 58th annual La Jolla Holiday parade and their theme this year was “100 Years of Christmas Cheer”. It seemed like the perfect parade to showcase our Beach Cruiser Trolley as well as our pink Breast Cancer awareness Trolley. Lastly, we had the honor of hosting our Mayor, the Honorable Kevin Faulconer, on the Felicity white wedding Trolley for the 36th annual Ocean Beach Holiday Parade and their theme this year was “Joy to the Sea – 36 Years Celebrating OB”.

St. Vincent DePaul Village Children’s Holiday Party

by Sebastian Biagioni, Old Town Market Leasing Operations

30 children ages 5-12, living in a downtown shelter, joined us at the Old Town Market for our 12th annual St. Vincent DePaul Holiday party. The children enjoyed pizza, sodas, piñatas and holiday fun. The highlight of the visit was a gift to each child by Santa and Mrs. Claus. The children had filled out wish list cards earlier in the month so that Santa knew exactly what they wanted. Santa and Mrs.
Clause were played by our very own Christian Perez and Carmen Thulin. On the way home, the Trolley and its conductor Hatch took the children on an evening tour of holiday lights around the city.

For the children five years and under, Mr. and Mrs. Claus bring their gift to St. Vincent DePaul and personally deliver them!

A huge thank you to Trolley CASTmembers, Old Town Market Merchants, and staff as they all partnered together to make sure every child received a gift.

Over 150 children, with one or both parents, live at the downtown San Diego shelter. All 150 plus children at the shelter were given a personalized gift. The children’s ages ranged from infants to 17 years of age at the shelter. Jennifer Ryan, Children’s Services Program Manager, St. Vincent DePaul Village writes:

### 64th Anniversary Las Posadas

This centuries-old tradition is being celebrated in Old Town San Diego State Historic Park for the 64th consecutive year. The Park Merchants Association reenacted the biblical journey of Mary and Joseph through the town of Bethlehem. The event began in the afternoon with carolers and children’s choirs in the state park, with the live theatrical procession starting at Sundown. There was a piñata party for all the children in the park’s activity area. The Old Town Market was at the center of it all distributing and lighting candles throughout the night’s procession. The market was able to be the main point for donations and information.

### Holly Jolly Trolley Tours

by John Savage, Operations Manager

The 2015 Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley Tour excelled for the third year in a row! This year it increased 24%! The preshow in the Old Town Market place really sets the mood for our guests, and gets them ready for singing Christmas songs! Then it’s out to the Trolley for a Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley caravan. The highlight of the tour is Garrison Street in Point Loma with its spectacular houses and city views. The tour ends in Old Town and the song Feliz Navidad is the perfect ending! Everyone finishes on such a high note they are ready to ride again. A big thank you our Conductor Elves: Chris “Curly” Chiotras, Larry Usall, Patricia Vanderwerff, James Kressley, Melissa Sewell, Mike Devin, Patrick Nettles, Doug Alt and Doug Price.
Francisco “Frankie” Noguéz, is Safety First by cleaning oil spots in the trolley barn. THANK YOU FRANKIE!

The CAST enjoyed a fun happy hour out at the Kansas City BBQ, made famous from the movie Top Gun. Back row left to right: Jon Laws, Ricky Gomez, John Barton, Elena Garcia, Bob Ross, Victor Santana, Stacy Bridges and Nikki Meo-Cook. Front row seated left to right: Carmen Thulin, Steve Brooks (Owners: Cindy Blair and Martin Blair) We were invited to wonderful drinks and appetizers in appreciation for having the Kansas City BBQ on our tour’s points of interest. Martin and Cindy Blair really treated us like family. Thanks!

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

The USS Midway Visitor Center
by Rod LaBranche, Director of Travel Industry Sales

I am happy to announce that the USS Midway Visitor Center is now selling tickets through Trusted Tours & Attractions! The USS Midway Museum opened in 2004 and will break a record attendance of over 1.3 million visitors in 2015. The USS Midway is one of the longest-serving aircraft carriers in the United States Navy, operating from September 1945, just after World War II ended until 1992 when she was decommissioned and was the longest serving American aircraft carrier of the 20th century. Since June 2004, the USS Midway has been docked in San Diego Bay and has been transformed into one of the most visited ship museums in the world. Mark Berlin is the Director of Operations and oversees the Visitor Center. Mark used to be the GM at OTT San Diego AND OTT DC and Gary Miller who is the Manager of the Visitor Center was a past GM at OTT SD as well! Thanks to all at the USS Midway Museum for their great partnership!

Visitor Center Manager Gary Miller, Travel Industry Sales Manager Joe Wagstaff and Visitor Center Specialist Dale Boyer

While out in the bay, one of the SEALs was lucky enough to be greeted by a passing dolphin on the underwater bow camera submitted by Captain George Adams.

Surprise Visitor

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My name is Jerrale Tyjah Morris and I was born in San Diego, California. I absolutely love San Diego, it’s my home, but in my teen years I didn’t feel the same way. I personally believe very few people can appreciate the city they went through puberty in, which lead me on my journey around America. I moved to New Orleans, Louisiana when I was twenty one. I live to visit that city. It was amazing while I was there. One of the things that I’ve learned is if you’re moving to New Orleans get a job at a bar during Mardi Gras. You can have just as much fun and get paid for it! After I left New Orleans, I went to the Mid West. I wanted to see snow. I had never lived in snow before. Moved to Dayton, Ohio and Chicago. Had an amazing time in both cities. I eventually moved back home with a new found love and appreciation for this city.

I started working at Old Town Trolley in February 2014. I saw the employment opportunity online. I was a little confused because the interview process was slightly different than what I was used to. It was a group interview which was slightly animated. We were asked about our previous work history. After the group interview we were given a script told to memorize as much as we could and we would be filed giving them a presentation of the script. I was extremely nervous. I stuttered a few times and “figuratively” kicked myself after. A few days later John Savage called me back and my time at OTT San Diego started. It’s been a really great experience so far.

What is your greatest fear?
Drowning. That said, I love swimming.

What is your favorite occupation?
I love the idea of being a wildlife photographer.

What do you deplore most in your friends?
I have a really eclectic group of friends from all walks of life. They are all really great people but I would say we all have the ability to communicate our feelings good and bad effectively. So we avoid serious arguments and when they do happen we can actually resolve them. I surround myself with extremely understanding people.

If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?
I think I’d come back as a Main Coon kitten. They are the most loving and cuddling cats, but they are still cats and extremely mischievous.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A great dinner with close friends amazing conversation and no cell phones. I don’t allow phones at the dinner table so I am lucky to experience perfect happiness a lot.
WASHINGTON, DC

It’s Our 30th Year Everyone!
by Eric Holmes, General Manager

I often wonder how different my life would be if Chris Belland and Ed Swift III had never decided to purchase those two cut down bread trucks, with the boat trailers. It was because of their vision and passion for the history of our great country, that on July 4th, 1986 Old Town Trolley Tours of Washington, DC Inc., opened its doors for business. Washington, DC, the Capital City of the United States. A relatively small city at 69 sq. miles, sitting on the north bank of the Potomac River. This great city is the home to all three branches of our federal government, the White House, Supreme Court and the Capitol Building. Who better to tell millions of people, from all over the world, the fascinating stories about the great men and women who helped shape this country than Historic Tours of America.

Old Town Trolley Tours of Washington, DC will be celebrating 30 years of storytelling in Washington, DC on July 4, 2016. Over the past 45 years, Chris, Ed III, and others, have built the largest land based sightseeing company in North America. Washington, DC’s contribution to this magnificent company includes; Old Town Trolley Tours, DC Ducks, Arlington National Cemetery Tours, and the Washington Welcome Center. Here in Washington, we try to always provide the historically oriented vacation experiences for our guests. It doesn’t matter if they are on land, water, or in the air. Well we don’t have an air component to DC’s operations just yet, but I wouldn’t put it past them to try. If you don’t think it’s possible, just check your CASTmember handbook under section B of our philosophy, it says “everyone has the right to fail, but no one has the right not to try”.

The Old Town Trolley brand has been a staple in the Washington, DC tourism community for 30 years. Over the years I have personally seen several other companies come and go. So what has made OTT endure the ups and downs of the hospitality industry in the most visited city in our country? How have we managed to stick around through, Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama’s Presidencies? I believe it’s our continued dedication to guests’ satisfaction, superior vehicles, and the need to provide great service that has made the difference.

There are so many other great things that will be happening in 2016. Arlington National Cemetery Tours just celebrated its one year anniversary and the DC Ducks will have two new additions to its fleet quacking around the streets, and on the Potomac River. Loretta, and Dwon just about came to tears when the first of 4 new Chance Sunliner II Trams arrive in December. I can’t wait to see the first fully loaded tram leave the Welcome Center. Captain Larry and his team are hard at work preparing Disco Duck, and Duck Tape for their debut in April of this year.

Last but not least Abe Burgos, our new Director of Sales and Operations is hard at work preparing to start DC’s latest venture. I can’t share all the details just yet, but trust me it’s going to be really big. I promise we’ll officially let the cat out of the bag next month.

Until then... don’t forget to say congratulations DC, and happy 30th birthday!

It’s not too early, we’re celebrating all year long.
Feeling Strong and Fit for Duty
by Eric Whitehead, Head Conductor

As the colder weather comes into play here in Our Nation’s Capital, we have to bundle up more, we start to move a bit slower and we tend to be less active. Unlike our fellow CASTmembers across the country in warmer climates, to stay active, our choices include going for a walk in the mall, renting an exercise DVD AT HOME or the dreaded, “shoveling snow”. Snow... Another subject for another day... As CASTmembers, we have to know how to take care of ourselves so that we can be ready to tackle whatever is thrown our way. Here in DC, we have a number of seasoned CASTmembers who do an outstanding job at what they do. And they do it by staying in the best shape possible.

We all need to create some sort of regimen for ourselves that will keep us strong during the cold Washington, DC winter months. Take it from Friendly Uncle Dave, stay healthy, stay strong, eat well and stay hydrated and you will always be fit for duty.

Got that Right Attitude
by Abe Burgos, Director of Sales and Transportation

Zig Ziggler once stated, “it’s your attitude not your aptitude that determines your altitude.” And although I am not a huge Zig Ziggler fan, I can certainly understand this sentiment. As New Depot Sales Manager Suly Cruz and I are doing our best to recruit the greatest sales team in HTA (no offense, I’m a bit partial), I can’t help but think of this quote.

The sales training team can teach sales techniques. We can teach prospecting tools. We can teach all the back office stuff that is needed to do the job. But what we cannot teach is attitude.

Every time at bat, a baseball player goes to the plate knowing statistically he is not going to get a base hit. Joe DiMaggio hit the ball only 32% of the time. Babe Ruth struck out almost two times as much as he hit home runs. Michael Jordan is remembered for the 25 times he made the winning basket, and the 26 times he missed the winning basket are forgotten. But what makes these the greats at their sport? It’s not the last time that matters, it’s the next time.

And that’s sales. It’s all attitude. This job is 20% what happens to you and 80% how you view it. The better the attitude, the better the salesperson.

Baby Fever
by Eric Chapman, Operations Manager

I don’t know if it is in the water or the Mello Yello, but babies are dropping at Old Town Trolley Washington, DC. So, if you are trying to have a baby, or even thinking about having a baby, maybe you should come to Washington and have a drink. On the other hand, if having a baby is the last thing on the planet you are interested in then... don’t come to DC.

In order of birth... I present to you:

MaKenzie J’Nyah Chapman May 5, 2015
Daughter of Operations Manager – Eric Chapman

Meyaire Kyree Godbolt June 5, 2015
Son of Sales Representative – Tiffany Godbolt
Grandson of Maintenance Tech – Mikel Godbolt

Zoe Jewel Tate July 18, 2015
Daughter of Conductor – Juliet “Jewel” Tate

Harleigh May Ball August 21, 2015
Daughter of Conductor – Jeremiah “J-Ball” Ball

London Johan Williams November 1, 2015
Grandson of Conductor – Elene “Ms. Ellie” Williams

Alvin Leon Westray, Jr. November 17, 2015
Daughter of Sales Representative – Monae Gudger
Granddaughter of First Impressions – Monique Byers Gudger

Oliver Todd Hamilton December 29, 2015
Son of Conductor – Jamie “J-Me” Hamilton

Rumor mill has it that 2016 maybe another year of the baby in OTT-WDC. It can’t go without saying, they are some cute babies.
MISSISSIPPI POT ROAST

In The Kitchen With...
Jake Hartman, Safety Officer

MISSISSIPPI POT ROAST
Easy Crock Pot Recipe

Ingredients
• 3.5-5 lb. chuck roast
• cooking oil
• pepper
• 1 ranch packet
• 1 onion soup packet (or au jus packet)
• 1 stick butter (1/2 cup)
• 7-10 pepperoncini peppers

Directions
1. Season the meat with pepper (I wouldn’t salt it, plenty of salt in this recipe already). Set a large skillet to medium-high heat. Add the oil, when the oil is hot, add the roast. Brown on all sides. Add the roast to a 4-quart or larger slow cooker.
2. Add the ranch packet and onion soup packet on top of the roast.
3. Add the stick of butter, and peppers on top of the seasonings.
4. Cover and cook on LOW for 8 hours.
5. Shred and serve on rice or mashed potatoes.
6. Enjoy!

Prep time: 15 mins
Cook time: 8 hours
Total time: 8 hours 15 mins

Wreaths Across America
by Loretta Pinkney, Arlington National Cemetery Operations Manager

Each year for the last 20 years, Wreaths Across America has placed wreaths at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as other veterans cemeteries and locations across the country. Wreaths Across America has a mission to Remember, Honor and Teach. This year, December 12th was Wreaths-In, and almost 50,000 volunteers came out to assist with laying a wreath at every grave and niche. Arlington National Cemetery Tours assisted the process, providing transportation for all the drivers who parked their rigs in the cemetery overnight. Over 60 tractor-trailers were needed to carry all the wreaths, which are paid for with donations. With over 600 acres, the cemetery has almost 300,000 headstones and niches which contain the remains of over 400,000 service men and women and their loved ones. It was our pleasure to be able to volunteer our services to this noble cause.

The Library of Congress
DECEMBER

Howard Winfield, 11 years
Elene Williams, 8 years
William Ruddick, 6 years
Tanya Byers, 5 years
Jeremiah Ball, 3 years

Ducks
Michael Rehn, 12 years

Arlington National Cemetery Tours

Ronald Dickson, 8 years
John Morrison, 3 years
Cyprian Riley, 1 year
Babatunde Tejan, 1 year
Amanda Varnam, 1 year
Mildred Clark, 1 year
Stephanie Graves, 1 year
Elisabet Tadesse, 1 year
Cathy Young, 1 year
Omar Haimanchandra, 1 year
John Jeffress, 1 year
Jacqueline Willett, 1 year
Tameika Smith, 1 year

January

Jose Melgar, 16 years
Jason Klein, 14 years
Stephen Martin, 13 years
Elton Smith, 11 years
Nazha Salhi, 11 years
David Willingham, 6 years
Eric Chapman, 4 years
Terri Southern, 3 years
Reginald Genus, 1 year
Laettia Carroll, 1 year
James Garrett, 1 year
Channelle Palmer, 1 year
Johnathan Postell, 1 year
Steven Valentin, 1 year
Mark Jackson, 1 year
James Dawkins, 1 year
Willis Green, 1 year

Arlington National Cemetery Tours

Mona Lisa Hooks, 10 years
James Verticho, 2 years
Michael Harrison, 1 year
Catherine Lawrence, 1 year
Torri Sharp, 1 year
Rashard Williams, 1 year
Tracy Richardson, 1 year
Kevin Shelton, 1 year

Background

I was born and grew up in Akron, Ohio. I have a twin brother and two older half brothers. I am the youngest. I share a Valentine's Day birthday with my twin, my oldest half brother, and my dad. After I graduated high school, I moved to Cincinnati, Ohio to attend College of Mount St. Joseph. There, I earned a B.A. in History and played NCAA D3 Women's Lacrosse. The only next step for me was graduate school.

I moved to Washington D.C. to attend George Washington University. While at GWU, I completed two internships, one at the Textile Museum and the other at the Supreme Court of the United States. Throughout high school, college and grad school, I hated public speaking. Presentations caused my hands and limbs to shake uncontrollably and made me sick to my stomach. When words came out of my mouth they were jumbled, inaudible, and unclear. A requirement of the SCOTUS internship was conducting lectures for the public and tours for guests of the justices. I hated it until I realized I loved it and excelled at it.

After a year and a half, I earned my M.A. in American Studies with a concentration in museums and material culture. I moved to Norfolk, Virginia for love. I worked at Jamestown Settlement educating children on the first English settlement and at Cape Henry Lighthouse enlightening visitors on the first federally funded lighthouse in the U.S. Love didn't last so I move back to Washington D.C. The first job offer I received was with Arlington National Cemetery Tours Inc. The rest is history.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Being happy, healthy and successful.

Which living person do you most admire?
All female service members, especially the two who recently completed ranger school and the current female Tomb Sentinel in training. They are examples of everything a woman can be powerful, smart, strong and brave.

What or who is the love of your life?
Lacrosse. I would give anything to play again at a competitive level.

What three things will you always find in your refrigerator?
Cheese, yogurt, and eggs.

Who are your favorite writers?
Allen Ginsberg, Diane Di Prima, Charles Dickens, Virginia Woolf, Bret Easton Ellis, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and F. Scott Fitzgerald
City Scoop
by Charles Brazil; General Manager

As you will see in the submissions that follow, this was a remarkable start to our “off season” with unseasonably beautiful weather including an 80+ degree Christmas Day. I am certainly not complaining, especially since this beautiful weather also brought with it many lovely guests seeking to take advantage of the opportunity to wear shorts while waiting for Santa and to take a trolley tour while they were at it. On the heels of a weird October that saw I-95 closing for a period of time in South Carolina, this little bump during what is normally our quietest time was very welcome. In addition to the unusual additional ridership, we continued to remain busy behind the scenes, welcoming new additions to both our Operational and Sales Leadagement staff and our front line as well, as we prepare for our season (which it seems has never quite left us, but will return in force come February). We also have begun work in earnest on an HTA attraction to arrive in Savannah sometime in 2016 (details to follow). Personally, I bid a fond farewell to Steve Burress and the rest of the Nashville Operational Crew who had spent a bunch of time at our operation preparing for the opening of our “lucky #7” in April of this year. It was a sincere pleasure to work with these folks and to see the genuine enthusiasm they have for our company and the new venture they are set to spearhead. Their sincere praise for our operation filled many of us with pride. Sometimes we lose sight of the great work we do on a day in, day out basis, and to have folks come in and remark on it reminds us to appreciate it and the many other blessings we are fortunate to have doing good work with great people. Now I’ve got to get back to work on this budget, and preparations for what will assuredly be a dynamic year. Thanks to all and here’s hoping you had a festive holiday and experience a productive and successful 2016.

Operations
by Jon Watkins; Operations Manager

Off season is in full swing in Savannah and I believe you could roll a bowling ball down River Street and not hit anyone. That being said we are still working hard at getting our shot at every tourist in town. We had a phenomenal season this year and look forward to even better results in 2016. Our Thanksgiving week was really great but Christmas was off the charts. The week between Christmas and New Year’s we carried an additional 1,503 riders over budget and our ridership budgets were pretty high every day. Everyone did their part to the highest standard and we operated like a fine Swiss watch. All of the students from the Savannah College of Art and Design have just returned to town after their holiday break and are providing their usual driving challenges as we navigate the route. A big thanks goes out to everyone that worked on Thanksgiving and Christmas day this year. We had our usual pot luck meal on those days and want to say how much we appreciated Bruce and Jane who prepared the turkeys and ham. They were delicious again this year.

Holly Jolly just finished up this year and we can now celebrate. We partnered with the Davenport House and the Westin hotel again this year. The Davenport provides the guests a look at how Christmas was celebrated in Savannah in the early 1800’s. The Westin this year put together a gourmet hot chocolate experience and also had their annual gingerbread house exhibit. The guests loved the gourmet hot chocolate this year and the free souvenir cup that we provided was a plus. Gratitude and applause to everyone who worked the Holly Jolly tour and made the holiday season that much brighter for our guests.

We are looking forward to getting two more of the new 28 passenger coaches the end of January. This will bring us to four coaches. We are trying to compete in our market for non-trolley charter transportations and these vehicles are key to that effort. We will be sending 5 of our Enterprise vehicles to Stephen and his crew in the new Nashville operation soon to help get them up and running.

Recruiting is in full swing for our 2016 Conductor class. We had our first job fair on January 5th at Savannah Tech and we will have another toward the end of January. So far we have nine new Conductors in the pipeline or have completed training so far.

Credit Card Program:
A new credit card program is being piloted for use by our guests. It will allow them easy access to purchase tickets on the spot and provide the operator with the ability to capture transaction data to better analyze their customers. The program will be implemented sometime in early 2016.
Greetings from sunny Savannah. The average daytime temperature for our lovely city was about 70 degrees during December. Exceptionally warm for this time of year. Of course with the tropical climate, came the visitors creating a record for ridership for the month. Our drivers responded in kind, delivering numerous quality tours whether Holly Jolly or historical during the month without an accident. I was very proud of them. This came on the heels of our National Safety Conference in November where Jim Lamberson introduced us to a new way, via computer, to report our accidents to Liberty. I sat on pins and needles throughout the month terrifed that I would have to report one and input copious amounts of info into the Liberty claim pages. Thanks conductors for relieving my angst. Now we need to get through January.

In regard to the National Safety Conference, my hat is off to Jim and Bill Meagher for all the hard work they put into organizing such a project. Jim presented us with a new Safety Officer Handbook coaching us on our specific duties; a very thorough manuscript touching all areas of our safety program. Bill delivered an educational talk on reporting and reducing CAST injuries which is our main shortcoming in Savannah. I did not know so much work went into working the claims. My project for 2016 is reducing these claims. Phil Lambert, Safety Officer from Key West, presented the on-line claim reporting. Phil will become my new best friend.

Probably the best part of the conference was meeting the safety officers from the other operations. It was good to know that they are actually real people. Over the years, our only contact was the safety teleconference each month. Now we have faces to go with the voices. This put my job in better perspective as I now know the other safety officers have the same challenges that I have here in Savannah. I was certain all my trials and tribulations were unique.

Next up for us is the yearly extravaganza, our CAST party. Our old Carbarn is transformed into Disneyesque atmosphere by our Groups and Charter Manager, Marcie Covington. The theme this year is mardi gras. Most importantly though is that the Safety Awards Recipients are introduced amid much fanfare. This year we are recognizing Irenette Clark with nine years, Michael Smith with seven, and Carl Williams and Jack Barrett with six each. Too numerous to mention (thankfully) are the rest that round out the 90% of our drivers that have completed the very difficult task of driving accident free in Savannah in 2015. What makes me wonder is, “What if you had all conductors named Irenette?”

Happy New Year!

Greetings from the Grave
by Garry Patnode: Ghosts & Gravestones Manager

This winter has been amazing for Ghosts and Gravestones. The combination of fantastic weather, great sales from the National Call Center and management of our available tours all contributed to a very busy December. We have been able to keep many of our staff busy through our quieter months and our guests have enjoyed the “open air trolleys” right through Christmas!

December also marked the transition from the Juliette Gordon Low House to the Andrew Low House. The addition of this new stop on our tour has been met with a resounding thumbs up from guests. Our CAST trained very hard on the new script and route and we were fortunate enough to secure a trolley stop directly out front of the house. Our guests are offered exclusive nighttime entry into the house and are allowed to take non-flash photography, all while hearing about some of the “paranormal goings on” of this famous property.

Human Resources
by Renee Merce: HR Manager

Even though we saw temperatures in the mid-70s, we knew winter was coming! And that means the hustle of Recruitment Season is upon us. Several ads and two job fairs later, we were lucky enough to add some fabulous new personalities to our family. We are now ready for – and eagerly looking forward to – the upcoming season, providing the best entertainment Savannah has to offer! January also hosted our Annual After-Holiday Party. A big thanks goes out to Marcie Larkin (Groups & Charters Manager) for pulling her strings and pulling the event together for us. As always, it was a huge success, fun was had by all.

Groups and Charters
by Marcie Covington: Group Sales Manager

Tis the Season in Our Trolleys! It’s not Christmas until you have attended a couple of things:

Savannah’s Lighted Christmas Parade is an annual tradition and local favorite that takes place during Christmas on the River every year. The parade marks the official arrival of St. Nick and takes place in the Historic District, starting on the west end of River Street, traveling throughout downtown before ending in City Market. This year’s parade had over 40 community groups and businesses with multiple units of decorated cars, trucks, floats, and of course our trolleys. Even the walking groups were wrapped in Christmas lights!

The Savannah Theatre always rings in the holiday season with their holiday extravaganza, “A Christmas Tradition.” This is a favorite Savannah event for all the locals and visitors.

Vanessa and Bryce are making the jump from ghost Conductor to daytime Conductor and we welcome them. Thanks to Kayla Black and all of the folks that help with this vital training program to ensure that we have the talent we need when season gets here.
The Nation’s Storyteller

alike, this show is a theatrical masterpiece that incorporates all of the Christmas magic audiences love into stories of love, laughter and enchantment. This is an absolute must see!

We are so excited the Civic Center decided to bring back its annual family-oriented ice skating. Not that this Southern Gal can skate much! So, you snow birds bring your skates and show us how it’s really done!

Hope ya’ll had a very Merry Christmas and have a Happy New Year!

Vendor Life
by “Colonel” Bob Hunter; Human Resources - Vendor Rep

Our vendor department started the year with the addition of Cathy Vaccari to our team. Cathy has been a concierge with the company for three years and everyone is excited for her move into sales. She joins an already talented team that also includes Stephen Plunk and Craig Armstrong. We have many exciting plans in store for this year and I am looking forward to lots of new growth in our department as we implement new strategies and redouble our efforts on all fronts.

Depot Sales
by Jim Rafferty; Depot Sales Manager

As we continue through our off season, we had a very successful November and December. We have had unseasonably warm weather so far through the end of the year with average temperatures in the mid 70’s. Even Christmas Day was 81. We may pay for it in January and February.

We begin every November with The Rock’n’Roll Marathon. We had great success at the runner registration point at The Westin for two days. Sale shave increased yearly and we will be expanding our offerings next year. Christmas week has always been a very strong week in Savannah and this year did not disappoint. With great weather all week long we far exceeded our ridership goals. Our annual Holly Jolly Tour was a great success as we expanded to running seven days a week during the holiday season.

Congratulations to our October Sales Rep of the Month Wanda Raimo who excels every day. Wanda is well on her way to her third consecutive Half Million Dollar Club.

The sales staff continue to impress with sales and guest service. They continue to do a great job in and day out. I would like to welcome Ashley Gnann to the sales staff and Douglas Wisdom to the Concierge ranks. Before we know it season will be upon us. We are ready!!

Training
by Kayla Black; Training Manager

It’s the dead of winter in Savannah, but the training season is hot, hot, hot. We’ve started off the calendar year with a bang—already we’ve had nine great rookie conductors start with us and we’ll have quite a few more come through the doors before season arrives in a few short weeks. Congratulations to our eight rookies of the Class of 2015 on their one year anniversary - you guys did an awesome job navigating your first year with OTT Savannah!

DECEMBER
Linda Ferguson, 6 years
Garry Patrick, 5 years
Jennifer Laraway, 2 years
Travis Spangenberg, 2 years
Oscar Floyd, 2 years
Jenny Shear, 1 year
George Hickman, 1 year
Scott Leekley, 1 year
Sherree Teston, 1 year

JANUARY
William Haegelin, 9 years
Alexis Alexander, 9 years
Larry Strong, 6 years
James Beam, 5 years
Sharon Gray, 5 years
Donald Hendrix, 5 years
Jody Leyva, 5 years
Paul Chauvin III, 4 years
Timothy Conway, 4 years
Gregory Beach, 4 years
Cathy Vaccari, 3 years
Ralph Cowart Jr., 3 years
Oscar Floyd, 3 years
Levinie Wooten, 3 years
Michael Harris, 3 years
Dennis Pellegrino, 2 years
James Fields, 2 years
Brenda Hankinson, 2 years
Michele Prince, 2 years
Khamilla Shellman, 2 years
Theresa Floyd, 2 years
Mark Spradley, 1 year
Kaitlyn Geertz, 1 year
Ashleigh Bowers, 1 year
Richard Bruneau, 1 year
BACKGROUND

I was born in Baxley, Georgia; a no Starbucks, one traffic light kind of a town. When community theatre wasn’t enough, I enrolled at Valdosta State University. I earned a Bachelors of Fine Arts in Theatre with a minor in physics. Don’t ask why, it never made sense to anyone else either.

After graduation I went on to work in professional theatre for the next five years. I spent as much time back stage as I did on stage. I’ve been a performer, a seamstress, a dresser, a costume designer, and a wardrobe mistress. The only problem with working in theatre is moving from contract to contract. When I decided to put down roots I moved to Savannah.

I applied for every job I could find. I had taken my first ghost tour when I was twelve and since then it had been a dream to give them one day. When I got the call from Old Town Trolley, it was a dream come true. Especially when you factor in that I had accidentally applied for a Conductor position not a Ghost Host. In February, I’ll have been working here for three years. I’ve learned every facet of the Ghost & Gravestones Tour, and I’ve loved every minute of it.

Which talent would you most like to have?
I would love to be able to sing. And anyone who has heard me try, would really love for me to be able to sing.

If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?
I would be a cat. They have all of the humor and intelligence of people, but with far more napping time.

If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city, where would it be?
I’d live in Malmo, Sweden. The city is full of history, and beauty.

What is your most treasured possession?
I have a Claddagh ring that was given to me when I was 11. I’ve worn it every day for 20 years. I feel awkward without it.

If you could choose one reality TV show to be on, what would it be?
Project Runway. I’ve been making my own costumes and clothing for years. I’d love to see how far I could get.
After the Holiday – Holiday Party – We held our annual Holiday Party. With the addition of the Executive Offices, IT Dept., and the National Call Center to St. Augustine, we needed to move our annual event to a new location, one that could hold us all. This year’s party was held at the Treasury on the Plaza, St. Augustine’s premier event venue. What a beautiful location it was with the old bank vault turned swanky bar. The Vault bar was featured on the Today Show the following morning after our party.

We had The Chris Thomas Band, a 12 piece orchestra, perform for our guests with the sounds of Sinatra, Martin, a little Motown and even a wonderful rendition of Wilson Pickett’s “Mustang Sally”. We added some professional dancers from Monarch Ballroom and Dance Studio to help get the crowd out on the dance floor and it worked like a charm! We even had quite a conga line going with everyone. The food was fabulous and prepared by the Aviles Restaurant at the Hilton Bayfront. This year we did a three hour cocktail hour instead of the traditional sit down dinner and everyone loved it! It allowed us to easily socialize, dance, and just relax. We announced our “Of the Year” Awards, but kept the business to a minimum so everyone could enjoy the band and have fun! It was an overwhelming hit and everyone agrees this was the best party yet!

Cookie Program

Melissa Mezick (vendor rep) and Dave Chatterton dropped off goodies to many of our hotels and B&B’s in town as a thank you for their support through the year. This year the Voices of St. Augustine Carolers went along with them. The Carolers surprised many guests having breakfast by singing their favorite Christmas songs. What a fun and festive way to show our appreciation! Frosted by Darla did an amazing job preparing the goodies.

ST. AUGUSTINE

Nights of Lights

We had a record breaking year! St. Augustine saw more visitors in 2015 than ever before. We broke records night after night. This year we brought in Beak and Skiff’s Famous Apple Cider from New York and our guests loved it! Before Nights of Lights was over with, we gave out more than 61,300 sugar cookies and over 1,290 gallons of apple cider.

Unofficial Mascot

Ellington likes to stop by and say hi every morning before our briefing as he takes his morning constitutional with his Mom. Today Sheriff Otis aka Museum Manager, Stephen Mitchell deputized Ellington. He was so excited to earn his badge!
Welcome Center Opens

St. Augustine is now home to a new Welcome Center! This new building has been the talk of the town for the past year as people wondered what was being built. Welcome Center West, located at the entry corridor of St. Augustine, on U.S. 1, is a state of the art building built in the old cracker style Florida is known for. It has an iconic water wheel in front that immediately draws guests’ attention. There are several lighted pole signs that help alert our guests to our location who arrive after dark. We have a phone bank, a children’s desk for children to sit and play at while their parents browse the racks of brochures and speak to our sales reps to plan out their day. Not to mention a beautiful view of the San Sebastian River behind it. We have a great wrap around porch for guests to sit and rock in our old timey rocking chairs. It has been an immediate success for St. Augustine.

Ghosts & Gravestones New Tour

St. Augustine Ghosts and Gravestones rolled out a new ghost tour! The Trolley of Doom will now take their passengers to a trip inside Potter’s Wax Museum, located in the Old Drugstore, one of St. Augustine’s haunted buildings.

Built on the edge of the Tolomoto Cemetery sits one of St. Augustine’s most recognizable buildings, the Old Drug Store. Unexplained noises, cold spots and shadows reportedly moving on their own make up only a few of the hundreds of documented supernatural occurrences. Learn the secrets to these hauntings that have plagued the Old Drug Store from the time it first opened in 1887.

Afterwards get an exclusive nighttime experience inside of Potter’s Wax Museum’s Chamber of Horrors for a unique retelling of the famed pirate, Andrew Ranson’s, gruesome execution.

Hat Contest

We held our Hat Contest in December. We started this contest as a way to encourage everyone to dress up their hats and make them festive! This year we let Facebook members post their votes by either voting or “liking” the picture of their favorite. Jennifer Johnson won First Place with her Elf on the Beach wearing the magical viewing glasses as the Holly Jolly Trolley rolled past with the lights on. 2nd place went to Jacqui Carlsten and 3rd place went to Chip Sullivan. We had so many great hats! 🎉

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DECEMBER
Robert Makin, 9 years
Kathy Burnett, 5 years
Charlotte Harris, 3 years
Jennifer Johnson, 2 years

ATTRACTIONS
Terry Herbert, 4 years
Michelle Fredette, 3 years

JANUARY
Teresa Akras, 15 years
Humberto Cabanes, 8 years
Thomas O’Brien, 6 years
William Chambers, 5 years
Kevin Baetz, 5 years
Noble Lester, 5 years
Davey Hairston, 4 years
Lisa Romanelli, 2 years
Juan Salinas Gomez, 2 years
Adam Fischer, 1 year
John Holmes, 1 year

ATTRACTIONS
William McComb, 7 years
Linda Manz, 2 years
Stephanie Horstmann, 2 years
Taylor Gaskins, 1 year
With our Old Town Trolley Beach Bus, there is a stop right in front of the Best Western Seaside Beach Hotel, which makes it very convenient for guests to board with no hassle of having to drive anywhere in their cars. The Best Western Seaside Hotel is one of the newly renovated hotels on St. Augustine Beach and has 48 standard rooms and two suites.

The lush landscaping of the property sure makes the guests feel like they have just arrived on some tropical Island, far away from everything. Marcy, the General Manager, is all about her guest’s experience while they are staying with her. The front desk staff is above courteous, warm, friendly and will do whatever it takes to make that guest have the most special experience during their stay.

This St Augustine Florida hotel features spaciously-appointed guest rooms and suites, each complete with a microwave, refrigerator, cable satellite television and free high-speed Internet access. Guests at this hotel in Saint Augustine will wake each morning to a complimentary continental breakfast. Additional amenities include an outdoor swimming pool and hot tub, guest laundry and business services.

Background
I was born and raised and spent the majority of my life here in beautiful St. Augustine. One of my favorite things is waking up to the salty smell of the marsh on low tide and I cannot imagine living away from the ocean. This is my third year with OTT St. Augustine and I can honestly say it’s been the best decision of my working career. Two of my work days are spent as the assistant for HR/Payroll manager and the other three days I work as the assistant to the AR/AP manager. My co-workers are like my extended family and it’s a pleasure to work and laugh with such amazing people. My greatest joys are my five children (three biological, two step). Raising five children brings multiple challenges and they keep me on my toes, but they continue to teach me something new each day. I’m blessed to have my best friend as the love of my life, my fiancé Michael, who embodies everything I’ve ever wanted. When I’m not at work you can find me out soaking up the sun while roaming the creeks off the intercostal waterway chasing red drum, trout, and flounder.

What three things will you always find in your refrigerator?
Datil pepper sauce (homemade of course)
Real butter (it’s the best)
Beer (the perfect end to a long day)

What do you consider your hero?
My grandfather- the best man I have ever known

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Delacroix, Louisiana- popping corks on a red drum fishing charter.

What is your greatest fear?
Spiders – they creep me out.
HISTORIC TOURS OF AMERICA HOSTS
SEASON KICK OFF PARTY
Holiday Happenings
John Welby, General Manager

Although December is typically a slow month, this year we saw a spike in ridership for the month, carrying a total of 7,318 guests. That represents an increase of 11.7% over last year, month-to-date...way to go OTT Boston!

On Tuesday, December 8th we held our annual Holiday Party at the Summer Shack Restaurant in the Back Bay. This was the third year in a row we held the party at the Summer Shack and, once again, everyone had a fantastic time. It was great to see everyone dressed in their holiday finest, having a great time and enjoying each other’s company. We were delighted to have co-owner and world-renowned chef, Jasper White, himself serving the Cast in the buffet line, an honor not bestowed on every group. The folks at the Summer Shack pulled out all the stops for us, so I need to say a big “Thank you” to Jasper White, Jeff Dugan and the entire team at the restaurant, you guys rock!

Awards and presentations were kept to a minimum so we could get more time for dinner and dancing. But, we did take time to recognize some CASTmembers for their outstanding accomplishments during the year. Conductors without accidents were recognized for their safe driving skills, not an easy task in a city like Boston. We also crowned (actually we used sequined Santa hats this year) the “of-the-year” winners in each category. Congratulations to the following: Tim Mitchell, Rookie of the Year; Phil Ribeiro, Sales Rep of the Year; Bob Regan, Conductor of the Year; Meg “Fiona” Feczko, Actor of the Year and Aldwin Perodin, Supporting CASTmember of the Year.

As always, the music was provided by conductor, Stephen Kent. Thank you Stephen for always taking care of us, you never disappoint. Adding to the entertainment this year were guest singing performances by two of our own. Conductor, Elaine “Mata Jones” Orsillo delighted the CAST with a set of her favorite songs and when she was done she had everyone on the dance floor. The big surprise in the entertainment area came from veteran Sales Rep, Fred Gefteas who took the mic and belted out a perfect rendition of Elvis Presley’s “Falling In Love”. Who knew Fred could sing?

A great party like this could not have happened without the hard work and dedication of Michael “The Professor” Chandler. Thank you Michael for taking care of all the details.

January ushers in the start of the Chocolate Tour season, which began on January 9th. It runs every Saturday until April 9th. This year’s version is a little different than in years past since we now have a new partner, Ghiradelli’s at Quincy Market where guests are given a brief lesson on chocolate making. From there guests are escorted upstairs for one of Ghiradelli’s world-famous hot fudge sundaes. Thank you to Steven Johnson, Meg Feczko and Michael Chandler for working out all the details.

Although I hesitate to even say it for fear of jinxing us, I think it is important to say thank you to Mother Nature and the trolley gods for smiling on Boston so far this winter. It’s been fairly mild and very little of that evil four-letter word that begins with “s” and ends with “w”. We got our fill last year, so it’s totally fine with me if we don’t get any this year. Who would have guessed that DC got over two feet and Boston would get just a few inches out of the recent storm.
Celtics Medical Center Charter

Sue Pye, Safety Officer/Trainer

I love driving trolleys in December because I get to do some really fun Charters. My month starts out with a fun weekend driving the Mayor and his entourage around the city to light the neighborhood trees. I have written about this before if you want to look up past NST. The charter that I am writing about today is one of my all-time favorites. Each year we get a call from Rosanne Mercer of Mercer Public Relations, asking for a couple of trolleys which we are happy to supply. This is a group effort between Old Town Trolley, Top of the Hub/Skywalk, Boston Medical Center and The Boston Celtics. Myself and another conductor (this year it was Matty “Capt’ Matty” Taylor) head down to Boston Medical Center and pick up a group of outpatient kids and their parents and bring them to the Skywalk Observatory. There they are greeted downstairs usually by a group of clowns (yes real clowns) who escort them up to the observatory on the 50th floor. Once at the top, they are greeted by more clowns and some of the doctors and nurses that take care of them. The backdrop is amazing with views of Boston from 50 stories up. By the time that I park the trolley and head up the kids are already playing all kinds of games and eating food prepared especially with them in mind. Members of the Boston Celtics, the coaching staff, the Celtic Dancers (Cheerleaders) and of course “Lucky the Leprechaun” show up to play games and enjoy food too. The kid-friendly food prepared by the Top of the Hub chefs includes things like chicken tenders, tator tots, mini cheese burgers with fixings on the side and mini hotdogs. There were ice cream stations set up as well.

It is so cool to see the Celtic players sitting with the kids and playing Jenga, or playing Basketball against the kids at the basketball free throw game. There are games of air hockey between the players and the kids and even a Nintendo Wii station set up to play tennis. I think my favorite moment this year was when Celtics Forward, Jonas Jerebka (#8), was playing Wii with three boys. The screen was set up with three boys and one girl and the boys playing found it very funny when Jonas discovered that his player on the game was the girl. The boys just cracked up.

As you might imagine there were lots of pictures being taken and there was even the opportunity to get your picture with a Championship Trophy. I thought this was pretty cool as the trophy that was there this year was from the 80’s the era of Larry Bird, DJ Johnson and Danny Ainge, to name a few.

Santa was visiting with the kids, the clowns were entertaining, and you could even get your face painted. This year I had a snowman painted on my cheek. After a while it was time for the highlight of the day, which most people would think that this was Santa giving out gifts, however the real highlight is the sing-along with the Boston Celtics, Coaches and Dancers. It is a good thing that most are playing Basketball because singing is not the strong suit for many, but they did have fun and they tried hard. I will say though that they would pull kids up to help them sing and some of them were very talented.

By the time the singing and gift giving is over it is time for the kids to get back on the trolleys and head back over to the hospital so they can head home. On the way to and from the event, I have Christmas songs playing and get the kids to sing with me on the trolley as well. The kids leave with a nice Christmas gift, lots of pictures and autographs and most importantly fun memories.

As I said at the beginning to this, I really enjoy this charter, the kids just love it too and it is great to see these kids that usually go to the hospital to be poked and prodded, having fun with the nurses and doctors that take care of them. I have been doing this for so long that I have actually seen some of these kids grow up.

Hope everyone had a happy and healthy holiday.
A round of applause goes out to Frank Gallagher, Boston’s top eTicket vendor for 2015. Frank has been a huge supporter of Old Town Trolley Tours for fifteen years. Frank is an amazing concierge. He believes that a concierge’s priority is to serve their guests. He said the concierge is always a better resource than any recommendation found on the internet. When a concierge is partnered with Old Town Trolley Tours plus Trusted Tour & Attractions, not only will the guests get the best advice but also the best value for their tourist dollars. According to Frank, while the Freedom Trail is a beautiful walk, Old Town Trolley Tours is the best two hours a guest can spend. He feels that people enjoy the tour more when it comes recommended from the concierge desk than from some unknown person online.

Frank knows how to make a lasting impression with his guests. While interviewing him for this article a woman came up to him and was so excited that he was at the concierge desk. She said she was at the Westin Copley Place last year and he was so nice and helpful and that she was happy to see him again. He thanked her and gave her a warm welcome back. We returned to our interview and she came over again, this time for a photo of Frank for Joe. Joe couldn’t make it this year but he just loved Frank. Who knew that Frank has a fan club? He always goes the extra mile for his guests, even the ones who couldn’t make it this year.

In his spare time Frank likes to go exploring and re-familiarizing himself with the ever changing city of Boston. Even though he loves to talk about the history of our city he equally enjoys all that is currently going on in the city today. He feels that it is his duty to stay a step ahead of the all the city’s developments and needs to be the eyes and ears of the hotel. Along with his curiosity and the camaraderie of his fellow concierges and the Greater Boston Concierge Association he is able to achieve this admirable goal.

We thank Frank Gallagher for his support of Old Town Trolley Tours and Trusted Tours & Attractions over the past fifteen years and look forward to working with him for another fifteen more. It is the relationship between Frank and his personal recommendations, the concierge staff at Westin Copley Place, and Old Town Trolley Tours, which help make Boston a great tourist destination city.

**Frank Gallagher**

Concierge – Westin Hotel, Copley Place

by Cathy Hutchinson; Vendor Representative

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**VENDOR SPOTLIGHT**

**Frank Gallagher**

Concierge - Westin Hotel, Copley Place

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BACKGROUND
I was born and raised in Baytown, Texas. After graduating high school, I decided to join the ever exciting field of Facility Maintenance. I’ve been working maintenance, in some form or another, for about ten years and I’m always amazed by the new things you can learn every day.

In 2012, I decided I was done with the Texas heat and wanted to know what a real winter was like. I joined the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum just in time for the snowiest winter on record in Boston. See? That day I learned to not open my big mouth about wanting to see a real winter was like.

I’m currently living in Revere, MA with my wife.

Which talent would you most like to have?
I’m currently teaching myself to juggle.

Who are your favorite writers?
Greg Rucka, Gene Luan Yang, Gail Simone

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Cup of coffee and a comic book

What is your favorite vacation spot?
A small cabin on a lake in Northern Maine

Who is your favorite hero of fiction?
Aquaman

Charles Everett
Facility Maintenance, Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum and one of the recipients of the 2015 CASTmember of the Year Award

DECEMBER
Charles Cirrone, 7 years
Karolyn Kurkjian, 4 years
Elaine Orsillo, 3 years
Joey Kantor, 1 year
David Ryan, 1 year
William Chappell, 1 year

JANUARY
Brian Buckley, 7 years
Robert Regan, 3 years
Arthur Dove, 1 year
Julianne Bowker, 1 year

JULY
Julianne Bowker, Conductor
Timothy Carr, Supporting
Julie Crowe, Sales Rep

OF THE YEAR
Robert Regan, Conductor
Aldwin Perodin, Supporting
Philip Ribeiro, Sales Rep
Timothy Mitchell, Rookie
Meg “Fiona” Feczko, Actor

Charles Everett
Facility Maintenance, Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum and one of the recipients of the 2015 CASTmember of the Year Award

DECEMBER
Michelle Barrett, 5 years

JANUARY
Jean Gordon, 9 years
What Off Season?
by Jerry Miller, Director of Key West Operations

When I went to Washington DC three years ago, people talked about the “off-season”. Having been up there during two supposed off-seasons, yes, the ridership falls dramatically in the winter but with all of the projects we had to accomplish, we never really had any slow time. In fact, in terms of workloads, it seemed we were busier during the winter than during the summer.

During the first off-season, we dissected our operations from top to bottom, dug deep into our policies and procedures, and came up with ways to better our operations. At the same time, we were busy getting existing CDL licenses upgraded, getting new people hired & trained, and finishing up a plethora of projects that had been lingering for far too long. The second off-season brought us Arlington National Cemetery Tours, and getting it up and running. ‘Nuff said.

Now I am in Key West and the busy season here is almost opposite to the busy season in Washington DC. However, in speaking with many leadagers and CASTmembers, I am told that each year, the Key West off-season is busier than the last, suggesting that eventually there will be no true off-season here.

As my Key West leadagers and I sat around the conference table a while back, trying to figure out how to hire enough people to handle the forecasted volume, I was reminded of a meeting I had many years ago at a previous employer. I was summoned to the President’s office one day. I walked in, shook his hand, and he immediately said, “Jerry, today you have 12 employees. Tomorrow you need to have 8. I don’t care who you get rid of or how. We’re done here.”

Having sat at both tables, I’ll take the organized chaos of a 365-day busy season and trying to determine how to find quality CAST members any day over trying to figure out how to downsize.

Celebrating 35 Years
by Linda Test, General Manager

In 1980, Ronald Reagan was elected President, Mount St. Helens erupted, CNN began 24 hour news, 3M introduced Post-It notes, Pac-Man was released, we found out who shot JR, and Old Town Trolley Tours of Key West began entertaining guests. On December 20, the CAST of OTTKW gathered at Tropic Cinema to celebrate 35 years of Trolley history, and the growth of HTA from a small trolley organization in Key West to the largest privately owned sightseeing company in North America. Chris and Ed addressed the CAST, reminiscing about the early days of operating. We ended the evening watching a movie and received logoed gifts to commemorate the evening.

Cruise Ship World
by Kevin Delahanty; Charter Representative

Winter in Key West is upon us, when the temperature starts tapering off, it makes working outside a bit more comfortable, we are talking about cools down to the low 80’s. Cruise Ship port calls are increasing, with 90 ships between December and January. Specialized interest tours, like the Rum and Cigar tour have become a favorite. Imagine going into a small family-run cigar store, where you receive lessons in selecting tobacco and even hands-on practice in rolling a cigar. Follow that by a visit to the First Legal Rum Distillery, where you learn the art of distilling while sampling some of their products.

This is the time of year when our population increases. Cruise ships increase by 3,000 to 5,000 depending on the number of ships in port. Along with cruise ships we have the regular vacation guests to take care of. On New Year’s Eve, we have many choices to help us kick off the New Year: The dropping of the Conch Shell at Sloppy Joe’s, drag queen Sushi, in a ruby slipper, and the Pirate Wench at the Historic Seaport. There are about 100,000 people stacked up in an 8 block area on Duval Street!
5 MINUTES WITH...
ANDREA RAINER

WICKER GUEST HOUSE

by Cheryl Actor, Vendor Representative

Andrea Rainer is a Front Desk Agent at the Wicker Guest House on Duval Street since May 2015. She was born and raised in Key West, Florida and is now, raising a girl of her own in this beautiful, spunky town. She went to Key West High School and does part time at the Florida Keys Community College and is going for her Bachelor's Degree in Business Management. Her goal one day is to own a business of her own and become a well-known name all around the world. Andrea lives with her daughter Kailee and husband Edward.

What are your three all-time favorite movies?
1. Dirty Dancing
2. Grease
3. A Time to Kill

If there was one place you would like to live besides Key West, where would it be?
I would like to live in New Orleans, Louisiana.

What is your most treasured possession?
The pictures I have of my grandmother and Uncle holding my daughter before they passed away, my grandmother always wanted great grandchildren.

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Las Vegas

What three things are always in your refrigerator?
1. Milk
2. Yogurt
3. Apple Juice

CHARTER SHOUTOUT!

Leslie Gilbert: Just Save the Date
by Tammy Osterhoudt, Group Sales

Just Save The Date is a full-service event planning and design company, specializing in destination weddings and social, corporate, and charity events throughout Florida and around the globe. At Just Save The Date, we believe that, we don’t just plan events, we plan our friends’ events. In order to create a unique and memorable event, we must get to know our clients on a personal level. Accordingly, our events directly reflect our clients, their personalities, and their vision. For some “the devil is in the details,” but, for us, our clients personalities are in the details, making the overall event truly unique and memorable.

Leslie is a homegrown southern girl. A native Alabamian, she began her planning career in college by accidentally becoming the party and event planner all her friends wanted and even strangers began to need. After college, Leslie's career has included wedding photography assistant, freelance event design planning and becoming an associate with one of Charleston, South Carolina's most exclusive wedding planners.

In 2012, Leslie brought her southern charm to Key West, and joined the Just Save The Date team. She currently lives in Key West with her husband Justin, a Third Class Petty Officer with the US Coast Guard, their son Cohen, and their two dogs, Maggle and Ace.

Romeo
Proud Owner: Karen and Steve Pont

Hello, my name is Romeo. I was born May 10, 2015. I am a conch as I was born here in Key West! I was adopted by two loving parents Karen and Steve Pont. For a few months I was an only child then I got a big brother. From day one yep I was spoiled. Toys galore from my Aunt Tommisine Hutton and lots of hugs and kisses from all around. Even the people at mom's office (Mary Martinez) request my presence when I’m not around. I spend my time aggravating my brother, I love chasing my ball, snuggling with mom or whoever will let me while they watch TV or movies. My new found happiness is being outside in the yard. We just moved and I have plenty of room to play now. Life is good here in Key West.
In January, the team led by Rosemary Pumar, Senior Buyer, along with Magda Witczak, Store Manager of Conch Tour Train and Abuela’s and the new buyers assistant, Kristina Shephard, set out to purchase jewelry, giftware, and home décor for all markets. The show was very successful in both “cash-and-carry” as well as items becoming available for the Spring. The trend in Atlanta showed Nautical is still very strong in jewelry and apparel and the color palate for the Spring will be the softer pastels of Coral, Pinks, and Blue tones. The ladies had to endure some pretty cold temperatures in Atlanta but managed to make this show very successful for all markets.

### Souvenir Super Show - Smoky Mountains

The buyers took off in November for their annual trip to Gatlinburg. The show has expanded to three different locations – Sevierville, Pigeon Forge, and Gatlinburg – and proved to be another great souvenir purchasing show for all cities. The buyers encountered many “Made in America” products and were able to work with several vendors on iconic custom art and proprietary items making TSG stand out in the retail world! On this trip, all four buyers attended – Krissy Agent, Lynn Dalton, Rosemary Pumar and Lisa Chubbuck.

### Orlando’s SURF Expo

This year, we had to divide the buyer’s team between the SURF Expo and the Atlanta Mart since they overlapped in dates. At the SURF Expo, Lisa Chubbuck led the team of Krissy Agent, Lynn Dalton, and Sponge Warehouse Apparel Supervisor, Janae Allen. The SURF show is one of the most important apparel shows that we attend each year. This year, we have seen the trends in Spring clothing move towards soft tones of peach, pinks, and aqua blues. Many vendors showed us this color trend in dresses, tops, and cover-ups. Overall, the SURF show was a very successful show for all markets.
**Holiday Happings**  
*by Eva Conaway: General Manager*

We enjoyed another great Thanksgiving lunch at the Conch Tour Train Station this year. The Conch Train Gift Shop Manager, **Magda Witczak** gets the help of the gift shop and ice cream parlor CASTmembers help to cook turkeys for those working on Thanksgiving Day. Other employees brought in side dishes or dessert to go with it. From all the Conch Tour Train CAST I want to thank **Magda Witczak** for making another Thanksgiving a little more enjoyable for those who had to work that day.

I would like to welcome **Ryan Arnold** to the Conch Tour Train. Ryan transferred here from Washington DC for the winter.

The month of December has the two busiest weeks of the year for the train. That is Christmas and New Year’s week. Our Holiday Light tours were also extremely successful.

The Conch Tour Train employees and the rest of our local CASTmembers went out on our own Holiday Light tours and rode in the Holiday Parade.

We had our CASTmember Appreciation Party. We had a great raffle with great prizes. Thank you **Jerry Miller**. There was good food, music and a chance to spend time with CASTmembers outside of work. Our annual awards are as follows:

- **Engineer of the Year**: **Tommy DeFrancesco**
- **Sales Rep of the Year**: **Cynthia McCoy**
- **Supporting CASTmember**: **Bob McGregor**
- **Rookie of the Year**: **Tom Leroy**
- **CASTmember of the Year**: **John Clifford**

CASTmember of the Year is voted on by their peers. Congratulations to everyone!

Finally we are getting some cooler weather. We had a couple of days in the 60’s. Not that cold for most but, summer lasted thru December. It wouldn’t be so bad if it cooled off at night. It’s been 88 during the day with a low of 84 at night.

Now we’re looking forward to the start of our winter season (hopefully a cool one) when all the snowbirds come down to sunny Florida. Happy New Year 2016!

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**December - January 2016**

**DECEMBER**

Bayard Andrade-Ward, 5 years  
Ryan Arnold, 3 years  
Richard Sanders-Fox, 2 years  
Tricia Lynn Richmond, 2 years

**JANUARY**

Frank Glander, 29 years  
Cheryl Actor, 19 years  
Mary Martinez, 11 years  
Bryan Lewis, 7 years

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**Holiday Train Rides**

Laurie Skinner jumps on board with Julie, Parker and Clinton Curry

Klaudie Putilova and guest  
Pam Seiber  
Bettina, Mary and Danielle

Big B and Trudy in the Parade

The Conch Train gets decorated for the night!

The Conch Train gets decorated for the night!

Laurie and her mom Georgeanne

Danielle and Clinton working the cruise ship

Laurie bundled up for our cold weather
KEY WEST CASTMEMBER

NIGHT OF APPRECIATION PARTY

Mary Martinez, Taylor Williams
Jim Sottile, Chris Holmes
Ivan Munoz, Jerry Miller
Patricia and Chris Holmes
Greg Lopez and Friend
Brenda and Ed Jones
Patricia and Chris Holmes
Ed Swift, Linda Test, Nancy, and Glenn Test
Grace Spencer, Harry
Drew and Eva Conaway
Friend and Karen Pont
Pam and Mike Lewis
Friend and JP Petrick
Friend and Cynthia McCoy
Friend and JP Petrick
Chris Belland, Jodi Kirby, Fran Kirby, and Andy Kirby
Iris Berneuter, Nancy Swift, and Bobby Berneuter
Friend and Aaron Andes
John Clifford, friend, and T.J. Stickney
Joe and Beth Moyer, Chris Belland

The Nation’s Storyteller
The Key West Night of Appreciation held in January at the Marriott Beachside featured a room full of shimmering glitter and the smiles of cast members. Jerry Miller took the opportunity to show the group some highlights of the past year and some exciting plans for the future. Dressed in their best “island formal” wear, they gathered for great food, outstanding desserts and prizes. The dancing - included modern moves and even some twists to some oldies. The cast members showed their appreciation for each other with toasts, applause for some wonderful awards and enjoyment when photographs of cast members were shared on a big screen. The Key West Cast Members met guests and family members and included them in the good food, good news and great music.
The National Call Center - A Year Later

by Lauren Sheldon, General Manager of the National Call Center

The National Call Center celebrated its first year anniversary on December 8th, 2015. As I reminisce over the past year, I can’t help but feel a sense of pride and achievement. The transition we’ve made, the hurdles we’ve overcome, and the progression we’ve seen as a new operation within the Historic Tours of America family, symbolizes the growth and technological advancement that this great company continues to achieve.

I remember first opening the National Call Center with myself and three agents; it seems like a lifetime ago. We started with Washington, DC because that was my background. The following week we opened St. Augustine, because that was everyone else’s background. To think, this was a time when the agents didn’t even have email! This was a time when mobile tickets were simply a nice idea, but we never really believed that it would come to fruition. This was a time when $2000 in sales for the day was considered a success. Wow; forever ago! But now, I digress.

As our one year anniversary approached, we had many reasons to celebrate. We were blessed with call volume and success, so the need to expand our department quickly became evident. We have more than tripled our staff to eleven agents who are smart, swift, talented, and have the uncanny ability to manage the constant flow of information in six different cities. They work in 10 hour shifts, four days on, three days off. The Call Center is open from 7:30am to 10:00pm (9:00 seasonally). This allows HTA’s guests to contact a live person to plan their vacations, purchase tickets, make/cancel reservations, request a refund and obtain directions for their tour, even when the local offices are closed. We pride ourselves on providing exemplary service to each and every customer that calls in to the NCC, as we realize the importance of our role as Customer Service Agents. We are the introduction, the first impression, the opening, and the beginning of their tour experience with Old Town Trolley.

One of the most important achievements we’ve made thus far is an open line of communication with each operation. The Daily Briefings we receive every day dramatically helps us stay abreast of the ever-changing dynamics in each city. This has helped to improve guest relations, and has substantially decreased the dissemination of incorrect information. We have developed an amazing working relationship with each General Manager and their teams, and we continue to celebrate all of their achievements, successes, and growth - just like a family should.

I have one of the best leadagement teams in all of HTA. My Senior Lead, Nikki Weekly and Lead Agent, Janice Pauley, have helped this department become a well-oiled machine. Their varying backgrounds have led to a magnitude of invaluable ideas, which has resulted in efficiency and professionalism within the Call Center. I can always count on them whenever my presence is required elsewhere. They are empowered to lead the NCC, and do so by example. I can rely on them to cheer their cohorts on, to motivate the agents to refine their skills and knowledge, and to ensure that a healthy, professional working relationship develops within the call center and with each one of the cities.

The National Call Center was established as a means to increase revenue for each city, to bridge the gap between the guests and the local operations, and to provide customer service to our guests no matter the time of year or time of day. We have grown in leaps and bounds over the last year and are very proud of all that we have accomplished. As we continue to progress and grow as a department on this tiny island in St. Augustine, I feel inspired about the future of the National Call Center and its role as an integral part of Historic Tours of America.
HOLIDAY LIGHT CONTEST WINNERS

St. Augustine

We are pleased to announce the winners of the Light Up the Night Contest. And they were chosen by you, our guests! We also held a special judging trolley that included the City’s most influential people, City and County officials and industry leaders. They took the Holly Jolly Trolley and voted for their favorite light display. This year we had more votes than ever!

1st Place - Casablanca Inn
They won $1,000 along with a trophy and a media package worth $1,750 (1/2-page ad in Mint Magazine & 100 WSOS Radio spots.)

2nd Place - At Journey’s End
They won $750 along with a trophy and a media package worth $1,000 (1/3-page ad in Mint Magazine & 50 WSOS Radio spots.)

3rd Place - Casa de Sueños
They won $500 along with a trophy and media package worth $600 (1/4-page ad in Mint Magazine & 25 WSOS Radio spots.)

Key West

Every year Old Town Trolley Tours, The Conch Tour Train and Keys Energy team up for the annual Holiday Light Contest. It is a great way to get the community geared up for the holiday season. Families decorate not only with lights, but show their love and spirit for the holidays in costume. Winners are awarded cash prizes, Waterford crystal keepsakes and signs to showcase their winning.

1st Place Winner: Teri Johnston.
in photo from left to right, Linda Test (Old Town Trolley General Manager), Winners Dar and Teri Johnston, Chris Belland (Historic Tours of America CEO) and Lynne Tejeda (Keys Energy CEO)

2nd Place Winner: Jeri Fox
in photo from left to right, Lynne Tejeda (Keys Energy CEO), Chris Belland (Historic Tours of America CEO), Winners Jeri Fox and Glenda, Frosty and reindeer friends.

3rd Place Winner: Becky Balcer
in photo from left to right, Chris Belland (Historic Tours of America CEO), Lynne Tejeda (Keys Energy CEO), Winner Becky Balcer, and Linda Test (Old Town Trolley General Manager)

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BACKGROUND
I was born and raised in the Battle Creek, Michigan area, Cereal City USA! After college I ventured out west for new experiences and to widen my horizons. Having come from a very small farming community in the Midwest, I was in for a real culture shock settling into my new home in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I embraced the culture and adored all of the colorful foods, vibrant music, and non-stop activities all while raising a family.

After some life changing events, I found myself moving back to my hometown in Michigan and attending a High School Reunion. There I met up with my current husband. We had been neighbors and classmates growing up and soon realized that we belonged togethe as adults. Merging the past with the present, and the future, we joined our families together and vowed to leave the snow-laden North for the sunny Florida South once our children were grown and out of the house.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Spending time with my family at the beach.

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Walt Disney World

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My husband Scott (but my children and grandson are a close 2nd)

If you die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?
Tigers are my favorite animals. They are so majestic and regal. I would want to come back as one so I could stroll amongst them.

What three things will you always find in my refrigerator?
Yogurt, cheese, and fresh fruits and vegetables

Your Healthy Tips & Attitudes Wellness Team is very excited to announce that the highly anticipated CarePlus Mobile App powered by Mobile Health Consumer has launched and is ready to be utilized! That’s right; it’s finally time to plug in those biometric numbers you got at the Wellness Fair! CarePlus is a mobile health consumer app that all medically enrolled CASTmembers are encouraged to register with; this app is essentially like having a health coach in your pocket and at your disposal. It is available for free download from the App Store and on Google Play. Once you have filled in your biometric numbers and completed a short health assessment you will receive personalized health and wellness messages based on your individual needs. General health and wellbeing reminders are also available to view straight from your mobile device and you may conveniently view your Cigna Medical ID Card digitally thru the app. Not only will you receive great information on how to stay ahead of the curve with your health, but you will be eligible to earn up to $34 per month in medical premium reduction in 2016 just for participating in the program. What a great way to start off the New Year!! Stay well HTA!

*Please remember, all information supplied to the mobile app is confidential and will not be shared with HTA.
ANNUAL GENERAL MANAGERS MEETING

The managers feasted on dinner at the Columbia Restaurant on historic St. George Street.

The new transportation center in St. Augustine.

Chris Belland and Christian Belland are checking out the National Call Center.

Doing work at the conference room at the St. Augustine Headquarters.

Facebook: facebook.com/historictours
Twitter: twitter.com/historictours

DECEMBER RETAIL
Mihail Mihailov, 11 years
Kathleen Kennard, 7 years
Patrick Lee, 5 years

SHIPWRECK TREASURE MUSEUM
Clinton Curry, 17 years
Jeremy Hyatt, 2 years
Gary Zimmerman, 1 year

LITTLE WHITE HOUSE
Robert Wolz, 30 years
Rene LaPierre, 5 years
William Averyt Jr., 5 years

JANUARY RETAIL
Leah Brenner, 12 years
Delores Boyle, 10 years
Pavel Theinert, 10 years
Sherry Wright, 6 years
Ina Trofim, 1 year

RETAIL DIVISION
Luis Acosta Perez
Cynthia Myers
Jose Muniz
Sarah Pasquini
Adrianna Sanchez Gomez
Toni Walser
George Lawrence III
Conner Fletcher
Adonis Smith
Rose Deralus
Janice Zenter
Peter Denks
Kiranjit Glen
Andrea Masturzo
Maureen Einstein
Cecile Bateau
Anna Ilescu

SHIPWRECK TREASURE MUSEUM
Danielle Hoy

GHOSTS AND GRAVESTONES
Stephen Bornstein
Jarrett Merkey