SAN DIEGO TURNS PINK

Read More about their October Fundraising Efforts on Page 12

www.HistoricTours.com
As we close out the year 2017, we can say without a moment’s hesitation that ... it’s been a wild ride! I couch this brief summary as the “State of the Onion” because it occurred to me that the current status of Historic Tours of America is built of many layers of circumstances. If you were to look at what happened during “Tragedyeden”, you would surmise that Key West, and to a certain extent St. Augustine and Savannah, got hit pretty hard. Well, they did and have recovered at different levels. In fact, Savannah and St. Augustine are doing just fine, if not great, and Key West is slowly getting back to “abnormal” (a tip of the hat to our nutrition reputation).

At the same time, our other cities have had a very good year which supported those who were having difficulties. We have been blessed with low national unemployment which means people are traveling more. Historically low gas prices is the cherry on top. In short, overall, Historic Tours of America has had a very good year, despite some fairly significant setbacks.

CLINTON, MONICA AND CAYLEY

The other night, I had the opportunity to attend the 35th Anniversary of the Key West Attractions Association, an organization which I was the first President and founding member. Obviously, I am quite proud that the organization has not only survived this long but has also become a voice of the attraction industry here in Key West and has the opportunity to cross-promote each other, making us all stronger. It is very rare that an organization can be started from such humble origins and survive this long.

In any event, I found myself talking to two young ladies of another state who were asking questions such as: “Who were the first members? When did you actually start? What was the original purpose?” etc. As I said, “Well, as you know, we started 35 years ago ... I realized I was speaking to two young ladies who weren’t even born then. Man, did I feel old!” This realization was tempered by my awareness in the audience with me that night were Clinton Curry, who is our Director of Museum Operations here in Key West, Monica Munoz, who is slowly taking over the advertising and marketing functions from the current Vice President, Piper Smith, and Cayley Berneuter who is Piper’s “go to girl” for everything from photo shoots to special events coordination. In fact, Cayley was tending bar which is always good training for a young person in business. All three of these folks, especially Clinton who I am pretty sure was born in the back room of the Key West Aquarium, have grown up or are growing up inside our company. Of course, this is happening in virtually every aspect of our business around the country where we have attracted good young people and they have stayed with us long enough to become General Managers and Executives.

It was a rough night of having to stand up as the “old fart” and talk about all this, but I felt pretty good from the standpoint that, very much like the Key West Attractions Association, although I know my role in the company must come to an end some day there are many wonderfully competent, talented and dedicated young folks right behind me to carry on.

No one can say how long a company will survive due to the vagaries of mistakes in management, changing technology, competition, regulations or the general economy, but the fact that our company has existed since 1973 says a great deal about our foundation rooted in the philosophy of Historic Tours of America. I am more than confident saying that as long as we are willing to participate in this first-class restoration. Ed Swift IV put the project under his management wing.

It has been and is a tremendous undertaking filled with discovery as we open up and look inside the Jail’s massive walls, learning the techniques of construction masters from one-hundred and thirty years ago. It is an incredibly challenging undertaking for all the construction teams on the project and HTA. We are restoring the Old Jail so that it looks like it did when it was first built with an eye towards making Mr. Flagler proud as it is his legacy we are protecting. All of St. Augustine is waiting to see the results of our efforts. We will not disappoint them.

Over Christmas I visited the Old Jail in St. Augustine, Florida which was constructed by Henry Flagler and given to the City of St. Augustine in 1891. The Old Jail was in active use as a jail until the 1950’s and then was sold some years later and eventually turned into a tourist attraction, which I visited as a boy. It is on the national registry and it has become a multigenerational memory for countless families, as one generation after another experiences and learns about all its history and mysteries.

In 1981, it was Flagler’s intent to produce a new jail that, from a distance did not look like a jail. The Victorian design with cupolas and towers was beautifully designed and with trim adornments it looked more like a small hotel than a jail. Since 1981 until mid-last year the original roof and gutter system that Flagler built remained significantly in place with periodic patch and repair. In September Hurricane Irma caused major damage to this historic structure and the time had come to fully restore this absolute marvel of red brick, metal roof, parge exterior and massive iron work. Such an undertaking required the full enclosure of the building in scaffolding, debris screening and putting in place manner of safety measures. John Thomas was hired as the project manager and he along with HTAs Wayne Taylor and Erinn Poots started the renovation. We have had subcontractors skilled in masonry, woodworking, roofing, decorative sheet metal fabrication, waterproofing, caulking and coatings, iron work, a certified engineer and artists from our own HTA art department participate in this first-class restoration. Ed Swift IV put the project under his management wing.

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We’ve spent 2017 building quite the reputation for ourselves. Evidenced by many returning clients and an unexpected increase in newsmakers. We’ve spent months forming relationships with local organizations throughout Nashville and have now become their go-to transportation and tour company. We’ve spent the year attending Convention Visitors Bureau meetings, Chamber of Commerce meetings, conferences, educational classes, bridal shows, grand openings to show support. There’s been countless hand shaking, smiles, warm gestures, thank you notes, lunches, dinners, meetings, and educational classes, bridal shows, grand openings to show support. There’s been countless hand shaking, smiles, warm gestures, thank you notes, lunches, dinners, meetings, and even some green left on the trees. We welcome everyone to come and see Nashville which is amazing any time of the year! Our tours are still going strong. We have the advantage of a very mild winter and rarely have the extreme cold and snow. I recently took a trip to the mountains of Tennessee. I was a bit early for the full color, but you can see that we have a beautiful state! It was just a year ago that the fires ravaged the Great Smoky Mountains, but they have come back strong, proving that Tennessee is a place that you must visit.

As we continue to grow in Nashville, we are becoming a bigger part of many of the great organizations we have in town. Every city has groups where they participate in their monthly meetings, networking, and the great events they put on in the city. This past month, I was honored to be elected to the board of the Nashville LGBT Chamber of Commerce. This is one of the most recent organizations that we joined and it was quite a privilege to be recognized by that organization as a company that supports their values. The diversity of our organization in All of our cities is something that we should all be proud to share. As Nashville came alive, we held to those same open and accepting concepts put in place many years ago.

We recently made a donation to an event held by the LGBT Chamber and the executive director, Lisa Howe, came to pick up the donation. She brought along her daughter, Hope, who was so excited to see the trolleys, and especially loved the ones with Johnny Cash. I have included pictures of Hope taking the wheel and standing with one of our Johnny Cash vehicle. The product we have and the equipment we use to deliver it even excites the younger generations.

Be proud of what we do, be proud of what we have, and be proud of our company.

This year in Nashville

David Galvan, Operations Manager, OTT Nashville

Nashville has become a great travel destination and an awesome place to live. It is said that over 85 people move here every day and that may be a low estimate. Looking at the skyline you’ll see our growth in a big way. The number of huge cranes and high-rises going up is staggering. Most of the buildings going up are hotels too, we have multiple Marriott properties going up including The JW Marriott which stands to be one of Nashville’s finest. You can also see projects going up from Hyatt, Hilton and Virgin Resorts. Its obvious people are loving Nashville.

As we finish up our second year here in Music City we are excited of what is still to come. Establishing ourselves as the premiere tour company in town has become a reality. We have seen great increases and success in all aspects of our operation and we look forward to what is still to come. Take a look at just a few things happening this year here in the “Music City”

- NHL Hockey – Nashville Predators
- NFL Football- Tennessee Titans
- Wine in Winter Festival
- March Madness” 2018 NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament
- Tin Pan South Songwriters Festival
- Nashville’s Cherry Blossom Festival (Not just in DC!)
- CMA Festival (Country Music Association) #1 Country Music Festival in the World!
- Bonnaroo Music & Art Festival
- 4th of July - Let Freedom Sing- the country’s largest fireworks show and concert
- Nashville’s New Years Eve Celebration- Bicentennial Park and Downtown Broadway Take Care Y’all!

Welcome everyone to come and see Nashville and even some green left on the trees. We work for, closing the deal is only a matter of time. I believe what happens next is much more difficult than the actual sell. The follow through on what we’ve promised our clients is the most important aspect of my job. Timeliness, cleanliness of the trolleys and professionalism of the Conductors, if they aren’t a part of my initial conversation with clients, they are always a promise which is very much so implied. Since we’re the newest kid on the block, we have spent over a year, chasing a new client base and proving to them that we are the best. When it comes down to it, we only have one shot at it. One shot to impress them. One shot to perform. One shot to be the best in the business. Which brings me back to our absolutely amazing, most awesome unique vehicles. One day, I was downtown at our stop #1 and needed a photo to send to a client. I took out my phone as I saw a trolley approaching and snapped a quick photo. I immediately fell in love with this picture because to me, it embodied the pure essence of the trolley, as they travel through the streets of Nashville, very large and impressive. Since I snapped this photo, I’ve sent it to a number of clients and most of the time, when I do, we close the deal. And we did it with only one shot.

2017 OH MY!

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We end this year with an eclectic mixture of charters: A birthday celebration, the big 40 with a private tour for Letty’s nearest and dearest friends. Our first appearance at a holiday parade. WHEELS, a church traveling group who dared to take on the Nashville scene. A Christmas party for a local corporation. A holiday event for our partners, L'Ermitage and The Hotel at Franklin. A completely full calendar of December marriage and holiday lights tour. A private tour for the cast of Shopkins Live! And last but certainly

Happy Anniversary!

Welcome aboard

Mark Patterson
Day Conductor
Bradly Vize
Sales Representative
Eric Escalona
Supporting
Russell Shoup
Night Conductor
Sherri Mathis
Sales Representative Night
Sherri Mathis
Night Guide

Mark Patterson
Night Conductor

Mark Patterson
Day Conductor

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First off, let me say how happy I am to be the newest Leadager at OTT-Nashville. I’ve filled many hats since we first started OTT-Nashville and now I’ve been able to take on a couple hats to put on a larger hat, Depot Sales Manager.

November turned out to be a bit slower than anticipated but when December started, things changed as we made our monthly sales goal before we even started the anticipated busy week between Christmas and New Year’s as we not only have all the Christmas Holiday tourists, we have the Music City Bowl and a couple of our usual stops were taken place in Nashville, we had to adjust the tour along with where we host throughout the entire year. An array of clients, from near and far, differing from one to the next. All individual with their own unique needs but each with one thing in common, Old Town Trolley Tours of Nashville.

NEW FACES
Clive McDowall, Head Conductor

Our growth in Nashville has been phenomenal which is leading us to look for and hire more friendly faces! We have two brand new conductors coming up and running giving the tour: Storie and Angela. We also have two more stadium trolleys soon on the way. We are adding conductors up and running giving the tour: Storie and Angela. We have two brand new conductors coming up and running giving the tour: Storie and Angela. We also have two more stadium trolleys soon on the way. We are adding

SAFETY MOTIVATION
Ally Marshall
Safety Officer

“Safety First” is a catch phrase heard in many places today. It’s applied to a myriad of different areas, to a point that it’s become part of the landscape and therefore less motivating. As a Safety Officer for a company who’s moto is “Safety First. Courtecy a Close Second,” it’s important to always find new ways to bring safety to the forefront of our CASTmembers minds.

A while back I had some cards printed up in an effort to constantly motivate our CAST to safety. The cards look like this:

Each leadager has a stack of cards, and as they are distributed to all CAST members, doing something safe, regardless of how minor it may seem, they fill out the card and give it to the CASTmember. It’s then the responsibility of the CASTmember the bring the card to my office and put it in the drawing. Once a quarter, three cards are drawn and prizes are awarded. Little gestures make big differences in life.

NEW DEPOT SALES MANAGER
Lewis Weaser, Depot Sales Manager

I recently ran the 2018 Walt Disney World Marathon with Stephen Spink from Loews Vanderbilt Hotel. While completing the race was a huge accomplishment for me, I can not help but to think how being the Vendor Sales Manager prepared me to complete the marathon. The Walt Disney World Marathon required me to be relentless in my pursuit of completing the 26.2 miles, just like I have to be relentless in going after certain hotel properties in Nashville. Depending on who you meet, you might have to follow up with a property multiple times before you get your first sale. The race also required me to be stay positive for 26.2 miles. As long as you can keep thinking positive thoughts, you can finish strong. This relates so much to managing the Vendor Department because you have to always keep a smile on your face and constantly think positive thoughts. After being the Vendor Sales Manager for two years, I have learned that these are the biggest keys to success in my position.

OLD TOWN TROLLEY TOURS • NASHVILLE

not least, an event with the Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee. What an amazing group of girls, so grateful to each and every girl and their families for choosing us to be their choice of giving and participating in such a fun event! (more about this to come.)

5. Merry Christmas to all and here’s to the New Year!

MUSIC CITY PLATINUM AMBASSADOR
Adler Lindsey, Hospitality Trainer for the CVC

The Nashville CVC has a wonderful series of classes where you can become a Music City Platinum Ambassador. Adler Lindsey is a Hospitality Trainer for the CVC. Adler has kindly come to the OTT Nashville office several times to conduct the five-part series of classes one must complete to become a certified Ambassador. The five sessions include: Nashville Backstage: Downtown, West, East; Creating Appeal and All Access. This has become very popular with our Cast.

• BACKSTAGE DOWNTOWN: Downtown Nashville is alive with exciting live music, great food, and elegant hotels. Explore the honky-tonks and neon lights on Lower Broadway, the upscale restaurants and vibrant nightlife in SoBro and The Gulch, and the unique shops in Germantown. Take a virtual tour of the attractions that make this a must-see, including the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum, the Frist Center for Visual Arts, and the Schermerhorn Symphony Center.

• BACKSTAGE WEST: More west of downtown and discover several hip neighborhoods with endless opportunities to experience culture and fun in Music City. Explore Nashville’s musical heritage on Music Row, enjoy a unique shopping adventure in Hillsboro Village or join a late-night dance party in Midtown. There’s something for every kind of taste with offerings such as Historic RCA Studio B, Cheekwood, the Parthenon, and Arrington Vineyards.

• BACKSTAGE EAST: Music City’s neighborhoods are quirky, diverse, and evolving. Visitors of all ages and interest are falling in love with these neighborhoods due to amazing restaurants, indie rock scene, vintage and eclectic shopping, and the vibrant and artistic culture. East Nashville homes are featured on many HGTV shows.

• CREATING APPLAUSE: Seeks to help CASTmembers create an authentic and memorable experience for guests by anticipating needs and exceeding expectations. This session focuses on attitude, product knowledge, listening skills, problem solving and more.

• ALL ACCESS: This unique and award-winning session on disability sensitivity ensures we are welcoming to all guests. CASTmembers learn about disability etiquette, communication skills, and the customer service side of the Americans with Disabilities Act. This session features individuals with disabilities as they provide the training tactical elements and also share authentic, first-hand experience, enriching the knowledge of the participants.

The Nation’s Storyteller Fall/Winter 2017

INGREDIENTS
• 1 large russet potatoes (about 2 3/4 lb.), peeled
• 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
• 3 tablespoons olive oil
• 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme, plus whole sprigs for garnish (optional)
• 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
• 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
• 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

DIRECTIONS
1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Coat a 12-cup muffin pan with cooking spray. Cut potatoes into 1 1/2-inch-thick slices.
2. Whisk together butter, olive oil, chopped thyme, chopped rosemary, kosher salt, and pepper in a large bowl. Add potato slices, and toss until evenly coated.
3. Working quickly, layer potato slices into stacks in muffin cups, filling each cup to the top. Bake in preheated oven until edges and tops are golden brown and centers are tender, 45 to 55 minutes. Remove from oven, and let potato stacks stand in pan 3 to 5 minutes. Carefully remove potato stacks from pan; sprinkle with sea salt, and, if desired, garnish with thyme sprigs. Serve immediately.

Herb Potato Stacks

INGREDIENTS
• 2 lb. cooked, mashed sweet potatoes
• 4 tablespoons butter, softened
• 1/4 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
• 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
• 1/4 teaspoon salt
• 1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
• 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
• 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

DIRECTIONS
1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Combine all ingredients except the mashed sweet potatoes in a bowl, then gently fold in the mashed potatoes. Spoon into a greased 1 1/2-quart casseroles. Top with pecan halves or marshmallows for topping. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes until bubbly. Makes 6 to 8 servings, but be careful, everyone will want seconds!
Hello from Music City! The night tour has been moving right along. We are excited to announce that we are now running tours seven nights a week, with the hope of offering two tours a night on the weekends in the near future! This past month brought a few personnel changes, and we have recently welcomed driver Rusty Shoup and tour guides Lindsey Sipe, David Isenberg and Starr Belle to our CAST family. They are fantastic additions and we are very lucky to have them!

Halloween has always been one of my favorite holidays and it made my year to find out that our CAST loves it just as much as I do! We had so much fun at the trolley depot checking in guests for the tour on October 31st! Elvis, an 85s rocker queen and John Travolta from Saturday Night Fever were working and having a blast with our guests! (Just wait until the Holiday season rolls around…)

The Old Town Trolley Safety Team held their conference in Nashville this past week and we had the pleasure of hosting 13 of them on the night tour on November 1st. It’s definitely time for the weekends in the near future! This past month brought a few changes to the route and content. We aim to launch the Soul of Music City Night Tour (version 2) in March!

We hope that you had a very special holiday season with your family and friends and we wish you the best in the year to come! And remember… “What a wonderful thought it is to know that some of the best moments of our lives haven’t even happened yet.” Bring on 2018!!!

Over the past few months, the Night Tour CAST has continued to share our love for Nashville and its music with our guests. I cannot believe that our tour has been up and running for five months! We have recently welcomed a new Night Tour Driver, Mike Gooch, to our team. He is a wonderful addition to our CAST and we are so happy to have him! Every member of our CAST does an outstanding job, but our phenomenal CASTmembers of the month for November were Morgan Harvey representing the Sales Team, Sherri Mathis representing the tour guides and Josh Howell for our incredible support team. I also want to share that we were so excited to have our second sold out trolley tour on December 30th!

Our team is stronger than ever and as we enter the quieter part of the year in Nashville, we feel that it is time to evaluate and tweak our tour a bit. (In the best way possible of course!) That being said, over the next two months, we will run just three tours a week while we work together as a team to make some changes to the route and content. We aim to launch the Soul of Music City Night Tour (version 2) in March!

Music cuts through all boundaries and goes right to the soul.” - Willie Nelson

NOVEMBER
Mark Patterson
Day Conductor
Sazia Lincoln
Sales Representative Day
Janet Reed
Day Supporting
Joshua Howell
Night Supporting
Morgan Harvey
Sales Representative Night
Sherri Mathis
Night Guide

DECEMBER
Mark Patterson
Day Conductor
Bradly Vize
Sales Representative Day
Janet Reed
Night Supporting
Russell Shoup
Night Supporting
Morgan Harvey
Sales Representative Night
Sherri Mathis
Night Guide

Rubin Ramirez
Thompson Hotel
My name is Rubin and I’m one of the fabulous concierges at a luxury property. The Thompson Hotel, in Nashville, I’ve arrived here from Houston after randomly choosing a city. I literally chose a city and started driving. I graduated from the University of Houston-Downtown. My favorite things in this world are champagne, Big Brother and traveling to random cities for a day. On any given night, you can find me in the kitchen baking or cooking and lounging around with my 18 year old pup, Ginger.

"We are the same. There is no difference anywhere in the world. People are people. They laugh, cry, feel love and music. It seems to be the common denominator. Music cuts through all boundaries and goes right to the soul.” - Willie Nelson

JIM’S FUN FACTS
My favorite author is Carl Hiaasen. He has a quirky perspective on life.

I am deeply envious of songwriters. So if I had a talent, the skill to compose both words and melodies that make sense to others is something I don’t have and wish I did.

Negril Jamaica is my favorite vacation spot. Negril is on the western side of the island, has the most spectacular beach (7 Mile Beach) and is the visual representation of my favorite song.

"One Particular Harbor" by Jimmy Buffett is my favorite song. While many of Jimmy’s song have helped me through some uniquely difficult times in my life, this song resonates the most.

My greatest achievement is raising two strong, independent and beautiful daughters. They are amazing and I’m a better man because of them.

Howdy y’all, I’m Jim Carberry, one of the conductors here in Music City USA. That’s Nashville to the uninstructed. After spending the first six decades of my life in the Hub of the Universe (Boston), I moved down the road apiece to Nashville. In February of 2016, I joined the few, the hardy, the insane as a CASTmember for the yet to be opened Nashville operation.

Nashville is an interesting place. I’m beginning to think no one was actually born here. While the roads and streets in Boston are challenging due to their past life as cow paths, the roads here in Nashville are simply weird. Streets change names without warning, make turns and keep their names and randomly stop and resume a few blocks later. Driving our stadium trolleys is both a blast and a challenging endeavor. As I’m sure you’ve all heard, Nashville has become a very popular place to be. Showing tourists that Nashville is more than just honky tonks is fun.

As a former Bostonian, I continue to follow the Sox, Pats and the Celts. I miss the ocean, my kids (they live in Philadelphia PA and Burlington VT) and the presence of Dunkin Donuts on every corner. But becoming friends with the folks here at OTT is helping deal with all that. This little collection of misfits plays fairly well.
ROY NAPPER
CONDUCTOR AND SALES REP, OLD TOWN TROLLEY TOURS

I was born and raised in Nashville, Tennessee. My parents owned and operated a grocery store in North Nashville during my formative years. By age 14, I was working the check-out counter and learning the importance of customer service and basic business principles. I graduated from North Nashville High School in 1965 and attended Middle Tennessee State University. I received a Bachelor's degree in History in 1969 and a Master's degree in 1974. From 1969 to my retirement in 1999, I was employed to teach History by the Metropolitan Nashville Public School System. In 1970, I married Jane Myatt. During our 47-year marriage, we have been blessed with two children, three grandchildren, and one (so far) great-grandchild. With the birth of our second child in 1976, I realized the difficulty of providing for a family on a teacher’s salary—my starting pay in 1969 was $3800 yearly, and I earned an extra $100 for coaching freshman football. With too much month at the end of the money, I looked for part-time employment to supplement my teaching salary. In April, 1978, I entered the real estate business as an affiliate broker. Although I worked part-time, my real estate commissions soon eclipsed my earnings as a public school teacher. Although tempted to leave teaching, I continued to teach school and practice real estate until my retirement from the school system in 1999. For the next 11 years, I worked as a real estate broker and investor with Crye-Leike Realtors in Hermitage, Tennessee. In 2010—after a total of 32 years in real estate—I retired from work to enjoy my blissful golden years.

Oops! Check that! I hated retirement! One can only watch so many episodes of Gunsmoke and The Price is Right. Within a year, I had become employed as an adjunct professor at Nashville State Community College teaching American History and Western Civilization to freshmen and sophomores. I loved it, however, due to rules regarding my state retirement, I could only teach 9 hours per week at a state school. By 2016, I was looking for something that would keep me busy. In April of 2016, I stumbled across an employment advertisement by Old Town Trolley Nashville. I was hired as a driver and tour guide. I really enjoyed giving tours of Nashville; however, after I hit a flag truck, a fire hydrant, and a Mercedes Benz, the company felt that it would be safer for the public and cheaper for the company for me to be in a sales booth. I have been working in sales since August, 2017.

I have absolutely enjoyed my experience with Old Town Trolley Nashville. Not only do I work with great people, but I have been blessed to meet people from all over the world. I intend to remain with OTT as long as I can physically show up to work. In fact, I have already written several historical novels written by Thomas B. Costain and Ken Follett. I identify and admire several historical figures, but Jedediah Strong Smith comes to mind. I love the wilderness and enjoy back-country backpacking and camping. I am very much at home in the woods. I identify with Smith because he left his Ohio home in the 1820’s and spent the rest of his life in the wildness of the Rocky Mountains. Although only in his teens, he became one of the best known mountain men. Please note that I do not identify with his being killed by native Americans at the age of 35.

My favorite vacation spot is the Great Smokey Mountains National Park. If I could live anywhere besides Nashville, it would be Townsend, Tennessee, a small un-commercialized town near one of the entrances to the Great Smokey Mountains National Park.

2017 CONFERENCE RECAP: WHAT A WEEK!

The last week of October, all of the Safety Officers from across the country gathered in Nashville, TN, for the 2nd annual National Safety Officer’s Conference. Attendees learned about the latest OSHA requirements, explored training techniques geared towards Accountability and Behavioral Systems, engaged with industry experts and educators, and much more! This year’s conference brought together a variety of perspectives, ideas, and best practices to foster collaboration among Safety Officers and Risk Management, with a common goal to ensure regulatory compliance with the safety and health of the CAST and Guests as the top priority. The focus of the conference was Productivity vs. Efficiency OR Productivity and Efficiency. This theme was reflected throughout the conference with daily discussions on improving efficiency and affectivity. There were three days of meetings with group activities each night of the week. Music City and OTT provided a friendly place to meet, as well as two great tours and a phenomenal evening at the Grand Ole Opry. It was truly a week to remember. Risk Management wishes to thank all of the many people and contributors who made this year’s conference possible—and not least our gracious host: Old Town Trolley Tours of Nashville!

WELLNESS AND FUN FAIR

This is how we mixed it up Nashville style.

• Take your Wellness Exam
• Mix in some Live Music
• Add some Healthy selections of Snacks,
• A dash of Fun Pictures at the Photo Booth,
• Don’t forget the Gift Bags full of Give A-ways
• Sprinkle in a little bit of Healthy eating

Lewis Weaser
VENDOR APPRECIATION
Melissa Elliott, Vendor Representative

The Vendor Department relies soley on the relationships I develop with the local businesses, concreties, and front desk agents in the city. Without their support, our success would not be possible. For the past two years, I have planned a “Thank You” party for our Vendors. This year, we teamed up with Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum and Bavarian Beerhaus, both have recently opened in the Opryland area of Nashville.

Our Vendors were able to explore Madame Tussaud’s Wax Museum at their leisure and even got a sneak peek of the studios! The studio manager gave our Vendors the inside scoop on what it takes to create and repair the wax figures. The Vendors learned how to paint and mold too! After we explored Madame Tussaud’s, we headed over to Bavarian Beerhaus for a wonderful dinner. The venue provided us with ample food. We had pretzels and beer cheese, sausages, Rüben rolls, and schnitzel. Everything was wonderful and all of the Vendors thoroughly enjoyed their time.
October is a busy month at OTTSD. Not only is Ghosts & Gravestones incredibly popular and its kids ride free month, but it is the peak of our annual Breast Cancer Fund-raising. The money we raise goes to the American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer to provide services for patients and their families as well as fund ground breaking research. In 2016, we raised an amazing $13,235! We figured we could raise at least $13,500 this year. The numbers are in and after months of hard work and corporate’s generous $5,000 donation, our 2017 total is……. $18,249!!!!

VIVA LAS TATAS

Our second new strategy was a fundraising fiesta dinner event appropriately named ¡Viva Las Tatas! Guests purchased tickets for an evening of dinner, margaritas, live music, door prize drawing and a silent auction. Café Coyote graciously donated their banquet room and an amazing taco bar. But Son Pa Ti stole the show with their live Latin music, making it impossible to resist dancing. We can’t wait for next year!

THE BIG PINK CHAIR

In order to step up our fund-raising game this year we had two new wildly fun ideas. One was to use Making Strides brand new BIG PINK CHAIR. We sponsored this amazing piece of inflatable furniture. CASTmembers dressed in their pretty pink Trolley shirts would ask for donations in exchange for people getting on the chair and taking pictures. The BIG PINK CHAIR events brought in $2,179 and we had the pleasure of hearing first hand stories of survivors and their families.

TIP HAT

Our CAST really band together to raise money. Many in our CAST have personal connections to loved ones affected by cancer and this year one of our own fought her battle. It is truly a team effort! Conductor take the Donation tip hat and donate all of their tips from that day. Sales Reps sell custom printed pink water bottles to guests. We get the whole community involved and a lot of our wonderful vendors and community partners donate money and items. Even our October CAST meeting is a Pink Spirit day. We fund-raise and walk in hopes that one day we find a cure.

MAKING STRIDES WALK

The fund-raising year hits a high point in Balboa Park and this year was the 20th anniversary of the American Cancer Society Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk. 25,000 people came out bright and early dressed head to toe in pink to participate in the 4-mile walk. “Pinkie” the pink trolley even made an appearance to shuttle walkers to and from the event.
We were honored to have members of the 13th Bomb Squadron reunion aboard our Trolley. The 13th Bomb Squadron is a squadron of the United States Air Force. It is assigned to the 509th Operations Group, Air Force Global Strike Command. Their motto is “Fear the Reaper.”

After 25+ years of the San Diego Group Sales Department being a one-(wo)man show I'm happy to announce that Jeanette Renning has joined Charter and Group Sales! Coming to us all the way from our very own Visitor Information Center Jeanette brings her vast experience to the department and has already helped organize and brought structure to the department. New and fresh ideas have already been implemented in her short time here.

With the addition of Jeanette, our collective mission is to grow the group business side. We’re looking to expand our offerings by adding special charter packages, Military Tours, Brewery Tours, scavenger hunts, college/university programs, etc.

Great to have you as a “partner in crime”! I’m looking forward to all of the exciting things we're going to work on together! Welcome aboard!

Erica Frost and Jeanette Renning, Charters and Group Sales

HISTORY, MYSTERY AND LEGENDS OF SAN DIEGO’S DARKER SIDE...

Chris Chiotras, Lead Conductor

This year we have added two additional ghost hosts to our CAST of dead and decaying tour guides. John “Cave” Couts, who became a highly regarded San Diegan civic leader, as well as an alleged cold blooded murderer, is played by Charles Hogquist. Also joining in our ghastly tour, resurrected from his grave… Don, Old Town’s preacher, played by Don Crist. Our Facebook page continues to grow with stories, pictures and accounts of the bizarre happenings during the tour. Just recently a retired Sheriff, upon hearing the story of Yankee Jim’s hanging, left the Whaley house with a red ring around his neck! Yup, we continue to feel the spirits as the tour keeps growing thanks to all of our ghost hosts; Melissa “Sinderella” Sewell, Larry the “Professor” Usall, Don “Wyatt Earp” Kaye, Cody “Morti the Mortician” Hug, and Chris “Grimsley” Chiotras.

VETERANS DAY PARADE

Old Town Trolley and SEAL Tours annually donate our vehicles to Veteran’s organizations that need transportation in the yearly parade. Participating contingencies this year include: Vietnam Unit Memorial Foundation/Swift Boat Sailors, American Ex-PW’s, Honor Flight, Military Order of the Purple Heart and the Distinguished Flying Cross Society. This was the 31st annual San Diego Veterans Day Parade and the theme this year was “A Tribute to Heroes at Home.”

Facebook.com/SanDiegoTours
Twitter.com/SanDiegoTour
Instagram.com/OldTownTrolley

FACEBOOK.COM/SANDieGOTOURS
TWITTER.COM/SANDieGOTOUR
INSTAGRAM.COM/OLDTOWNTROLLEY
I was born in Riverside, California. After graduating from high school, I joined the Marine Corps because the recruiter dared me to. After six years as an Air Support Operator in the Corps I was discharged, and shortly afterwards met my wife and the real adventure began. I graduated college and worked for many years in the transportation industry. In 2003 my wife and I decided to quit our careers and buy one-way tickets to Kauai. We had vacationed there for the previous ten years and always dreamed of living there. We spent the next twelve years in paradise.

I began scuba diving every chance I could. I met a local research photographer at a Luau. After a few mai tais followed by a night dive (that turned out to be a job interview) I was offered a job as a deckhand on a boat researching humpback whales. This was the beginning of my boating career as a videographer/photographer studying humpbacks and dolphins with a wild crew. We spent more time underwater than we did on dry land.

After three years of diving every square inch of Kauai, my wife convinced me that I needed to find a job that would pay the bills. As usual, she was right!

I got my Captain’s license and began doing tours of the Napali Coast in Kauai. I started driving Zodiacs and worked my way up to the more luxurious sailing catamarans. The people I met from all over the world and my fellow employees convinced me that I had found my calling. I needed to be on the water in the tourism industry.

Over time, our two children grew up and when grandchildren came along, in 2014 we knew it was time to move back to the mainland. My brother worked in San Diego and told me there were Captain opportunities in SD. I saw a job advertisement for a Captains position at San Diego Seal Tours. I interviewed with Captain Jim Saffer and John Savage. For some unknown reason they hired me!

I have worked for HTA for almost two years now. The people I work with have made it such a fun place to work. We may be a collection of silly misfits, but we always have fun and everyone is professional and takes pride in what we do. A true honor to work for HTA.

My greatest fear is being abducted by aliens... again. In friendship, I value a great sense of humor, adventure and friends who can convince me that what I am about to try is way too risky!
San Diego Holiday Lights and Sights Trolley Tour excelled its fifth year in a row! This year it increased by 390 riders or 15%! The real growth this year was in the Charter group sales area! Private Holiday Light and Sights tours had an amazing 111% growth, from 9 private tours to 19 private tours! They also had over a 1800% growth in the Specialty Tour area! Though Washington State has made four appearances in the Holiday Bowl’s history, Michigan State would go on to win 42-17. The 2017 40th annual Holiday Bowl game featured the Washington State Cougars vs. Michigan State Spartans. The week-long event featured team days at SeaWorld, San Diego Zoo, a Navy and Marine Corps luncheon and battle of the bands as well as participating in the Port of San Diego Big Bay Balloon Parade. The 2017 40th annual Holiday Bowl game featured the Washington State Cougars vs. Michigan State Spartans. The week-long event featured team days at SeaWorld, San Diego Zoo, a Navy and Marine Corps luncheon and battle of the bands as well as participating in the Port of San Diego Big Bay Balloon Parade. Though Washington State has made four appearances in the bowl game’s history, Michigan State would go on to win 42-17. Recognized as “America’s Largest Balloon Parade,” the Holiday Bowl Parade features more giant helium-filled character balloons than any parade in the country. Over 100,000 spectators filled the streets along the Embarcadero on a picture perfect sunny day in America’s Finest City, San Diego.
The Nation's Storyteller

OLD TOWN TROLLEY TOURS

TROLLEY OSCAR NIGHT PARTY

OTTSD held their Annual CASTmember Party in January after the busy Christmas holiday season. Every year we like to show our appreciation and plan something different and fun for everyone to enjoy! We would like to thank Seasons 52 for opening their restaurant and appetizers for this special evening.

Also, to coincide with our “Oscar Night” theme, we rolled out the red carpet, gave out some swag and celebrated those CASTmembers who stood out this past year. Another great year and the winner goes to Trolley Land and our wonderful CAST!

DECEMBER

Jack Vernon
Conductor
Barbie Harrell
Sales Representative
Nik Ross
Sales Representative
George Adams
SEAL Tour
Cody Hug
Specialty Tour

OTTSD Fall Wellness Challenge. CASTmembers pushed themselves to complete a range of activities all centered around living healthier lifestyles. John Lindsey, Erica Dill, and Carmen Thulin walked away with awesome prizes to encourage them to continue these healthy habits.

FATHERS’ VILLAGE CHILDREN’S HOLIDAY PARTY

OTTSD Fall Wellness Challenge. CASTmembers pushed themselves to complete a range of activities all centered around living healthier lifestyles. John Lindsey, Erica Dill, and Carmen Thulin walked away with awesome prizes to encourage them to continue these healthy habits.

DUE TO THE DOWNTOWN LITE LIGHTS TOUR/CITY LIGHTS TOUR

Erica Dill and John (Red) Lindsey took time out from their training in St. Augustine to see and visit with the Savannah CAST and take tours.

FUN PHOTOS

OTTSD Fall Wellness Challenge. CASTmembers pushed themselves to complete a range of activities all centered around living healthier lifestyles. John Lindsey, Erica Dill, and Carmen Thulin walked away with awesome prizes to encourage them to continue these healthy habits.

OLD TOWN MARKET

64TH ANNIVERSARY LAS POSADAS

OTTSD Fall Wellness Challenge. CASTmembers pushed themselves to complete a range of activities all centered around living healthier lifestyles. John Lindsey, Erica Dill, and Carmen Thulin walked away with awesome prizes to encourage them to continue these healthy habits.

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.

OLD TOWN DIA DE LOS MUERTOS

This year’s festivities attracted over 5,000 visitors for the 2-day celebration including the procession walk to El Campo Santo Cemetery. Many altars were constructed to honored family, friends and even historic figures from Old Town’s past. Old Town Market alter included pictures of our family and friends that have graced our lives with joy. Those who participated were glad to remember the lives of their family and friends while being able to participate in one of Old Town’s grand annual traditions.

The Nation’s Storyteller

Fall/Winter 2017

20
It has been a whirlwind several months for our operation and for ours truly as we recovered from the impacts of our September storm with an October for the record books, carrying nearly 38,000 riders and eclipsing the Matthew impacted books, carrying nearly 38,000 riders the impacts of our September storm.

As August drew to a close, we were busy at the Magic Kingdom, things cranked up in what some consider the beginning of our “off-season” but no for four stupendous days! It was an enlightening experience, one that filled us with great ideas for continued opportunities to engage and delight our CAST and significant validation of the great works we are already accomplishing. As you can see by the pictures (attached), we had a lot of fun both in the classroom and during the numerous field trips throughout the Disney campus. I feel so blessed to have participated in this program and look forward to future opportunities to do so again. WOW!

Upon my return to Savannah from the Magic Kingdom, things cranked up in what many consider one of “America’s Most Haunted Cities” as we rolled out even more Ghosts & Gravestones and Ghost Town Trolley Tours to the myriad guests in town to experience the “Darker Side” of Savannah to great fanfare! A huge “shout out” to our Ghost CAST for a job well done.

From October we move swiftly into November, which from the race and had a great time doing it. From there we moved on to host the National Transportation General Managers Meeting from November 6-10, 2017. The entire CAST revelled in having the General Managers from Boston To Key West, from Nashville to San Diego come and experience our beautiful city and collaborate with our HTA Executive CAST as to how to continue to deliver on our mission to be The Nation’s Storyteller, committed to delighting our guests, our CASTmembers and to remaining innovators in our field. So many extraordinary initiatives were discussed and many great memories were made. It was a spectacular event and I finished on the 10th feeling equal measures amazed and exhausted.

Thank you to all that participated and a special thank you to Ed Swift IV, Chris Belland and Ed Swift III for supporting your leadership group in their quest to achieve excellence for our company. I hope you had a great holiday season!

From October we move swiftly into November, which some would consider the beginning of our “off-season” but no mess on the CAST of OTT-Savannah, no way. We start the month opening our city to 15,000 of our newest friends as they participate in the Rock n’ Roll Marathon. Normally it is a massive undertaking on the operational side of things because of icy conditions? Can you believe we had to close or no clue on how to deal with the by-products of the cold weather. Can you believe we had to close the Savannah Operation because of icy conditions? Stop laughing John Welby!!

Finally, but certainly not least, in December we said farewell to a truly great friend and conductor. Terry Hayes started his career with Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah on February 5th, 2001. Right from the start it was apparent that he was going to be an excellent conductor. He cruised through his training very quickly and was ready to hit the streets before anyone else in his class. In a hallmark of his tenure, Terry became a dispatcher’s best friend. He demonstrated excellent loop abilities, including timeliness to schedules and the knack of navigating Savannah’s historic district in the most efficient way possible. A dispatcher knew that asking Terry to "silence, safely" would get both parts of that request done. As he developed Terry was able to bring his voluminous knowledge of Savannah’s African-American history to his tours. He was an easy go-to if any conductor had a question about that, or any other aspect of the city’s history. His willingness to share his knowledge was recognized and appreciated by his fellow cast to the point that he became a great example to multiple conductor “generations”.

Always wanting to work, Terry would scoop up any yellowops with popped up, held jump at those late charters, and when asked to run a late loop his response was always to say “sold!”

Terry’s experience and knowledge lent him an air of gravitas – when he spoke, everyone listened. His contributions in briefing and cast meetings will be missed. His almost 18 years of service are not replaceable, but with the wisdom that he has passed on, he has contributed to the excellence of our conductor ranks.

Chris Belland was kind enough to put together an Honorary Lifetime Conductor award for Terry to which he received a standing ovation. Good luck Mr. Terry in your future endeavors.

You’ll read about it no doubt in some of the department reports. While we all get excited to see some snow in Savannah we certainly have little or no clue on how to deal with the by-products of the cold weather. Can you believe we had to close the Savannah Operation because of icy conditions? Stop laughing John Welby!!

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it out of the park. From conductors, salespeople, leaders, and anyone I might have forgotten, everyone did an outstanding job. We had a smooth, albeit long, day which is testament to the hard work put in at all levels. We have also identified some additional expansion opportunities for next year and with our team, the sky is the limit.

We have a new crop of dispatchers that have come online in the last few weeks. Emily Baillargeon, Lori Pipero, and Ted Wall are all doing well and we are looking forward to having them keep our trolleys rolling for our guests.

Looking forward, we have our Holiday Sights tour starting in a couple of weeks and as per usual, we are charging away with training for that. Once that is complete we have a couple of folks lined up to learn our specialty tours, then we will be firmly in the holiday week. The week between Christmas and New Year’s is typically the busiest week of the year for us, and the way this year has been so far we expect to break records that week.

Even though we are looking at our off season coming up, that means we will begin recruiting soon. With a number of initiatives on the horizon and our customer service continuing to steadily climb, we will need to bring on a fair sized class of new conductors for next year.

Lastly, we all wish a bon voyage to Terry Hayes this past week. Mr. Hayes was a 17 year veteran of Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah and his acumen and experience will certainly be missed from our conductor ranks. I think retired life will suit him and we can always catch up with him at the Saturday farmer’s market in Forsyth Park.

In December our annual holiday sights tour in full force. This year we carried about 40% more guests than ever and it was a smooth operation. Our partners at the Davenport House helped us out by picking up the beverage and snack service this year and they did their usual excellent job hosting our guests.

January brought possibly the strangest weather week in Savannah OTT history! We had a couple of inches of snow that forced us to close for one full day and part of another. In addition, the ice has closed 2 stops for the 3 days since then, too. I’m sure our friends in Boston and DC aren’t too impressed with our snowfall totals but it is the first snow that has stuck in almost 30 years and it certainly created some issues for us.

As usual, our fantastic cast carried us through our difficulties and we were able to save the day for a convention group in town who needed transportation. The city bus and ferry service shut down and we were able to help them keep their schedule somewhat normal. Great job by our conductors!

Recently we will have another big hiring push. Our retirement continues to go up and we have a big contract with a bus tour company that is scheduled to make over 80 trips to Savannah this year. With the numbers they are talking about moving, we will need to make some serious increases to our conductor ranks.

Other than that, January is a slow month for operations. It is when we make sure we have as many ducks in a row as we can so that we are ready for the busy season to start in March. We are looking forward to the weather warming up and those crowds to come back to town!

NOVEMBER
Lillie Shaw
Conductor
Jenny Shear
Sales Representative
Leila Caughran
Ghoste - Gravestones
Robyn Jones
Supporting

GROPS AND CHARTERS
Craig Armstrong and Laura Ross, Groups & Charter Sales Manager

I had the privilege to attend the 2017 Girl Scout Convention in Columbus, Ohio! Savannah is the birth place of Juliet Gordon Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts of America. We are a popular destination for troops, delegates, and alumni! The convention was a wonderful opportunity to show what Savannah, and Old TOWN Trolley, have to offer.

Gearing up for the fall, I along with Stephen Plunk from our Vendor Department represented Old Town Trolley and The American Prohibition Museum at the Bluffton Chamber of Commerce, Fall Business Expo! Old Town Trolley of Savannah is a new member of the Bluffton Chamber of Commerce. With Bluffton being just over the bridge from Savannah, we are able to promote our tours, attractions, and transportation services into North Carolina.

GHOST & GRAVESTONES
Michael Harris
4 years

SALES
Jim Raftery, Depot Sales Manager

Wow, who would have thought we would have hurricanes 2 years in a row. I know I didn’t, but we did. Hurricane Irma paid us a visit on September 11th and there went our month. We could not run operations for 4 days due to the mandatory evacuation order. Although we had much less damage this year over last, we did not recover the lost ridership or our annual Ghost & Grave tour promotion. As a result of the storms, Thanksgiving weekend did not disappoint, as we had some huge ridership days and finished well over budget.

As we begin to roll into our “not so busy” season, we are getting ready for the 7th Savannah Rock & Roll Marathon. The city will be filled for the first part of the month with hundreds of runners so we are looking to get off to a great start.

As we continued to come back from Hurricane Irma, we started out November with Rock & Roll Marathon. We had another successful marathon weekend, as we staffed the check-in booth at The International Trade & Convention Center. We kicked off our annual “Ghost & Grave” promotion for the runners. Thanksgiving weekend did not disappoint, as we had some huge ridership days and finished well over budget.

With Thanksgiving we began our Holiday Sights Tour nightly through Christmas Eve. We had outstanding results this year, beating last year’s ridership by 50%.

As we begin to roll into our “not so busy” season, we are getting ready for the 7th Savannah Rock & Roll Marathon. We had another successful marathon weekend, as we staffed the check-in booth at The International Trade & Convention Center. We kicked off our annual “Ghost & Grave” promotion for the runners. Thanksgiving weekend did not disappoint, as we had some huge ridership days and finished well over budget.

With Thanksgiving we began our Holiday Sights Tour nightly through Christmas Eve. We had outstanding results this year, beating last year’s ridership by 30%. The week between Christmas and New Year’s continues to be one of the busiest weeks of the year in Savannah. We struggled through the month to stay ahead of ridership, making it on the last day to finish up 0.2%. That’s close!!

The sales staff continue to perform with sales and guest service. We certainly have had a much colder winter than in the past few years, but we are bundled up and ready. After all, this is the South! It shouldn’t be this cold. As we come into 2018, we all know season is around the corner. Congratulations to our Sales Reps of the Month: (August) Patrick Starling, (September) Patrick Starling, (October) Wanda Raimo and (November) Jennifer Schwarz. Well done!!

Happy Anniversary!

OLD TOWN TROLLEY TOURS

Michael Smith 12 years
Jacqueline Kelly 12 years
William Haegelin 12 years
Gary Patrick 7 years
Juanita Erskine 7 years
Rance Shell 7 years
Donald Hendrix 6 years
Tommisunte Hutton 6 years
Jodi 6 years
Theresa Floyd 6 years
Michael Lenze 5 years
Rachel Gove, Jr. 5 years
Oscar Floyd III 5 years
Oscar Floyd IV 4 years
Jennifer Larraway 4 years
Brenda Hankinson 4 years
Theresa Floyd 4 years
George Hickman 3 years
Scott Leekey 3 years
Sherrice Tester 3 years
Richard Bruneau 3 years
Jenny Shear 3 years
Christopher Jaduin 2 years
Ashley Gann 2 years
Paul Peters 2 years
Jonathan Prell 2 years
William Ferrer 2 years
Jennifer Schwarz 2 years
Patrick Starling 1 year
Douglas Irvine 1 year
Gordon Bartholf 1 year
Crystal Braden 1 year
Latoya Hanna 1 year
Keya Just 1 year
Dee Rose 1 year
Peter Vanasse 1 year
Kailley Franklin 1 year

AMERICAN PROHIBITION MUSEUM
Travis Spangenburg 5 years

GHOST & GRAVESTONES
Michael Harris 4 years

FACEBOOK.COM/SAVANNAHTOURS
TWITTER.COM/SAVANNAHTOURS
INSTAGRAM.COM/TROLLEYTOURS
FACEBOOK.COM/AMERICANPROHIBITION
TWITTER.COM/USAPROHIBITION
INSTAGRAM.COM/AMERICANPROHIBITION
WE’RE SHAKING THINGS UP!
Kayla Black, Museum Manager

November and December were huge months in the Prohibition Museum. Not only did we have the opportunity to host the National GM’s Conference and introduce the entire GM team to the best museum in Savannah, but we also had the opportunity to have two massive events during the month of December. National Repeal Day, the date when Prohibition officially ended in the United States is December 5th and we had a massive party to celebrate, along with our friends from Old Forester Bourbon, the first bourbon bottleed after Prohibition. Later on in the month, after we hosted several holiday parties for local companies, we were able to ring in 2018 in style in the speakeasy. The joint was jumping and the giggle of December. National Repeal Day, the date when Prohibition officially ended in the United States is December 5th and we had a massive party to celebrate, along with our friends from Old Forester Bourbon, the first bourbon bottled after Prohibition. Later on in the month, after we hosted several holiday parties for local companies, we were able to ring in 2018 in style in the speakeasy. The joint was jumping and the giggle of several holiday parties for local companies, we were able to ring in 2018 in style in the speakeasy. The joint was jumping and the giggle of several holiday parties for local companies, we were able to ring in 2018 in style in the speakeasy. The joint was jumping and the giggle of several holiday parties for local companies, we were able to ring in 2018 in style in the speakeasy. The joint was jumping and the giggle of several holiday parties for local companies, we were able to ring in 2018 in style in the speakeasy. The joint was jumping and the giggle of several holiday parties for local companies, we were able to ring in 2018 in style in the speakeasy. The joint was jumping and the giggle...
HUMAN RESOURCES
Renee Mercer, HR Manager

Three things can be counted on during this time of the year: the Annual OTT Costume CASTmeeting, The Rock-n-Roll Marathon, and Open Enrollment madness. This year, all can go down in history as successes. Our First Place costume contest winner, and winner of a $50 gift card, was the American Probation Museum's Justin Kent, as Forest Gump. Runners up were concierge, Dale Hover, as Paula Deen and Ghost Host, Jillian Brown, as a ghost pirate. Each runner up received a $25 gift card. Although October is easily a favorite among CAST, November is trying to come in a close second! For me, personally, Open Enrollment is the best time of year! This year we tried to get more people in on the action with our display table which boasted contests, prizes, and grab bags. I’d like to send a special Thank You to Trolley Stop Gifts who had 100% of their CASTmembers pull their weight around here, but our CASTmembers pulled it off (of course). I’m thankful to work with such a phenomenal group of people who are able to show up to work at 2 am with contagious excitement, can-do spirit, and sensational teamwork. To reinforce these ideas, this year, we introduced Team Building CASTmeetings. November’s meeting, game show themed and based on the HTA Mission Statement and Philosophy, was entitled “Glass Case of Emotions.” It was an incredible team effort with tons of fun and everyone’s favorite…gift card prizes! We can’t wait until our next one!

December and January were festive months. December was the beginning of our CAST appreciation activities from our Holiday Photo Wall, sweat contest, and New Year’s Resolution Board to Hot Cocoa bars, breakfasts, and more! We love and appreciate our CAST for everything they do for us and for the experiences they provide our Guests. We (obviously) have the greatest team in the HTA nation but I may be a little biased. Another exciting initiative we’ve begun is the “Fun Employment League (of Savannah).” This committee is made up of one CASTmember from each department, including our APM/CSU CAST. Our purpose is in the name: ensuring that OTT Savannah provides a fun place to work, and who doesn’t want that?! Employees who are happy with their workplace exhibit pride, and as a result, great Guest service. The committee will organize the team 5ks, special events, and little “thank yous.” It is such an incredible honor and enjoyable experience to work here, and every member of our CAST should feel the same way.

HELLO FROM THE SAFETY WORLD

“Bean” Kelly, Safety Officer

We did have the National Safety Officer Conference, which was amazing, Thank you Ed Swift and Chris Belland for allowing us to have this great tool of learning and a big thank you to Ally Marshall for hosting the event. I was able to take away a lot of great information and look forward putting to use in the Savannah Operation.

We are starting to move into the slower time of the year and still moving forward with the refresher training for all conductors. (Commentary Driving) The Ghost CAST completed this training at the end of October. November brought the Rock N’ Roll Marathon to Savannah for the 7th year and we handle the transportation for them. A BIG thank you to the drivers for the awareness it takes to run this shuttle service and November 11th is our Veterans Day Parade which causes us to run a different route while we honor our former service men and women. This time of the year we also start training for our holiday tour and the added night driving training, for this tour has had a great feedback on this extra training.

Well I thought this day would never come but it SNOWED here in Savannah and we needed to do Winter Snow Safety. The snow came down and stayed for 3 days which I can’t ever remember happening. Last good snow was 2010 and before that 1989, I was 9 years old the last time it stuck. With that being said our conductors had some challenges on their hands with ice on the ground. Each driver was given the reminder of slow and steady win the day and that we live in “Slowvannah.” I am very proud to say they did very well and I want to thank them for doing such an Awesome Job!!! We have started our new conductor classes and I would like to welcome them aboard to our awesome location.

Lastly: Remember, Safety is as Safety does.

THANK YOU ANDAZ!

Much appreciation goes out to the Andaz Hotel and it’s staff for hosting our General Manager’s meeting in November. We couldn’t express our gratitude enough for the outstanding service. Top: Chris Belland, Gary Patrick, Charlie Brazil, Florence Ploovel (banquet manager), Lee Williams (attendent), and Ed Swift fit. Right: With the Chefs Chef. Chris Cummer, Sous Chef Martelle Lorenz and Line cook Dan Feur are Ed Swift IV, Eric Holmes, Chris Belland and Charlie Brazil

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Historic Savannah Carriage Company

Historic Savannah Carriage Company and its owners, John and Kelly Tarr, have been friends of Old Town Trolley Tours for many years. Their horse carriage company is our official carriage partner company, sold by our concierges and vendors throughout the years and their horse tours are the absolute best in the city.

Five years ago they purchased Magnolia’s of Savannah, a gift and souvenir store, to serve as their physical storefront location. They began offering our trolley tickets in the store alongside their carriage rides and quickly emerged as a top vendor. Recently they moved from their longtime location on Bull Street down to River Street to be closer to their carriage pickup point. At the same time they transitioned from selling traditional hard tickets to an Online Vendor which has been a big success for their sales. We look forward to seeing their current employees, Cathy and Carole, every time we go down to River Street just as we look forward to continuing this mutually-beneficial business partnership in the years to come!
The Nation’s Storyteller

OLD TOWN TROLLEY TOURS

year but to look at innovations each city has been testing. We benefit of having cobblestoned squares and antebellum architecture, and we had the stunning place to visit with its picturesque historic district filled with tourist. The General Managers were hosts. A big thank you to Savannah Old Town Trolley and the American Prohibition Museum for welcoming us into your city and especially for showing off HTA’s newest attraction: The American Prohibition Museum for streamlining recap process, upgraded website and a repackaged Basic Orientation to make it more engaging to our new CASTmembers joining the HTA Team. The creative juices were flowing and I came away renewed and excited for our prospects for the new year. I am proud to be working with such a talented and genuine group of people. I can truly say that it was one of the best meetings we have ever had and the great ideas and energy of the team was remarkable. Check out some of the pictures from our visit to the American Prohibition Museum.

In November our Transportainment General Managers gathered together in Savannah, Georgia for our annual meeting, which started the planning process for Fiscal Year 2018/19. Savannah is a stunning place to visit with its picturesque historic district filled with cobblestoned squares and antebellum architecture, and we had the benefit of having Charlie Brazil, Garry Patrick and the Savannah Team as hosts. A big thank you to Savannah Old Town Trolley and the American Prohibition Museum for welcoming us into your city and especially for showing off HTA’s newest attraction: The American Prohibition Museum and Speakeasy. The General Managers were thoroughly impressed by the stage sets, narrators, technology and mixology. The mixology was especially appreciated after a long day of training and budget spreadsheet review! I can tell you that some of the finest mixologists are working at the Speakeasy and the Savannah Prohibition Museum for streamlining recap process, upgraded website and a repackaged Basic Orientation to make it more engaging to our new CASTmembers joining the HTA Team. The creative juices were flowing and I came away renewed and excited for our prospects for the new year. I am proud to be working with such a talented and genuine group of people. I can truly say that it was one of the best meetings we have ever had and the great ideas and energy of the team was remarkable. Check out some of the pictures from our visit to the American Prohibition Museum.

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We welcomed our locals in September with Hometown Pass Month. Each September we invite St. Johns County residents to tour our attractions and ride the daytime trolley for free. This is a great way for our locals to play tourist in their own backyard. We know they will want to bring their friends and family back when they visit during the year. This year for the first time we added Ghost & Gravestones. Locals received 50% off adult admission tickets to the Ghosts and Gravestones when booked in September. This is an added bonus for our Hometown Pass members. The rest of the year Hometown Pass members can enjoy a buy one – get one free on our daytime tours and attractions.

OTT ADDS PARKING
Old Town Trolley Tours of St. Augustine has made another step to help alleviate the parking issue in St. Augustine. We have purchased property on north San Marco Avenue that was mostly a deserted lot filled with overgrown brush and turned it into parking spaces. In the past year we have added 64 new parking spaces to north San Marco Avenue.

AUTHENTIC OLD JAIL PRESERVATION
Renovation/preservation of the Authentic Old Jail – Steps are underway to help preserve the Authentic Old Jail. The Old Jail currently is undergoing renovations to help preserve it for another 100+ years. It will receive a new roof, new windows, new bars, new plaster and a fresh coat of paint to top it all off. We expect the facelift will help the Authentic Old Jail to make it another 100 years or more. It is a huge job, but it is worth it to help preserve our history here in St. Augustine.

We have been removing the parge that was placed over the brickwork. While removing the parge, we discovered someone had etched the words “Pluggy Tanker” into the brickwork. We are currently researching the name to see what relevance it had to the Old Jail when it was being built. (Parge is a cover made up of plaster or mortar.)

Our next step will be to shift our focus to the interior of the Old Jail. Stay tuned for what happens next. See President Ed Swift’s article on page 5 for other details.

SEPTEMBER HOMETOWN PASS MONTH

Among those performing were David Lee, Kelly Archer, Phillip White, Brian Davis, Tommy Cecil, Rick Ferrell, Cliff Cody, and Brandon Chase. Their names may not be well known, but their hits are, including “Letters from Home,” “One Hell of an Amen,” “Something Like That,” “Home Alone Tonight,” and “Sleep Without You.”

PATRIOT SERVICE DOGS
On Veteran’s Day, Old Town Trolley Tours and attractions had the honor of hosting Patriot Service Dogs to Old Town St. Augustine. Patriot Service Dogs is a 100% volunteer 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to helping our disabled military community gain a sense of independence through a partnership with a well-trained service dog. On Veteran’s Day all veterans tour for free at all Historic Tours of America Tours & Attractions. Additionally, $1 from every trolley ticket sold on Veteran’s Day benefits the Patriot Service Dogs visit the St. Augustine Complex.

Our Second Annual Jailbreak 5k was a success! We doubled our registrations from last year and gave out 75 bicycle helmets. Not bad for it being our second year hosting a 5k run. This year we had Smokin’ D’s Bar-B-Q out being their famous sides of beans, rice and bread. The biggest hit of the morning were the BMX Trickstars who performed many tricks for the crowd as they waited for the runners to finish and return to the Old Jail for live music. Jeannetta Salyer from the Ramona Band performed for the crowd as everyone ate, drank and rested. Awards were given out to the fastest runners in each age group and we even had awards for the best costumes. We are looking forward to our Third Annual Jailbreak 5k and even more fun next year. Mark your calendars now – the last Saturday in October.
MEDIA EVENT NIGHT

We held our 2nd annual Media Event Night on Dec. 4th. Our partners, the St. Augustine Distillery, the San Sebastian Winery, Casa Monica Hotel and the Colonial Quarter all helped put together a fun night and invited the local media from print to radio and tv. We invited them to come to historic St. Augustine to see what we have to offer. Guests enjoyed a catered event at the Winery with food prepared by the Colonial Quarter and desserts from the Casa Monica Hotel. Drinks were offered by the Winery and the Distillery. After the cocktail hour guests were brought outside to the trolleys to enjoy holiday lights as voted by AARP, AAA and Country Living magazine.

COOKIES PROGRAM

Not able to decide what to be for this year’s Halloween Vendor Cookie Program was the inspiration for this year’s theme of Rock, Paper, Scissors.

Left Photo: Dave Chatterton, Melissa Mezick and Rod LaBranch
Right Photo: Yummy Treats delivered to the Cedar House Bed & Breakfast.
Treats provided by Hot Shots Bakery.

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS

Throughout the year Melissa Merick and Dave Chatterton visit their hotel vendors and bring goodies to them during the holidays to thank them for supporting us through the year. They add to the delivery at Halloween by dressing up. This year Rod LaBranch, the Director of Sales for HTA, joined Dave and Melissa. Rod was in town visiting our local operation and was happy to join in on the fun. They dressed up as Rock-Paper-Scissors.

CAROLING ALONG

Melissa Merick (Vendor Representative) and Dave Chatterton made the rounds delivering goodies made by Hot Shot Bakery to several of our Bed and Breakfast vendors. It was a great morning visiting during our December “Cookie” program. Guests staying at the inns were treated to Christmas carols sung by St. Augustine’s very own Wandering Carolers. This year’s treats were amazingly prepared by Hot Shot Bakery n’ Café. They looked great and tasted even better. All around success as many wonderful vacation memories were created today!!

LIGHT UP NIGHT

Light Up Night marks the night when St. Augustine turns on the beautiful Nights of Lights and includes the official tree lighting. A fund raiser to view the lighting ceremony is held at the Government House and proceeds benefit Home Again. The event includes a live fund raiser to view the lighting ceremony is held at the Government House and proceeds benefit Home Again. The event includes a live entertainment, food and music. It was a fun night out to celebrate our 16th Anniversary with friends from the area.

OLD TOWN TROLLEY TOURS • ST. AUGUSTINE

16TH ANNUAL ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Old Town Trolley celebrated their 16th Anniversary party on Nov. 2nd. We welcomed back all of our partners: San Sebastian Winery, St. Augustine Distillery, Taberna del Caballo, Ancient City Brewery, Raintree Restaurant, Coca-Cola, Smokin’ D’s, and Mint Magazine.

This year we had the Chris Thomas Band perform for us and even brought in professional dancers to help encourage everyone out on the dance floor. Instead of raffling off prizes, Kristin from Mint Magazine invited guests to play 3-D Twister to win prizes. Adults and children loved the challenge of playing Twister on a giant-sized blow up floor. Smokin’ D’s arrived in style with lights and sirens on their antique fire truck. The smoked hog they brought was gone in a flash. This year’s event was held in front of the Old Jail and was reminiscent of an old-fashioned block party. It was a great morning visiting during our Christmas tree lighting ceremony held at the Government House. Old Town Trolley Tours was a proud sponsor of this year’s event. Many of our Leadagement team members were on hand to help celebrate the lighting of the tree and the entire downtown area of St. Augustine. It was a fun night out to celebrate as we begin our Nights of Lights season.

Christmas carols sung by St. Augustine’s very own Wandering Carolers. This year’s treats were amazingly prepared by Hot Shot Bakery n’ Café. They looked great and tasted even better. All around success as many wonderful vacation memories were created today!!

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Light Up Night marks the night when St. Augustine turns on the beautiful Nights of Lights and includes the official tree lighting. A fund raiser to view the lighting ceremony is held at the Government House and proceeds benefit Home Again. The event includes a live band, wonderful food and drinks, and a front row seat to the lighting of the Christmas tree in the plaza. Old Town Trolley Tours was a proud sponsor of this year’s event. Many of our Leadagement team members were on hand to help celebrate the lighting of the tree and the entire downtown area of St. Augustine. It was a fun night out to celebrate as we begin our Nights of Lights season.

16TH ANNUAL ANNIVERSARY PARTY

Old Town Trolley celebrated their 16th Anniversary party on Nov. 2nd. We welcomed the hospitality, tourism, and city and county government to Old Town St. Augustine. We welcomed back all of our partners: San Sebastian Winery, St. Augustine Distillery, Taberna del Caballo, Ancient City Brewery, Raintree Restaurant, Coca-Cola, Smokin’ D’s, and Mint Magazine.

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Elliott was born and raised in New Jersey. He enjoys a good meal, world travel, fashion, shopping, real estate and interior design. He also enjoys long trips riding his motorcycle. His family is most important to him, and he loves to spend his free time with his wife, father, mother-in-law, dog, cat, bunny, snake and fish.

Elliott’s career path was in the hospitality food service industry as an Executive Chef and Baker, and, at times, a night club General Manager: a hectic, but rewarding lifestyle in NJ.

Thirty years later he decided it was time for a change, and being his parents retired in Florida, and there were some great opportunities to be had in the real estate market, he picked up and left the north and headed south to St. Augustine. He had been visiting this city since the 1970s and had felt a connection with it. He had dreamed of one day playing a part in the city itself.

Elliott’s past two years with the company have been challenging and rewarding. He has risen to the position of Lead Conductor, Dispatcher, Trainer, and at times, Manager on Duty.

Elliott is truly proud to be part of St. Augustine’s leading tourism company, allowing him to share the history and architecture of this great historical city with others. He considers himself privileged to be given the opportunity to play such an important part in our guests’ vacation experience and memories. Be sure to stop by the Trolley Depot at Old Town in front of the Old Jail if you find yourself in St. Augustine, and experience a little of Elliott’s passion for hospitality and good times. ALL ABOARD!!!!!!!

Our 5th annual judging event was better than ever. Historic Tours of America’s Art Department, led on this project by sculptor Cody Wicker, has been creating, in clay, a life size image of Henry Flagler seated on a bench, which will be eventually placed in front of Potters Wax Museum, a building Flagler had constructed in St. Augustine, Florida.

“Cody has put a tremendous amount of study and dedication to this sculpture,” said Monte Triz, the head of Historic Tours Art Department. The Flagler likeness will be cast in bronze and once returned from the foundry will be dedicated to Flagler’s memory with a plaque telling the story of Flagler and this development.

The Swift Family Christmas otherwise known as “Swiftnmas” kicked off this year with a trolley ride to view St. Augustine’s Famous Nights of Lights on Christmas Eve. They were each presented with their own bag of goodies that included light up lanyards and plastic magical viewing glasses to enhance the lights.

First Place Winner Kerry Wall

Second Place Winner Lindsay Gray’s Hat

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Hat Contest

First Place Winner Kerry Wall

Second Place Winner Lindsay Gray’s Hat

Each year we hold an annual Hat Contest for our CAST to help encourage them to dress up their holiday hats. A festive hat on a conductor or a sales representative helps to put our guests in a holiday mood and also makes them more approachable. This year’s winners were:

• Kerry Wall – First Place $100 Target Gift Card
• Lindsay Gray – Second Place $75.00 Target Gift Card
• Christine – Third Place $50 Target Gift Card

We had many wonderfully creative hats and congratulate everyone on their hats.
The Nation's Storyteller Fall/Winter 2017

WASHINGTON, DC

MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE
Eric Holmes, General Manager

The Museum of the Bible’s mission is to invite all people to engage with the Bible. The Museum is comprised of eight floors, including exhibit and gallery space, visiting libraries and temporary exhibit space, a restaurant and biblical garden, a performing arts theater, a grand ballroom, and event space.

The 430,000 square foot museum is scheduled to open on November 17th, it is located just three blocks from the United States Capitol Building, and of course true to Washington DC’s free of charge. However, there is a suggested donation of $15.

For personal reasons, this has been the most anticipated, and I believe the most beautifully designed museum in Washington. I can only assume it will take years to view the immense amount of content inside this museum. That’s why I plan to get my membership for year-round early access. This should allow me to beat the lines!

On October 22, 2017, the Washington, DC operation was closed for all Trolley and DC Ducks day tours due to the Marine Corps Marathon. Instead we hosted an old fashioned Road-e-o competition and cookout, which included family and friends of the CAST. Drivers volunteered to compete against each other in a closed obstacle course for prizes, awards, and of course… bragging rights! They brushed off the dust and tested their skills on six exercises- a 90 degree turn, straight-line backing, conventional parallel parking, alley docking, an S-curve, and narrowing lanes into an emergency stop. And that wasn’t the ultimate test; all of this had to be completed in the Stadium trolley, which is 39 foot long by 13 feet, 4 inch tall!

Competitors were timed on their completion of the course with deductions for touching/knocking over cones, contact to curbs, exceeding obstacle boundaries, and taking additional pull-ups/back-ups. Some completed the course in about three minutes, while others took a little longer with times up to five minutes. In all 16 drivers competed and three victors prevailed. 1st Place went to Jamie Hamilton, 2nd Place was Joe “Just Joe” Patterson, and coming in at 3rd was Kevin “Trench” Quinn “Mighty Quinn” Feik.

Aside from the competition, other CAST, family, and friends cheered on our guests.

LEONARD K. KATZ MENORAH LIGHTING

WASHINGTON, DC

TROLLEY ROAD-E-O 2017

McDale Johnson, Safety Officer

On October 22, 2017, the Washington, DC operation was closed for all Trolley and DC Ducks day tours due to the Marine Corps Marathon. Instead we hosted an old fashioned Road-e-o competition and cookout, which included family and friends of the CAST. Drivers volunteered to compete against each other in a closed obstacle course for prizes, awards, and of course… bragging rights! They brushed off the dust and tested their skills on six exercises- a 90 degree turn, straight-line backing, conventional parallel parking, alley docking, an S-curve, and narrowing lanes into an emergency stop. And that wasn’t the ultimate test; all of this had to be completed in the Stadium trolley, which is 39 foot long by 13 feet, 4 inch tall!

Competitors were timed on their completion of the course with deductions for touching/knocking over cones, contact to curbs, exceeding obstacle boundaries, and taking additional pull-ups/back-ups. Some completed the course in about three minutes, while others took a little longer with times up to five minutes. In all 16 drivers competed and three victors prevailed. 1st Place went to Quinn “Mighty Quinn” Feik, in 2nd Place was Joe “Just Joe” Patterson, and coming in at 3rd was Kevin “Trench” Williams. Mighty Quinn even took home a Miniature Trolley Trophy created by one of our CDL trainers, Jamie Hamilton.

Aside from the competition, other CAST, family, and friends cheered on our competitors while enjoying a little backyard barbecue. Everyone had a great time and we hope to host again next year to cement an Annual competition.
FALL IN THE MALL

Normaly the national mall is a bustling and bustling attraction filled with people. For 8 to 9 months out of the year, there are tourist and families enjoying the sights and sounds of Washington, DC. There are children running, locals playing Frisbee, soccer and taking care of their daily jogging obligations. There are celebrations, demonstrations and protest, both peaceful and some not so peaceful...Welcome to fall 2017 on the National Mall and looking around, there's nobody to be seen except a few strollers here and there. Today, the Mall looks empty, lonely and deserted. For those of you that don't visit us in the fall and winter, this is what our precious National Mall looks like once all of our beloved tourist, demonstrators, protesters and visitors go home. Pictured is Sales Representative Maggie hard at work on the Mall at our Smithsonian Depot. Are you lonely too Maggie?

MY TAKE

The Professor (James Garrett), Trainer

October is here and we can look back at this past summer in the rear view mirror. This summer, we had challenges that aren’t unique to Old Town Trolley; however, the combination tested the metal of which Old Town Trolleys are and the cast are made of. I’m very happy and relieved to say that everyone passed with flying colors.

Washington is known for hot summers. In the 1800’s, the British Foreign Service Office classified the embassy here in Washington as a Tropical Outpost. So heat and humidity are nothing new to Washington. On the 4th of July 1850, President Zachery Taylor was affected by the heat while giving a speech at the Washington Monument. Going back to the White House, Taylor had a large dish of iced milk and cherries to cool off. Taylor, known as “Old Rough and Ready” died five days later. This summer we experienced record heat with more than 50 days over 90 degrees in July and August. Many days were in the low 100s. More than once did conductors and drivers look at the thermometers on the trolleys and see temperatures ranging between 104 and 107. If the heat weren’t enough, we have the humidity to go with it, pushing the heat index even further up the charts. All the while, conductors, sales reps and valets putting their best faces, acting as though the heat was nothing more than a minor inconvenience. It would have been easy to give in to the conditions, the each and every front line cast member put on their game face and made the guest experience the best in Washington.

This year, Old Town Trolley saw our competitors go into a price war. Trying to gain market superiority, prices with our competitors dropped to less than half the price of an Old Town Trolley tour. Fortunately, guests read reviews. While the other tour companies fought each other to undercut each other in pricing, Old Town Trolley stayed the course and continued to have online reviews that any service company in any industry would be proud of. As has always been emphasized, we are not the biggest, we are the best, and I believe that we can be rightly proud of the product we deliver. Tough competition in the tour industry is nothing new in Washington, and Old Town Trolley will continue to provide the highest quality tour in Washington...as it always has.

The last challenge we faced this past summer was staffing. There is a huge shortage of CDL drivers in the Washington metropolitan area to a degree, it is being carried as a news story across media outlets. With an expansion of our Washington services, we have had an increased need in the number of qualified drivers and conductors in a market with fewer and fewer candidates. That meant that drivers and conductors had to dig even deeper than we usually do to keep all our operations moving smoothly without any effect on our guests, and we did it.

So now, rolling into the fall, we have just a little bit of an opportunity to catch our breath and prepare for it to all start over again in March. Thank you Washington team for digging down deep and giving all our guests a great Washington experience. Be proud.

BOMB CYCLONE

BOMB CYCLONE! Sounds totally scary right? This winter storm hit the entire east coast the first week in January- from Florida all the way up to Maine. The District barely got hit compared to our other HTA eastern cities. Boston, no stranger to cold and snow, saw over a foot of snow and record breaking high tides. Savannah, a stranger to cold and snow, was hit with 2-4 inches of snow and freezing temperatures. DC, who is pretty familiar with cold temperatures and snow, received a light dusting and frigid temperatures.

The cold temperatures caused some ice to form on the roads. For safety reasons we decided to suspend tour operations for the day. Our motto is safety first courtesy a close second. Suspending tour operations requires a lot of work on the part the Leadager team, the office staff and two lovely sales reps that had to man the desk at union station.

Someone had to let the guests know we weren’t operating. The safety officer and I were tasked with riding around downtown to catch stray guests that did not get the memo about our closure. Luckily we only encountered a few people and they were pretty understanding. Although it was cold I was able to capture a few pictures of our beautiful city covered in snow and ice.

LOVE IS IN THE AIR

Eric “Mr. E” Whitehead, Operations Manager

I don’t know what’s in the air in Washington, DC but I think it’s something called LOVE. Love is a beautiful thing. In the last 45 days or so here at OTT DC, we have had three beautiful and handsome couples tie the knot. Seems like every few weeks, someone is walking down the aisle. So if we could, let’s all take this opportunity to acknowledge and send well wishes to CP (OTT Shuttle Driver) anures Terri (First Impressionist) along with Jake (Tour Conductor) and Ryan plus Paris (Tour Conductor) and his wife Michelle (along with Smiley who is a Conductor and was the Officiant of their Wedding).

View of the frozen Tidal Basin and the Jefferson Memorial

BOMB CYCLONE!

Amanda Varnam, Head Trainer

Bomb Cyclone! Sounds totally scary right? This winter storm hit the entire east coast the first week in January from Florida to Maine.

As is every year, I am the last person to go from shorts to pants, with temperatures already in the 20’s and 30’s, I am at what temperature I would put on pants. The last challenge we faced this past summer was staffing. There is a huge shortage of CDL drivers in the Washington metropolitan area to a degree, it is being carried as a news story across media outlets. With an expansion of our Washington services, we have had an increased need in the number of qualified drivers and conductors in a market with fewer and fewer candidates. That meant that drivers and conductors had to dig even deeper than we usually do to keep all our operations moving smoothly without any effect on our guests, and we did it.

So now, rolling into the fall, we have just a little bit of an opportunity to catch our breath and prepare for it to all start over again in March. Thank you Washington team for digging down deep and giving all our guests a great Washington experience. Be proud.

LAST MAN STANDING

Eric “Mr. E” Whitehead, Operations Manager

As is every year, I am the last person to go from shorts to pants, with temperatures already in the 20’s and 30’s, I am at what temperature I would put on pants. The answer is a Cyclone Bomb or Bombegnies, depending on what news you listen to. Dressing for that day pants were laid out. Dress and ready for work then the text, operations would be closed for that day. As I arrived that day, with the rest of the Leadagers came the taunts and jeers. Later as some of the Arlington National Cemetery cast arrived more shock and disbelief. What? Long pants, never would have thought they would see the day. Fast forward, the day after the big storm, high of 18 degrees with a wind chill of -10, pants seem right as the cast and assisted staff enter the building, again the cries of disbelief. The following day I was back to shorts and my comfort zone, again The Last Man Standing.
The Nation's Storyteller

Corporate culture: “The beliefs and behaviors that determine how a company’s employees and management interact with each other, guests and potential guests.” I think you would agree that Historic Tours of America has grown significantly since renovating Key West buildings back in the 80’s. Today, we provide tours, attractions and retail merchandise to millions of guests every year. As our Chief Executive Officer, Chris Belland, often says, “That’s a far cry from the 7,000 we served in our first year of giving tours.” But with the success comes what I will call “hiccups.” And one of those hiccups has been the loss of our corporate culture. How many of our CASTmembers know our mission statement? How many know our philosophy? And how many know our first year of giving tours. “Train the Trainers.”

During the week of January 15-19, 2018, when sixteen trainers from December 27. The final product of this nine-month process occurred in Washington DC on October 25, December 20, and again on November, we developed it; concentrating on our mission and excellence. The new orientation was tested and tweaked through November, we presented the new orientation to everyone and we finished the day wearing dark sunglasses and oversized oven mitts while doing so? One word: Comical! After we finished the Saran Wrap Ball game, I presented the new orientation to everyone and we finished the day with some Q&A.

Wednesday’s icebreaker was called “Beach Ball Q&A,” where attendees toss a beach ball, covered with personal questions, to each other. When they catch the ball, you must answer one of the two questions where your thumbs land. Let’s just say, what was said in St. Augustine stays in St. Augustine! The remainder of the day was spent hearing snippet presentations by all six trainers. The creativity, enthusiasm and presentation skills were quite impressive.

On Thursday, Abe and I facilitated St. Augustine’s new CASTmember orientation to a group of 16, while the 16 trainers from around the country observed. Ed Swift IV, Vince Leone, Christian Belland, Charlie Brazil, Dave Chatterton and Jacqueline Stepp all joined us for a day of fun, activities, trivia games and the introduction of HTA’s Corporate culture. What we had worked on for nine months all came together and I think this was the first time when I truly realized that we had re-instilled the foundation that has been, is, and will continue to be, so important to our company.

To all those involved, take a bow. Ya’ done good!

BRINGING BACK OUR COMPANY’S CULTURE

Jerry Miles, National Trainer

THE CHRISTMAS TREES OF DC

Natacha “Virginia” Moore, Head Conductor

Call me a bit bias, but there is nothing like Washington, D.C. under the lights. One of the best products Historic Tours of America offers is the Monuments by Moonlight tour in the Nation’s Capital. Being able, to share two and a half hours with guests from around the world informing about our great city is a pleasure. My favorite time of the year has arrived and I have always noticed just how great the Christmas trees are here in Washington, D.C. To guests are given an added bonus with two major Christmas trees at the White House and at the U.S. Capitol that add to the history of D.C.

As a tour conductor, constant reading helps us give a better tour each and every time we board a trolley of guests. I have learned that the guests are just as fascinated with our Christmas trees and the stories and history they provide. The U.S. Capitol Christmas tree is referred to by Washingtonians as the, “People’s Tree” and has arrived every year on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol since 1964. The Capitol Christmas tree is always selected from one of our National forests in the United States of America. This year’s tree was lit on December 6, 2017 by Speaker of the House Paul Ryan and hails from The Kootenai Forest in Montana. The 79-foot Engleman Spruce has ornaments all donated by residents of Montana.

The tradition of lighting the National Christmas Tree has gone back more than 40 years before Washington, D.C. would introduce the “People’s Tree.” President Calvin Coolidge walked from the White House to light a 44 foot Fir tree decorated with 2,500 lights on November 30, 1923. This year the National Tree lighting occurred on its original date and is a 30 foot Blue Spruce from Virginia. Surrounding the National Tree will be 56 smaller trees each decorated with one-of-a-kind ornaments from a farm in North Carolina, each representing every U.S. state territory and the District of Columbia. The South Portico of the White House is beautifully festive and you should all come visit and take a look.

JACOB LOVES 170

Eric “EJ” Whitman, Operations Manager

One of the great things about this amazing company that we work for is they continue to invest in their people and their equipment. We have 2 brand new state of the art stadium trolleys numbered 514 and 515. But to the surprise of everyone here, one of our conductors by the name of Feike Quinn absolutely loves one of the oldest trolleys in the fleet. Trolley number 170 is a 1994 Chevy IC that he calls his heavy Chevy. Ok, I made that name up for him but from the very first day that he was assigned that trolley, he has been in love with it. Although he has had the opportunity to drive newer vehicles, he likes his 170. He says that he loves the pull string on the bell, the bell is louder than the newer ones, he loves the glass windows and he thinks the front bumper looks like a locomotive coming at you. Needless to say, some of the other conductors will not be upset if Jacob gets to drive his baby every single day!!!
DC TRAINEE SPOTLIGHT
McChale Johnson, Safety Officer

When I was onboarded as the Safety Officer last year, one of my assigned tasks was to improve the training process. In September, I was assigned to oversee my first training class, which included four Conductor candidates who needed to acquire their CDL. All four successfully completed training and obtained their license in November and December. I would like to put the spotlight on the trainees for a job well done and to officially welcome them to the Old Town Trolley team. They are currently still working on learning the loops, but will be certified on the Blue Loop (our main tour loop) later in January.

Stephanie “StephFunny” Walltower is from Silver Spring, MD. She enjoys writing poetry and engaging in anything creative. StephFunny feels that working for OTT is a great opportunity for her to learn more about the area she grew up in and in turn educate people who hunger for that same knowledge. Robert Makana is from Hyattsville, MD. His hobbies include music, hunting, fishing, reading, and volunteering as a Firefighter/EMT. Robert came to OTT with interest in acquiring his CDL and since he previously worked for other tour companies, Robert saw this as an even better opportunity! Benjamin “Uncle Ben” Paratore was born and raised in the Jersey Shore. He enjoys making toys from exotic wood. After retiring, Uncle Ben decided he wanted to be a tour guide and since he loved driving, he thought OTT was the place to be! Lastly, but not least, James “Magic J” Roberts is from DC. James also enjoys writing poetry. After researching OTT, Magic J saw us as the family oriented job that he wanted to be a part of.

Again welcome to the team StephFunny, Robert, Uncle Ben, and Magic J! We know that each of you will shine as our storytellers.

We look forward to welcoming many more Conductors and Shuttle Drivers before our season begins. Especially since my fellow CASTmember, Amanda Varnam— the newest Head Trainer, and I have developed a revamped training program, which we debuted in December. Wish us luck as we embark on this journey!

ANC END OF SEASON PARTY

Loretta Pinkney, ANC Ops Mgr, Oscar Overton
The staff met at Dave and Busters

Christine Stewart (ANC Admix) and Oscar Overton (ANC Sales)

Oscar Overton (ANC Sales), Cathy Young (ANC Sales), Stephanie Graviss (ANC Charter Representative)

Dwon Gillis, ANC Assistant Operations Manager and the dance floor as DJ Big Cheez

 прим.несущ.
OMG… is what comes to mind when I think about the 2017 season! So many busy days, so many records broken and such incredible teamwork by the OTT Boston CAST, it’s hard to keep track of it all. By the end of October we had reached our budgeted ridership number for the entire fiscal year of 284,940. The trend continued into November and as of November 6th another record was broken, Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston surpassed 300,000 riders for the year! Clearly this is no small accomplishment and the entire Cast of Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston deserves a huge CONGRATULATIONS for a job well done….way to go team! Halloween was on Tuesday, October 31st and many of our CASTmembers partook in our annual Costume Contest. The CAST really stepped it up this year with so many great costumes. Prizes were given out for first, second and third place and the winners were….

HOLIDAYS
Nothing gets you ready for the holiday season like three Old Town Trolleys all decked out with festive decorations. Every year Mayor Walsh and his entourage hire our trolleys for a three day period to visit each neighborhood in the city to light the neighborhood’s Christmas tree and to kick off the holiday season. This year it took place from December 1st to the 3rd and was, once again, a huge success! Thank you to all of the conductors who drove this charter; Jennifer “J” LaBarre, Keith “Sully” O’Sullivan, Gordie Fitt, David “Lil Dave” Ryan, Charlie “Papa” Cirrone, Jan Taylor and Sue Pye. Check out the great pics on Jan Taylor next to one of the beautifully decorated trolleys.

One of the many charitable organizations that OTT Boston supports is the Laboure Center here in South Boston. One of their biggest fundraisers every year is the annual Holiday House Tour. Old Town Trolley proudly provides three trolleys to drive hundreds of folks to and from the various homes that are all decked out for the holidays. Thank you to the awesome conductors who drove for Laboure this year; Michael “Townie” Byrnes, Keith “Sully” O’Sullivan and Julianne “Jewels” Bowker. (see pic)

OTT Boston’s annual Holiday Party took place on December 6th at the Summer Shack restaurant. To say this was the best one yet would be an understatement. The fabulous Admin team of conductors, Laura Parker, Laura Haker and Crys Jackson out-did themselves by creating a theme, “Winter Wonderland”, decorating the restaurant and making sure no detail was left out. Yours truly embraced the theme of the evening by wearing a very special suit which screamed Winter Wonderland. One of the highlights of the night was the photo booth, complete with all sorts of props which helped everyone get into a festive spirit, check out some of the great pics (see pics on Page 54). OTT’s resident DJ, conductor David “Lil Dave” Ryan provided the DJ services of great music and karaoke for the evening. Thank you Dave! We couldn’t have done it without you. Thank you also to Michael “The Professor” Chandler and Tracey Paturzo for taking care of all of the details with the Summer Shack.

On December 9th, OTT Boston received a ton of free publicity thanks to a snow storm, of all things. Around here a couple of inches of snow is no big deal, but to the rest of the country it’s apparently a major story or at least it was for the Weather Channel on that day as they set up for live shots at Quincy Market right beside the OTT ticket booth. Throughout the day The Weather Channel would do live shots showing our booth and Quincy Market in the background. One of those shots included a visit from Santa which was then sent out on Twitter. Our friends at the Andaz Hotel all the way down in Savannah, GA sent me the screen of the tweet. You got to love the power of the internet!

On January 13th the New England Patriots played in the AFC Divisional game and beat the Tennessee Titans by a score of 35 to 14 to advance to the AFC Championship game for the seventh consecutive year. My condolences to Steve Bustreus and the rest of the Nashville CAST, there’s always next year! Following that win, the New England Patriots’ Cheerleaders and team mascot “Pat Patriot” were spotted all over town, even on trolleys, getting the locals excited for the next game against the Jacksonville Jaguars on January 21st. Talk about a game! Once again the Pats proved that it’s not over until it’s over. New England was trailing going into the fourth quarter 20 to 10 when they came from behind to win with a score of 24 to 20. Next stop…. Super Bowl was against the Philadelphia Eagles, unfortunately… we lost that one.

WELCOME ABOARD

BOSTON TEA PARTY SHIPS & MUSEUM
Carrie Midura
Maudie Njoku
Stephanie Cramer
Laurnette Sequea Wa Nenega

Happy Anniversary!

OLD TOWN TROLLEY
Robert Gibson
12 years
Charles Cirrone
9 years
Brian Buckley
9 years
Karolyn Kurkjian Jones
8 years
Robert Regan
5 years
David Ryan
3 years
Tracey Paturzo
3 years
William Chappell
3 years
Charles Everett
2 years
Julianne Bowker
2 years
Arthur Dove
2 years
Marcus Muirhead
1 year
Brett Baptiste
1 year
Lisa Young
1 year
Brandon Parker
1 year
Keith O’Sullivan
1 year

BOSTON TEA PARTY SHIPS & MUSEUM
Jean Gordon
11 years
Leon Poindez
5 years
Amber Robitaille
4 years
Joseph Russev
1 year
Sierra Grabowska
1 year

SEPTMBER
Boo “Boston Bob” Eaton
Conductor
Sean “William Marlowe” Morris
Actor
Phil Ribeiro
Sales Representative
David “Lil Dave” Ryan
Supporting

Phil Ribeiro
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The Nation’s Storyteller Fall/Winter 2017

Jonathan “Jack Burton” Norcross
David “Cubbie” Matayabas

We have always held the belief that the guest is now we can check up on guest complaints. Different can now moving forward have a totally guest comment statement may have been interpreted because the still photos didn’t tell the whole story or a have just accepted and paid off work. But, I have been amazed on the trolleys up here. At first notes on the vehicle video without any problems. Guests tours right off their ships ship season and gave thousands of guests eager for the knowledge that we can of Boston. The guests still come and the toe warmers in the shoes. To use the hand warmer in the mittens here in Boston “sweatah weathah” . It year as sweater weather or as we say up air is cooler. I like to refer to this time of Fall, the colors have popped and the in Wells, Maine. The attached pictures show mechanics Jim Mehigan and Dave Gustafson hard at work prepping six of our vehicles for their winter hibernation off site. Of setting the proper guest expectation on those busy days! I am very proud of our team for a job well done and look forward to keeping the momentum going as it seems that this winter is going to fly by!!

TRAINING TO BE THE BEST
Sue Pye, Safety Officer & Trainer
Hello from the Great City of Boston. Well we have finally arrived in Full, the colors have popped and the air is cooler. I like to refer to this time of year as sweater weather or as we say up here in Boston “sweatah weathah”. It is now cold, so time to bundle up, time to use the hand warmer in the mittens and the toe warmers in the shoes. Keeping warm is important so that we can continue to give the awesome tour of Boston. The guests still come and are eager for the knowledge that we can impart on them.

We had a very busy and safe Cruise ship season and gave thousands of guests tours right off their ships without any problems. I would like to share some notes on the vehicle video surveillance system that we have on the trolleys up here. At first there were questions as to why we need it and how would it work. But, I have been amazed at what can be seen on these. Accidents that in the past we may have just accepted and paid off because the still photos didn’t tell the whole story or a guest comment statement may have been interpreted differently can now moving forward have a totally different outcome. The other benefit of the video is now we can check up on guest complaints. We have always held the belief that the guest is always right. I have discovered that sometimes the conductors are just doing what they have been trained to do or say and the guest is interpreting the information wrong. I have watched some great tours. We will have conductors that care about sharing the history of Boston. Thanks Boston Conductors for showing off our city so well. I know that the conductors that we have in all of our cities share their enthusiasm for their own cities too. I got a glimpse of this in Nashville at the National Safety Conference on the two tours I took which were great but even better was the time spent with my fellow safety officers. It was great to see that each city, though different, has similar issues that we have to deal with. Also I got to see the Charlie Daniels Band at the Grand Ole Opry… how cool is that!

Moving into the Holiday Season, Stay Safe out there on the crazy streets of each of your cities and have a wonderful Holiday season.

OUR FLEET
Bob Giesling, Fleet Manager
With a fleet of 44 trolleys, 36 of which are stadium-size, OTT Boston’s barn is bursting at the seams and we are currently parking 4 to 6 vehicles outside every night. That, of course, will create a huge safety issue should we get any significant snow fall. With winter fast approaching, we’ve decided to store some of our trolleys off site at the Molly Corporation in Wells, Maine. The attached pictures show mechanics Jim Mehigan and Dave Gustafson hard at work prepping six of our vehicles for their winter hibernation off site.

COATS FOR CHRISTMAS
Brandon Parker, Administrative Assistant
Office Staff kicked off our winter season with another FUNDraiser. Our lost and found bin was once again full from a very busy cruise ship season. Admin hold another silent auction as well as a coat drive. Some items we sold this time included a lost video camcorder, Hard Rock Café souvenirs, and a Patriots championship hat (Go Pats!). Staff from all departments donated brand new or lightly used coats. We once again supported the Condominum Elementary School and community center. Gentrification is taking over South Boston. Many inner city children were without coats this winter, some have immigrated over not realizing the harsh winter temperatures while others are struggling financially. Old Town Trolley was able to donate 40 coats of various sizes for both boys and girls. Once again cashing in lost treasures and giving back to the community.

DECEMBER
David “Lil Dave” Ryan
Conductor
Andrew Quinney
Sales Representative
David Gustafson
Supporting

In the midst of an extremely successful “Ridership” year at OTT Boston not to be lost is the success of our Cruise Ship business! We’ve broken all ridership records including “Cruise” ridership. A few highlights of our season are pictured here.

On the 4th of July we carried just shy of 3000 guests. Visiting Boston that day! Check out some of the great pictures I got during our cruise ship season.

COACHES FOR CHRISTMAS
Brandon Parker, Administrative Assistant
Office Staff kicked off our winter season with another FUNDraiser. Our lost and found bin was once again full from a very busy cruise ship season. Admin hold another silent auction as well as a coat drive. Some items we sold this time included a lost video camcorder, Hard Rock Café souvenirs, and a Patriots championship hat (Go Pats!). Staff from all departments donated brand new or lightly used coats. We once again supported the Condominium Elementary School and community center. Gentrification is taking over South Boston. Many inner city children were without coats this winter, some have immigrated over not realizing the harsh winter temperatures while others are struggling financially. Old Town Trolley was able to donate 40 coats of various sizes for both boys and girls. Once again cashing in lost treasures and giving back to the community.

CRUISE SEASON
Brian Buckley, Operations Manager
In the midst of an extremely successful “Ridership” year at OTT Boston not to be lost is the success of our Cruise Ship business! We’ve broken all ridership records including “Cruise” ridership. A few highlights of our season are pictured here.

On the 4th of July we carried just shy of 3000 guests. Visiting Boston that day were the Celebrity Summit and Queen Mary II. Combined, those ships carry over 4500 passengers. Over 500 of those passengers purchased shore excursions from both ships. Additionally, our depot at the Black Falcon Cruise Terminal sold 178 tickets. We also had approximately 135 guests who had E-Tickets when they arrived. In short approximately 20% of the guests on board both ships rode with Old Town Trolley that day! Check out some of the great pictures I got during our cruise ship season.

OLD TOWN TROLLEY TOURS of BOSTON

Our cruise ship season takes a total team effort and each year our execution continues to get stronger! Our team does an excellent job of setting the proper guest expectation on those busy days! I am very proud of our team for a job well done and look forward to keeping the momentum going as it seems that this winter is going to fly by!!

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT
David Haigh
Sheraton Boston Hotel
David Haigh is a concierge at the Sheraton Boston Hotel. He’s been working there for over a year and is big supporter of Old Town Trolley Tours. He was born in West Yorkshire, England and moved with his mother and sister to Australia when he was 9 years old. They traveled from England to Australia by boat which took 1 month. David still has vivid memories of that trip. In particular, he remembers the 2 day stopover in Cape Town, South Africa. (It was 1974).

David and his family finally arrived and settled in Adelaide, South Australia. After finishing school, David worked in retail for several years. In the late 90’s, David used a computer chat site called Compuverse. In 1997, he started chatting with Emily, who lived in Boston. Three years later, David moved to Boston to be with Emily. The first job he took after he arrived was as a front desk agent at the Inn at Harvard. After working for several months, David became a concierge, and then moved up through the management positions until he was hotel manager. In 2016, David left the 73 room Inn at Harvard and took a job as a front desk agent at the 1220 room Sheraton Boston. Six months later, David became a concierge at the hotel.

David loves working at the Sheraton and he loves being a concierge. He enjoys his coworkers and learns a lot from their extensive knowledge. He likes giving information to and helping his guests. He is happy to recommend Old Town Trolley Tours to his guests because he knows that our tour is high quality and high value. When David isn’t at work, he enjoys spending time with his family – his wife Emily, his step daughters Jessica and Christine, and Christine’s daughter Ariana (who turned 3 in July). A huge thank you goes out to David for all he does to make guests feel welcomed in Boston and for recommending Old Town Trolley Tours.

NOVEMBER
David “Cubbie” Malaybas
Conductor
Jonathan “Jack Burton” Norcross
Actor
Ashley Cappuccio
Sales Representative
Solen Jean
Supporting

The first day that guests see when they disembark the ship

The Celebrity Summit and Queen Mary II

The first thing that guests see when they disembark the ship

OUR FLEET
Bob Giesling, Fleet Manager

With a fleet of 44 trolleys, 36 of which are stadium-size, OTT Boston’s barn is bursting at the seams and we are currently parking 4 to 6 vehicles outside every night. That, of course, will create a huge safety issue should we get any significant snow fall. With winter fast approaching, we’ve decided to store some of our trolleys off site at the Molly Corporation in Wells, Maine. The attached pictures show mechanics Jim Mehigan and Dave Gustafson hard at work prepping six of our vehicles for their winter hibernation off site.

File vehicle going into hibernation this time of year

50 The Nation’s Storyteller Fall/Winter 2017
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GHOST & GRAVESTONES

Will Munoz was born on a dark and stormy afternoon in Boston. Will’s family probably didn’t notice, but it was definitely Boston… and late December, so probably stormy! Despite being named after a baseball player, Will is terrible at playing sports but very good at watching them, especially the ones that Americans don’t like, such as hockey and soccer (supporting the Boston Bruins and Arsenal F.C.). Good thing he found his calling in entertainment, because that football scholarship would not have gone well.

Having developed an unnatural obsession with Halloween at an early age, Will found his way into the world of professional haunting as a scare actor. October would see him building headstones and zombies in his basement to set up on the front lawn for the 31st. Now he gets to act like it’s Halloween most of the year at Ghosts and Gravestones, where he has been for seven years. His mother is relieved to see him find a better outlet for his energies than her front yard.

JONATHAN’S FUN FACTS

His greatest fear is spider-clowns. Spiders and clowns individually, not scary. Put them together, pure nightmare fuel.

His favorite vacation spot is Disney. Specifically the Haunted Mansion.

He loves when he is on the clock, I'm an actor, lying is my profession.

His favorite hero of fiction is Harry Dresden.

If he were to die and come back as a person or thing, he would be a Spider-Clown

THE DEAD OF WINTER
Steven Johnson, Operations Manager

Ghosts & Gravestones got greedy this year and decided to stay open on Saturdays through the Winter. We’ve been happy with the response so far and look forward to doing it bigger and better next year. You haven’t lived until you’ve told a ghost story in subzero weather. Here’s a few pictures from some of our coldest, darkest nights (it was 15 degrees on the night of the tour with the full trolley).
HALLOWEEN

On Tuesday October 24th, a group of us went out to deliver Halloween gift bags to some of our vendors. Vendor reps Cathy Hutchinson and Beth Josephs were joined by Ghosts & Gravestones actors Leo “Bernard Kingsly” Wylder and Kim “Lilly Winters” Villandry. Julie “Jewels” Bower drove us to the various locations in a Ghost & Gravestones trolley. The bags we handed out included an orange fidget spinner with the OTT logo in the middle, pretzels and the requisite candy.

We stopped at the Fairmont Copley Plaza, the Omni Parker House, the Visitor Information Center, the Hyatt Cambridge, the Kendall Hotel, the Marriott Residence Inn, the Marriott Cambridge, the Hotel Marlowe, and the Royal Sonesta. We all handed out gift bags and talked to the concierges, other hotel employees, and guests but “Bernard” and “Lilly” definitely stole the show. Almost everybody wanted their pictures taken with them. At the Fairmont, “Lilly” posted a photo of herself in the lobby to Instagram and almost immediately someone from the Fairmont responded to the post. Below is a screenshot of that Instagram photo with comments from the Fairmont and a few other pictures that we took.

CHRISTMAS

It was a cold and snowy day when Santa, his elves, and the vendor reps delivered cookies to the vendors in Boston. Santa was none other than our Operation Manager, Brian Buckley. The elves were vendor reps Beth Josephs’ twins Cory and Davy and vendor rep Cathy Hutchinson’s grandchildren, Kailey and Jake Evers and Jackson Remick. What a sight the elves were in their matching red t-shirts, green sashes, hats, and bells. They were adorable if I do say so myself. We went to several hotels in the area handing out cookies and candy canes. You should have seen the looks on people’s faces when the elevator doors in the lobbies open up and Santa walked out. Priceless! So many people, kids and adults too, had their picture taken with Santa. It was a fun day for everyone, vendors and elves alike. Elf Kailey wanted to know if we could do this again. Hang in there honey, Christmas will be here before you know it! Beth and Cathy were wondering, do our kids think this is what we do every day at work?
As our busy fall season begins to make way for the colder temperatures of a Boston winter, we've been lucky to celebrate another great milestone in our short history. On Friday, October 27, we welcomed our 1 millionth guest – the Johnson Family of LaCresenta, California! This number refers to the 1 millionth paid guest (excluding comps, VIPs, or event attendees). We are thrilled to have achieved this amazing total in just over 5 years in business. We are truly one of THE “things to do” in Boston and could not have achieved that status without the hard work of all of our Cast Members, both past and present. Historic Tours of Americas commitment to the guest experience and the BTPSM commitment to telling the story of the Boston Tea Party of 1773 in such an immersive and engaging way have helped us on this road to success. Our location in the Fort Point Channel neighborhood has also helped as we are lucky to be involved in the Friends of the Fort Point Channel association. This group does quite a great job of engaging the local community through various means. The Pumpkin Pageant is always a highlight of the year, and not to brag, but we have been award winners in the Pageant every year that we have participated! This year was no different as Jillian Couillard, Creative Department Supervisor (CDS), took the reins and using a suggestion from Christopher Davis, CDS, to turn the pumpkin into a tea cup with the three ships floating in the “water”. We hosted the “Fall Fling” Event that evening to welcome the Friends of the Fort Point Channel members and announce the winners of the 2017 Pumpkin Pageant. Kim Salvato, Events Manager, did a wonderful job facilitating the event, as she has all Fall with such a busy schedule. We were bustling after hours for the last several months due to Kim’s hard work. Our location on the water really helps to create such a beautiful event venue!

The “off season” brings lower guest numbers but it certainly doesn’t mean we’re slowing down. Our “Huzzah! Tavern Night” program continues to draw large crowds every 2nd and 4th Friday of the month and we are excited to bring that program back to Harpoon Brewery in early December. Our maintenance team is busy preparing for the winter months, continuing to keep our site looking brand new, and focusing on winter safety concerns. Dan O’Neill, Site Manager, and Kris McQuage-Loukas, Assistant Site Manager, attended the National Safety Conference in Nashville and were given the opportunity to present to the other attendees. Although HTA’s “bread and butter” is the trolley business, all entities share safety concerns and can certainly learn from each other. We are very proud of their initiatives and accomplishments that have added all of us to be the best that we can be.

Our biggest night of the year, December 16th, is only a month away! It’s exciting to be once again presenting the 244th Anniversary and Annual Reenactment of the Boston Tea Party with Old South Meeting House. Be sure to check out our social media channels leading up to this historic night!
I am proud to introduce you to the new General Manager of Old Town Trolley Key West. Rich Fox was born and raised in South Manchester, England. That is the home of the famous Manchester City Football Club, and to say that he is a fan would be a massive understatement. His allegiance is so strong that he has a sizable tattoo on his lower leg that bears the badge of the team. He, like many of us, considers watching his team to be one of his favorite hobbies. He makes no effort to hide his feelings about his team, or how he feels about their rivals. I once watched him jealously forbid a child wearing a rival’s jersey to board one of the company vehicles. It was a rather entertaining exchange to witness, and although his efforts were all in fun, that child may well be sprawled out on a therapist’s couch as you are reading this. He has lived much of his life being inspired by a quote from John Wayne: “Courage is being scared to death, but saddling up anyway.” Money being no object, Rich would love to spend the day at his very own surf shop in Queensland, Australia, then jump on his motorcyle, ride home and make up the cast of Old Town Trolley. He says that the energy of the people in this company is nothing short of contagious, and that is what contributes to him looking forward to waking up every morning, excited to go to work. As you all know, no two days in this business are the same, and it is that requisite spontaneity that places this position with this company at the top of his all-time-favorite list. We are all thrilled to have Rich here at Old Town Trolley. We wish him all the best in his new position, we are here to help in whatever way necessary, and we look forward to many more years of his successful leadership.

Franklin Graham’s disaster relief organization, Samaritan’s Purse, spent more than eight weeks in Key West volunteering to clean up, not only Key West, but also the Florida Keys that needed help. Samaritan’s Purse flew in up to 160 volunteers a day, on three separate planes. The volunteers came from all over the U.S. as close as Ft. Lauderdale. And as far as Washington state. Volunteers stayed a day, some two weeks, and others for more than a month.

Todd Taylor, N.C. said they would stay “as long as the Lord provides.” Their official last day was scheduled for Nov. 14, 2017. All of the Florida Keys thank Samaritan’s Purse for all their help. We are all thrilled to have Rich here at Old Town Trolley. We wish him all the best in his new position, we are here to help in whatever way necessary, and we look forward to many more years of his successful leadership.

Employee of the month twice
October 2016 and March of 2017, is new comer Brian González.

González was born in Cuba and came to the United States five years ago and graduated from Marathon High School in 2016. His plans include joining the Coast Guard and since this is his fifth year in the United States he will be applying to become an American citizen sometime this year. González can be found most days in Mallory Square where he greets the guests as if they were his best friends. His kind and charismatic personality has made him one of the most likeable people at OTT.

Brian González and trolley conductor Hugo Manzeira intensely conversing before Hugo’s tour.

Photo credit Heather Clement.  

On behalf of the CASTmembers of the Conch Tour Train I would like to thank Historic Tours of America for taking care of our CAST after Hurricane Irma. Many CASTmembers would not have been able to continue to live in Key West if it weren’t for them. Amazing! We are looking forward to our upcoming busy season! Holiday Light Tours were a big hit.

While were were shut down because of Hurricane Irma, our cast took the opportunity to clean, paint and brush up on some sightseeing.

In October the cruise ship Empress of the Seas came in and docked at the Mole Pier. That pier is on the military base so they have to be escorted out on the train or trolley. A group of 51 of those guests decided to dress up like flamingos while they were here. They all had flamingo hats. Then some had boas, sunglasses, hats, shorts and shirts with flamingos. One of our administrative assistant Melissa Litten dressed up for Halloween. She looked great!

Happy Anniversary!

Old Town Trolley Tours
Derek Eckley, Old Town Trolley Tours

Happy Anniversary!

Old Town Trolley Tours
Aaron Andes 10 years
Marvin Martinez 9 years
Paula Lewis 7 years
Richard Sanders-Fox 4 years
Norman Bruein 3 years
Arvin Ramsey 2 years
James Ode 1 year
Stephen Clark 1 year
Donald Hines 1 year
Arthur Zelenak II 1 year

GHOSTS & GRAVESTONES
Frank Glander 31 years
Mindy Tucker 5 years
Ashley Dixon 4 years
Bruce Dodge 26 years
Cheryl Actor 21 years
Eduardo Silva 18 years
Vicki Clark 14 years
Mary Martinez 13 years
Joyce Dahlinger 15 years
Robert Lutz 9 years
BJ Andrade-Ward 7 years
Tricia Richmond 4 years
Susan Chiappone 2 years
Gregory Bloom 2 years
Thomas Leroy 2 years
George Litten 1 year
Antwun Lyons 1 year
Carlos Valdivieso 1 year
William Allen 1 year
Kelly Mordini 1 year
HOLIDAY LIGHT TOURS

Rich Fox, Old Town Trolley Tours General Manager

We here in Key West would like to wish the rest of our Historic Tours of America family the very best holidays, and the happiest and most prosperous of new years! May 2018 be your most fruitful year yet!

It has been extremely busy here in the southernmost city! Holiday light tours have become an integral part of the culture of Key West, and they are showing no sign of decline. Just in case anyone doesn’t know exactly what I am talking about, I’ll give you a little background. Every year, in early December, applications are submitted by homeowners who are wishing to be considered for awards that will be given for best-decorated homes. Applications were due a little bit this year, I assume because people have chosen to spend more money on hurricane recovery, and therefore less on holiday lighting. This program is sponsored by HTA, in conjunction with the local electric company, Keys Energy. Cash prizes, as well as Waterford Crystal items are awarded to first, second, and third place winners. To determine winners, a trolley is filled with representatives from the sponsoring companies, and the applicant homes are all visited one evening. It has become somewhat traditional that non-cash, adult-oriented, sometimes-intoxicating bribery is considered permissible, and may have even been deemed effective in determining prize winners. In some cases, this “hospitality” continues all the way through the lighting touring season, presumably in hopes that the following year will produce a more favorable result for those houses that are especially hospitable. It is during this festive evening that a suggested route is determined for the season’s light-viewing adventures. The evening culminates with a visit to the beautiful home of Chris Belland and Piper Smith, where festivities continue, well-wishes are extended, good will is shared, and motivational words are spoken, all toward the goal of continued success for the holiday season.

As much fun as all have had, this is little more than the very tip of the proverbial iceberg. Here is where the joy of the season really begins. While there are homeowners that could not justify the expense of festive light displays, local businesses really stepped up to the challenge, and we almost DOUBLED our ridership this year over last! I am sure the holiday lights in Key West, but were not involved in the many tours of America family the very best holidays, and the happiest and most prosperous of new years! May 2018 be your most fruitful year yet!

The third place house is a character-driven presentation featuring the entire Peanuts gang, and even includes Hermey, the misfit elf that dreams of being a dentist! This was the most participative home on the tour. Every trolley that passed this house was greeted with kids that came right onto the vehicle and passed out candy to all the guests! I might be willing to wager that all of their efforts might just land them a spot higher than third place next year.

There is a very large and bright star hanging high above the streets of Key West that leads you to the first-place house. The magnitude of the effort put into this display is nothing short of incredible! Multi-colored lights strung meticulously in the trees, and dozens of lit figures lining the yard, verandas, and rooftop make this home a spectacle to behold!

A very successful holiday season has been had here in Key West, and we would, again, like to wish you and all of yours nothing but the best going into 2018. Our hurricane recovery effort has been hard fought, and absolutely worth every bead of sweat that has been shed. Our prayers continue to go out to those that did not fare well from hurricane Irma. We feel like Key West is 99% recovered, and we continue to be thankful for all of the support we have received from everyone in this fantastic company! Please tell your friends and neighbors that Key West is open for business! If you have not yet been here, please allow me the pleasure of showing you around. See you soon!

CAST PARTY

We dressed our best, toasted each other, and danced the night away. It was a night to remember for all who attended. From the photo booth with the Viking hats, the door prizes consisting of rum and cookies, to Rich Fox presenting Tim Watson with a whole cake to ensure his success in their weekly weigh-in (yeah, that definitely happened). The Trolley and Train Holiday Party reminded everyone that we are not just colleagues, Ledgeragers or Cast Members, but that we are one VERY large family. We are all sad that Frank Glander did not wear his Kilt this year, but we still managed to have a good time and break it down on the dance floor to our favorite hits like Celebrate, Mambo No. 5, and Uptown Funk.

We are certainly lucky to work for a company that we love, with people that we love. Happy New Year and let’s have a killer season!
For the past 35 years, Historic Tours of America (including the Old Town Trolley and Conch Tour Train) has hosted the Children’s Day celebration in Bayview Park. A multitude of vendors (all for charity) participate each year to raise money through food, games, and rides sponsored by us. The costume contest and performances are the highlight of the day.

Nicole Arias from Sigsbee Charter School won the t-shirt contest design.

The 35th Annual Children’s Day

2017 Winning T-Shirt design

2nd Annual Paella Cookoff

A Harry S. Truman Foundation Benefit

The Harry S. Truman Foundation hosted its 2nd annual Paella Cookoff on January 27th on the lawn of the Little White House. The event attracted nearly 200 people sampling a Spanish favorite... Paella. It is a dish prepared by simmering together chicken, seafood, rice, vegetables, and saffron and other seasonings in a large cast iron skillet.

The event was part of the annual Key West Food and Wine Festival. Taking home the first prize was Historic Tours of America’s CEO and VP of Marketing and Advertising Chris Belland and Piper Smith. They won an amazing crown and large tin rooster that was later named Cocky Balboa.
The Key West Harry S. Truman Foundation hosted its annual membership drive at the prestigious Truman Little White House. A small team of the most dedicated volunteers, fondly known as the Harry’s Girls & Auxiliary, serve as the most gracious hosts and provide all of the amazing food and beverages. The evening was complete with authentic 1949 White House Christmas décor as well as Dickens’ Carolers played by Key West High School Choir. A display of the new replicated fabrics was on display to show our members one of the many impacts of their generosity.

Conscious of the National Fire Sprinkler Association and Wayne Automatic Fire Sprinklers Inc for upgrading the entire sprinkler system at Truman’s Little White House. Pictured from left to right is Reggie Hancock, Shane Ray, Vickie Pritchett and Bob Wolz. The Key West Harry S. Truman Foundation is dedicated to preserving Florida’s only presidential museum and you are not preserved until you are protected. Thank you NFSA!

Special thanks to the National Fire Sprinkler Association and Wayne Automatic Fire Sprinklers Inc for upgrading the entire sprinkler system at Truman’s Little White House.
THANKSGIVING ON THE LAWN

SEASON KICK OFF!

WELCOME ABOARD

HISTORIC TOURS of AMERICA
Jeramy Stehly
Alexis Moya Rodríguez
Tania Mercurio
NATIONAL CALL CENTER
Elizabeth Fox

Happy Anniversary!

Benjamin McPherson 38 years
Joseph Moyer 37 years
Antoinette McPherson 34 years
Marion "Hope" Casas 29 years
Debra Schepp 27 years
James Sewell 20 years
Frank Herrada 20 years
Stephanie Monsalvatge 16 years
Magdalena Janicka 13 years
Ryan Darragh 10 years
Jennifer Gregg 9 years
Freddy Varela Jr. 6 years
Christopher Tretter 3 years
Stacey Jackson 3 years
George Poymon 2 years
Corbett Simpson 2 years
Alexander Fernandez 1 year
Angela Kaffenberger 1 year
Mary Potter 1 year

The Nation's Storyteller

Fall/Winter 2017

Dessert Contest Winner was Lauren Albury with a Pumpkin Cake. See Lauren’s bio on page 65.

Many photos were given out throughout the night.

Mallory Square closed up shop and got fully decorated for the festivities.

Frank and Mercy Herrada with Ed Swift

The Hangover Hospital supplied B12 shots.

The 2018 Season Kick Off Party occurred on January 10th in Mallory Square. About 300 guests showed up to celebrate the start of Key West’s (hopefully busy) tourism season. We had multiple vendors set up around the square serving the best of what they offer as well as the ability to meet people who are on the front lines of the industry. The Durtbags once again were the live entertainment and a multitude of great trips and prizes were raffled off including four $500 cruise vouchers! We also raised $700 for a local charity, Season Season Fund, during the evening!