Potter’s Wax Museum Unveils MLK Statue

Complete Story Inside on Page 16
Projects, Talents, and, Oh Yes... Budgets
by Chris Belland, CEO

I don’t make a call to anyone in business these days that they don’t tell me the same thing. They have never been so busy in their lives. Well, it is true here, too. I have never seen all our people as busy as they all are today.

We just finished our year-end budgets for all our business units. We are on a fiscal year from April 1 through March. Believe it or not, we reviewed 60 budgets over the past two weeks, which includes 11 different Transportainment companies, which now include Nashville, 8 attraction budgets, including the upcoming American Prohibition Museum, 28 retail budgets and 11 administration departments. After a while, you tend to glaze over, but I think we got through them in good shape, but a whole lot of work. Something fairly wonderful occurred to me in the process. We essentially started this company in 1973 as a real estate restoration company in Key West. Ed and I and our other two partners, Moe Mosher and Mike Cates, bought up old derelict buildings on Duval Street and fixed them up. When I say fixed them up, we had a crew of hippies which my brother ran and we all did what we could, which was a lot of demolition, going to the dump, carpentry and painting. As I look back on those days, they were some of the best of my life.

From there, we got into the attraction business with the Key West Aquarium and, eventually, our first Old Town Trolley which had 13 employees. Now we are a company of over 1,300 CASTmembers spread across seven cities. All this in what now seems the blink of an eye, however, it took one major ingredient which was the revelation of the recent budget period.

It occurred to me as we went through each operation in excruciating detail, which was the right thing to do in showing respect for the managers who spent a lot of time thinking about and planning for their budget presentation, that we have managed to attract an incredible depth of talent. Many of the Leadagers of our company have been with us for decades which is something of which both Ed and I are extraordinarily proud.

When you think about companies and what they do, we are certainly unique in the world. We are, indeed, the largest tour and attraction company in North America and certainly different from a Disney or Universal Studios. These big attractions operate in their own world with a wall around it and we operate in urban areas on public streets. We have managed to overcome great obstacles in becoming so very good at what we do and, again, it comes back to the people who make it happen. We are a company of artists, buyers, trainers, financial experts, maintenance, administration and ... of course I could go on and on with all the job categories it takes to make the wheels of Historic Tours of America turn, but suffice it to say there is no outdoing what we do.

I know I speak for Ed when I say that of all we have done, we are most proud of the people who have come into our company and grown along with us. I never like to say people work for me because they don’t. We work together and it has been one of the great joys of my life.
American Prohibition Museum to Open in Savannah

by Ed Swift III, President

Dear CAST:

The “American Prohibition Museum” in Savannah, Georgia is now officially under construction. For the past three months Dana Ste. Claire (Museum Coordinator) and Monte Triz (Art Department Manager) have been leading a design team made up of myself, Kayla Black (Prohibition Museum Manager), Charlie Brazil (Savannah OTT Manager), Vince Leone (National Trainer) and Bruce Smith (Head Mechanic for the project) to gather stills, artifacts, historic information, cars and trucks of the period etc., etc. to complete America’s first permanent Prohibition Museum to be located in Savannah, Georgia. Vince came up with this idea about three years ago and, frankly, while I liked it, I did not have much hope to ever find a place or a city where it would fit. Well Savannah is the perfect fit and we have the perfect building site, a big brick building in historic “City Market”. Wet, really wet Savannah throughout Prohibition (1920 to 1933) today is very lax on open container laws, bar licenses etc. The perfect city in which to have a drink of alcohol. The following narrative is the beginning of the PR campaign. Hope to see you all there.

America’s most scandalous and raucous chapter in history comes to life in Savannah’s AMERICAN PROHIBITION Museum, a lively & entertaining attraction in the historic heart of one of the South’s most storied cities. The museum traces the history & politics of drinking from the time of the Pilgrims to contemporary Savannah’s famous night life. With over thirty life-size “historic character” figures and powerful dioramas - some filling entire rooms – the museum immerses visitors in the days when liquor was forbidden and black market booze ran freely. Guests journey through the centuries-old campaign and moral certainty of Temperance to the passage of the 18th Amendment in 1920, a doomed piece of legislation designed to reign in the liquor & bar industry and curb the drinking habits (and constitutional rights) of Americans everywhere, but instead caused the explosion of the American social scene in what was arguably the most dynamic decade in U.S. history. Visitors experience the Roaring Twenties when Americans rebelled in Speakeasies, Flapper dance halls, and basement distilleries. Al Capone and other gangsters became millionaire celebrities as poorly equipped law enforcement agencies lost the tiring chase. Rumrunners from the Appalachian hills ran moonshine at night in souped-up cars, racing them on weekend around oval dirt tracks – this the very genesis of NASCAR. Organized crime was rampant, alcohol consumption spiked - the unintended consequences of Prohibition were profound. Fourteen years later in 1933, the 18th amendment was repealed - the only time an amendment has been stricken from the United States Constitution – and the disastrous “noble experiment” and the once-hailed moral “magic bullet” crashed to a celebrated end. The story of Prohibition is more than the history of a single issue political campaign that became enshrined in the Constitution - it is the fascinating story of how America changed dramatically – socially, economically, and politically - when the basic civil liberties of its citizens, human rights guaranteed by the very Constitution on which our nation was built – were taken away. Unintended results such as the income tax, women’s rights, social equality, jazz, the re-emergence of the Klu Klux Klan, NASCAR etc. were all by-products of this tumultuous age. It is the story of survival and ingenuity. It is a fully American story.

Museum Highlights

Opening Summer 2016 in Savannah’s historic City Market! The Savannah Prohibition Museum features over 200 authentic objects & artifacts, including an original 1918 beer truck, a 1923 Model T touring car, and a 1936 Ford “rumrunner special” with its trademark V-8 Flathead engine.

The museum displays one of the best authentic copper moonshine still collections in the United States. Visitors learn how to make moonshine in this gallery.

State-of-the-art special effects and interactive displays engage museum guests. Talking portraits of Prohibition Wets & Dries, high definition presentations of moonshiners working a still and a Speakeasy gatekeeper make history fun.

• Learn to dance with the Flapper craze as the Charleston sweeps the nation!
• Take selfies with saloon keeps, gangsters, suffragettes, race car drivers, and more.
• Stand (and get your picture taken) with Al Capone and other famous gangsters in a criminal “Who’s Who” line-up of full “life size” figures.
• Whisper a secret password to a gangster guarding a Speakeasy door!
• Duck into the splintered saloon that a hatchet-wielding “Carrie Nation” destroys!
• Feel the full weight of a Thompson submachine gun!
• Haul bootleg liquor with a backwoods moonshine runner!
• Learn how people continued to find a drink during Prohibition and how America made and supplied its own black market booze by the hundred thousands of gallons.
• See a display of strange devices used to smuggle booze, from flask canes to fake Cornish hens and fake lumber trucks.
• Find out where you stand with fellow citizens by voting in vintage voting machines on your views of today’s issues caused by Prohibition.
Hiring Season

Our successful past year is causing changes to our new routine! We are needing to hire earlier than usual for our Trolley Department to accommodate our staffing requirements, but we are certainly adjusting. We welcomed seven new conductors and one new valet. As for the SEAL and Sales Departments, there are a few CASTmembers either switching departments or moving from PT to FT, which means hiring for those two departments will take place a little later than usual. We will stay prepared for changes and we will smoothly transition our CASTmembers into their positions. Here’s to a successful season!

Depot Sales News
by Theresa Lampert, Depot Sales Manager

Spring is in the air at San Diego Old Town Trolley, the city is bursting with many new spring activities. This past weekend Balboa Park held the 11th Annual Cherry Bloom Festival with record numbers attending the festival. Seaport Village hosted the 2016 Spring Busker Festival attracting hundreds of visitors to the city’s beautiful Bayfront. Through both of these events, our Sales Reps and Valets were busy taking care of our guests and the increased traffic.

All of us in the Sales Department are excited in anticipation for a very active and productive season. Scheduled are several cruise ships making San Diego their port of call. Also, Spring Break is just around the corner and we are expecting to have the best season ever! In preparation for this exhilarating time of the year, we would like to welcome two new members to our team:

- **Stacy Bridges** joins us as a full time Sales Rep. Stacy comes from the Operations Department, she brings a strong knowledge of our tours and operations.
- **Darrel Forney** joins us as a full time Valet and has a solid background in customer service. As a newcomer, we asked his opinion about working at SDOTT. “This is the best job that I had, it gives me the opportunity to work with guests directly. I’m excited to come to work every day and I have fun while I’m at work”

With the addition of these two new CASTmembers and our already outstanding Sales Team, we are poised to have an extraordinary “Goal Busting” Spring Season!
The CAST celebrating Gaslamp Quarter Mardi Gras aboard Ghosts and Gravestones.

Felicity!

Congratulations to this good-looking couple, Teresa and Thomas Edmunds! Thank you for including the Felicity Wedding Trolley in your plans for your very special day!

San Diego SEAL Tours was honored to host a special tour for the USO San Diego and their extra-special VIP group which consisted of 30 wounded, ill or injured service members from Columbia and Venezuela, as part of an event called the Marine Corps Trials. Each year USO San Diego takes their allied nation service members on an “All American” excursion in San Diego and this year they chose our SEAL Tour! Welcome aboard everyone and thank you for your service!

Retired NBA star Yao Ming enjoyed a SEAL Tour out on San Diego Bay. Yao, at 7’6” tall, takes a photo op break with Captain Parker.

Conductors Scotty Love and Melissa Sewell pose with a plaque of appreciation presented to Old Town Trolley from Lincoln Military Housing. For over 50 years Lincoln Military Housing has had a mission to provide not only premier homes but also outstanding management and maintenance services to military families. They strive to understand the changing needs of military families and consider it their duty to improve the quality of life for those who live in our communities. Several times a year Old Town Trolley Tours has the honor of providing chartered tours to military families that are new to San Diego so they can get familiar with their new home.

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Congratulations to this good-looking couple, Teresa and Thomas Edmunds! Thank you for including the Felicity Wedding Trolley in your plans for your very special day!

FEBRUARY
Robert Williams, 14 years
James Saffer, 12 years
Steven Brooks, 9 years
Jerrale Morris, 2 years
Lauren Judal, 1 year
Ricardo Michel, 1 year

MARCH
Harold Denson-Dozier, 22 years
Rick Diaz, 22 years
Erica Frost, 18 years
Saul Alba, 14 years
Debbie Hildebrand, 11 years
Evan Kohler, 7 years
Nicoletta Meo-Cook, 5 years
Jeffrey Love, 3 years
Gina Urbina, 3 years
Victor Santana, 1 year
Danielle Lindsey, 1 year
Jeanette Perez, 1 year
Eliderio Gomez III, 1 year

SEAL
James Murphy, 3 years
This issue I would like to showcase the Bell Staff at the beautiful Bahia Resort Hotel. The Bahia Resort Hotel is located in the heart of Mission Bay, eight miles from Downtown San Diego and two blocks from the Pacific Ocean. Built in 1953, the Bahia Resort Hotel is located on a 14-acre peninsula surrounded by the sparkling waters of Mission Bay. The Bahia Hotel is owned by the Evans Hotel Group which also owns and operates the Catamaran Resort and the award winning Lodge at Torrey Pines. The Bell Staff at the Bahia is led by Bell Captain Arthur Bell and his team including Andrew Garcia, Phillip Ona, Michael Hendricks, Jason Colway and Alex Pissi. The Bahia has been supporting Old Town Trolley Tours for over 20 years. Arthur and his staff recommend our tours on a daily basis as we also offer a complimentary daily shuttle to the hotel to take his guests to start their tour in Old Town. Thank you Arthur and the entire staff at the Bahia Resort Hotel for all the great support over the years!!!

San Diego has an entire leader-board dedicated to the safest drivers on our team. More and more are approaching a decade of safe operation. Morning meetings, Monthly meetings and every type of meeting in between start and end with safety. For this edition we would like to shed a light on an individual who gives us a daily example of how Safety Culture is supposed to work.

Doug Price has only been driving with Old Town Trolley since 2014, so he hasn’t had the opportunity to reach one of those long-term milestones…… yet. But we all have confidence that he will. He never misses an opportunity to help out a fellow conductor moving a trolley or even one of our office staff getting out of the lot at the end of the day. Because of his team spirit, he has become one of our “Go-To” guys anytime that an accessible vehicle is needed (a rarity in San Diego) or if a complicated charter arises. An unwillingness to cut corners has kept many drivers out of harm’s way, however it is somewhat rare that you find someone who takes so much forethought to their daily routine. On multiple occasions Doug has discovered a need for a minor repair or fix, not the day of, but the day before he needed a particular vehicle. Constantly making inquiries and hunting for new and better ways to do things has become his Standard Operating Procedure. That is the kind of Safety Culture we strive for and we look forward to seeing him at the helm of a trolley for the time to come and climbing towards the top of our Safe Driver Leader-Board.
Hi my name is Orlando Montano and I am from a small town in Arizona called Yuma. I come from a huge family of 5 girls and 5 boys and I am second to the youngest. My dad always wanted a huge family. I moved to San Diego right after graduating high school back in 1994. But I was too young to be out here on my own and decided to move back home. But in 1998 I returned back to San Diego.

I have 15 years of experience in sales, customer service, marketing and management as well as in a call center setting. My first job here in San Diego was working as a receptionist for an internet company. With hard work and dedication I was promoted to a sales rep. After being in sales for a number of years I was promoted to sales manager. I have always wanted to be in the sales/customer service field. Based on my work experience one of my friends recommended that I apply for the position of Sales Rep with Old Town Trolley of San Diego. I have been with Old Town Trolley Tours since 2010.

This is my first job working in an outside booth setting. I really enjoy it and I have a lot fun with it.

What is your greatest fear?
My greatest fear is a fear of heights. I don’t like to have my feet removed from the ground. I like to be in control of my body. I have overcome the flying part of it but it is still hard to deal with.

What is your favorite vacation spot?
My favorite vacation spot is a place near the ocean. And living in San Diego, I feel like I am on vacation all the time.

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
The greatest love of my life besides my family are my dogs. I had two Pomeranians for 13 years, but they died of old age. I am a huge pet lover and currently I own two cats, which were abandoned on my door step at two weeks old. Their names are Hansel and Gretel.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?
I could name a couple but one in particular is moving from the desert (Yuma Az.) and into PARADISE (San Diego Ca.).

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
My idea of perfect happiness is living life like there is no tomorrow. When I was born I was born sick. I was very weak, anemic and with a heart conditions but I survived and I am so grateful to be alive. My father once told me “son you have to live your life full of light and happiness, celebrate life to the fullest because one day we are here and gone tomorrow”, this is why my colleagues always see me with a smile and a positive attitude at work. There is nothing more pleasing to me than to make people laugh, smile and even giggle..
Second Chance Employment
by Eric Holmes, General Manager

We all have heard the saying “Good People Know Good People.” While this statement may be true, I believe there is another saying that could possibly help us reach our recruitment goals. I’m talking about “Second Chance Employment.”

After talking to Chris last week, I realized that we have a tremendous opportunity to impact lives and communities, by giving people a second chance at sustainable employment. Everyone deserves a second chance. It’s a sentiment deeply rooted in spirituality, it also embodies our deepest hopes of achievement, and salvation. Chris has reminded me how life-changing a second chance can be.

I’ve always believed that people deserve at least one second change. I’d love to be able to give everyone the benefit of the doubt, but I also know that people will let you down. Some will lie, connive, disappoint, cheat, and betray. No amount of time, sweat, or compassion will change that. So where do you draw the line? How do you know if someone has changed, or if they’re just conning you? How do you know if someone with a rocky past, will now make a good CASTmember.

The true answer is you can never know for sure. Some things that should be considered are: severity of the incident, their history, their current situation, and their potential.

I have seen a lot of CASTmembers come and go over the years. I now find myself wondering if any of them have seen the error of their ways, made some changes in their lives, and deserve a second chance at being a CASTmember. I don’t know for sure, but it may be worth a few phone calls to find out. Stay tuned, I’ll let you know soon.

My Head Hurts, My Feet Hurt, My Hands Hurt, but My Heart is Good....and Really That’s All the Matters
by Abe Burgess, Director of Sales and Operations, National Harbor Shuttle

Months of interviews. Hundreds of emails. And a thousand minutes after accepting the challenge of the National Harbor, the Gaylord National Concierge desk opened on March 1. And I must say, it is pretty. We have seven concierges on board and we’ve gotten nothing but great reviews on their attitude, attentiveness, and superior customer service. I know there are some challenges to every new venture. And this is nothing different. But with these challenges come new learning experiences. And with new experiences comes growth, both professional and personal.

Throughout the next couple of Storytellers, you’ll get to know the team. And what a fine team they are shaping to be. Kierra Hagler, Destiny Edelen, and George Boaitey were all found through Indeed.com after searching about 800 applications. What’s most interesting is that Kierra was the first person I interviewed and Destiny was the 3rd person I interviewed. George was an instant click. DeAndre Helton and Destini Thomas were found at a job fair. And again, those two were among the first I interviewed at the fair. Ashley Green was a referral from a CASTmember. Reminder to Dwon Gillis to get hooked up with Good People Know Good People. And Anthony Sadler was a previous Ticket Seller of the Year. Sadler was made for this job, as I have often told him.

And we started a shuttle from DC to the National Harbor taking over a contract from another company. Although, that’s not without its challenges, hopefully it will bring bigger and better things to our part of budget.

Shortly after we started all of these new CASTmembers, Destiny Edelen came to me, sat me down and with a very serious stern look she said to me, “expect nothing but greatness.” So far, so good because I expect nothing less.

Clang, Clang, Clang Goes the...Cherry Blossom?
by Eric Whitehead, Conductor

It’s that time of year again. We are preparing for Our Nation’s Most Festive Springtime Celebration. We anticipate welcoming over 500,000 people into the Washington, DC region or as we like to call it, our front yard. Here in DC, when we bring in springtime, we do it right... Some of the most beautiful trees anywhere surround our tidal basin, Hain’s Point Park and The Washington Monument. They’re pink and white with colorful magnolia trees and crape myrtle bushes sprinkled in for added color and charm. These magnificent trees generally last for about two weeks but a strong wind or a good heavy rain could take them all away from us too quickly. We hope that doesn’t happen this year. The festival runs March 20th through April 17th but the peak blooming forecast for 2016 has now been set for March 18th through March 23rd. The blossoms truly have a mind of their own.

To prepare for the crowds, traffic, pedestrians and extended tours, all conductors here in DC are currently taking singing lessons. Since it may take us an hour to get approximately two miles around the Tidal Basin, we’re all going to learn to sing like Judy Garland or Frank Sinatra. Ha... I think not!! What we are going to do is tell lots and lots of fascinating, interesting stories. During this season, the day tour almost turns into the night tour. We spend lots of time with the same guests during this period of time. We will have lots more time on the trolley with our guests so we are polishing up all of our good, long stories about this wonderful city and its previous inhabitants and visitors. We’re going to talk about Japanese Ambassador Sutemi Chinda and his wife Viscountess Iwa Chinda,
President William Howard Taft and First Lady Helen Taft plus all things cherry blossoms. So, fellow CASTmembers from around the country, if you have the time and the desire, join us and help us to welcome over 1.5 million guests to our front yard.

No More Wabbit Season, it’s Duck Season
by Capt. Larry Warren, DC Ducks Operations Manager

DC Ducks will be able to offer seven Ducks this season. Adding Disco Duck to our 2016 fleet will enable us to offer more guests a place to sit and relax while the Ducks comfortably drive through Washington, then splashing down into the Potomac River at the Columbia Island Marina, while gazing at the Pentagon as we enter the water.

Our new T-Duck (Disco Duck) will be joined later this summer by it’s twin brother, Duck Tape, as we are starting to make-ready Duck Tape for touring.

I’m really proud of what everyone has accomplished this winter. With the leadership and organization of Captain Kent Thomas and all the endless abilities and knowledge of Captain Mark Gormley, who is responsible for some very major improvements to our regular Ducks and the T-Ducks as well. It is blatantly obvious that this winter the DC Duck crew worked so very well together, as a family, and with the supervision of our lead mechanic Chuck Diedrich.

I can’t say enough for the amount of hard work everyone contributed in unison, day after day, I have no doubt that we’ve guaranteed the most successful Ducking Season in our history. I feel I must mention all the cooperation, help and assistance from all of the crew’s spouses.

Winter Means it is Training Season
by Michael “Dancing” Fool Hart, CDL Trainer

During our off-season we do most of our hiring and training. My part of that training is assisting CASTmembers in obtaining a Commercial Driver’s License.

I have been working as our “CDL” trainer for a number of years and like to think I am the “Not Cracked, Damaged, Broken, or Leaking Guy.”

We have drivers who live in Maryland, Virginia, and Washington DC.

The CDL tests are similar but different and create a broad range of challenges.

Our new drivers learn a thorough pre-trip and numerous skills that are required to drive a large commercial vehicle in an urban, congested environment and obtain a Commercial Driver’s License. Time for practicing driving is an important part of the process. All trainees have time to learn and practice before they take their test. Over the years we have developed an excellent program and have achieved a near 100% success rate.

This year we had a lot of weather related closings and delays in testing and training and it has delayed some of our new drivers certifications.

We have been able to obtain some last minute tests resulting in a true team effort to get everyone to the test lot with the proper documents and such.

We have successfully added Liberty Mutual’s “Decision Driving” to our training this year and all CASTmembers who drive company vehicles participate in the program. New tour products and vehicles are being added this year and we are working to insure everyone is prepared and trained to drive new routes and vehicles.

Making and building professional drivers takes time and patience but it is always worth the effort.

Recruitment... What is Recruitment?
by Eric Chapman, Operations Manager

According to the Business Dictionary, it is “the process of finding and hiring the best-qualified candidate (from within or outside of an organization) for a job opening, in a timely and cost effective manner. The recruitment process includes analyzing the requirements of a job, attracting employees to that job, screening and selecting applicants, hiring, and integrating the new employee to the organization.”

Recruitment for Old Town Trolley is not as simple as most might think. To be a CASTmember of Old Town Trolley takes a special kind of person. We are not looking for the “average Joe” or the “average Jane”. We are looking for the energetic, the enthusiastic, the exciting, the enjoying-life, the fun-loving, the goofy, the unique. Simply put... We are looking for the right person. It’s not an easy task. To do what we do takes a special person.

We are looking for Tour Conductors... Someone who can drive a commercial vehicle and narrate at the same time. Just because you can drive, doesn’t mean you can be a Tour Conductor. Just because you can tell a story, doesn’t mean you can be a Tour Conductor. That special person can do both. Now add in the mean streets of Washington, DC.

A Tour Conductor in Washington, DC will encounter the following issues during their tour:

- Hundreds of Thousands of Tourists
- Hundreds of Thousands of Commuters
- Hundreds of Bicyclists
- Dozens of Skateboarders
- Dozens of Hoverboards
- Protests
- Festivals
- Rolling Street Closures
- Marches
- Presidential Motorcades
- Vice Presidential Motorcades
- Heads of State Motorcades
- Worst Traffic Congestion in the Nation
- NBA Basketball Games
- NHL Hockey Games
- MBL Baseball Games
We interact with hundreds of thousands of guests a year. We operate in all types of weather. It gets hot and humid in Washington. A typical trolley will travel about 81 miles a day at an average speed of 18 miles an hour. A typical Tour Conductor has to be familiar with nearly 30 different Hotel Stops, 100+ points of interest on the Orange Loop, 100+ points of interest on the Green Loop, 50+ points of interests on the Red Loop, 17 Smithsonian Museums (the ones in Washington, DC) and their current exhibits, current events, public transit, great restaurants, and the list goes on and on.

So if you know of someone special willing to be one of the BEST, have them fill out an application! We are hiring here in Washington, DC. The pay is not bad either.

My First Day on the Job
by Joe Patterson, Old Town Trolley Tours Conductor

April 10th, 2014.....6:00 a.m. I laid in bed, wide awake...my alarm pierced through the silencers of the room as the first flush of morning cracked through my blinds. So much for a good night's sleep. I tossed and turned throughout the entire night. And now it was time....in a matter of hours I'll be taking one of the most important tests of my life....my stomach had enough butterflies in it to fill the Butterfly Garden at the Natural History Museum twice over, and I couldn’t even get my nerves in check long enough to scarf down the waffles I had placed in the toaster five minutes ago. I grabbed a bottle of orange juice out of the fridge instead, picked up my car keys, gave my son a kiss, gently enough to be sure not to wake him, as his mom wished me luck. On my way out the door I peaked back once more at the two of them, and then all of a sudden everything seemed like a fortune. I made enough money that day to buy a can of Similac. And my son, who at the time I would refer to as a “simil-alcoholic” could really fly through the stuff. I would adopt the same attitude I had that day, every other day, from there on out at work. And here we are today, three weeks away from my two year anniversary of my first tour. And whether I’m dispatching, and we are short of drivers on a busy day, or I’m giving tours, stuck in standstill traffic on trolley #251 in 102 degree weather, (I’m sure my fellow OTT-DC drivers understand the pain in this particular situation) or I am going through something in my personal life and
just not feeling work that particular day, I always think back to the sight of my son and his mom that day as I walked out the door, and the motto remains the same.....FAILURE IS NOT AN OPTION!

They’re Here!
by Joe Patterson, Old Town Trolley Tours Conductor

Finally! The new Chance Sunliners have arrived at Arlington National Cemetery, just in time for the start of the Cherry Blossom Festival. When we were first awarded the contract to conduct interpretive tours at the cemetery, we inherited many pieces of old, worn-out equipment from the previous contractor. Coupled with some new trolleys and shuttle buses, we managed to survive a tremendous first season, carry over 400,000 guests, and win kudos from the cemetery management and guests alike. The new season will be even more awesome. The new Sunliners feature an air conditioned pull unit (yay for the drivers!), coupled with three trailers and an awesome sound system, giving us an additional 460 seats. This will enable us to not only exceed last year’s ridership, but give our guests a more comfortable experience as they “Honor, Remember and Explore” all that Arlington National Cemetery has to offer. We are already running two of the new units on a daily basis, and the other two should be ready to go shortly. Driver/narrator training is in full effect and we are looking forward to the new season. Bring on the guests!

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**ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY</th>
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<tr>
<td>Eric Holmes, 20 years</td>
<td>Robert Norris, 12 years</td>
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<td>Abraham Burgos, 16 years</td>
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<td>Stephen O’Brien, 11 years</td>
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<td>Darin Delrosario, 6 years</td>
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<td>Barbara Williams, 3 years</td>
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<td>DUCKS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laurence Warren, 15 years</td>
<td>Stephen Heare, 7 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kent Thomas, 11 years</td>
<td>RETAIL</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward Hatch, 10 years</td>
<td>Sheila Marshall, 10 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Santacroce, 8 years</td>
<td>Ashia Gaines, 6 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Gormley, 1 year</td>
<td>Tanisha Smith, 1 year</td>
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**ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEBRUARY</th>
<th>MARCH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RETAIL</td>
<td>ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debra Budd, 9 years</td>
<td>Linda Hazelton, 6 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Torita Walls, 2 years</td>
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<td>Erin Mellott, 1 year</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Meghan Brown, 1 year</td>
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<td>Mark Williams, 1 year</td>
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Arlington recently received custom stop markers for the graveyard to help visitors locate where the tram stops are.
City Scoop
by Charles Brazil; General Manager

Just like that, in the blink of an eye, “off season” is over. On top of the fact that our opportunity to plan, write budgets, do cosmetic improvements, make changes, sell map advertising, hire and onboard new CASTmembers and several other items really boils down to about 6 weeks, we had spectacularly beautiful weather, so it was much busier than expected out on the streets as well as in the office this year. KUDOS to our entire CAST who accomplished much during our small window of time. Special thanks to the Operations Team for working on significant route and script changes which will make our tour product even better and will further help our guests “SEE THE BEST FIRST” when they choose to visit our lovely city. As for me, on top of helping our team juggle all these balls in the air, my great task was to deliver a vision for the upcoming fiscal year which is virtually upon us in the form of a budget, and I can happily say it is in the can and I believe we are in for another spectacular year. Not only do I feel that we have a number of great initiatives on tap and are poised to see a number of items truly blossom this year, like our Executive Coaches and our Wedding Trolley, but I am excited to finally see the first of what I hope will be several attractions come to Savannah in the form of a concept that is the first of its kind, and one that will be fun, informative, entertaining, immersive and absolutely unique- the American Prohibition Museum! Thank you to the Executive CAST and the project team for working so hard for our “SUMMER 2016” opening. The stories, memorabilia and concepts are cause for great enthusiasm and excitement. Come to the GRAND OPENING y’all, we’ll be launching this baby like only Savannah, GA can.

Operations
by Jon Watkins; Operations Manager

I really love a success story and we had a great one in February. We had a major comeback from our middle of the month daytime tour ridership sales deficit in February. This is absolutely one of our toughest months here in Savannah because the weather is as unpredictable as it was this year. On February 11 our daytime ridership was down 11.9%. We have an absolutely awesome group of CASTmembers and I had no doubt that working together we could pull it out. Through a lot of effort on everyone’s part we ended February with our daytime ridership up 4.4%. What a great come back for the orange and green team!

We are looking forward to our second annual trolley rodeo on St. Patrick’s Day March 17th. This is the only day that we do not run our tours each year so it makes perfect sense to do some team building that day. We started last year with our first rodeo and had great participation and a lot of fun. This year we invited our two competitors, Old Savannah and Oglethorpe, and hoped to compete for the trolley rodeo championship on Savannah. Unfortunately both declined to participate...my theory is they were afraid of being shown up by the mighty orange and green. This year we have been meeting for planning and have things ready to go. We start off with a picnic lunch and then the competition starts with a quiz for the drivers on Savannah history, company policies and the Savannah tour service ordinance. This year we hope to increase our Sales dept. attendance and have several things planned for them to gain points for their team. Then the driving skills events take place along with a lot of trash talking. Thanks to the planning team, Kenny Gresham, Andrew Hill, Larry Floyd, Tony Hall, Dennis Pellegrino, Michele Price, Bryce Muhlenberg and Ashley Gnann.

We will be starting a new daytime route on April 1. We generally do a route revision every year around this time and this year we are “smoothing” out some of the more challenging areas of our existing route. With the Prohibition Museum coming online this summer we have moved our City Market stop to the middle of the tour to help facilitate the success of our attraction.

Dennis Pellegrino recently moved into our training function and has been working with our Training Officer Kayla Black to learn the ropes. Dennis has had an amazing start to his career with OTT. In 2014 he was our Conductor Rookie of the Year and in 2015 he took on the responsibility of Dispatcher. Thanks Dennis for taking on the training challenge as it’s a critical function for making sure that the orange and green machine keeps moving forward.

Sometimes I believe that Savannah is the running capital of the country. Starting around this time of year we have organized runs moving through the historic district every Saturday...and it’s usually hundreds of participants. The city has organized a sports council that is promoting running events and it brings a lot of folks into Savannah for these events that might not visit with us otherwise. It’s great to see all of the folks out participating in these events and we hope that they will take a trolley tour while they are in town.
We have been hiring new conductors this year and have a great bunch of new folks joining us. Welcome aboard to Chris Maudlin, Dave McSavney, Bill Ferree, Bob Schweiger, Jon Prell, Paul Peters and Ken Hefflefinger. Bryce Muhlenberg, Vanessa Royal and Kim Green who all completed training for the daytime tour from our Ghost & Gravestones tour and are making valuable contributions. Tasha Chancey is currently training for Ghost Conductor/Shuttle Driver. We are also really glad to welcome back Willie Dennard who is doing a great job as our Engagement Coordinator at the Welcome Center.

**Safety**

by Kenny Gresham: Training Officer

The accompanying photo is our safety committee’s safety slogan board disguised as a black Volkswagen (from Safety Sam fame). Written across it are all the names of the safety award winners from the second safety pay period in 2015 and the yearly ones; award winners instead of recipients is appropriate. Writing the names on the cutout was suggested by our Safety Committee. Our Safety Committee is like the fire department in reverse. Its function is to put out fires before they start. The Committee would also save a cat from a tree if needed.

We’re now into our third month of the year and we’ve had some success and some challenges so far. January was as cool as the back side of a pillow with nothing to report. February was rolling along into the third week of the month when the Grim Reaper took his tool; had a CAST injury, guest injury, and one accident. Thanks to the powers that be none of these were severe, but “Frequency breeds severity” and this axiom holds true. So the plan now that the dust has settled, “How do we prevent the next misstep?”

Liberty Mutual taught me about scanning ahead looking for hazards; plan an escape route which could be making a turn or slowing down or stopping, the easiest solution but probably the hardest. The ego will not stop. It tells you, “I can make, I’ve got it, or it’s not my fault if they’re parked wrong” and on it goes. The last part of the equation from the Liberty Decision formula is to apply an escape route. Do what any reasonable, logical, open minded, and willing person would do to avoid the problem and not listen to the whisper telling you I got it, I got it, I can make it. I can squeeze through. BAM! The answer is to scan, plan, and act. By the way, these are the first three answers to our Defensive Driving test that was created over twenty years ago and still holds true today.

**Greetings from the Grave**

by Garry Patrick: Ghosts & Gravestones Manager

At Ghosts and Gravestones we take our off season seriously. We have been making some changes with our stories over the winter months and the team has been training and refining their tours. It’s very important to our program to evolve each year and develop a better product for our guests. A thank you goes out to Kayla Black and Travis Spangenburg for all their hard work on story development and training and thank you to everyone for making the training fun!

Congratulations to all the team on a fantastic 2015 and an even better 2016.

**Human Resources**

by Renee Mercer: HR Manager

Between hiring, a rodeo, St. Patty’s in Savannah, and – oh yes! – hiring…we have had a busy “slow” season! Luckily, the past couple of months have introduced some wonderful tools to help us become an even better operation. My favorite you ask?!? Online onboarding (although I was hesitant at first) and Retention calls! The adoption of the online onboarding process has been both a time saver, and a great tool in minimizing paperwork, which both myself and Stacey Silverman, the HR Admin Assistant, are beyond grateful for!! Retention calls conducted by Christina will help us to target issues that we may not have known to be issues. This affords us the opportunity to create a better, more thorough, hiring/training process, which in turn develops more successful and happy employees – and there is nothing we love more here than HAPPY EMPLOYEES!

**Groups and Charters**

by Marcie Covington: Group Sales Manager

One of the most romantic cities to spend Valentine’s Day on the Georgia coast is our city of Savannah. We call her the city of romance! The city has lots of charm with many beautiful squares, live oaks with hanging moss and a bustling river front. Savannah is the perfect destination for a romantic getaway weekend. Walking in Savannah is always a pleasure, you can walk on the riverfront at night, watching the moon reflections in the water, see the large cargo ships coming in and out of port, or enjoy one of the many
bars or restaurants. There’s always a lot to do and see in Savannah.

After you have been romanced by our beautiful city, come celebrate St. Patrick’s Day with all the locals and approximately 700,000 visitors. We have the second largest parade in the United States. There’s nothing like green grits for breakfast and green beer for dinner. Don’t forget our orange and green trolleys fit right in with the decorations. Hope to see you with your beads on!

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

As we approach the final days of our year 2015 and 16 we’re excited here in Savannah in the vendor department.

Our department continues to grow during the past year! We’ve added two new vendor assistants Stephen Plunk and Cathy Vaccari.

Craig Armstrong continues to keep us all on our toes and heading in the right direction.

We are heading to hotels; we have several in the making right now we continue to add more vendors. We should finish well over budget once again. This will be our fourth year running!

Depot Sales
by Jim Rafferty; Depot Sales Manager

As we leave another “off season” behind, we are geared up and ready for season. For the most part we had some pretty good weather for winter. Mild days and very few rainy evenings saw good results for both daytime and G&G tours.

We had our annual Holiday Party in January which was a big success and fun was had by all. A big congratulations goes out to our Sales Rep of the Year T Floyd. She had a fantastic year and is on her way to joining the Half Million Dollar Club for the first time. Great Job T!!!! Also congratulations go out to November Sales Rep of the Month Concierge Dan Gleason and December Sales Rep of the Month Tim Conway.

We also would like to welcome two new additions to our concierge ranks. Jennifer Schwarz and Mandi Lanier. They are going to do a fantastic job.

I want to thank the entire sales staff for powering through another winter as we get prepared to get ready for season. We have been looking forward to great weather and lots of guests.

Training
by Kayla Black; Training Manager

We’re right into Training Season now, although it feels like Training Season never ended! So far, nine new rookies have risen to the rank of conductor and are out there getting ready to WOW our guests. Congratulations to Kim Dillard, Chris Maudlin, Paul Peters, Jon Prell, Bryce Muhlenberg, Vanessa Royal-Edwards, Bill Ferree, Dave McSaveney, and Bob Schweiger on certifying! I’m sure your first year with OTT Savannah will be awesome.

Maintenance
by Bruce Smith; Maintenance Manager

We are getting ready to rock and roll into our busy season. I had the pleasure of flying to our sister company in DC to take a look at HTA # 46 and 47, a couple of 1985 Road Masters that are on retirement row. With a little bit of love, it looks like they will make a great addition to our fleet here in Savannah. # 47 is already in the loop and doing very well, as for # 46 shown in the picture that our mechanic and fabricator Jason Carrington is working on, the old girl is getting a face lift, and should be ready to roll out into the spotlight once again.

Thank you DC for your donation, we will definitely put them to good use. We also just received two more Defender shuttle busses and two Molly’s are on the way.

So before you retire them, give Savannah a call. We love the old stuff and the challenges of getting them back on the road.

With a full lot of trolleys and shuttles, we are ready to hit it and get it. You all be safe out there!

HAPPY 20th Anniversary

FEBRUARY
Terry Hayes, 15 years
Alexandria Bryant, 13 Years
Cindy Cantrell, 12 years
Jon Watkins, 8 years
Carl Williams, 7 years
Francis Gleason, 6 years
Kristina Prince, 3 years
Kayla Black, 3 years
Linda Sickler, 3 years
Christopher Duzdinski, 3 years
Robert Lawson, 2 years
Mary Bright, 2 years
Melody South, 2 years
Steven Meyer, 1 year
Emily Mason, 1 year
Yvette Perry, 1 year

MARCH
Janice Emerson, 15 years
Jackson Barrett, 10 years
Eric Coney, 6 years
Willie Dennard IV, 5 years
James Gibby, 4 years
Kendrick Banks, 1 year
Edward Wall, 1 year
Colin Saxon, 1 year
Anthony Luckett, 1 year

RETAIL
Chelsea Michael

Elizabeth Wiglesworth, 5 years
Hello! I was born in Williamsport, Pennsylvania on the banks of the Susquehanna River. It’s a city most well-known for the Little League World Series, and not much else. I started my adult life wanting to be a Rockette, but when I realized I wasn’t going to get much taller, I decided history was the path for me. I attended Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania and received undergraduate degrees in History and Art History, then moved on to Shippensburg University of Pennsylvania and received a master of arts in Applied History (that’s a fancy term that nerds like me use for museum work). I worked at several museums, edited books, researched projects, and in between all that I lived for a short time in California, New Jersey, Maryland, and then Ohio.

When I tired of the weather in Cleveland, I started looking for greener pastures. On a whim, I moved to Savannah and started my life here. For the past five years, this has been my home, and it’s really been a great time. New opportunities and life changing experiences have been the hallmark of my time with Old Town Trolley and Historic Tours of America, and I’m really glad that this is where life has led me.

If you had one talent, what would it be?
I’d love to be able to play the violin. Playing an instrument is a gift, and I wish I had listened to my parents when they told me to practice playing the piano. But, violin would be a wonderful talent to have!

What three things will you always find in my refrigerator?
Spicy V-8, coconut coffee creamer, and assorted leftovers.

Who are your favorite writers?
David Eddings, who wrote the Belgaraid and Mallorean series, and Orson Scott Card, who wrote the Ender's Game series.

If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?
If I could come as anything, I’d chose a dog- a dog that has an owner who loves them! Treats, walks, snuggles, naps, and no responsibilities but to love unconditionally? Yes, please!

If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city, where would it be?
I’ve lived quite a few places in the past decade or so, and I’m still enjoying Savannah, so I don’t see myself leaving any time soon. But, I’ve always loved the look and feel of Cape May, New Jersey. It’s a beach resort town with a rich past and beautiful Victorian architecture. I have fond memories of that place.
Once a month the magazine publication Where Magazine holds a concierge event in St. Augustine. They pick a different attraction or venue each month to help the concierges of hotels/attractions get to see what is offered here in St. Augustine. February’s Where Wednesday was held at our newest Welcome Center located on US-1. We had the wonderful Raintree Restaurant cater the event with delicious hors d’oeuvres and Sam Pacetti completed the event with live music.

Everyone had a great time and enjoyed getting to see what we have to offer our guests when they first come to St. Augustine. The guests were impressed by the phone bank we have installed that allows guests to pick up a phone and immediately be put through to the front desk of a hotel or B&B. And as if the entire inside of this iconic building wasn’t enough to wow everyone, watching the sunset over the San Sebastian River while standing on the wrap-around porch completed the evening. Dave had no less than six people in one evening ask if we were renting this building out in the evenings for private events. Everyone loved the new building and were impressed with the technology inside that is available to our guests visiting St. Augustine.

Meet our Newest Figure at Potter’s Wax Museum

Potter’s Wax Museum had its first new figure added since Historic Tours of America took ownership of the historic Wax Museum. HTA believes Potter’s Wax Museum has a good foundation of historic figures both old and new. However, we wanted to bring new figures to the museum with local ties to St. Augustine. It didn’t take long for everyone to agree Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. should be our first. Monty Triz and his talented team of artists did a lot of research to make sure they got this figure perfect. Along with their research, they also called on a few locals who were here when Dr. King marched in town for the Civil Rights movement. Dr. King was housed and fed by Ms. Cora Tyson who still lives in the same home where she welcomed Dr. King in 1964. Monty met with Ms. Tyson numerous times to make sure they were on the right track with the figure. When the time came to unveil the new figure, Monty and Dave brought Ms. Tyson and other members of the ACCORD Civil Rights Museum to see the figure first and to give their approval of the statue. When Ms. Tyson first walked up to the statue, she became emotional and had to leave the room. Once she returned, she looked at Monty and said “You got it. That’s him!” and hugged Monty. Needless to say, Monty’s team surpassed anyone’s expectations.

St. Augustine’s Tourism and Hospitality Council joined with OTT St. Augustine and the ACCORD Civil Rights Museum to help unveil the newest wax figure Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., during Black History Month.

As part of the local Tourism and Hospitality Council’s meeting, we invited the council to our unveiling of our newest wax figure at
Potter’s Wax Museum. The official unveiling of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr figure was held on the front steps of the ACCORD Civil Rights Museum in St. Augustine, Florida. These steps were the same steps Dr. King walked on during his stay in St. Augustine in 1964. Dr. Hayling had a dental practice in this building and allowed Dr. King and Andrew Young and others to use his office as a meeting place. This was pivotal in the Civil Rights movement as many will agree Dr. King’s visit in St. Augustine helped convince President Johnson to sign the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

For the unveiling we invited members of the ACCORD Civil Rights Museum along with city leaders, members of the Chamber of Commerce and members of the local media. It was great to see so much news media on hand for this historic event. After the unveiling we welcomed everyone back to the Corazon Cinema and Café for a cocktail party catered by Gypsy Cab Company.

We look forward to our next unveiling and more historic figures.
The Nation’s Storyteller

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Historic Howard Johnson Inn
by Melissa Mezick

Nick and Tupal, the owners of St Augustine’s Historic Howard Johnson Inn, along with the General Manager, Marialeena and her staff, welcomes visitors from all over the country to come and experience beautiful downtown St Augustine.

Situated in the downtown historic district of St. Augustine, the Howard Johnson Inn’s guests can board Old Town Trolley for a sightseeing tour that stops right in their parking lot. Enjoy free Wi-Fi Internet access, microwave and refrigerator, and direct TV with HBO in your spacious king, double bed room or suite, along with comfortable accommodations. At our St. Augustine hotel one car per room parks free with plenty of parking for your truck, bus or RV as well for a nominal daily fee. Start each day of your stay with free Rise & Dine continental breakfast. Other handy amenities include guest laundry facilities and 24-hour coffee service in our lobby, and our friendly front desk team is at your service 24 hours a day.

VISIT THE OLDEST RESIDENT IN ST. AUGUSTINE...

...The “Old Senator” Live Oak tree, that is 600 years old! “Old Senator” sits in the parking lot of the Howard Johnson hotel off San Marco Avenue, just a short distance from historic downtown St. Augustine. This magnificent oak tree stretches far above, making it one of the grandest and oldest trees in Florida. Enjoy this natural and beautiful landmark on your visit to the nation’s oldest city, St. Augustine.

LOCAL ATTRACTIONS

Step outside our St. Augustine, FL, hotel to look up at Old Senator, the 600-year old tree on our grounds, then walk to Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park to get a glimpse of what explorer Ponce de Leon saw when he discovered Florida in the 1500s. Take the Old Town Trolley, which picks up nearby, on a tour of notable spots like Mission of Nombre de Dios and Castillo de San Marcos, the old Spanish fort. Sip wines at San Sebastian Winery, just a mile away, visit the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum or check out the ferocious snappers at The Alligator Farm.

DINING OPTIONS

Walk to many popular restaurants near our St. Augustine, FL, hotel like Barnacle Bill’s or Raintree. Sample Spanish cuisine in a unique setting at Columbia Restaurant in the center of town or simply order in from Hungry Howie’s and relax in your room.

BUSINESS AND EVENT FACILITIES

We are pleased to offer a banquet room, perfect for a gathering of up to 60 people.

The Old Town Trolley passes by the Colonial Quarter

CASTMEMBERS OF THE MONTH

FEBRUARY
James Ziegler, Conductor
Bill Swicegood, Sales Rep.
Tyna Conkey, Supporting
Judy Turner, Retail
Andrew Joyce, History Teller
Gabby Madridejos, Ghost Host
Pam Reed, Pickle

MARCH
Eliott Alex, Conductor
Sierra Travis, Sales Rep.
Jacqui Carlsten, Supporting
Lauren Beverly, Retail
George Sommerer, History Teller
Alexa Wint, Ghost Host
Mark “Mac” MacFarlane, Pickle
Helping our CAST lead Healthier Lifestyles in St. Augustine

We are so proud to work for a company that encourages health and wellness for our CASTmembers. Here in St. Augustine we have several initiatives we have put into place to encourage a healthier lifestyle. Not too long ago we installed a Healthy Vending Machine in our breakroom for our CAST. The machine only dispenses organic, non-GMO and some gluten free options to snack on. No soda will be found in this machine. Only healthy juices and drinks are available. We recently started purchasing 25 bags of fresh fruits and vegetables from our local Publix to raffle off at our CASTmeetings. Each month CASTmembers that attend our monthly meeting are eligible to win one of the bags of fresh produce. The CAST loves the idea! Each month Publix helps us by giving us “in season” produce and even throws in recipe cards or spices to help with dinner ideas.

Another initiative we have started is sponsoring CASTmembers in local 5k runs. Not too long ago we started with the VeloFest 5k run where we had a whole host of CASTmembers join in. This was followed up by the Matanzas 5k run in January and also the Lighthouse 5k run in March. The Lighthouse 5k also had a fun run for the kids and Dave Chatterton’s son, Evan Chatterton, participated as well as Jennifer Weigel’s daughter who placed first in her category. What a great example they are for other CASTmembers, but also for the next generation! Great job Team!!

We will be continuing to find new ways to promote health and wellness in the workplace that we hope will carry over and become healthy lifestyle changes.

Several of our CASTmembers have succeeded in achieving significant weight losses and have made healthy lifestyle changes since coming onboard with OTT St. Augustine. One of them is Terry Herbert. Here is his story:

My name is Terry Herbert and I play a shopkeeper in the Oldest Store Museum and in my off time I write screenplays. I wasn’t getting much exercise at home or at work. One day I sprained my hip which resulted in me being out of work for two months. I couldn’t stand or walk for more than a few minutes. I started taking vitamin supplements recommended by a nutritionist. Within three weeks I felt like I had a new body and was back at work. I became serious about weight loss and joined a gym. Then my co-worker, Michelle Fredette, convinced me to participate in a 5k run the company was sponsoring. It was very hot, and my time wasn’t good, but I survived. I have since completed four more 5k runs and have shaved 10 minutes off of my time. The health initiatives here at work have helped encourage me to live a healthier lifestyle. I now eat better, work out regularly and enjoy participating in the company sponsored 5k runs. Something I never dreamed I would be doing a year ago. I feel much more alive and am happy to be following the tradition our General Manager, Dave Chatterton, has set getting himself in top physical shape. I’m already looking forward to my next 5k race.
BACKGROUND
I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and was the last of five children and a twin. I grew up in the suburbs of Milwaukee and got an appreciation for the outdoors and the many festivals they had at the Lakefront. I have lived in California, Arizona, Missouri, Illinois, Virginia, and of course here in Florida. When I first came down to Florida, I was living in Orlando and working on International Drive where I met Wendy Messinger (a conductor for OTT St. Augustine). We have known each other since that time and have went our separate ways, but always remained friends. When I moved back to Florida, I moved in with Wendy and she only had high praise for Old Town Trolley. When I became a CASTmember, I started as a sales rep. and then came to work in the office as an assistant in AR and Recap and also as Director of First Impressions.

What is a trait you most deplore in others? Dishonesty/lying. You always get caught!
What do you consider your greatest achievement? Definitely my 2 children who have given me 5 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild
What 3 things will you always find in my refrigerator? Of course Diet Coke (can’t live without), butter and cheese
What is your favorite vacation spot? St. Croix
What is the greatest love of your life? The pleasure I get cooking for people and seeing how much they love it!
Wax Figure of King Unveiled

Museum Captures Leader’s Likeness with Help from Locals

Courtesy of the St. Augustine Record

Dozens of people gathered around the porch at 79 Bridge St. in downtown St. Augustine, where a wax figure of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had just been unveiled.

Some took pictures or posed with the figure, which stood in a black suit with one hand raised in a gesture.

While most people at the event Tuesday evening probably had only learned of King, some who attended came to know him while he stayed in St. Augustine in the 1960s. Some of them hosted King in their homes.

Cora Tyson said she met King for the first time a short distance from where the wax figure stood on Tuesday. Tyson’s home, where King stayed with Tyson and her husband, is across the street from the museum.

Historical markers in her yard tell the story.

Officials said Tyson provided input as part of the creation of the wax figure, which is part of the Potter’s Wax Museum collection on Orange Street.

“I talked with Dr. King. I fed Dr. King,” Tyson said. “We cried together. We prayed together, and this is very, very touching. ... This is a pleasure for me to stand here this afternoon and be able to unveil the statue of him. When I saw it I broke down in tears, but it’s wonderful.”

The unveiling at the corner of Oneida and Bridge streets was in part a way to bring more attention to the civil rights museum, officials said. The museum is run by the nonprofit ACCORD, which stands for Anniversary to Commemorate the Civil Rights Demonstrations. Opened in 2014, the museum houses local pieces of history from the civil rights movement in St. Augustine and is open for tours by appointment.

Other people involved in the local civil rights movement, either through activism or support of activists, attended the event. Among them were James Jackson — who worked alongside King and other leaders such as the late Dr. Robert Hayling — and Janie Price, who hosted King in her home.

“We’re here at a historic place, but we’re also here with historic people,” historian David Nolan said.

Nolan said the museum building was familiar to King because strategy meetings were held there during the civil rights movement.

The site also served as the dental practice of Hayling, a civil rights leader who died in December.

David Chatterton, city manager of Potter’s Wax Museum owner Historic Tours of America, said the business is focusing more on historical figures with local ties for the wax museum and King came to the top of the list.

“We wanted to do something special to capture his likeness from when he was here in St. Augustine, and this was made only possible with the partnership and help of the ACCORD museum and with Ms. Cora Tyson,” Chatterton said. “The Historic Tours of America art department worked tirelessly to get this figure just right. They consulted with Ms. Tyson on numerous occasions to help capture his likeness, his essence and his mannerisms of when Dr. King was here in St. Augustine.”

Chatterton said as a way to thank the ACCORD museum and locals for their help, the business will give the ACCORD museum a bronze head from the original casting of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. figure.

While the figure will stay at Potter’s Wax Museum, it will help the city and ACCORD tell the story of the civil rights movement in St. Augustine, which helped push along passage of the Civil Rights Act in 1964, Chatterton said.

Creating the figure took several months and a team of artists.

In addition to Tyson’s input, the team used the likeness of the Rev. Ron Rawls — and cast his hands — because they were told his mannerisms are similar to King’s, said Montgomery Triz, art director for Historic Tours of America.

“It was an honor. ... He played such a vital role in our city,” said Rawls, pastor of St. Paul AME Church on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue in St. Augustine.

Triz and other artists who worked on the project attended the unveiling, including Briana Serna and Cody Wicker, both artists with Historic Tours of America.

The process included detailed work such as mapping out how King’s hair fell on his face, Serna said.

“We punch in hair one by one,” Serna said.

At some point in the process of creating a wax figure, the piece takes on more of a human quality. Wicker described it as the twinkle beginning to come into the eye.

“It’s almost surreal when it starts to happen,” Serna said.

For some, the event was a time to reflect on the past.

As part of his speech, Nolan talked about Potter’s Wax Museum in the days of the civil rights demonstrations — when it was across from Plaza de la Constitucion. At the time, reporters noticed a wax figure of pacifist Mahatma Gandhi in the front window and noted the irony of that figure overlooking the attacks on civil rights demonstrators, Nolan said.

“I wish those reporters would come back now and let them see the statue of Dr. King. This is the new St. Augustine for the 21st century, and thank you for being part of it,” Nolan told the crowd.
What a Difference a Year Makes!

John Welby, General Manager

Wow, what a difference a year makes! Last year Boston was buried under mountains of snow and OTT was forced to shut-down our operations for an unprecedented 8 days in one month. This year we only had to close down for two days....thank you Mother Nature! The great weather certainly helped us have a terrific month (at least for the winter anyway) with our ridership being 119% over our budget! Congrats to the entire OTT Boston team for this amazing accomplishment.

Although we have not had much in the way of snow this year, we have certainly seen our fair share of cold weather. On Sunday, February 14th we saw record low temperatures here. When I left the house in the morning, I took a picture of the temperature reading on the dashboard display in the car (see pic) and it was 12 degrees BELOW zero! Yes, you read that right, it was -12 degrees and that was just the air temperature without taking into account the “wind chill factor”. As it turned out, it was a very windy day and the “wind chill temps” were running at -30 degrees! Did that stop the team at OTT Boston? ..... Oh, heck no! The entire OTT Boston team stepped up to show our guests a great time and what it means to be a native Bostonian. This makes me think back to my years of driving trolleys in Key West in the winter and how everyone would complain about the “cold” if the temperature dipped below 60 degrees; what were we thinking?

We had a special guest attend our February CASTmeeting, former Lead Conductor, Rich “Buzz” Sheridan. Back in November, Rich decided to retire after many years of dedicated service to OTT Boston. Joining our ranks in 2005 as a conductor and becoming a Lead Conductor after just a couple of seasons. However, Rich’s main role for the last several years was being my right-hand-man at the cruise ship terminal. He worked every cruise ship we had, showing up at the crack of dawn, loading up supplies and greeting hundreds (if not thousands) of guests on a daily basis. He could always be counted on for greeting everyone with a smile and making them feel welcomed to Boston. He was also my insurance policy when I needed another person giving a tour. He would happily just jump onto his trolley and do a tour for us.

He was instrumental in helping us build the cruise business here in Boston. His presence and contribution will be missed by everyone, but especially by yours truly. As part of his duties working in the cruise terminal he was required to wear an orange safety vest. So, as a thank you to him for all of his years of service, I had the entire CAST write a message on his vest, which I then had framed. We presented it to him at the February CASTmeeting where he received a standing ovation. I would like to say a heartfelt “Thank You” to Buzz for all that he did and I miss him already.

February was the month that we said farewell to another longtime CASTmember, Lead Conductor - Michael “Bear” Giobbe, who has gone on to pursue other interests. Over the years Michael performed many duties here at OTT Boston, but the last several he served as the liaison with our uniform company making sure everyone received their proper costumes and addressing any issues that came up with them. He certainly deserved a medal just for that, having seen him dealing with huge piles of dirty costumes after a hot Saturday in the middle of the summer. He also served as one of our trainers and was instrumental in getting many conductors ready for certification over the last couple of years. His last day, believe it or not, was exactly 10 years from the day he started. We wish him best of luck with all of his future endeavors.

One of the many organizations OTT Boston is associated with is the Greater Boston Concierge Association (GBCA). Every year the GBCA holds a fundraiser for their special charity; the Ellis Center which offers Adult Day Care facilities for those in need. The fundraiser itself is held at the Prudential Shopping Mall at Christmas time and the GBCA offers gift wrapping services with all donations going to the Ellis Center. Several CASTmembers from the OTT Boston team volunteer their time and help the GBCA by wrapping presents. Vendor Reps, Cathy Hutchinson and Beth Josephs always offer their services and two years ago I joined in on the fun. Yes, I do consider it fun. I actually like wrapping presents. This year I was honored when Betty Salemme (President of the GBCA and Concierge at the Seaport Hotel) asked me to join her at the check presentation at the Ellis Center. (see pic) Altogether the GBCA raised closed to $3000 for the Ellis Center. It was great to meet some of the folks who benefit from the fundraising and reminisce with about growing up in Boston.

Planning is well underway for our 2016 season and all indications are that it is going to be a banner year here in Boston.
The entire leadager team has been focused on recruiting, interviewing and hiring new CASTmembers. Finding qualified candidates has become increasingly difficult over the years, so instead of relying on just classified ads, we are using every resource we have available, including our trolleys and trolley barn. With the help of the very talented Piper Smith, we now have beautiful signs on the back of a couple of our trolleys in addition to billboards on our property advertising that we are looking for good people. The billboard alone is seen by hundreds, if not thousands, of people every morning using the drive-thru at the Dunkin’ Donuts next door. I would wager it is the single busiest drive-thru in Boston! For our first training class of 2016, we welcomed to our ranks four conductor trainees; Anthony Crowell, David Dawson, Mike O’Hearn and Michael Byrnes. By the time you read this they should be certified and giving tours. Good luck guys!

During Recap on a Monday night in February, Sales Rep – Nick Harding (Sales Rep of the Month for January) shared an account of an interaction he had that day. While working at the Waterfront Welcome Center, one of the fire alarms went off and, although it was a false alarm, the Boston Fire Department arrived on the scene within minutes. Never missing an opportunity, Nick spoke with one of the firefighters who had asked about our Tours. He explained the tour and presented the Essential Guide Book. He mentioned that while answering alarms around Boston the firefighter could impress his team with facts from our book. Although he did not buy the book, the firefighter said he may in the future. How’s that for prospecting?

Chewie
Proud Owner: Kim Salvato, Administrative Asst.

Chewie (Chewbacca) is a handsome, blonde gentleman. He enjoys playing fetch on the beach, snuggling with his owner Kim, shedding and using the force. Chewie is 6 years old and named after Chewbacca for the sounds he makes during temper tantrums when he doesn’t get enough attention. He’s been perfecting his spot on impression for 6 years now. He also looks like a model dog straight out of a Purina commercial. In short, Chewie is an All American Hero who is proud of his mom for helping to tell the story of the single most important event leading up to the American Revolution.
The Nation's Storyteller

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Scribe, Hambon, Gordie, Bear, Larry, and Jewels

The Old South Meeting house was built in 1729 as a Puritan meeting house. Because of its central location and large size, large meetings (meetings in which more people were expected to attend than could fit into Faneuil Hall – Boston's town hall) were held here. In fact, some of the most important meetings leading up to the American Revolution took place in the Old South Meeting House, including the meeting on December 16, 1773. During that meeting, 5000 colonists gathered inside the Meeting House to decide what to do with over 30 tons of taxable tea sitting on ships in Boston Harbor. The colonists didn't want the tea unloaded because they didn't want to pay the tax on the tea. However, the Governor refused to allow the ships carrying the tea to return to England without unloading the tea. This stand-off culminated on December 16th. The meeting ended and approximately 150 men made their way to the ships on which the tea was stored. Once there, they dumped 340 chests of tea into Boston Harbor. (It took them almost three hours to do so). This act became known as the Boston Tea Party and is said to be one of the most important events leading up to the American Revolution. It's no wonder that the Old South Meeting House's motto is “the place where, meeting by meeting, vote by vote, a revolution began.” The Old South Meeting House was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1964. Today the Meeting House is a museum and like most museums, they have a gift shop. Old Town Trolley Tour tickets are available for purchase in the gift shop. The Old South Meeting House is certainly worth a visit for both Bostonians and those visiting Boston from out of town.

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Old South Meeting House

by Cathy Hutchinson, Vendor Representative

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CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Phil Ribeiro

Conductor, Old Town Trolley Tours

BACKGROUND

I was born in Boston, Massachusetts on a snowy Tuesday in January of 1984. Dad decided to tell my Mom he wanted to name me Philip, after one of his uncles. When in reality he was naming me after one of the greatest Boston Bruins hockey players of his time, Phil Esposito. I was raised and have lived most of my life in Somerville, MA. The most densely populated city in New England. I played ice hockey growing up and loved it, though now the glory has faded and only the aches and pains remain. I wouldn't change it, I learned one of the most important life lessons from hockey, how to be a team player. Growing up in the Greater Boston area, you are living playing and working in history everyday. Even if you don't realize it. It wasn't until I came to work for Old Town Trolley, that I realized that I could share our nation's history and my hometown, while having fun. And get paid to do it! I love meeting our guests from across the globe and sharing my beautiful city with them. Us Bostonians take a great deal of pride in our city, and I'm proud to be able to share it with visitors old and young working for Old Town Trolley.

P.S. Go Sox!

Which historical figure do you most identify with?

Benjamin Franklin, I like to think of myself as both a Statesman and diplomat.

What is your favorite vacation spot?

Definitely Martha's Vineyard I've been going there since I was a kid.

What is your most treasured possession?

Well they're not possessions, but what I treasure most are my two daughters Carolyn and Alana , and my girlfriend Sherri.

What three things will you always find in your refrigerator?

Linguiça, eggs, cheese.

If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city, where would it be?

Somewhere on Martha's Vineyard, maybe Aquinnah.

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As we wait for Spring to arrive, we are preparing for the arrival of our School Group Season. In years past, we would see the majority of our groups in May and June, but as our popularity continues to grow, we are seeing groups as early as mid-March. The Groups Sales office (Sean Lawler and Leah Belcher) has been working feverishly for months to book the thousands of reservations that we will see in the upcoming months. The fruits of their labors will be realized as all departments begin to welcome these large and enthusiastic groups. Our Customer Service Reps are ready to give excellent care to our guests, the Tea Room staff is baking cookies, the Retail Staff is stocking the shelves, and the Historical Interpreter/Actors are honing their crowd control skills and aiming to show these young people that history can be fun!

Meanwhile, we are presenting a large amount of Skype experiences and Outreach performances. Over the last few months, our Lead Actors (Stephen Chueka, Jillian Couillard, Angelo Calderone, Christopher Davis) have been facilitating the Education rehearsals. The Historical Interpreter/Actors learn multiple scripts in a short amount of time, from the Boston Tea Party Skype to the Boston Massacre Trial to the Educational Outreach program. Their hard work continues to spread the word about our wonderful site and our mission to share the story of this iconic event in American History.

As we move into our 4th summer season, we are finding ways to use our time and location more efficiently and effectively. The Retail store, under the leadership of Manager Lisa Hurd, continues to smash records. Lisa consistently pushes her staff to focus 100% on the guests and to show them why this is one of the best shops in the city! As part of this focus, she will be hiring a night crew to restock the shelves and to work on purchase orders, etc. This will allow the daytime staff to be at the registers and ready to serve the next guest! And as trends continue to change, Lisa reports that many of our guests ask about reordering products and “do you have an online store?” Up until this point, the idea of an online store was just a dream. BUT, we are happy to announce that coming in Fall 2016, the BTPSM will start the first online store in HTA! This will be a months-long process, but we are so excited to see this idea come to fruition. Thank you to Lisa and her staff for continuing to push the boundaries of what they do and to serve our guests in the best ways possible!

The Creative Department has hired 11 new Historical Interpreter/Actors and they are about halfway through their training process, and by the time this article is published, we hope that they’ll be out in front of our guests! The Tea Room has begun to hire new staff and revamp their offerings for the upcoming season. Customer Service has also begun hiring for the new season and our Maintenance team continues to keep us looking our best at all times and will be looking for a few new members of that team prior to the summer. All of our departments are constantly searching for the “right fit” - a CASTmember that will take pride in their job, in their site, and in the mission of helping our guests to make great memories while visiting our historic city!
As my first busy season here in Key West winds down, I am working on my list of things to accomplish during the off-season.

Our main focus during the next few months will be to brainstorm recruitment methods. With an unemployment rate flirting in the 2-2.5% range here in Key West, recruiting folks is a challenge. I’m certain, however, that we can sharpen our pencils and come up with ways to attract some amazing talent.

Another focus will be starting a shuttle service on May 1 for a group of new hotels on the island. This endeavor will entail hiring drivers, buying vehicles, and a plethora of other operational considerations. There’s a lot to get done in a relatively short period of time, but “we got this!”

Another focus for us this year will be to clean and renovate many of our sales booths. We currently have eleven sales booths. Another two booths will be opening within the next 30-45 days and a third is in the testing phase and if sales are strong enough, it may be opening as quickly as 30-45 days as well.

We will also be replacing the roof on the trolley barn. No more leak-catching buckets for us, no more throwing tarps over our collateral goods to keep them from getting wet and no more getting dripped on from above!

The trolley operation will be getting three new trolleys and the train operation will be getting another train this year! There’s no better feeling than knowing the company you work for is financially strong and growing. Plus, more vehicles = more satisfied guests!

During our off-season, and in very general terms, we’re also looking at other tour offerings, searching for more barn space, evaluating some of our policies and procedures, and finally, getting geared up for our next busy season.

Is there really ever an off-season? It seems we’re just as busy, if not busier, than our busy season.

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Cruise World
by Kevin Delahanty, Cruise Ship Liaison

Here we are, going into February and March with 77 ships between those two months. Everyone loves to cruise in the Caribbean during the winter and we love to see them! Our weather has been less than perfect. Our normal temperature is around 77 as a high, but we had a lot of 60 degree days with winds and rain. Despite the weather, sales still go on due to the determination of sales staff. We have welcomed new ships to Key West. The Carnival Fantasy is replacing Carnival Ecstasy; RCCL Legend of the Seas and the Caribbean Princess both made first time calls. Banking on the success of the Key West Rum and Cigar tour, we are looking at other new products to offer to the cruise lines.

Season Ends
by Kristy Smith, Head Conductor

We are, once again, bidding adieu to our season drivers who were kind enough to come down and assist us with our busy season. As the end of season approaches for our season drivers to once again leave us, I reflect on time spent with them and remember. Rolling in first this year, Maine Man Jim Glavine...sauntered into the trolley barn as if it were yesterday, dressed in t-shirt and shorts, gear in hand and said “What trolley am I in Boss?” Close behind Ole’ Chris Kringle Holmes “Trolley 101 I presume?” with a twinkle in his eye. Hot on his heels is French fry loving Darin Delrosario “Where ya want me?” Yes, the snowbirds and we’re happy they are here. Still more to come and quietly so, still holding hands after all these years, Gary and Alice Barr, “Glad to be back.” they say. For the next few days, you hear around the barn ... “Hey! Glad you’re back, how ya been?” We all settle in, and we begin...Season.

We are busy as can be, and our season drivers jump right in never missing a beat. It’s like they’ve been here all along. We’re a well-oiled machine. Tours and yellows, grab and go’s, ships and charters, busses and all, it’s all a blur. Then before we know it, as
quickly as they arrive, we are watching them go. First to arrive and first to go, is Jim Glavine, hanging up his flip flops till next year. Right behind him Darin Delrosario who summed up his time here, “Can’t wait to sleep in my own bed.” Quietly they came and quietly they go...Gary and Alice Barr, leaving a lovely hand written note on the table for us all..”Sincere thanks to all of our “Key West Family”. Be safe and may your “tip hats” be full.

We appreciate the time they sacrifice, leaving behind family, to give up their mittens, and coats, to put down their snow shovels, and travel afar to a tropical island for the winter. We appreciate their coming to assist us and they are a fun bunch. We look forward to seeing them all again next year. Thanks guys! We misses ya already!

New Operations Manager
by Gary McDonnell, Operations Manager

I want to express the amazing experience I have had as the new Operations Manager for Old Town Trolley, Key West. I was thrilled to accept the position and it has been very enjoyable. I felt I had big shoes to fill taking the position originally filled by Steve Burress. The respect he had by the CASTmembers here is amazing and I wish him the best of luck in Nashville. I am looking forward to what I know will be a great future with a great company, and amazing people.

We are in the middle of our season at this point. Cruise ships are in nearly every day. Many days, two ships, one of which requiring trolleys, trains, and shuttle buses to shuttle all the passengers into Mallory Square. The island is filled with tourists from all over the world. It is a pleasure every day to meet the visitors, whether they are here for a few hours, a week or for months. We are beginning to focus efforts to recruitment for next season. We have come up with some great ideas to accomplish a very challenging task.

Karen Emery began her wedding coordinating career in 1987 while officiating and arranging South Florida weddings to local brides. In 1989, a Holland America guest contacted A Wedding For You and asked them to help coordinate the first wedding onboard the MS Westerdam. Since then, A Wedding For You and Karen, have created the destination and onboard wedding program for each of the cruise lines.

With her impeccable sense of organization and knowledge of local (island) availabilities and vendors, Karen brings over 27 years of destination wedding experience to each of her clients and now to you.

Key West and all of her wedding locations have been personally visited by Karen and her staff and they have escorted many weddings to oversee the personal touches. Although A Wedding For You has grown over the years, the most important element is still customer service and making every bride feel as though she is the only bride.
Sonja Curry-Moore
Administrative Assistant, Old Town Trolley

BACKGROUND
I’m what you’d call a true Key West Conch. Born and raised here in sunny Key West exactly 29 years ago. My family originated from the beautiful Bahamas in which most of them still live right here in Key West. In fact the person I admire most in the world is Mother she’s one of the strongest people I know. She raised me and my brother alone due to the death of my father and she made sure she filled that void. I can’t remember a play, recital, or speech I ever had without my biggest fan in the audience.

Watching my mother love and care for my brother and I gave me the motivation to be the mother I am today. I love my daughter Imani beyond measure. She is absolutely the best thing that could have ever been given to me. She’s an amazing kid, that does amazing things in school and on the basketball court. You could say I’m one lucky mom. I’ll be rooting her on from the stands of the WNBA one day right after she walks across the stage at Harvard and that’s a promise.

In my perfect world perfect happiness is exactly what I have. An amazing family that supports and loves me past any pain or downfall I’ve ever encountered, an extraordinary man that decided to share his life with me and make me the happiest woman on earth, and a daughter that’s a breathtaking reflection of God’s love for me. You see sometimes we get caught up in material things and think that’s where our happiness should lie. My happiness lies in a beautiful Sunday morning full of Imani screaming “MOMMMMMMMMMMM”, and my husband screaming “HUNNNNNNNNNYYYYYYYY what for breakfast?”

My greatest fear is leaving this earth without my family knowing how much I truly love them. So I use up every second of everyday to let them know, to plan cookouts and beach days that include everyone. I’d hate to ever be in a coulda, woulda, shoulda situation if it ever came to it. Taking no moment for granted and never putting off tomorrow what should and could be said or done today.

I became a CASTmember in October of 2015 and by far Old Town Trolley has been one of the greatest teams I’ve had the privilege of being part of. It’s more like a family away from family and who wouldn’t want to work for a company like that.

Tiffany Albury
Administrative Assistant, Conch Tour Train

BACKGROUND
I was born and raised in Key West, a 7th generation “Conch”. Growing up I was a cheerleader and a ballerina. I have lived here pretty much my entire life. I moved to Mesa, AZ at 18 years old and attended Mesa Community College where I received my AA. I then relocated to Tampa, FL where I worked at a debt settlement company. After four years away from home, I moved back in 2010.

Once I was back I started working part time and going back to school. I had my daughter in May 2012 and stayed home with her until she was 2. I started working in Group Sales as an Administrative Assistant for Conch Tour Train and Old Town Trolley in October 2014. I love the people in my office and enjoy coming to work every day!

My daughter is my greatest blessing! She is now an 8th generation “Conch”, following my footsteps in cheerleading and is also a ballerina. In August she will start Pre-K in the same elementary school I attended. Seeing her do all the things I enjoyed as a child, in the same places I loved, is the best part about raising her on this little island I call home. I am looking forward to the future and what it has in store for my daughter and me, as well as my future with Historic Tours of America!

What or who is the greatest love of your life?
My daughter, Gianna Victoria Parrish!

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Disney World.

Which talent would you most like to have?
I would love to sing!

If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city, where would it be?
New York City, the city of opportunity!

What do you most value in your friends?
Honesty.

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Adding to the Fleet
by Eva Conaway, Conch Tour Train General Manager

It’s been over 16 years since the Conch Train added a new vehicle to the fleet. Officially on April 1, 2016, we start building another one. I will be giving up The Conch Train jeep that I have driven for the last 9 years. They could not find a jeep that would work. So mine will be modified to make it fit. That is where they will start with the jeep stripped down. They will build the loco over the top of it. We are all very excited.

Our Winter Season is over at the end of March and we move into the Spring. At this point it’s more like summer. We will continue to be busy with ships but our snow birds will have all gone home.

I would like to thank all the Conch Train CASTmembers for another great year!

Blue Angels Visit Key West
Photos and Content by Mark Drais, Conch Tour Train Engineer

On April 2nd and 3rd, the World Famous Conch Tour Train and more specifically, engineers Mark Drais and Kenny Jones, had the honor of providing parking lot shuttle service for the Southernmost Air Spectacular. This event featured the United States Navy Blue Angels, the Budweiser Clydesdales, and a list of special civilian stunt pilots. It was an outstanding family event with the United States Navy opening the gates of the Boca Chica Naval Air Station to the general public and showing off some amazing heavy hardware!

A big thank you to the United States Navy for allowing us the privilege to be of service!

Naval Air Station Key West
by Captain Steve McAlearney, Commanding Officer, Naval Air Station Key West (reprinted with permission of the Naval Air Station Key West)

Naval Air Station Key West has a long and proud history, and is currently the Navy’s premier air-to-air combat training station and also home to a bustling port facility. The installation has been a part of the Key West community since 1917, when a coastal air station was built on Trumbo Point. The first naval flight recorded from the station was on Sept. 22, 1917, with Coast Guard Lt. Stanley Parker flying a Curtiss N-9 seaplane.

In 1945, after World War II, the Navy disestablished its satellite air fields and combined them into one aviation activity designated as U.S. Naval Air Station, Key West. It has served as a training facility since then, preparing hundreds of thousands of aviators from all services, as well as allied nations, to preserve peace and protect the nation.

We have also selected very special civilian performers for the Southernmost Air Spectacular. The performers that you see today have spent thousands of hours developing their amazing and exciting aerobatic acts.

The Naval Air Station also has served as “the tip of spear” when needed – first in 1962 during the Cuban Missile Crisis and most recently in support of Haiti humanitarian missions.

The skill and training required by military aviators is evident in the U.S. Navy’s Flight Demonstration Squadron the Blue Angels, as well as the other military flight demonstration teams that you will see this weekend. The incredible maneuvers that the Blue Angels perform are actually the same fundamental maneuvers that are employed in aerial combat.

Spectacular flying, static displays, a Kid’s Zone, souvenirs and concessions – there is no better way to spend a day with family and friends!
On February 1st, Cyril Chauquet of the TV show Chasing Monsters made a stop at the Key West Aquarium to take a swim with one of the more misunderstood fish in the Florida Keys, the Great Barracuda. You'll have to watch the episode to see how his swim turned out! I'm looking forward to it, especially with a portion of the footage highlighting the aquarium and its hard working CAST. Pictured from left to right is the show director, Cyril Chauquet, his photo bombing cameraman and Clinton Curry.

Storytellers from the Key West Shipwreck Treasures Museum and Old Town Trolley Key West participated in the Pigeon Key Art Festival in February. The Shipwreck Storytellers, Mindy Tucker as Lillian Taylor, Eddie Goldstein as Asa Tift and Clinton Curry as Elijah Curry, portrayed figures from the 1850’s Wrecking Era. Wrecking, the business of salvaging ships, helped propel Key West into one of the richest cities per capita in the United States. OTTKW Conductor Judi Burton joined us as well. Judi portrayed an 1820’s Era Florida Keys pirate, Lily Lynch. During this era, Florida Keys pirates were being hunted by Commodore David Porter and West Indies Anti-Piracy Squadron. We all had a great time at the festival and look forward to participating in future events.

In late January during the Annual Kelly McGillis Woman’s Flag Football Tournament, the tournament namesake made a special visit. Pictured with Kelly McGillis is Clinton Curry and his daughter Parker. Girl’s from the 4th to 8th grade schools in Key West and the Florida Keys were invited to play in their own tournament the same time the women were playing. Of course, Parker will now have to watch Top Gun to find out why we needed a picture. Just have to wait several more years.

The Wounded Warrior Project’s Soldier Ride visited Key West in January. After several days of taking in the hospitality of the Fabulous Florida Keys and Key West, the Warriors were invited to a reception on the grounds of the Harry S Truman Little White House after a community outreach hike ride. Little White House guide Anne Trogner welcomed the Warriors on behalf of the CAST of the Little White House. The Warriors passed thru the Presidential Gates on their way to the Little White House. At one time, these gates were only opened for visiting U.S. Presidents.
Key West Walking Tour:
Did you Know? Banyan Trees
by Clinton Curry, Key West Walking Tour General Manager

Banyan trees are the National Tree of India, their native country. The tree is named after “Banyans” or “Banians”, early Hindu traders who would sit under the canopy of the tree to rest, as well as to carry out business. In most traditional villages of South Asia, they have become very popular meeting places for people to gather due to the amount of shade they provide.

Many of the largest Banyan Trees in the world are in India. While there is debate as to which is the largest, two of them are said to each cover over 5 acres of land. One located in Calcutta is named the “Great Banyan” and the other in Andhra Pradesh known as the “Thimmamma Marrimanu.”

One of the more striking images from a Banyan tree is the aerial roots and prop roots. As the branches spread out from the trunk of the tree, aerial roots extend to the ground like strands of hair and when they reach the ground, form prop roots.

There are several notable Banyan Trees in Key West. The most talked about and photographed of these is on the grounds at the Banyan Resort. This particular tree is said to be over 100 years old and has prop roots extending into several properties.

While impressive, it is nowhere near the size of Florida’s Champion Banyan Tree. The largest Banyan Tree in the State of Florida is in Ft. Myers at the Thomas Edison Estate. This tree was planted in 1925 when it was only four feet tall. Today, the Edison Banyan Tree measures 84 feet tall and has a circumference of 376 inches!

Many non-native trees made their way to Key West as seeds or as juvenile plants aboard tall ships during the age of sail. Banyan Trees are one of many that fall under this age. Our frost free climate is perfect for many of them. I know I’m glad to have these trees growing on the island! Next up, fruit trees...

Aquarium: Did You Know?

The Key West Aquarium doesn’t just have marine life living there. We feature invasive species that have moved to Key West and the Florida Keys throughout the years such as the green iguana. These beautiful creatures have created quite a stir in the local community, due to their voracious appetite for all things flowers and fruits. Next time you visit the aquarium, make sure to stop by and check them out.

FEBRUARY
RETAIL
Irina Bakala, 15 years
Natalia Trostianskaya, 10 years
Tanya Azavedo, 8 years
Khrystyna Tomenchuk, 8 years
John Lo Piccolo, 1 year

GHOSTS AND GRAVESTONES
John Schafer, 4 years

MARCH
RETAIL
Jimmy Delva, 2 years
Mark Faris, 2 years
Jennifer Llagostera, 1 year
Diana Llagostera, 1 year
Ivenson Gourgue, 1 year
Stephana Cidelus, 1 year
Isabel Valdez, 1 year
The San Diego-Coronado Bridge (commonly referred to as the Coronado Bridge) is a 2.12-mile bridge that spans San Diego Bay and connects the City of San Diego with the City of Coronado. The 90 degree curve is by necessity — spanning long enough so it can rise to a height of 200 feet and a 4.67% grade, allowing even the Navy’s aircraft carrier to sail under.

2015 OVERALL STANDINGS
RACE FOR THE CHIEF CONDUCTORS CUP

1. SAVANNAH
Piper Smith, 29 years
Jose Casas, 13 years
Terry Strickland, 7 years
Larry Williams, 3 years
David Lewin, 2 years

2. BOSTON
Natalie Machado, 12 years
Justyna Janicka, 11 years
Montgomery Triz, 14 years
Ernest Poore, 11 years
Carter Taylor, 2 years

3. WASHINGTON DC
Mariola Janicka-William, 20 years
Nashville: Did You Know?

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FEBRUARY
Piper Smith, 29 years
Jose Casas, 13 years
Terry Strickland, 7 years
Larry Williams, 3 years
David Lewin, 2 years

MARCH
Mariola Janicka-William, 20 years
Natalie Machado, 12 years
Justyna Janicka, 11 years
Montgomery Triz, 14 years
Ernest Poore, 11 years
Carter Taylor, 2 years

The Chief Conductors Trophy is a concept recognized by the Risk Management department to award our cities for great safety results. Please refer to Chris Belland’s article “Safety is First and So is Boston” article in the Vol. 19-No.14 April-May edition of the Nation’s Storyteller for the complete story.