On Saturday, February 25, 2012, saw presidential family members gather on the lawn of the Little White House to discuss their mothers and grandmothers as First Ladies of the United States.

Margaret Hoover, a FOX News commentator, revealed a long forgotten Lou Hoover who sounded like an incredibly accomplished “modern woman”.

Lou Hoover was the first American woman to earn a degree in geology from Stanford, where she met her future husband in a geology lab. She backpacked and was an expert marksman... hardly what we’d expect from a First Lady. She and Herbert Hoover trans-navigated the world five times by ship. She was a gifted linguist and spoke fluent Mandarin. She and Herbert were running mining operations in China when the Boxer Rebellion broke out. Gangs of Chinese threatened all westerners. Lou Hoover, armed with rifle and pistols, shot advancing Chinese from the German compound.

She was a noted artist, photographer and architect. While First Lady, she was approached by Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts of America, to become active in Girl Scout leadership. For the next 22 years she served as president or board member of the Girl Scouts. She is credited with facilitating the first sale of Girl Scout cookies, and Girl Scout programming today is largely funded through the sale of their cookies.

During the Depression, she mobilized the girls to provide voluntary relief assistance for those in economic want. She created the template for an activist First Lady for which her successor, Eleanor Roosevelt, came to be known.

Clifton Truman Daniel shared many favorite stories of his grandparents. Often criticized as being unloving or uncaring, Bess Truman was, instead, intensely private. Her father had committed suicide while she was a teen and she always feared that exposure of that would embarrass her husband or daughter. She was a pillar of strength for her mother and brothers. She was extremely well read and would offer sound advice to her husband. Once when asked the role of the First Lady, she replied “to sit next to your husband, keep quiet and make sure your hat is on straight.”

She and Harry Truman met when she was five and he was six. After high school graduation, they courted for nine years, marrying in 1919. Their only daughter, Margaret, was born when Bess was 40. Literally thousands of letters were exchanged between Harry and Bess Truman giving us a wonderful insight into a deeply devoted couple. Harry Truman died in 1972; Bess survived an additional 10 years dying in 1982 at the age of 97 thus making her the longest lived First Lady.

Susan Ford brought us the experience of growing up in the

Continued on Page 35...
Many things in my little world never cease to amaze me, not the least of which is the prodigious output of genius throughout history. Well, yeah! They were not having to spend countless hours keeping up with the latest scandal or the newest rising star and they did not get hooked on endless sitcoms. Yes, they had a big advantage.

These now recognized giants in their fields painted masterpieces, chiseled mythical sculptures, wrote literally thousands of beautifully penned, grammatically perfect letters of wit and insight and, in their spare time, invented things of great and lasting importance.

While I am in awe of the current state of technology, I have to remember it would not be so without the accomplishments of those who came before and it all seemed to come from a keen sense of observation that, for the most part, seems lost in today’s fast-paced world.

Just for fun:
Did you ever wonder, when plucking petals from a flower to “She loves me, she loves me not”, how many petals a flower has? Interestingly, the number follows a very peculiar pattern. Flowers generally have petals numbering 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34 and so on, each number being the sum of the two preceding numbers as in 3 plus 5 equals 8 and 5 plus 8 equals 13 and so forth.

Michelangelo, Da Vinci, Franklin and Jefferson Had an Advantage: NO TV!

Bob “The Colonel” Hunter was our featured CASTmember for Savannah in our last edition. Unfortunately, his biography was incorrect. Please read the corrected biography for him below.

Bob “The Colonel” Hunter came by his name because prior to coming to work for HTA in 2001, he ran four local Kentucky Fried Chicken stores. A friend at one of the stores called him “The Colonel” (you will see that he looks a bit like the original recipe as well—just better) and the name stuck.

Originally from Miami, Bob came to HTA after a brief stint at KFC, and a long career in the insurance industry. He has served as a Sales Representative, Conductor and now as the Hotel Vendor Representative (for the last four years). He bleeds orange and green and loves Old Town Trolley Tours.

The Colonel appreciates being given the opportunity to show our valued guests our beautiful city.
No Snow!

by John Welby; Operations Manager

The winter months are usually very challenging for Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston. The staffing is reduced dramatically, the number of guests falls off quite a bit and to top it all off we suffer through miserable weather. Well, what a difference a year makes!

As of this writing, this winter will go down in the history books as the second LEAST snowiest on record. Unlike last year when we were counting the snowfall rate in feet instead of inches, this year we’ve seen hardly any snow at all. For the month of March, we have had unusually high temperatures and have already broken the high temperature record multiple days for the month.

Even though it is our off-season, we have been busy behind-the-scenes making plans for the up-coming season. One of the biggest plans is the adding of newer trolleys to our fleet. In order make room for more vehicles in our barn, we are and transferring some of the still usable trolleys to our other operations and retiring the oldest and most unusable vehicles. I hope San Diego, Savannah and Washington gets plenty of more years out of them.

A Fresh Look

by Cheryl DeSimone, Vendor Sales Account Manager

For the first time since I was hired here at OTT we have all new administrative assistants in our front office. Usually when we need to hire someone, there is always a “veteran” out front to help train the newly hired person and to keep the front office running smoothly. We hired two new administrative assistants in November and we recently hired a third new person. Katie and Melissa have been here approximately four months. If you called our office you would never know these ladies are new, even Evelyn! They are absolutely amazing at their jobs and I feel very fortunate to have them in our office. Recently, Katie has taken on the role as my HR Admin Assistant. From the moment we hired her I had the sense that she had the “right stuff” that would make her the perfect HR Admin Assistant and I was right. She is doing a wonderful job of learning the ins and outs of Human Resources and has already shown her capabilities for the job! Melissa, a Florida native, must have been born in Boston in a previous life, because she is doing an excellent job with the phones and helping people find their way to our tours and other things to do in Boston. She has also taken on the role of my Finance Assistant. The winter months are usually very challenging for Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston. The staffing is reduced dramatically, the number of guests falls off quite a bit and to top it all off we suffer through miserable weather. Well, what a difference a year makes!

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Thanks Vendors!

by Cathy Hutchinson; Depot Sales Manager

Overlooking the banks of the Charles River and tucked between Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) you will find the Hyatt Regency, Cambridge. The Hyatt is known for its unique pyramid shape, location and its personalized guest service.

The Chef Concierge, Frank Afework, is the reason for the Hyatt’s superb service. Frank came to Boston from Ethiopia many years ago to attend college. To earn extra money he began working as a part – time bellman at the Hyatt Regency. He has never left the hotel. Frank has been at the Hyatt Regency, Cambridge for over thirty -five years and is a Charter Member of Hyatt Hotels.

Frank is very proud to be an ambassador to both the city of Cambridge as well as Boston. As a concierge he believe that you must keep up on current event in both cities as well as the surrounding areas. He feels that his job as a concierge is to make the guests comfortable with the hotel, the area, and all it has to offer. Frank’s pride in his job shows. As he said” you are on a stage, be confident! Know your product.”

Frank said that he is the number one marketing and sales person for Old Town Trolley Tours. If you spend some time listening to him talking to his guests about us and you will believe he is probably correct. I have had the pleasure of working with Frank for seven years. He and his staff, Sweemeng Ho and Richard Martin, have gone from boarding passes to paper tickets, and are now pros with eTickets and all Trusted Tours & Attractions has to offer their guests. Frank promotes Old Town Trolley Tours because he knows that we stand behind our product 100%. Frank doesn’t sell OTT for the money but for the thumbs up that the guests give him after a day of touring.

While Frank Afework drives a Ford Explorer and a C320 Mercedes to work everyday he also has a collection of classic cars. He owns a ‘86 XJ6 Jaguar, a ‘81 38SL Mercedes coupe, and a ’76 2002 BMW. Recently, when cleaning out one of the cars, he found an Old Town Trolley map going back to 1991. He has been with OTTT for twenty - one years! How many concierges’ can say that?

Frank is excited about the upcoming season with Old Town Trolley Tours and the opening of the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum. we look forward to working with Frank and the Hyatt Regency, Cambridge for many years to come.
three women come to work each day with such great personalities and attitudes ... it makes it very easy to be their leader! Thank you to Katie, Melissa and Evelyn for doing such great jobs!

Off Season Success
by Ed Doerr, Depot Sales Manager

We had a very successful “off season” here at Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston. And when I say “off season” it really was just that. We had warmer than normal temperatures and practically no snowfall. Last year we were forced to close operations 4 days in January alone. We have not lost a single day to snow this year. Amazing!

And, the numbers reflect that. In January we were up 11% and February we were up 16%.

We are now looking forward to moving back in to high season and bringing back the reps who took the winter off and hiring new reps as needed. It should be a great season in Boston with the bicentennial of The War of 1812, a visit from the Tall ships and the celebration of our beloved Fenway Park’s 100th anniversary.

Specialty Tours
by Andrew Rhodes, Tour Entertainment Manager

We are opening the crypt of a new Ghosts and Gravestones season here in Boston. This year we kicked off our summer with the 111th South Boston Saint Patrick’s Day Parade! We have started digging up some good guides for the summer, and are happy to say all of our full time gravediggers will be returning. We are also finishing up Boston’s Original Chocolate Tour which runs Saturday’s January through April. A sweet time has been had by all with deserts from The Top of The Hub, Historic Omni Parker House, and The Langham Hotel. Our guides and our crazy chefs are ready to put that tour away for now, and shed those pounds for the summer. We will also be sorting out our colonial kit for our educational tours which begin in May. The Sons and Daughters of Liberty Tour takes school children around our city and showcases for them the differences between old Boston and new on the road to revolution.

Assistant Manager Steven Johnson and I are looking at some other specialty tours, and events to keep our actors very busy for the summer. With Chocolate tours, Ghost Tours, Educational Tours, promotional appearances, parades, and a few other special events you can bet we will be working ourselves to the bone.....so to speak.

Check our Facebook page for even more pics from the parade!

Break A Leg!
by Sue Pye, Safety Officer

Hello all from the Northernmost point in the HTA Nation. My name is Sue Pye and you may have read one of my Famous Faces articles over the years. Well this time Matthew has asked that I write about myself and share my recent experience with you. I am sure you have heard the expression Break a Leg... well let me tell you DON’T. I am recently back to work after being out for nine weeks with a broken leg and I am still not off the crutches.

Let me tell you what happened...On January 12, I went to a physical therapy appointment. This was the 12th appointment so I was feeling much better and the Achilles Tendonitis in my right ankle was much improved. Well, at 9:01 AM I fell while doing an exercise, still not sure how. At 9:02 AM as I lay on the floor with my left leg now broken and my foot dislocated and toes now pointed to the left, I called Matthew and told him that I broke my leg and would not be in that day. Well long story short I had surgery and now have a plate and four additional screws holding my left leg together. For the next eight weeks I lived with my sister and her family and could not
My name is Steven Johnson and I’ve lived in New England all my life. After high school, I enjoyed a life of luxury and irresponsibility as a theater major at the University of Southern Maine. In search of the next stage in my life, I moved down to Boston when I was 23.

When I arrived in the city, Old Town Trolley was one of the first places I dropped off an application. I thought it would be a great way to utilize my customer service skills and learn about the city I’d just moved in to. Shortly after, I was asked to join the ranks of Old Town Trolley Tours: Boston as a sales representative.

I still remember one of my first days at OTT: Boston. I was assigned to work at Fanuiel Hall, in early March, during a daylong torrential downpour. With perseverance, a sense of humor, and a whole lot of luck, I was able to sell twelve tickets despite the season and weather.

I spent a year and a half being a sale rep and, to this day, I’m grateful for the experience. It wasn’t until a few chance meetings with the actors working at Ghosts & Gravestones that I showed up for an audition, got cast, and began haunting the streets of Boston as “Anthraxicon the Deathbringer”.

At Ghosts & Gravestones, I truly found my niche within the company. I’ve been acting in/selling tickets for/managing Ghosts & Gravestones, in some way or another, for over eight seasons now. I’m grateful for all of the actors I’ve been lucky enough to work with, and I’m grateful for the managers who trained me, educated me, and put up with me.

Recently, I decided to make an even better life for myself and started working to finish my degree. I’ve been going to school part-time at Bunker Hill Community College and look forward to transferring to a four year in institution in the very near future. Outside of work, I enjoy time with my awesome girlfriend and enjoy many strange and wonderful hobbies.

What talent would you most like to have?
Too many to count... Boxing, fluency in French, swimming (I’m just an ok swimmer)... there is very little I don’t want to learn to do.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Spending time in the outdoors (hiking the White Mountains, going to the ocean) with my sweetheart and a few of our close, amazing friends.

What do you most admire in your friends?
Being straightforward and saying exactly what they think.

What three things will you always find in my refrigerator?
Mold, dust, and empty space... (I’m never home)

If you could choose one reality TV show to be on, what would it be?
People choose to be in reality TV shows???? Really? What is this world coming to?
In a previous edition of The Nation’s Storyteller I told you about the concierges and front desk agent who sell Old Town Trolley tickets at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Boston – Downtown. In this edition, I’d like to tell you about the amazing bellman team at this hotel. The bellmen, Ghirmai Sebhat, Binyam Teklemariam, and Rene Flores also sell Old Town Trolley Tour tickets.

Ghirmai came to the United States about 10 years ago from Asmara, Eritrea. He worked as a physical education teacher in his home country. Today, Ghirmai maintains a connection to his physical education background by coaching an Eritrean community basketball team. After arriving in the U.S., Ghirmai worked different office jobs. Then, five years ago, he took the job as bellman at the DoubleTree by Hilton. He enjoys his job very much. This job allows him to connect with people he otherwise wouldn’t have the opportunity to meet and he finds that those connections have instilled a greater respect for others. Ghirmai also likes the opportunity that recommending the Old Town Trolley Tour to his guests gives him to connect even more with guests. Ghirmai recommends our tour because he knows that Old Town Trolley “runs on time, has a great frequency and extensively covers the city of Boston.” Ghirmai also likes the way the Old Town Trolleys look – the distinctive orange and green and the shape of the vehicles. Most importantly though, Ghirmai likes the positive feedback he receives after guests have taken the tour. He said “people are always excited after they take the tour.”

Another bellman at the hotel who sells Old Town Trolley Tour tickets is Binyam Teklemariam. He is originally from Addis, Ethiopia. He worked at the Hilton Addis before coming to the U.S. Binyam has been in the U.S. for five years and came here after winning the lottery and getting his green card. He settled in Boston because there is a large Ethiopian community here. Binyam felt at home right away and is happy to have settled in such a fine city. He enjoys everything about Boston and is happy that there is a reputable sightseeing company to give tours to the guests at his hotel. He makes sure to recommend the Old Town Trolley Tour to every guest he sees. When he isn’t working, Binyam enjoys playing soccer.

The third member of the bellman team at the DoubleTree by Hilton is Rene Flores. Rene came to Boston from South America some years ago to attend Boston University. He has worked in several different hotels in the Boston area and enjoys the work very much. He also really likes good coffee and knows a lot about what makes a good cup of coffee and what doesn’t. He also knows about good tour companies and says that Old Town Trolley Tours provides his guests and himself with the best tour and customer service experiences.

Thank you all for your continued support. It is so great to work with you.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

DECEMBER
Charles Cirrone, 3 Years
Michael Schlueter, 3 Years

JANUARY
Jean Gordon, 5 Years
Edward Doerr, 4 Years
Brian Buckley, 3 Years
Maggie Mathews, 2 Years
Michael Buchanan, 2 Years

FEBRUARY
Matthew Murphy, 19 Years
Andrew Quinney, 11 Years
Richard Sheridan, 8 Years
John Feeley Jr., 6 Years
Michael Giobbe, 6 Years
James Mehigan, 2 Years
Gordon Fitz, 1 Year
Justin Moss, 1 Year

CASTmembers of the Month

OF THE YEAR
Marc Chidley, Conductor
Andrew Quinney, Sales Rep
Forest Mason, Supporting
Ryan Jennings, Actor
Ryan Jennings, Rookie

DECEMBER
Robert Findlen, Conductor
Maggie Mathews, Sales Rep
Piro Pelari, Supporting

JANUARY
Justin Moss, Conductor
Maggie Mathews, Sales Rep
Catherine Cunio, Supporting

FEBRUARY
John Egan, Conductor
Paul Sullivan, Sales Rep
Aldwin Peredin, Supporting
Key West News

by Steve Burress; Operations Manager

Thank you to all Old Town Trolley Tours of Key West CASTmembers! What more can I say? We have had an incredible season so far, as you may have noticed from the excitement of many of the other leadagers’ articles. I am so proud of every person who has made it happen. Without conductors, sales agents would have nothing to sell. Without sales agents, conductors would have empty vehicles. Without Johnna and Mary in the office, no one would ever be able to find where the nearest ticket booth to their hotel would be! Without maintenance, vehicles wouldn’t be able to get out of the barn to do the tours and provide the product that the sales reps need to sell! Do you get my point? I’m thankful for the CAST of Old Town Trolley Tours of Key West!

I just attended a meeting today for the Key West Attractions Association and received some wonderful news. It looks like the trend is going to continue in Key West. Year to date airline ridership is up 22% compared to 2011 (the biggest year in Key West International Airport History). 2011 was up 19% over the previous year, so that makes 2012 well on track to be another record breaking year for tourism in the Keys.

I want to welcome a few new folks to our crew and say goodbye to a few who feel they need 14 drivers. This year we feel that we will not be slowing down everything now; right now. With the help of a microwave you can make Minute Rice in under a minute. I share this with you to help us all realize that everything has a due process. When it comes to selling, it’s all about the full package. I don’t just mean selling packages, I mean delivering the full package to a guest. Greeting potential guests and treating them the way we would want to be treated when we are on vacation.

Spring is here and our first quarter was a success. HTA sales have increased along with our ridership, Trains and Trolleys, they just keep on running. I extend a warm welcome to all of our newest sales reps. for both CTT & OTT.

As we continue to move forward solving each problem as we go, we will be able to help our guests, and ourselves, and thus become the full package TOGETHER.

I realize that being in the tourist business, The Show must go ON. Even when we may, be somewhat stressed out. Remember that our guests pay for us to entertain them with a smile.

I want to truly THANK YOU ALL!!!! What fabulous job, you all have done, together.

Thoughts to ponder: Take what you have and use it, and your talent will be increased.

Life is an echo: What you send out – comes back. ---- See You at the Top!

Spring is in the Air

by Candy Lockyear; Head Conductor

Spring is here! For us here in Key West that means that our cruise ship schedule will change with less ships coming into our city each week. The last few months has been our high season, and oh what a season it has been. In the months of January & February we had 24 drivers! That is the most that we have had here in Key West and this season we needed them all!! To accommodate all of these drivers we needed to add to our 20 trolleys. This past week we welcomed two brand new beautiful trolleys to our fleet. We are very excited to have them here. Of course the drivers are a little scared of them due to their height and length. They stand taller than our other trolleys. Because of this, our maintenance team had to make some adjustments to our trolley barn door!!!

We are looking forward to our summer. Last year we saw an increase in people vacationing here in Key West and we are expecting the same and more this year. In the summer most of our visitors are from Florida, the only ones that can stand our humidity & heat index when it is 94 degrees. In summers past we have been slow and only needed 14 drivers. This year we feel that we will not be slowing down
and will go into the summer with 22 drivers. WOW! There are lots of exciting things going on here in Key West. If the summer is when you & your families take a vacation, come on down to Key West and see what all the fuss is about. We would love to have you.

**New Excursion Liaison**

*by Paul Cross; Excursions Liaison*

Great to be back in Key West and part of the HTA family again! I love this challenging role of Excursions Liaison! Already I have received emails and texts from the Shore Excursion Teams that I have had the pleasure of meeting and we are making great strides in reminding them of the awesome product that we have. I am having a lot of fun on the pier and its creating a HTA presence out there for us. I have a farming plan that I am developing! I say farming, as its going to take time. Sowing an authentic relationship and dependable service over the coming months and years so that when our various counterparts need assistance then we will be the first one they call leading to a great Historic Harvest!

**CASTmembers of the Month**

**DECEMBER**

Louie Cabrera, Conductor  
Jack Sibley, Sales Rep.  
Cesar Moreno, Supporting

**JANUARY**

Ben Fox, Conductor  
Patricia Ramsey Sullivan, Sales Rep.  
Jason Sisco, Supporting

**FEBRUARY**

Ben Fox, Conductor  
Patricia Ramsey Sullivan, Sales Rep.  
 Marvin Martinez, Supporting

**PETS OF THE MONTH**

**HANSEL**

Owned by Jack “Curry” Houston

**LIL**

By: Proud Owner Rick Milelli  
Historic Tours of America Engineer

Meet Lil. She’s about one year old. She’s a pound pup and we think that she is part chihuahua part beagle (cheagle). She’s very sweet and loves to lie in your lap.

**HAPPY ANNIVERSARY**

**DECEMBER**

Pamela Lewis, 1 Year

**JANUARY**

Aaron Andres, 4 Years  
Marvin Martinez, 3 Years  
Davild Willingham, 2 Years  
Danial Jones, 1 Year  
Benjamin Fox, 1 Year

**FEBRUARY**

William Webster, 19 Years  
Timothy Watson, 5 Years  
Shirley Porter, 1 Year  
Gary Barr, 1 Year

**Operations Manager Steve Burress tries on a fashionable sponge hat.**

twitter.com/keywesttours  
facebook.com/keywesttours
Conch Tour Train

Eventful Months

by Suzanne Egle; Head Engineer

January signals a new year and quite a few exciting doings in Key West. Our annual holiday HTA cast member party was once again held at El Meson de Pepe, a fabulous venue in the heart of Mallory Square with authentic Cuban cuisine and ambiance. Party goers danced under the stars to salsa and merengue music by Caribe, a popular Key West Latin band. Casino tables provided fun entertainment, and plenty of savory food was offered. It was fun to get dressed up for a change in a normally very casual Key West!

On New Year’s Eve the Annual Dachshund Parade was a delight for spectators and participants as proud dog owners showed off their cute, costumed pets.

On January 22, 2012, Key West celebrated the centennial anniversary of Henry Flagler’s completion of the Overseas Railway Extension from the mainland of Florida to Key West. A parade replete with authentic-looking characters (including Henry himself!), dressed in their 1912’s finery, started at Truman Annex, made its way down Duval St. and ended at the steps of the Custom House. A fantastic fireworks display was a spectacular end to a very exciting celebration.

A high honor was conferred on our very own St. Mary Star of the Sea Catholic Church in February. Pope Benedict XVI designated St. Mary a minor basilica in recognition of its spiritual and historical significance.

January through March is very busy again with the peak of the cruise ships coming to port almost daily. To accommodate our many Spanish-speaking cruise passengers on the Majestic, the Conch Train added a Spanish tour when it is in port, narrated by CTT driver Eduardo Silva. It has been very successful.

School Groups

by Tammy Osterhoudt; Group Sales Charter Department

Spring has sprung! School groups are here! As The Nation’s Storyteller, we operate tours and attractions in cities where American history happened, and they are “must sees” for school field trips. School groups are big business for all our charter departments, especially in the spring. However, there is no match for a school group coming to Key West! There is no way around it – we are hard to get to.

While we work directly with individual schools from all over the country, our biggest school group clients are Sunshine Educational Tours and Flamingo Educational tours, both headquartered in Ft. Lauderdale. On a regular basis, their groups make the bus journey from Fort Lauderdale – four hours up and back (each way) – in one day! With hotel rates being what they are in a resort destination, there is no overnighting here!

The planning sometimes takes place a year in advance. And, it’s not just the Old Town Trolley or Conch Tour Train tours we book. We book our attractions too, as well as other island attractions of interest to them. We coordinate their entire day – crammed-packed and fun-filled. With such a limited time on the island, they want to be sure they see everything. This is not a cookie-cutter group package: each group wants something of different, or a different combination things. We tailor their visits and tours to meet individual needs.

Timing is everything – and timing can be a challenge. Trying to have them experience as much as possible makes scheduling tight, and each attraction has different variables we have to consider. Then, there are the potty breaks and the lunch breaks … and the delays. Ohh, the delays. They cause havoc! Because the Keys have one road in and out, 150 miles of it, a fender-bender can cause major back-ups. When we get word of the delay, the juggling act begins! We are on the phone with all the tours and attractions on the schedule to adjust all the times. Glitches are the norm. Sometimes an attraction is not able to move the time slot as they have another group at that time. That means starting over, changing everything around to make it work.

Our goal is to put together a great and memorable Key West adventure for our school groups! We want them to leave exhausted, but happy. In the end, everyone will agree it’s been a great Key West visit and a great day, unless you’re on the bus trip home with them!
Roundhouse Revival

by Roberto Alvarenga; Maintenance

The Roundhouse here at the World Famous Conch Tour Train has been a hub of activity with the busy season upon us. Our mechanics Cezary, Stormy, Hank, Joe and Gabe strive to ensure that all our trains are operational and running strong with PM’s and QC’s, as well coming to the aide of our drivers in the field. Our fabricators Taj and Andrew are maintaining the integrity of the beauty of the Conch Train’s cars. This month, they are quite busy with a car’s restoration. And the trains would not sparkle daily without the work of our detailers Greg, Keith & Mike.

The Roundhouse itself has received a facelift. Our new go-to guy in building maintenance, Rick, has cleaned, painted, caulked the entire outside of the Roundhouse from top to bottom. Little did we know that mechanic Gabe is also known as Artist Gabe; his restoring of lettering and sign work that is hand-painted on the Roundhouse really makes the building a showcase for our trains to come home to.

Thanks to Heather, she is keeping our office and all of maintenance in order. We look forward to a successful spring and summer!

CASTmembers of the Month

JANUARY
Robert “Bob” Lutz, Engineer
Matthew Puppich, Sales Rep.
Sabrina Johnson, Supporting

FEBRUARY
Robert “Bob” Lutz, Engineer
Tomi Hutton, Sales Rep.
Gail Sibley, Supporting

MARCH
Tommy DeFrancesco, Engineer
Christian Marinona, Sales Rep.
Robert ‘Stormy’ McCall, Supporting

Fun Photos!

Piper Smith and Linda Test recently attended the Florida Attractions Association’s Southeast Regional Forum in Miami. Pictured with them is Bill Lupfer, President and CEO of the Florida Attractions Association and Kim Long, of Fantasy of Flight who is the current chairman of the Board. The event was held at the Miami Children’s Museum and topics included the association’s lobbying efforts on behalf of the attractions industry, a social marketing presentation by Visit Florida and general business discussion by the members representing Miami Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe Counties.

Twitter: @conchtourtrain
Facebook: facebook.com/conchtrain
ON THE SPOT... Ron Maranian

Engineer, Conch Tour Train

I was born in Washington, D.C. to Armenian parents on May 25, 1945. We lived just up the street from the White House. My ruling planet is Mercury; I was driven home from the hospital in a 1945 Mercury. Coincidence? Maybe. Maybe not. Two months after I was born, WWII ended. Coincidence? Maybe. Maybe not.

My journey in life has taken me to many places. I have lived in New York City; Cape May, New Jersey; Topanga Canyon and Beverly Hills, California; Denver, Colorado, and now Key West. I have been coming to Key West since 1973. I used to see the Conch Train traveling through the streets of Key West and always thought it would be a fun job. Over 30 years later, I moved here permanently and decided to apply as a driver for the Conch Train, even though there was no opening for a driver. Bill McIntire interviewed me anyway, took a chance on me, and I was hired on April 24, 2011.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?
First comedian to perform at The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. Former president of the American Federation of Comedians. “Ron Maranian’s Comedy Sandwich on Rye,” a two-hour special on WPBT, Miami, FL. Bob Dylan saying, “You were funny; you made me laugh.” Getting hired by Bill McIntire at HTA.

What is your most treasured possession?
My son and daughter and my two grandkids.

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Aspen, Colorado

If you could choose one reality TV show to be on, what would it be?
Celebrity Apprentice

What is your greatest fear?
Being arrested for flying a kite in Washington, DC. Don’t laugh, it has happened. A number of years ago, I really was arrested for flying a kite; little did I know there was a hundred year old law, which made kite flying illegal in Washington, D.C. I threw myself on the mercy of the court, admitted I was a kite junkie and asked to be sent someplace where there was no wind. The non-tragic details will be in my memoir, “Falling on your face is still moving forward.” (By the way, the law has since been changed.)

Silver Palms Inn
by Cheryl Actor, Director of Account Sales

Key West’s newest boutique hotel, the Silver Palms Inn, is located in Old Town, at 830 Truman Avenue, a few short blocks from Duval Street.

The new guestrooms and suites are lovely. Tastefully furnished, their contemporary simplicity creates a restful, spa-like ambience. A warm earth palette, accented by aqua and green with crisp white plantation shutters gives them a pleasant island atmosphere. Each room includes a small private balcony – the perfect place to enjoy the island’s soft tropical breeze, coffee or cocktail in hand. The pool in the central courtyard is dotted with aqua umbrellas and offers a pleasant escape from the bustle of Old Town.

Committed to our environment, Silver Palms Inn is a certified Green Lodging Facility, offering the highest quality green products and services....

The pleasant atmosphere of the hotel is felt immediately upon entering the lobby. The friendly front desk staff makes each guest feel welcome. They are helpful, courteous and knowledgeable. A big thank you to Elena, Tejas, Slava, Kelvin (all pictured), Peter, Anvar and KP (not pictured). All have been enthusiastically selling Old Town Trolley e-tickets since April 2011. Great job! Keep up the impressive sales!
Famous Faces
Ellen Russell Mallory
1792-1855

Ellen Russell Mallory was one of the first women pioneers of Key West and an inspiring example of the capable and enduring pioneer women who helped build Key West and our nation.

She was born in 1792 in a tiny village near Waterford, Ireland. At the young age of 13 years old she was orphaned and sent to live with her two uncles on the Caribbean island of Trinidad. By the age of 16 she had met and married Charles John Mallory, a Connecticut construction engineer. They had two sons, John and Stephen and moved to the United States in 1820. Due to her husband’s failing health, they moved to Key West for the warmer climate in December of 1823.

At the time, Key West was inhabited by fishermen and pirates, and she was one of the few white women living there. Once in Key West, Charles opened a grog shop, and she went to work at the naval hospital. Charles health continued to deteriorate, and he succumbed to consumption in 1825. Their oldest son, John died a few years later at 14 years of age.

After her husband and son died, in order to earn a living, Ellen opened a boarding house, “Coconut Grove,” which became the center of social life and hospitality in Key West. As the town’s nurse, Ellen was untriring in her care for the sick and infirmed who had contracted yellow fever, a deadly, contagious disease of unknown origin. She was a devout Catholic and self-less mother who used her meager earnings from the boarding house to send her only son, Stephen, to school in Pennsylvania. Ellen lived to see her son become a successful lawyer, U.S. Senator and Secretary of the Navy of the Confederate States of America. Mallory Square, the heart of Key West sunset celebrations and commerce, is named after Stephen Mallory.

Ellen was a kind and gentle woman who was well respected for running a successful business at a time when women were “not allowed” to work outside the home. For 32 years, she gave unselfishly to her beloved city and fellow human beings. When she died on May 15, 1885, the town of Key West closed the stores along the funeral procession route and most of the citizenry followed behind her coffin to the cemetery in a spontaneous and fitting tribute to the “First Lady of Key West.”

Welcome Aboard

William Averyt, Jr.
James Mira
Erik Reighard
Christopher Casto
Yuleisa Cordova
John Schafer
Eric Graham
Nancy Honeywell
Barbara Baxter
Jorden Moorehead
Odalyz Zuaznabar
Daniel Marvin

Happy Anniversary

December
Robert Wolz, 26 Years
Clinton Curry, 13 Years
Mihail Mihailow, 7 Years
Kathleen Kennard, 3 Years
Joseph Martinez, 2 Years
Frank Bumstead, 1 Year
Brooke Bowesox, 1 Year
Wayne Galloway Jr., 1 Year
William Averyt Jr., 1 Year
Rene LaPierra, 1 Year

January
Barbara Benner, 8 Years
Delores Boyle, 6 Years
Pavel Theinert, 6 Years
Galyna Myakushak, 3 Years
Marie Sheets, 2 Years
Tudor Cojusnean, 2 Years
Julie Cunningham, 2 Years
Sherry Wright, 2 Years
Betsy McDearmon, 1 Year

February
Irina Bakala, 11 Years
Natalia Trostianskaya, 6 Years
Tanya Azevedo, 4 Years

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Washington, DC

Same Guy, Did You Know?
by Abe Burgos; Charter Representative

People ask me pretty much on a daily basis, “Abe, can I book a trolley?” Or they may ask, “Abe, can I book a Duck?” But never does anyone ask “Abe, can I give you a back massage?” Well, the first two questions are what I’ve been fielding for the past few months. Charter business is booming faster than spaceship carrying Angelina Jolie to my heart...in other words, we’ve been busy.

Did you know? In February, Group sales was up 226%? 226%! No wonder I won the Most Awesomest Cast Member award. Actually I can’t take all of the credit. About 40% of that was repeat business. It lets us know that we have the best tour product this side of the Rio Grande...no offense St Augustine, Boston, Key West and Savannah.

Did you know? In March starts the 100 year Cherry Blossom Festival. In 1912 the nation of Japan gave us a gift of 3,000 cherry blossom trees. The average bloom is about 7-10 days. But in 2008, they were in bloom for 15 days! Can you believe it? 15 days. That’s the average time I go between haircuts.

Did you know? The average peak date is April 2. The peak this year is March 22-25. That means 80% of the Cherry Blossom Trees will be in full bloom at the same time. Although in most of the country the start of baseball season is the beginning of spring, the start of the Cherry Blossom Festival is our beginning of spring. We have to keep our minds off of the Washington Nationals this time of year. Usually they are full of hope and promise and let us down in the 8th inning. Unlike the Cherry Blossoms. They never let us down.

Did you know? More people check Facebook in the morning than the morning paper. Actually this is a stat I made up. I’m not sure this is even true. But you know what they say about stats. 42% of all stats are made up. I just want to bring it to your attention that we have the most number of Facebook fans of all HTA. Just wanted to let Key West aware of that. We have them beat by three fans as I type this. That’s the average time I go between haircuts.

Did you know? In May starts the 100 year Baseball season. In 1878 the first baseball season was held. The same year Washington Nationals started. As I sit and try to think of what to write that is different than the last story, I realize it’s the same old same old. Things break, we fix. Things go boom, we investigate. But who are we? So I thought I would focus more on not what we do, but who we are. We are going into this season with a great staff of Maintenance CASTmembers, but two really stick out as extraordinary.

Meet Keith and Mike!
by Malcom Barton; Maintenance Manager

As I sit and try to think of what to write that is different than the last story, I realize it’s the same old same old. Things break, we fix. Things go boom, we investigate. But who are we? So I thought I would focus more on not what we do, but who we are. We are going into this season with a great staff of Maintenance CASTmembers, but two really stick out as extraordinary.

Keith Gober

Allow me to introduce you to Keith Gober. He has been with us for two years off and on and grew up in San Diego. Why is he a mechanic? It just seems to be easy for Keith. Ever since he was in high school through UTI learning about Diesel Technology and Dunbar Armor as a mechanic, Keith has enjoyed learning more about his craft. After only his short time, he’s already the back up lead foreman fixing difficult things such as air conditioning units in our diesel buses to basic daily discrepancies. His leadership amongst the other staff members, calmness under pressure, and his demeanor has proven to be an asset. I can’t think of a single job I can’t put him on.

Mechanics are only as good as those who assist them. We are a full team, and one of our most valuable helpers is Michael Overly. He’s been here a total of nine years and started as a cleaner/fueler. Since then he has gotten his CDL, a set of tools, and is already learning how to rebuild fuel systems. The great thing about Mike is that I only need to ever show him something once. After that, he’s on his own installing a new transmission. In five years, I see him being able to become a lead mechanic.

If Old Town Trolley was a person, the maintenance department would be the legs. We keep things running. Without Keith and Mike, we would still make it to the finish line, but we would be limping all the way there.

Focusing on Safety
by Larry Warren; DC Ducks Operations Manager

Responding to a new mandate from the U.S. Coast Guard that required stability testing for each of the six DC Ducks, as well as for most other passenger vessels in the nation, the Washington crew embarked on an intense two-week campaign to improve the vessels in time for the beginning of the 2012 season.

All openings along the upper portions of the Ducks were sealed shut, and pipes that run from bilge pumps were raised at least six inches. While that does not sound like much, it gives the Ducks a significant advantage during stability testing, when eight 55-gallon drums of water, 12 cement blocks and thirty-two 50-pound bags of sand all are loaded onto one side, causing the 31-foot boats to lean toward that side, which might result in an unsafe situation.

“We are sure the changes we made will absolutely ensure the safety of our passengers and captains,” for years to come, said Capt. Larry Warren. “We believe our operation already was safer than any
of its kind in the nation. Now we have gone a step beyond, making our commitment to safety unquestionable, and without parallel in the United States.”

The steps taken by the DC Ducks should result in a final determination by the Coast Guard that the capacity of each Duck will remain at 29, including the captain of each.

Coming into Season
by Eric Holmes, Operations Manager

We can see the light at the end of the tunnel. This is a very busy time of year for us. Although we are in our slower season as far as ridership is concerned, we are still very busy. Hiring and training new CASTmembers has been our focus. We are preparing for the last stand of our 2011 – 2012 campaign. We have manage to find and hire a few new conductor trainees that we believe will make wonderful additions to our CAST. Welcome aboard to Ross Adelson, Alaina Altair, Phil Beckman, James Brady, Eric Chapman, Barry Dequenne, Donald Holman, Marilyn Mapp, and Keldon McFarland. Training is underway and we look forward to their anticipate contributions to our CAST.

In other trolley news, the Cherry Blossom Festival will be celebrating 100 years of the Gift of Trees. Because this wonderful celebration will last for five weeks, and the Easter and spring breaks fall in the same five week period we are looking forward to ending our season with a bang. The CAST is working hard to prepare for the thousands of potential guests. Much to our surprise, in the midst of preparations we have seen an increase in ridership over the past few months. This February has been the best on record since 2007.

Nothing can stop us now. Well maybe a 3K, 5K, or a 10K race? How about a parade, a marathon, or a triathlon? No, not even the Presidential motorcade will stop us from bringing history alive for all who trust their transportainment needs to “Washington's Best Tour”.

Safety First!
by Tom St. Clair, Safety Officer

Being the new Safety Officer for the Washington DC Old Town Trolley Tours is a challenging job to say the most. Luckily our former Safety Officer Abe is still here and helps me to take on this responsibility. One of the good things that have helped me learn this job is that I’ve been the Safety NCOIC at my Air Force Unit at Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland.

I must say this is a little different than the Air Force because I’m working with all of these conductors and maintenance. And you can’t forget working with many more guests who come to Washington DC to see our city and take our tours. Luckily I only have to see most of these people when there’s a problem.

We have 34 full time drivers and 10 part time drivers. On an average month, we will drive 36,000 miles. With a population of about 573,059 and even more visitors driving here, that can be a challenge onto itself. We also have nine new trainees who have to also learn about driving here in DC and put up with the taxi cabs.

Lucky for me, my training did not start in the middle of our season so I did not have to jump from the frying pan into the fire. March 20 through April 27 will be the National Cherry Blossom Festival. It will be five weeks this year and we are expecting over one million visitors just for the first two weeks of the festival. With more luck and having some of the best drivers in the city we will not have a problem being safe.

Depot Sales
by Teresa Butts, Depot Sales Manager

As Cherry Blossom approaches, the sales team is gearing up for what we hope will be a very busy season. The team is ready, willing and able to handle it with flying colors. Everyone is rather tired of the slow pace of the winter and ready to go full speed ahead. Even though the off season is slow, the sales team met their goals for November, December, and January. Suly Cruz was our sales representative of the month for both December and January. In February, one of our newer ticket sellers, Johnny Del Rosario, was our sales rep of the month, just squeaking by William “BJ” Whiteside. They competed until the last hours of the last day. Also noteworthy, in February all of the full time ticket sellers were above 100% of their goals for the month! Way to go team!

DC by Moonlight
Mike Goggin, Night Operations Manager

Since late September 2011, the Monuments by Moonlight tour has been making a new stop. It’s a chance for our guests to see two memorials at one time just off Ohio Drive on the banks of the Potomac River. The memorials honor two outstanding 20th century leaders – President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Roosevelt served as our nation’s 32nd President during the years 1933-45. He was elected to four consecutive terms and saw the United States through crises ranging from the Great Depression to the Second World War before dying in office at the beginning of his 4th term. His memorial is divided into four exterior chambers to commemorate his longevity in office. There is also a statue of Eleanor Roosevelt on the grounds of the memorial. It is the only statue in Washington that honors a First Lady.

Dr. King was the leading civil rights leader of the 20th century before an assassin’s bullet claimed his life in Memphis on April 4, 1968. His memorial is intentionally positioned between the Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. It was from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial that King made his most famous speech on August 28, 1963. In that “I Have a Dream” speech, he quoted Thomas Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence in saying, “we hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [sic] are created equal.” In that same speech, King prayed that “with this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.” The architect of the memorial brings those words to mind in designing a massive “mountain of despair” as one of two prominent stones that make up the compact memorial. The other stone is thrust forward from it. That is the “stone of hope,” and
from that stone is chiseled a thirty foot tall relief of Dr. King himself gazing out upon the Tidal Basin.

The memorial to Dr. King is D.C.’s newest attraction. It opened to residents of the capital city on August 22, 2011 and was scheduled to be dedicated on the 48th anniversary of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on August 28. However, the threat of a hurricane forced the dedication to be pushed back to mid-October. Since that time, thousands of visitors have flocked to the new memorial, many of them aboard our Monuments by Moonlight trolleys. Come and experience it for yourselves!

With Cherry Blossom season upon us, a few of our daytime drivers are in the process of being certified to conduct night tours as well. This consists of learning the script and the route, which are both distinct from our day tour, and then personalizing the tour so that each driver makes it his or her own. We look forward to certifying two to four new drivers for the night tour this spring to help us keep up with the demand for the tour, which remains extremely popular.

CAST members of the Month

SEPTEMBER
Rob Gibson, Conductor
Arthur Chu, Sales Rep.

OCTOBER
Stephen O’Brien, Conductor
William Whiteside, Sales Rep.

NOVEMBER
Rob Gibson, Conductor
Anthony Sadler, Sales Rep.

DECEMBER
Michael Rehn, 8 Years
Howard Winfield, 7 Years
Elene Williams, 4 Years
Ronald Dickson, 4 Years
Walter King Jr., 2 Years
William Ruddick, 2 Years
Robert Taylor 1 Year
Tanya Monique Byers, 1 Year

JANUARY
Jose Melgar, 12 Years
Jason Kelin, 10 Years
Stephen Martin, 9 Years
Elton Smith, 7 Years
Nazha Salhi, 7 Years
Mona Lisa Hooks, 6 Years
Thomas St. Clair, 5 Years
Robert Gilson, 2 Years
Wallace Boyd, 2 Years
John Jackowiak, 1 Year
Matthew Henika, 1 Year

FEBRUARY
Eric Holmes, 16 Years
Abraham Burgos, 12 Years
Laurence Warren, 11 Years
Stephen O’Brien, 7 Years
Kent Thomas, 7 Years
Ryland Jones, 6 Years
Michael Hart, 5 Years
Robert Ray Jr., 5 Years
Debra Budd, 5 Years
Arlene Holder, 4 Years
Frank Santacroce, 4 Years
Jorge Bernardo, 4 Years
Andres Trujillo, 2 Years
Darin Delrosario, 2 Years
Alexander Caron-Schuler, 1 Year
Robert Santucci, 1 Year
Colin McLaren, 1 Year
Adam Johnson, 1 Year

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facebook.com/washingtontours
The Gator Bowl Parade

by David Chatterton; General Manager

Our ghastly ghouls traveled to Jacksonville on New Year’s Eve to take part in the Gator Bowl Parade. Every year the Gator Bowl brings thousands of people to watch the two teams play on New Year’s Day. This year, however, New Year’s Day fell on a Sunday, so the Ohio State Buckeyes and the Florida Gators (Go Gators!) played on January 2nd. But the parade still took place, as always, on New Year’s Eve.

This highly attended event gives us a chance to really put ourselves out there and interact with our fans. And yes they are definitely our fans! Our Ghosts & Gravestones vehicle and CAST members are a favorite among the crowd every year. Chris Kiamil, Vanessa Ziegler, and William McComb walked alongside the vehicle and handed out buy-one-get-one free coupons to the crowd. This event helps bring more and more people to St. Augustine every year to experience the exciting frights of the city and the Old Jail.

In the Trolley World

by Savannah Brewer; Operations Manager

With the holidays finally behind us, St. Augustine has found time for rest and reflection. Mostly rest. Every year from Thanksgiving to the 31st of January, the city of St. Augustine lights our fair city with 2.5 million Christmas lights. The Nights of Lights celebration is one of the biggest city events of the year and one of OTT St. Augustine busiest times. This year the wait time for boarding stretched for nearly an hour at some points but our guests were raring to go once they got on board!

Helping us out with the ridership this year was an article in National Geographic Magazine that named St. Augustine one of the top 10 most beautiful cities in THE WORLD for viewing Christmas lights! As soon as that article came out, the guests started pouring in. A great big Thank You to all our CASTmembers who worked so hard to make the season a success!

The Beach Blast

Every year the city of St. Augustine coordinates an extraordinary party for New Year’s Eve at the St. Augustine Beach Pier. This family-friendly event gives everyone in the city the opportunity to ring in the New Year with their families in a fun and safe environment with food, dunking booths, a kid zone with bounce house, and fireworks.

This year, we were contacted to provide transportation from the Holiday Isle to the pier. We also sent Jessie Bailey and Erica Jones, two of our ticket sellers, out to sign up more locals for the Hometown Pass. They were equipped with a prize wheel that people could spin after signing up. The prizes consisted of free tickets, magnets, and more. While decked out in festive attire, Erica and Jessie recruited another 75 Hometown Pass holders!

Museums

by Amy Mackay; Museum Manager

Costume upgrades have arrived for the St. Augustine History Museum school program. Our guides now dress as 1770s Spanish colonists to lead our school groups through the museum. Our timeline of history covers a thousand years worth of history in 45 minutes. Museum highlights include the Timucuan Native American display, the fascinating artifacts from the age of Spanish exploration, our exhibit on pioneer Florida “crackers”, and Flagler’s railroad display. Guests love the guides in their new costumes!

By the beginning of February, there was no doubt that we were officially in school season. Because the Florida public school system covers Florida history in the 4th grade, we are inundated with 4th-graders each year. They seem to descend like locusts – and they are everywhere! They are also our favorite audiences in all our Museums, because they are so enthusiastic and ready to learn. They are fascinated by everything we have to offer, from high-wheeled bicycles to maximum-security jail cells to thousand-year-old canoes.
As our city keeps the lights on until January 31st, a few years ago we came up with a unique tour to see the lights during the month of January. The Rockin’ New Year’s Trolley bops through the streets every Friday and Saturday night with a T-Bird at the wheel and Pink Lady leading the crowd in popular dances and songs from decades past. This year we saw an update to our song list, as our 80’s selection changed from “Footloose” to “Ghostbusters.” Our guests had a blast and folks on the sidewalks stopped to stare as our musical journey made its way through the Nation’s Oldest City.

Chocolate...cocoa...truffles...ganache... and so many other yummy goodies. The St. Augustine Chocolate Tour debuted for its third year in January and ran every Saturday until the end of February. With Chef Bonbon at the helm and Driver’s Cocoa Puff and Cream Puff behind the wheel, our guests were off on a two-hour tour through the history and development of chocolate. All of our partners returned for another year, making this year a roaring success! Thank you to Peterbrooke, Whetstones, the Raintree Restaurant, the Hilton Bayfront and Claudes Chocolates.

ON THE SPOT...

Jesse Skelton
Facilities Assistant, Old Town Trolley Tours of St. Augustine

I’m from a town south of Chicago called Champaign. We moved to Florida 32 years ago, and have been here ever since. Before moving to St. Augustine, we lived in a small town called Welaka for a few years. I have 20 years in the construction industry, which is what brought me to Old Town Trolley. In my spare time, I enjoy hanging out with friends and family. I’m an avid shooter, so a lot of my time is spent on the range. I also love spending time in the woods, teaching my dog Kidd.

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Elbow Key in the Bahamas

Who is your favorite hero of fiction?
William Munny

Who are your favorite writers?
My favorite writers are Sun Tzu, Stephen King, and Edgar Allan Poe

Which living person do you most admire?
My mom.

What do you value most in your friends?
Being honest.
Top Row Left to Right; Amy Mackay (Museum Manager), Rob Moore (Maintenance Manager), Steve Everett (Safety Officer), Vince Leone (AR/AP Manager), Noble Lester (Ghosts & Gravestones Manager)

Bottom Row Left to Right; Melissa Mezick (Vendor Representative), Savannah Brewer (Operations Manager) Dave Chatterton (General Manager), Terry Akras (Head Sales Representative), Michelle LaRocco (Charter Representative) Joyce Pease (Human Resource Manager) Danny Green (Scary Deputy)
Bayfront Westcott House Bed and Breakfast Inn

by Melissa Mezick; Vendor Department

Old Town Trolley is honored to have the Bayfront Westcott House Bed & Breakfast Inn as Vendor of the Quarter. Owners Joy and Andrew and the complete staff bring the highest quality of first class service to all their guests. The Westcott is located on St Augustine’s Bayfront and offers the most spectacular views of the water morning, noon and night.

This is the motto the Bayfront Westcott House Bed and Breakfast Inn lives by “Ask and You Shall Receive!”

At Bayfront Westcott House Bed and Breakfast Inn, the owners and their staff put the vitality to the hospitality. They claim to coordinate your every wish and spoil you every second, and they really do! That hospitality high is compliments of inn owners Joy and Andrew Warren. Both England borne, the Warrens ventured to the United States 40+ years ago. They spent many years in the Southern California hotels and hospitality business–Andrew with Preferred Hotels® and then his own company, Woodbridge Hotels Inc., and Joy as director of catering at Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina. St. Augustine’s Westcott House has been their “home” since spring 2009, and they have since showered thousands of guests with that earlier-eluded-to hospitality.

Westcott House, located on Avenida Menendez, was built in 1880 as a private residence for Dr. John Westcott who was well known for his prominent military career, his interests in transportation and politics, and his research efforts in the cause and cure of yellow fever. He was a land surveyor for the St. Johns Railroad (whose tracks spread from the San Sebastian River to Tocoi) and was a heavy hitter in the development of the Intracoastal Waterway that links the St. Johns River to Miami.

The house changed hands a few times over the years and saw its fair share of soirées amongst St. Augustine’s elite. In the 1970s, it was converted into a guest house and has been entertaining tourists and travelers ever since! Today, Bayfront Westcott House is a 16-room, full-service bed and breakfast. When you check in, you’ll be greeted by a sign that says, Ask and you shall receive! (and likely Joy, herself, will ensure you get it!).

Every room has a private entrance. Most rooms have a Jacuzzi tub, electric fireplace, and outdoor sitting area.

Early risers experience a tangible slice of Heaven when they grab some coffee and take in the bayfront sunrise, with all the sights and sounds associated. Each morning, there is a signature hot entrée and many scrumptious extras (served indoors and out). Complimentary coffee, tea, hot chocolate, soda, and water are available throughout the day, and there is always some sort of sweet treat available in the dining room. A fantastic spread of hors d’oeuvres is presented each evening. The exclusive (and popular) Fact or Folklore social hour happens every Monday and Wednesday from 6-7 pm and is hosted by a professional story teller from the Spanish Military Hospital. Guests enjoy hearing stories of St. Augustine’s colorful past (that they likely won’t hear elsewhere) and decide for themselves whether fact or fiction.

If you decide to actually leave the inn and explore town, you’re but a short walk away from all that the historic district has to offer—breathtaking architecture and historic landmarks, museums and art galleries, quaint and eclectic little shops, dozens of restaurants and street-side cafes, and so much more! Lovers will find evening romance while sitting on the seawall in front of the Inn, feet dangling over to the water’s edge, listening to the sounds of the current (and the occasional cough coming from one of the bay-slip boats), with the moon and stars above, distracted only by that dim, patterned beam emanating from the Lighthouse across the way. So if you’re already in St. Augustine, be sure to stop by Bayfront Westcott House B&B Inn and introduce yourself; otherwise, give them a call at 904.825.4602 or visit them online at www.westcotthouse.com.

PET OF THE MONTH

MUFA SA

By: Proud Owner Noble Lester
Ghosts & Gravestones Manager

This is Mufasa, named by my wife, who obviously has a sense of humor. A Chihuahua and Italian Greyhound mix, he is the fastest and smartest animal around, with a mind of his own. He is so convinced of his own good looks that he actually poses for the camera. Mufasa has come to expect his Christmas gifts – he looks through the pile to find his. He is our best friend, and he has embraced our whole family, including my son’s young family.

The Bayfront Westcott House Bed and Breakfast.
Middle photo is of the Menendez Room.
The start of 2012, like all “New Years” is a bit odd for us, since we all remain supremely focused on the start of our HTA/OTT new year in April. Regardless, the first quarter of 2012 has started with a trend that gives us cause for optimism. We concluded 2011 with a very strong finish for our Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley Tour for (up 67% over 2010). This tour included for the first time a trip over the bridge to visit the Westin Savannah Harbor Resort for a view of their Gingerbread Village, their Trees of Life display and a visit from Santa or one of his crew to tell the stories of good ol’ St. Nick. By all accounts, it was a great success. We parlayed this into a good trend for January and February ridership overall, a strong recruitment and training period for our new conductor class, a great “post” holiday party and the launch of a newly improved Paula Deen Tour featuring exclusive tour company access to the Lady & Son’s Restaurant, dinner and a fun-filled theatrical show to compliment the excellent cuisine. We also welcomed a great new vendor, the Hampton Inn on Bay Street, which joins its sister property the Holiday Inn Express and will in no time be producing as well, if not better than this, our #1 vendor in Savannah. I made it through another budget preparation season, culminating in a smooth budget presentation, and we worked hard to prepare ourselves for what looks to be a great season ahead. Thanks to the terrific CAST here at Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah for making such hard work look so effortless and fun. We look forward to hosting all our guests in 2012-13. Come on down to where the tea is always sweet and the hospitality always warm. Everything’s better in Savannah!

Changes in Seasons

by Garry Patrick, Depot Sales Manager

Savannah has experienced an incredibly mild winter this season and as a result we have been able to generate considerable growth over last year’s numbers. I take great pride in our sales team’s discipline and consistency, plus their ability to keep a smile on their faces day in, day out. I’m confident 2012 is going to be a record year for Savannah.

Over the off season we have been working hard on new attractions and tours in preparation for the coming year. Late February saw the start of our new Paula Deen tour. An exciting new revised tour where we have exclusive access to Paul Deen’s Restaurant, Lady and Sons, on the tour! Our guests also receive her “rags to riches” tour and a Dinner Show. This exciting product is shaping up as a BIG draw card because guests can avoid the ridiculously long lines at Lady and Sons at lunch or dinner by taking our tour. Thus freeing up more time for them to enjoy our On/Off Day Tour of Savannah or a Ghost Tour! We also have a pirate ship coming to town but I will talk more about that next issue.

We stand ready for the season with our veteran sales team and we would like to extend a warm welcome to new and
returning sales staff Petya, Tony, Lionel, Tim, Wade and Dennis.

Seeing Green
by Marcie Covington-Larkin, Ops. Manager

Green, Green and more Green!

With the combination of the 100th Anniversary of the Girls Scouts and St. Patrick’s Day all happening within the same week, Savannah is seeing nothing but green. With record crowds expected this year, the St. Patrick’s parade could surpass New York City’s in its number of units and participants. That would make it the largest St. Patrick’s Day parade in the world. For years and years, it’s always been said that New York’s was the largest. Move over, New York City. Savannah’s St. Patrick’s Day parade is marching through.

We are expecting over 15,000 people to be marching, over 60 different bands and numerous military branches. We’ll have the 3rd ID, the Rangers, Marines, Navy and Coast Guard, including the admiral from our district of the Coast Guard, all participating in the parade. According to the estimates I’m hearing, a million people will be in town over the weekend. Unfortunately, St. Patrick’s Day is the only day that Old Town Trolley of Savannah is closed. You can barely walk the streets during this time, so it would be impossible to maneuver a trolley safely through the streets. Our CAST will be sitting around the greened fountains in the squares, enjoying the festivities.

The Girl Scouts will celebrate their centennial with a sunrise service, followed by a walk over the Talmadge Bridge. They will continue their celebration in Forsyth Park for the remainder of the day.

We are all looking forward to record numbers this year and I can’t wait to hear “Goal Buster,” being celebrated every morning in briefing.

Accident Decrease
by Kenny Gresham, Safety Officer

Our spring class began Jan. 31 with nine willing participants. Seven brand spanking new and two transfers from our G&G Tour. At this writing, six have passed their CDL road tests which is quite an achievement, due to the fact that the test site is ninety miles away. The one in Savannah closed for awhile and has just recently restarted, but the testers haven’t been certified to test for the passenger endorsement. Our training program may not be many things, but it is flexible. The city tour guide test presents another hoop. One can study the history of our city and know it thoroughly, but if the dreaded “C” test surfaces, all bets are off. This version of the test (there are four separate tests) is kept under lock and key, rarely presented, and only used when the tester believes that the testee needs to gain some form of humility. It works. It asks questions like, “The museum has all of these things but --------” Answer – a dugout canoe. Does the museum have the London Bridge? Does it have a model T? Next question – “What is the aisle number where bread is located at Kroger?” Come on! “Who founded the colony and when.” Let’s get real, city. But I digress.

The class is coming along fine. The G&G transfers were recently loop certified by Charlie and of course, were immediately thrown into the loop. They didn’t sink. They have a couple years of safe driving experience behind them. Speaking of safety, as we begin each practice loop for script training, the starting point is our mirror check station. Set the trolley mirrors correctly and use them. Over and over, we stress this. When I’d been a safety officer for a couple of years, it suddenly dawned on me that with right rear accidents, we were hitting things behind us as we were pulling forward. How do you strike something behind you when you’re not backing up? This doesn’t make sense. After much deliberation, I concluded that if one wasn’t checking one’s mirrors and turned sharply to the left, their might be a subtle tail swing to the right that could possibly strike a parked vehicle causing damage. An epiphany!! This is the lesson we’re trying to convey to the new drivers and maybe some of the veterans that could use a little refocusing. We are rededicating safety in Savannah!
Vendor Department

by Robert “The Colonel” Hunter, Vendor Representative

Savannah is really coming alive with flowers blooming and the tourist visiting. Our Vendor Department is really growing. With Saint Patrick’s Day in March we delivered “Savannah’s official to go cup” – Thanks to Ally, a conductor, for making my very cute outfit. Big things are coming our way!

Jet Setting

by Joyce Ellis, Groups and Charters

Hello from Savannah! It’s been a busy few months in Savannah’s groups/charters dept. Savannah celebrated Martin Luther King’s Birthday with one of the South’s largest parades. Savannah had over 400 units in the parade, with OTT-SAV supplying 13 trolleys! In February, Joyce and her team traveled to NC with VisitSavannah for a sales mission that would cover two states (NC-SC), 120 appointments, five days and many miles on a rental car! Groups have already been booked, more to come! Very successful sales mission.

Joyce was home long enough to switch suitcases and fly to Louisville, KY for Travel South Showcase. Travel South focuses on the 11 southern states from Arkansas to KY and all points in between. She had approx 40 set appointments with a lot of “meet and greets” on the fly, answered questions about Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah as well as referred business to Washington, DC; St. Augustine and Key West, FL. Again, a very successful Travel South Showcase with business booked for Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah.

Whew, and if that wasn’t enough…..once again, home less than 24 hours and Joyce is meeting Girl Scouts from San Jacinto Council, Houston TX. We celebrated the 100th Anniversary of Girl Scouts on March 12th. We started the festivities with a Bridge Walk over the Talmadge Bridge (3-5 miles from beginning to end, depending on where you started!) Old Town Trolley provided transportation and later provided trolleys and tour guides for our GS Discover Savannah tours, thanks to Joann Harris, Ally Marshall and Cindy Cantrell. We participated in the festivities at Forsyth Park; the sunrise services on Monday, March 12th as well as the wreath laying ceremony at Laurel Grove Cemetery. Joyce had the pleasure to meet and have her photo taken with Anna Maria Chavez, CEO for the Girl Scouts of the USA; as well as Dick Platt, great nephew of Juliette Gordon Low.

Now, paint the town a different shade of Green........as soon as most of the Girl Scouts left on Thursday, March 15th, we started the influx of 600,000 – 1 million guests coming into Savannah for the 2nd largest St. Patrick’s Day in the United States. Estimates vary, we don’t have final count as of this writing, but it sure felt like 1 million plus guests were in town!

Did we mention the American Cruise Lines has started their spring tours from Charleston to Amelia Island? Spring has sprung and once again we are ready or not, guests are coming to the beautiful, sunny Savannah, where the tea is always sweet and the hospitality is always warm, especially at Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah. Ya’ ll come on in, ya’ hear!

Gastonian Inn and the Kehoe House

by Bob “Colonel” Hunter; Vendor Department

This month our featured vendor is the Gastonian Inn and the Kehoe House – they are one of our outstanding vendors –

Experience the true ambiance of historic Savannah by staying in two luxurious, grand Savannah mansions: the Gastonian and The Kehoe House. For visitors looking to experience the very heart of historic Savannah, these four-diamond B&Bs offer a unique setting that’s classic Savannah.

Both mansions were built in the late 1800s, and both have been meticulously restored and furnished with antiques and authentic décor. Both offer a delicious cooked-to-order breakfast, delectable hors d’oeuvres, tea and desserts. Both feature balconies off beautiful guest rooms, exquisite gardens, and are surrounded by the historical beauty and one-of-a-kind atmosphere of residential downtown Savannah.

The Gastonian is set on Gaston Street near Forsyth Park, and features a working fireplace in each of its 17 spectacular guest rooms. This inn was recently named among the Top 50 Small Hotels in the world in a Condé Nast Reader’s poll, and was selected by Food & Wine as one of the nation’s best Bed and Breakfast Inns.

Located adjacent to Columbia Square and next to the Davenport House museum, The Kehoe House is one of the finest and best-known historic inns in Savannah. An exquisitely restored 1892 Renaissance Revival mansion, this inn has been featured in Southern Living, Coastal Living and is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Integral to both inns’ classic Savannah atmosphere is the warm Southern hospitality that seems to flow effortlessly from the staff. From a genuine welcome and personal tour of the inn upon arrival to turned-down linens each evening, the staff is dedicated to making visitors feel like friends spending the evening together in these historic old homes.

While guests seem to luxuriate in time spent lounging in the private gardens or sipping a glass of wine in the parlor, a visit to Savannah isn’t complete without taking a tour of this illustrious city. Old Town Trolley is the tour company of choice for these award-winning inns, and the tours given range from over-views of Savannah to an evening look at its historic haunts.

To reserve a room or learn more about these inns, visit www.KehoeHouse.com and www.Gastonian.com.
ON THE SPOT...
Marcie Larkin
Operations Manager, Savannah

Being the Operations Manager in this amazing city is the best job I have ever had. I grew up about 20 miles outside of Savannah and I am the third of six children. The greatest joy and love of my life is my five wonderful children; the time and experiences we’ve shared are immeasurable. I enjoy meeting guests from all over the world and telling them all the great stories about our wonderful city.

As a former fire fighter on call for 24 hours at a time I was looking for a job that would allow me more time with my children. Savannah is a beautiful city and I am glad to be able to share it with others.

What three things will you always find in my refrigerator?
Apples, Yogurt, and Milk.

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?
I have a tendency to overextend myself. I always try to be there for everyone while not tending to my own needs.

Which talent would you most like to have?
Mind-reading.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
To be able to balance evenly work and home and to be able to more or less attend everything related to both my children and my CASTmembers.

What do you most value in your friends?
Honesty.
They would eventually grow apart and by would remain childless – most likely due London and Scotland. Daisy and Billow wealthy. They had homes in Savannah, often and socialized with the educated and "No!" saying that she never heard anyone tell her to worry, Daisy used it to her advantage, eventually lead to deafness in both ears. Not damaged. Frequent ear infections would as a result, Daisy’s hearing was permanently damaged. Frequent ear infections would eventually lead to deafness in both ears. Not to worry, Daisy used it to her advantage, saying that she never heard anyone tell her "No"!

Daisy and her husband “Billow” traveled often and socialized with the educated and wealthy. They had homes in Savannah, London and Scotland. Daisy and Billow would remain childless – most likely due to Daisy’s struggles with ovarian abscesses. They would eventually grow apart and by 1901 it was apparent the marriage was over. Billow requested a divorce, but died in 1905 before the divorce was finalized. Daisy would continue to travel the world, but she continued to yearn for a sense of purpose. In 1911, she had a chance meeting with Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scouts. The two shared a love of art and travel, and both shared common family backgrounds. They became instant friends, and started sharing ideas for the formation of a scouting troop for girls after Lord Baden-Powell told Daisy how 3,000 girls had tried to register as Boy Scouts by using their first initial and last name. She believed that all girls should be given the opportunity to develop physically, mentally and spiritually. With the goal of bringing girls out of isolated home environments and we’re going to start it tonight!” On March 12th, 1912, Daisy registered the first troop of Girl Guides, the first of the 18 girls to register was Margaret “Daisy Doots” Gordon, Daisy's niece and namesake. Renamed the Girl Scouts in 1913, Daisy would use her own money, (even selling her strand of pearls) and the resources of friends and family, to push the organization to new heights. After years of declining health, Daisy discovered she had breast cancer in 1923. She kept the diagnosis a secret as she continued her work with Girl Scouting, and her final mission to use the Girl Scouts as international ambassadors for peace. Daisy died in Savannah, GA on January 17th, 1927. She’s buried in her Girl Scout uniform in Laurel Grove Cemetery. Her friends honored her efforts by establishing the Juliette World Friendship Fund; the organization finances international projects for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides. Since her death, scouting has grown to over 3 million members and is widely considered the largest educational organization for girls in the world....and it all started with a phone call!
Happy New Year!

by David Thornton, General Manager

Historic Tours of America begins its fiscal new year on April 1st... so Happy New Year! As with the start of any year, the time to reflect on the prior year with an eye to the future becomes a natural process. I am so fortunate and grateful to work with such a wonderful group of CAST and Leadagers. They have great knowledge, history and insight into our business and San Diego, besides just being lots of fun. Thank you San Diego Team, you are a joy to work with!

We spent February and March in a number of extended conference calls with our Chief Operations Officer, Ed Swift IV, to discuss and develop the strategic plan for all of our business units in San Diego. Our formal budget tele-conference call review was held with the executive team in Key West, Florida. With the upcoming challenges ahead this year, we are optimistic and excited about our New Year business action plan. A big “Thank You” is due to the extended budget team both in the Leadagement and Executive CAST on both coasts. 2012 looks to be another great year for the Old Town Trolley family.

At our Embarcadero Harbor stop, we have combined our Trolley and SEAL stops into one location at the historical Star of India. We moved our Harbor Trolley stop and ticket booth while construction proceeds for the new Embarcadero redevelopment project over the next 18 months. The new waterfront construction will shape the future of San Diego by joining downtown and the bay. The plan will benefit the entire region, enhancing the bay’s appeal as a hub of activity.

At all of our other sales ticket depots, we have spruced up each depot with new signage, marketing posters, repainting and repairs, all ready for the new busy season.

We have been diligent to improve our service and enhance our guest’s vacation experience. Our results were positive resulting in a -44% decrease in refunds from 2008. The number one reason for refunds now: “Unable to take tour,” because of a lack of time. With so many great and wonderful things to do in San Diego, it’s a challenge to see and do it all.

This past year, we joined 10 other Old Town businesses in a San Diego TV campaign ad, promoting Old Town and Old Town Trolley Tours. Old Town Trolley’s ad focused on ‘Locals Ride Free’; our Hometown Pass program. San Diegans Ride FREE when accompanied by a full-paid adult guest. What a great way for locals to see the best of San Diego with out-of-town family and friends, free.

Though the upcoming year will be challenging, we are all excited and optimistic about our new business year in America’s finest city, San Diego.

Ridership

by Terri Zorn; Operations Manager

For the last quarter of our fiscal year, our trolley tours ridership did better and better as the months went by. In January we were 3% better than last year; in February, 10% better, and we are in-line to be almost 20% better in March for ridership! Thanks to a great end of year, we made our ridership goal for the entire year. Despite our year round mild climate, the months of Jan and Feb are still considered our winter season. Since we do not utilize all our trolleys every day during the winter, we have the ability to have our trolleys at local events to promote our Locals Ride Free Program, known as the Hometown Pass. We did this with our Whale Days Festival and a Health Fair for a local School District where our tour normally has no visibility. Our trolleys were also in some parades, including four trolleys in the San Diego Gaslamp Mardi Gras parade. Our off-season is also a time for us to catch up on paperwork. Even we, who spend vacation with our visiting guests every day, have paperwork. Part of this is quality control – we want to make sure every conductor has a ride along and a performance evaluation. This helps to keep our product fresh, consistent, up-to-date and our evals give honest, constructive feedback. Speaking of up-to-date, we have had weekly meetings of a newly formed script revision committee in order to have conductor input for a fresher, more site-driven script. After all, they do the job every day and they know what our guests like! Look for our new script to roll-out in late Spring of 2012

SEAL Tours

As always, the weather is a huge factor for our SEAL Tours. January is the coldest month for San Diego and this year was no exception. Although we did have a few weeks here and there of better than normal temperatures, we also had some colder than normal weather including a lot of rain. Yes, it does rain here and no, we do not like it. Despite the ups and downs of our weather, our SEAL ridership was up,
San Diego Whale Festival is Successful
by Alex Rodriguez; Depot Sales Manager

The third annual San Diego ‘Whale Festival’ was held on the Port Pavilion on the Broadway Pier on Saturday, January 21st and attended by many local San Diegans and visitors. Old Town Trolley and SEAL Tours participated as a sponsor with both vehicles and an information booth.

The free Whale Festival community event offered a wide variety of interactive and hands on displays to spark the interest and imagination of any child including a walk-through whale, live sea creatures, face painting, art projects, and a bounce house.

Whale watching season has become one of San Diego’s favorite times of the year. The Big Bay Whale Days and Whale Festival provide the community with the best place to learn about California gray whale ecology and conservation and find information about opportunities to interact with the whales safely and affordably.

Changes in the Office
by Carmen Thulin; Office Manager

It’s with mixed emotion to announce that Jessica Hiatt is leaving the company and returning to school to pursue a degree in graphic design.

Jessica has been my HR Assistant for five years and has been a tremendous support in payroll and all related human resource functions. We are very excited for her and wish her the very best in her new adventure. I also want to announce the return of Erin Smith, who was our weekend receptionist/cashier for 5 ½ years while she attended college to be an anthropologist. Erin left us in July 2011 to study abroad in Sweden. Our operation welcomes her back as our new HR Assistant and with her knowledge of OTTSD and Jessica’s training, she is a great fit for the position. Yolanda Osana, who was a Sales Rep and our relief receptionist/cashier has left the company also to pursue her dream working with birds and animals. We wish her the very best in following her dream.

Old Town Trolley and SEAL Recognized for Excellence in Sustainability
by Bob Ross; Safety Officer and Carmen Thulin; Office Manager

Going green is good for the environment – but it also provides economic benefits. The Port of San Diego and the city of San Diego were the only government agencies on the west coast selected to receive technical assistance and support in the development of a Green Office Challenge. The program is patterned after a successful program started in 2009 by the city of Chicago and ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability, a nation-wide association with 600 local, regional and national governments that are committed to sustainable development.

The Port of San Diego and city of San Diego joined Charleston,
South Carolina; Nashville, Tennessee; and Arlington County, Virginia, in developing a program aimed at helping businesses engage in a friendly competition to reduce costs and conserve water and energy, as well as meet other environmental goals.

The voluntary program - the first of its kind on the West Coast - is designed to promote business practices that reduce energy consumption, water use and waste, as well as prevent pollution.

The program's first phase was conducted during 2011. Participants enrolled in the program received support and training to monitor and reduce their energy and resource use through an online scorecard. The scorecard is tool with a series of 50 strategies to help businesses track their sustainability efforts and initiate additional environmental efforts. Participants demonstrating the greatest improvement to their baseline score were recognized for their achievements.

On Tuesday, January 24 the Port of San Diego honored 49 businesses for their environmental achievements at an awards breakfast. The awards ceremony marked the end of the first year of the Port of San Diego's Green Business Challenge. San Diego Old Town Trolley and SEAL Tours was recognized as one of the honorees in the Excellence in Sustainability class for implemented more than 30 of the 50 strategies outlined in the Green Business Challenge.

San Diego Old Town Trolley Tours worked with port partner San Diego Gas and Electric to conduct a comprehensive energy audit. The company retrofitted their lighting fixtures in their facility, resulting in a 33% energy savings. Getting involved with the Green Business Challenge gave us the opportunity to look at some of our practices and get better at what we do in being more efficient.

San Diego Receives Top Safety Award 3rd Year in a Row

For the third year in a row, the San Diego Old Town Trolley, SEAL, Balboa Park Tram, Old Town Market and Maintenance combined operations received the company's top safety recognition as the safest HTA operation for 2011 calendar year. The combined San Diego operations drove a total of 456,000 miles during 2011 while reducing their total accidents by 30%. The greatest improvement was shown by the Maintenance Department when they went the entire year without a single auto accident. 87% of eligible trolley, SEAL, and park tram drivers received safe driving award recognition and 92% of those drivers received the maximum safe driving award available. Seven drivers were recognized for driving of three, four, or five years accident free and one driver has gone seven years without an accident.

Safe Driving

What can you do when you need to make a quick decision with only a little information or time? In a moment of crisis, not a lot. You can’t do your best thinking in three seconds. That’s the spot many drivers get themselves into. Time and again, they must make sudden decisions to try to avoid a crash because they didn’t anticipate problems in advance.

Most crash-causing situations are repetitious, and indecision can be costly. Once you understand what can happen on the highway, and have been taught or self-trained to respond in key ways, you can come up with the right decision every time.

You probably make the correct decision most of the time. But because you must make many decisions for every mile driven, even skilled drivers will sometimes make a minor or critical error. Safe driving habits, when practiced regularly, helps keep those errors to a minimum. Everyone has the goal of becoming an expert at whatever they do—this should apply to driving as well.

Safe driving depends on three factors:
Knowledge — This is what to do. (Rules of the road – such as stopping at a flashing red light)
Skill — This is how to do it. (Mechanical operation – pulling out of a skid)
Decision — This is when to do it. (Based on your driving experience, training and attitude)

Safe driving is composed of these five steps:
1. Expand your “look-ahead” capacity. Rather than focusing directly in front of the vehicle, look to where you will be 10 to 12 seconds down the road — where potential trouble could begin.
2. Size up the whole scene. A safe driver will continually scan for bicyclists, pedestrians, construction, traffic congestion, erratic drivers and changing road conditions. That includes scanning your properly adjusted mirrors every few seconds.
3. Signal your intentions early. Use your turn signals, horn or lights when appropriate. This helps other drivers understand your plans, so they can make their own decisions.
4. Plan an escape route. Carefully time your passing moves, avoid tailgating and plan your actions to help avoid a crash. Think ahead and allow enough time, space and visibility to stop or maneuver smoothly.
5. Take decisive action. By practicing the first four principles, you’ll be able to react to most traffic situations with enough time and space to maneuver safely.
Accessible Training

Old Town Trolley Tours currently operates five accessible trolleys and four accessible amphibious SEAL tour vehicles plus an accessible Free Balboa Park Tram. Every February all of our drivers undergo both classroom and hands-on refresher training on transporting & securing mobility aids. Every driver takes their turn either operating the lift or sitting in the chair so they can experience what it is like from both sides.

Refurbishing Trolleys from Boston

by Norm Niles; Maintenance Manager

There is the old saying that one man’s trash is another man’s treasure. Old Town Trolley of San Diego just received two old, not in-use trolleys from our sister city-Boston. They were transported by semi-truck to our location. What do we want with these old trolleys? They happen to be newer than the current Balboa Park Trams we drive now. Our first view of the trolleys made us wonder, what have we done? However, on closer inspection we realized that there are some good points. The interior overhead woodwork is in excellent condition. The seats are in good shape, one of the engines has been rebuilt, and the exterior bodies are in great condition. If they are to stay green and orange color, we may be able to save the current paint. So, what is wrong?! The floors are ugly, so is the dash area and engine cover. The interior is blue, what should we do? We will fix all of the problem areas and make them nice and refurbish the entire vehicles. We are just about finished with Key West’s newest addition to its fleet, a Hydra Terra amphibious vessel, the Key West Duck Tours.

Felicity has a Birthday!

by Erica Frost; Group Charter Sales Manager

On March 16th, 2012 our beautiful “Felicity” wedding trolley had her 6th birthday/anniversary of being in San Diego! In these past six years she’s done over 375 weddings! Busy girl!

PCMA Convention Comes to San Diego

In January, San Diego was proud to be the host city for the PCMA Convening Leaders Conference. PCMA stands for the Professional Convention Management Association. This is a HUGE opportunity for San Diego and Old Town Trolley & SEAL Tours, including everyone in the tourism and hospitality industry as we really rolled out the red carpet. At a follow-up reception the “word on the street” was that San Diego has by far been the best host city in their history of conferences. Old Town Trolley was a Bronze level transportation sponsor. The last time San Diego hosted PCMA was in 1996 and after that last convention the attendees booked enough conventions to fill our Convention Center for 2 ½ years.

Mardi Gras

The 18th annual Mardi Gras in the Gaslamp Quarter returned on Fat Tuesday, February 21st. Over 16 blocks of the Gaslamp Quarter transformed into the biggest Mardi Gras celebration on the west coast! The streets came alive with the hottest DJs, four stages, six elaborate areas, outlandish performances, masquerade parade and more. There were over 35,000 revelers as they partied in the streets and soaked in all of the Mardi Gras merriment! We had our “Felicity” trolley, our Ghosts & Gravestones and two other orange & greens rolling in the parade with VIP’s.
Spirit of ‘45
Military Leaders Conference

Keep the Spirit Alive! is a non-profit, non-partisan initiative to raise public awareness about National Spirit of ‘45 Day so that it is observed every year in communities throughout America on the second Sunday of every August. This is an honor By observing Spirit of ‘45 Day, Americans of all ages and backgrounds can help assure that the courage, self-sacrifice, “can-do” attitude and commitment to community of our “greatest generation” will continue to inspire a renewed spirit of national unity and shared community in America, especially at a time when our country must come together to meet major new challenges.

The Spirit of ‘45 National Leaders Conference held in San Diego February 17-19 and it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience for the more than 125 attendees who came from more than 30 states to share experience and ideas for taking National Spirit of ‘45 Day to a whole new level this year. The attendee list was very impressive as a lot of them were true war heroes. We were their “wheels” while they were in San Diego as we took them to several events over the course of three days. It was an honor to not only be of service but also to be in their presence.

Old Town’s Blessing of the Animals

by John Savage; Old Town Market Leasing Manager

On Sunday January 15 Monsignor Mark Campbell led the 3rd annual Blessing of the Animals at the Historic State Park in Old Town. The Blessing of the Animals dates back to the 1700s, it was an annual celebration honoring St. Anthony of the Desert, the Patron Saint of the Animals. The San Diego Benediction of the Beasts also honors Father Anthony Ubach whose work with Native Americans included the building of St. Anthony’s Industrial School for Indians back in 1886, located at the site of our very own Casa de Aguirre!

This year’s blessing was attended by multiple dogs, cats, rabbits and two donkeys. Also in attendance for the third straight year Chopper the famous Harley riding dog.

New this year was the addition of a facebook site and a Youtube channel for the “blessing of the Animals Old Town San Diego”.

Embarcadero Waterfront Construction

Construction began early Jan on San Diego’s front door to the city, the North Embarcadero waterfront. Once complete, the Embarcadero will increase and enhance the public’s access to San Diego Bay through a wide esplanade and waterfront promenade. Through its groves of jacaranda trees and world-class public art, the public will feel welcomed into this area, which is the first leg of a signature linear public park that will eventually run the entire 1.2 mile length of the North Embarcadero. From the City, the Embarcadero will frame views of the Bay down West Broadway and C Street. The project will also capture and treat storm water to improve the water quality of San Diego Bay. During construction, our Trolley Stop has been relocated near the historic Star of India ship at the Maritime Museum. Both the Trolley and SEAL Tours will now temporarily operate out of the same location at the Star of India until construction is completed in 2013.

Old Town Trolley Visits La Jolla Cooks 4U

Old Town Trolley Tours was looking for a fun way to celebrate the great year we’ve been having and while reviewing TripAdvisor we discovered La Jolla Cooks 4U was the #1 fun thing to do in La Jolla. It was the perfect opportunity for our team to celebrate & have fun while building teamwork.

La Jolla Cooks 4U is a personalized hands-on gourmet cooking and dining experience specializing in Californian cuisine with its very own organic vegetable and herb garden. Owner Chef Jodi Abel operates La Jolla Cooks 4U out of her home where she teaches you how to prepare a gourmet meal, and then you get to dine on the delicious food you learned to prepare.

When we arrived at the big yellow house on the end of the street we were greeted by Chef Jodi and welcomed into her kitchen. We donned aprons and reviewed the menu we were going to prepare. Chef Jodi & her sous chef had prepared all the ingredients so all we needed to do was wash up and start cooking. We learned how to blend delicious Tofu Berry Smoothies, and make Granola Parfaits in Parmesan Cheese Baskets. We followed that by making Grilled Flat Breads topped with Goat Cheese, Smoked Salmon, Capers, and Purple Onions to go with our Vegetable Fritata and for dessert we made some Incredible Sticky Buns.

It was a beautiful warm sunny San Diego day so we moved from the kitchen to the patio with a fantastic view of Mission Bay & the Pacific Ocean to enjoy the breakfast we had prepared with Chef Jodi’s help & instruction.

The venue was great, the view was outstanding and the food was even better. And we cooked it ourselves! Thank you Chef Jodi, we can’t wait to do this again!
This month I am proud to showcase the Concierge staff at the Manchester Grand Hyatt San Diego. The Manchester Grand Hyatt is the largest hotel in San Diego with 1625 rooms and my Number One hotel account. They are incredible supporters of the Old Town Trolley Tour and SEAL Tour. The hotel is adjacent to Seaport Village where both our tours depart which makes it very convenient for their guests. The team of seven is lead by Cathy Gomez, Chef Concierge. Cathy has been with the hotel since the opening in 1992! She is assisted by Philip Kaufman who has been with the hotel for 14 years. The entire staff does an amazing job and they are known for the great service that they give. In fact, the hotel was just awarded the Hyatt Maritz Madness service award which is a top honor for their hotel. The Manchester Grand Hyatt is the tallest building in San Diego and has great amenities which include two pools, two tennis courts, volleyball, basketball, Kin Spa and their famous bar called “Top of the Hyatt” which has the most spectacular views of San Diego. Thank you to the entire Hyatt staff for all of their tremendous support they give to the Old Town Trolley Tours and SEAL Tours. Congratulations and thank you for being #1!!!

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
My idea of perfect happiness is simple. It involves spending your life with the people you love most in a beautiful and safe environment.

Which living person do you most admire?
I have the utmost respect for every professor and diligent student I’ve met. I truly admire everyone who values education and hard work.

What is your greatest fear?
I fear the unknown! I have an obsession with learning about everything I can.

What is your favorite vacation spot?
I have a loving family in Hawaii and I enjoy visiting them whenever I can. Maui is probably my favorite island.

What do you most value in your friends?
I value honesty and loyalty above all else!
Nancy Nuhaily was the winner of the HTA ‘Pick-the Oscars’ contest. Nancy scored a five wins out of six choices. Congratulations Nancy!

Kathy Anderson, park tram shuttle drive, enjoying a hot coffee on a very rare cold, wet and windy day in the park.

CASTmembers of the Month

DECEMBER
Jim Fraley, Conductor
Barbie Harrell, Sales Rep.

JANUARY
Jim Fraley, Conductor
Barbie Harrell, Sales Rep.

FEBRUARY
Phillip Fondaw, Conductor
Nikki Meo-Cook, Sales Rep.

East Visits West!

On a recent trip to San Diego... Historic Tours President, Ed Swift along with his two sons Ed IV and Vince visited the San Diego operations. Pictured here are John Savage, David Thornton, Ed Swift IV, Terri Zorn, Lorin Stewart (former general manager of Old Town Trolley Tours of San Diego), Ed Swift III, Rod LaBranche and Vince Leone. What a great looking group of people!
TRIVIA TEASER

1. In what movie does Robert Duvall declare “I love the smell of napalm in the morning?” a-Full Metal Jacket, b-The Great Santini, c-Assassination Tango, d-Apocalypse Now.


3. Which American city gets its name from the Sioux language as the “place of the smelly onions”? a-Kalamazoo, b-Chicago, c-Sacramento, d-Omaha.

4. What actor won an Academy Award for his performance as blind man Frank Slade in the movie Scent of a Woman? a-Al Pacino, b-Bruce Willis, c-Warren Beatty, d-Michael Caine.


6. Which Shakespeare play contains the lines “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name, would smell as sweet?” a-Romeo and Juliet, b-Macbeth, c-The Tempest, d-The Merchant of Venice.

7. “Smells Like Teen Spirit” was a big hit for what grunge band? a-Bush, b-Soundgarden, c-Nirvana, d-Pearl Jam.

8. Ambergris, a waxy substance used to make perfumes, is created in the intestines of what animal? a-Sperm whale, b-Muskrat, c-Cane toad, d-Alpaca.

9. Which actor provided the voice of Stinky Pete the prospector in Toy Story 2? a-Tim Allen, b-Robin Williams, c-Kelsey Grammer, d-Ryan Reynolds.

10. On what sitcom might you hear a character singing Smelly cat? a-Mad About You, b-The Big Bang Theory, c-Friends, d-My Name is Earl.

FLAVORFUL CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS
1. Absorbs, with “up”
5. Make like a sheep
9. Crude group?
10. Greasy
11. Lascivious look
12. Heavy, durable furniture wood
13. Hold spellbound
15. Ace
16. By and large
22. Hardly the life of the party
23. Cosecant’s reciprocal
24. “I had no ___!”
25. Arm bone
26. Leak slowly
27. “Check this out!”

DOWN
1. Exclusive
2. Dentist’s request
3. Equal
4. Dump
5. Cheers!
6. In ___ of
7. Banned apple spray
8. Kid
14. Grand __, Nova Scotia
16. Nile bird
17. Junction point

Note: The title is a clue to the word in the shaded diagonal.
Spring Travel

by Jim Lamberson and Bill Meagher; National Safety Officer / Director of Risk Management & Insurance

Spring time is here, the official sign that summer is around the corner. Vacations, day trips, going to a beach, swimming, or perhaps an amusement park may be in your plans. These are all fun things to do in the good old summer time but remember... injuries and illnesses never take a break.

Here’s a quick checklist before traveling:
- Did you-
  - Have your car serviced? Brakes, tires, wipers, fluids, etc.
  - Notify the Post Office or ask someone to pick up your mail?
  - Turn off all appliances and secure your home?
  - Notify alarm company, lock doors and windows, install light timers, take care of pets, etc.
  - Leave a copy of travel itinerary with a friend or family.
  - Remember medications, passports and other important paperwork.

As you begin your summer and plan vacation travels, be aware of the following:
- Bad Weather - at times very unpredictable.
- Crowds, Heavy Traffic, Road Rage
- Excessive Speeding
- Cellphone and Texting while driving
- DVD players in vehicles
- Navigation systems
- Loud playing music
- Fatigue

These can all contribute to distracted driving and lead to trouble. Here are some important safety practices:
- Remember food safety. Keep cold foods, cold & hot foods, hot.
- Apply sunscreen for outdoor activities.
- Bring along insect repellent to help eliminate or reduce bug bites.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Place BBQ grills a safe distance away from people and structures
- Don’t swim alone.

Always be safety conscious, enjoy your time with your family & friends and come back to work with good tales to share with your fellow CASTmembers!

New Safety Officers

We here in Risk Management would like to welcome aboard our newest safety officers. They are:

Claire Hiller, Key West Trolley/Train Operations: Claire started off as a Conductor and assumed her current duties from Jim Lamberson who has moved to fulltime National Safety Director.

Steve Everett, St. Augustine: Steve also started off as a Conductor and assumed his current duties from Savannah Brewer who was promote to Operations Manager.

Tom St. Claire, Washington DC: Tom also started off as a Conductor and assumed his current duties from Abe Burgos who has moved into the Charter and Groups Sales department.

And, Sue Pye, Boston: Sue has been Boston’s trainer for some time and has now taken on the additional role of Safety Officer, a move that realigns her position as Safety Officer and Trainer as does the HTA family of companies.

Please join Bill and Jim in welcoming these CASTmembers to their new roles in the HTA family of companies.

Puzzles, Games and Trivia Answers from Page 33

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRIVIA TEASER</th>
<th>LAPTOP WORD SEARCH</th>
<th>FLAVORFUL CROSSWORD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answers to ‘Common Scents’</td>
<td>TRAVEL CARDS BVZ</td>
<td>SOPS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-d, Apocalypse Now</td>
<td>MESSAGES S SE OF V</td>
<td>BLAT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-b, Burt Lancaster</td>
<td>G T N R S S E N T I F E</td>
<td>OPEC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-b, Chicago</td>
<td>E A E Q Q Q K O C B N D S</td>
<td>OILY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-a, Al Pacino</td>
<td>C C I N N R N E J E A E C</td>
<td>LEER</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-d, Eddie Fisher</td>
<td>W S O C R P T W C M S C</td>
<td>TEAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-a, Romeo and Juliet</td>
<td>W S O D U E S R I X E</td>
<td>ENRAPTURE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-c, Nirvana</td>
<td>B E E K S T A G M S L A</td>
<td>PRO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-a, Sperm whale</td>
<td>O X A T T E E L E Z</td>
<td>IN THE MAIN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-c, Kelsey Grammer</td>
<td>K N Q N S T R C Z I F</td>
<td>BORE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-c, Friends</td>
<td>S Y N E N K C R P P</td>
<td>SINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S M S C E R G L S</td>
<td>IDEA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L I X M Y S N W S F V K Y</td>
<td>A U L NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>G O M R A S S P O Z B L</td>
<td>SLEEP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Q L R O S C L O K A E</td>
<td>PST</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
White House as a teenager from 1974-1977. Her mother, Betty Ford, was called by Time Magazine “America’s Fighting First Lady”. Betty Ford fought for the Equal Rights Amendment and women’s rights in general. She became an outspoken First Lady who removed the stigma of breast cancer and inspired millions in her recovery from alcohol and prescription medication addiction. She founded the Betty Ford Center For Substance Abuse.

All three presidential children pointed out the cooperation that existed between Democrats and Republicans in their presidential families and the polarization that exists today. Susan Ford told us in the 1970s the Congressional Wives Club would hold picnics: Congressional members, their spouses and children knew each other as persons even if they disagreed. Today, the families often stay back in their districts and the congressional members fly back and forth each week, making it is far easier to demonize the opposition.

Fielding the questions for this distinguished panel was CNN contributor John Avlon who is married to Margaret Hoover.

The two-fold mission of the Little White House is preservation of the 9000 square foot house and educating the public about the American Presidency. This is the third gathering of presidential children.

Joanna Huestis and Debra Clarin have become board members for the Florida Keys Chapter of the Society for Human Resources Management. Joanna is serving as president-elect and Debra is serving as treasurer. The chapter meets monthly for educational meetings and networking with other professionals in the area. This provides a great way to keep up with the ever changing employment laws, as well as make a contribution to the Key West business community as representatives of HTA.