What the H is a #Hashtag
written by Chris Belland, CEO (the fluff part) and John Penney, Blackdog Advertising (the technical stuff)

What is a hashtag, you might very well ask. Just a little while ago, I didn’t know either. To me it was always the little cross-lines thingy on the typewriter (what the h--- is a typewriter?) used to denote ‘number’. Today, it has taken on a whole new meaning.

Hashtag actually got its name from Twitter which used the “#” symbol as a way of searching and organizing the content that its users were posting (tweeting … as it were) about. The hashtag or # sign is now used on many other social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest.

The most important part of all this is that the hashtag usage now gives social media contributors the ability to add the # symbol in front of a word or phrase in their post, photo or video so that other social media users may search and find the contributor’s post. Mind you, this is all being written by somebody who does not Facebook, Twitter or Instagram or Pinterest for that matter. I’m not even sure what Instagram and Pinterest are or mean. So, take everything you are reading in this article for what that’s worth.

Anyway, John Penney of our advertising firm, Black Dog Advertising, convinced Piper and of course whatever Piper tells me, I believe, that this was a way to generate interest, or should I say generate investment, by our guests on the Yankee Freedom ferry ride out to the Dry Tortugas by getting them to hashtag their photographs to their friends it would, of course, spread the word about the Yankee Freedom III Dry Tortugas Ferry in a very compelling way. So … we started a contest.

As part of the 100th Anniversary of the National Park Service, the Yankee Freedom III Dry Tortugas National Park Ferry started, for their part of the Centennial celebration of the NPS, a photography contest and invited anyone to join at www.drytortugas.com to cast their vote for the grand prize winner. We were even able to partner with the Florida Keys Council for the Arts in displaying the finalists’ photos at the Key West International Airport. This is now in place and that is the photograph pictured here.

Voting began on December 1st 2015 and will continue through February 29, 2016. The grand prize is $500 and a chance to participate in a national competition with other U.S. National Parks.

So, there you have it … maybe a better understanding of what a hashtag does which is connect people’s postings with the rest of the world. We live in a very connected world. Whereas it used to take weeks, months and even years for a thought or action to make its way in a small geographic area or to the rest of the world. Today, it can happen in a matter of minutes. As one who has lived through the mimeograph, special delivery mail, faxes and other technological marvels, I’m not sure I can comprehend the speed at which we are moving. I’m not going to # this article.
Familiar Territories: Ryan Souder  
National Call Center Agent

Coming up very soon I will be participating in my 3rd season of Nights of Lights with Old Town Trolley and Historic Tours of America. This 3rd season is going to be a special one as it will be my first season handling the event from the newly minted National Call Center as 1/10th of a team of universally sharp and creative tour masterminds. It has been quite an adventure up ‘til this point in my career at OTT. After all, I came from the streets of St. Augustine. What I learned from selling tickets in the city has been my foundation for working at the NCC. Every day I am able to effectively apply something that I learned downtown to each and every city in our canon of OTT cities.

There are perks on each side of the spectrum. There are certain things that I miss about working downtown in St Augustine but there are also things that I love about working at the NCC. From someone who has been on both sides, here is my perspective list:

**Things I Miss Working Downtown:**

One thing that I miss is **MEETING PEOPLE** who were visiting the city. Everyone has a story. It was fun to hang out with guests while they waited for their trolley and chat about life, travels, history, music, anything. On more than one occasion I actually met someone who I shared a common friend with from somewhere around the country. Small world, huh?

I miss the **FREE FOOD** downtown. Certain restaurants on St. George Street would often give sales reps free food or at least send someone to take a lunch for you at your booth. You could also build credit with certain places by referring people to them. I still have a $60 credit at the best pizza spot downtown.

Rotating to **NEW DEPOTS** each day was nice too. I **LOVE MY DESK** at NCC surrounded by city maps, but man, it’s hard to beat a front row seat of the Castillo de San Marcos or the Matanzas River on a beautiful day.

**Things I Love about Working at the National Call Center:**

One thing I DON’T miss is one particular FAQ, ‘Where is the bathroom???’ I have yet to have that question asked at the NCC but now that I am writing this I probably will get one tomorrow and forevermore.

**Things I Love about Working at the National Call Center:**

- **The SALES** in here are Megatron status quite often. I can remember a few mega sales downtown but not nearly as many or as often as the ones that show up here at the NCC. The Trusted Tours inventory has some BIG tickets stashed in there. Example: just yesterday I sold $800.00 worth of tickets in Miami. Yes, MIAMI.

- **LEARNING OTHER CITIES** has been fun. I won’t pretend to be as much of an expert of the other five OTT cities as I am St. Augustine, but it’s still neat that I am able to familiarize myself with the cities, half of which I’ve never been to, through the Trolley operations.

- **I LOVE MY SCHEDULE.** We work long 10 hour days here at the NCC but we only work four days a week. That’s a whole extra day off! Sometimes I’m able to mow my lawn, play music with my friends, and hit the beach all in the same week.

- **THE FUTURE** of the NCC could not be brighter. The team is the strongest and most cohesive that it’s ever been. We are a well-oiled group of minds that are able to tackle challenges with ease. OTT Nashville is on the horizon, along with some VERY exciting department developments. Stay tuned.....it’s good to be at OTT.

CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

**Natasha Kader**  
National Call Center: Senior Lead Contact Representative

**BACKGROUND**

Greetings everyone! I was born in one of the most beautiful places in the world, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. At the age of two I moved to Miami, Florida and although I loved it there and learned Spanish, I felt a calling to my birthplace. I moved back and started my major in Psychology. I started working part time at a five star hotel on the famous Ipanema Beach. Six years later I decided it was time to return to the USA. I worked for a call center selling boutique hotels and absolutely loved selling on the phones using my multiple language skills. I then worked for a luxury cruise line in Ft. Lauderdale, FL and had a blast cruising the world and learning new cultures. In 2013, I met and fell in love with my wonderful husband, Ed. We had visited St. Augustine on Valentine’s Day and I remember thinking how I’d love to live here one day and work for the best tour company there ever was. Four months later his job relocated him to St. Augustine and within one month I joined Old Town Trolley as the Director of First Impressions. When I heard about the new call center I was so ecstatic and one year later, here I am doing what I love most, helping people! What I love most about my job is the diversity in the Call Center, the ever-changing dynamics in all six cities as well as my awesome colleagues!

**What talent would you most like to have?**

It would be great if I could sing a tune.

**Which historical figure do you most identify with?**

Mahatma Gandhi

**Who are your favorite writers?**

Anne Rice, Osho, James DeSantis, Sigmund Freud, Eckhart Tolle

**What or who is the greatest love of your life?**

I would have to say my dearest Grandfather, Dr. Peter W. Glynn.

**What is your most valued possession?**

Collection of National Geographics dating back from the 1980’s till today.
Pretty in Pink
by David Thornton, General Manager

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and Old Town Trolley Tours CASTmembers geared up for weekly fundraiser events to support the cause. Several of our business partners and suppliers donate goods to our silent auction fundraising events, including the Winzer Corporation (a gift basket), Ferrellgas (two burner camper stoves, hoses and full propane tank) and Unifirst Uniforms (two San Diego Chargers football tickets.) Our Leadagement each donated a gift basket for the auction as well.

At our ticket depot booths, bottled water was offered to our guests for a donation request helping contribute to the cause. Other fundraising efforts included a weekly bake sales and raffles. Some of our Conductors volunteered and donated their own daily tips - totaling over $1,600 from donated tips alone!

CAST, family and friends signed up for the local chapter of the American Cancer Society walk “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer” held in Balboa Park. Our pretty in pink Trolley was there providing shuttle service for participants to and from the starting point.

This year, our efforts raised over $10,000 all going to the cause to fight breast cancer.

Kids Free October

During the entire month of October, families with children enjoyed special deals at more than 100 San Diego hotels, restaurants, attractions, museums and transportation companies during “Kids Free San Diego” Month. Providing families an opportunity to save during budget-conscious times, “Kids Free San Diego” Month offers a variety of “kids free” incentives, ranging from complimentary meals, attraction admission, hotels and Amtrak rides and much more. Old Town Trolley and SEAL Tours also included kids ride free during the month of October.

Consistently rated one of the top family destinations in North America, San Diego is home to world-class family attractions, abundant arts and culture, family fun eateries, hotels and popular activities like surfing, whale watching and golf. As the summer beach crowds diminish, visitors to San Diego in October can relish in the regions sunny weather and warm temperatures and enjoy a number of fun-filled fall activities.

Breaking Records
by Erica Frost, Group Sales Manager

This has been a record-breaking fall for charter business for both Trolley and SEAL Tour group sales! In my 17+ years here at OTT we never had an October that has been quite this busy. If this is an indication that our business is on an upswing, we’ll take it! OTT was selected to become a sponsor of the local chapter of MPI (Meeting Professionals International) for their annual Day of the Dead pub crawl.

Annual Taste of Mission Hills

Other notable news, both wedding trolleys were out every weekend in October, there were 24 weddings in October. Old Town Trolley San Diego was involved in at least five different “Taste of…” local neighborhood events, as well.

We also had the honor of participating with our beautiful pink Trolley in the American Cancer Society’s “Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk” in Balboa Park.

Dia de los Muertos
by Sebastian Biagioni, Old Town Market Leasing Operations

Dia de los Muertos fell upon us on Sunday and Monday this year, November 1st and 2nd. It was a great event with many activities and celebration. This year’s festivities attracted over 75,000 visitors for the 2-day celebration. Over forty local businesses, museums,
and shops created traditional Día de los Muertos altars that could be viewed and enjoyed by all. Many of the altars honored the historic figures from Old Town's past. Old Town Market remembered our family and friends that have graced our lives with joy. Some of the activities that were made available at the Market were Sugar Skull face painting, Paper Flower making and various other family friendly activities. We had live music playing throughout the day with various performers coming through. Dance groups made their way towards Casa Aguirre entertaining our patrons and all who were enjoying Dia de los Muertos. Sunday, November 2nd, the event concluded with an evening candlelight procession with thousands gathered in costumes and painted faces on a walk through Old Town to the El Campo Cemetery.

Old Town Art and Crafts Show

by Carmen Thulin, AP/AR Manager

With such a great success bringing in crafts with the art aspect for our Old Town Art and Craft Show, it made the event even better. We achieved our goal of over 60 Artists to attend. There was a children's art display for the public to vote on their favorite entry. The first, second and third place winners received a beautiful homemade historic ribbon. Tables were setup in the children’s area for the children to make macaroni necklaces. This activity was a big hit.

The Art and Craft Show runs along San Diego Avenue from Conde Street to Twiggs Street, leaving the two main streets of Twiggs Street and Harney open. With the street construction on Juan, it made for an interesting congestion problem for Trolleys and tour buses alike. Along with the Art and Craft spaces, there were three food vendors and a wonderful Cantina with live entertainment sponsored by the Tequila Factory.

The event was a success despite the rain we had Saturday night that made us close the Children’s Art area Sunday morning. Some Artists left, but many Artists stayed and San Diego’s beautiful weather returned for the rest of Sunday, they reported that it was one of their best shows. The proceeds help to support the old town business community and continue offering free parking in Old Town.

USA-Mexico Effort to Rescue Twinkles

by Nancy Nuhaily, Office of First Impressions

This little Chihuahua-mix managed to survive ALONE for 12 sweltering days and danger-filled nights living on the traffic-choked streets of downtown Tijuana, Mexico. Twinkles’ owner, Michael LeBold, a local San Diegan artist and our friend working for Old Town Market and the Trolley Tours, was the victim of a robbery attempt while returning home to Tijuana. Frightened from the scuffle and ordeal, Twinkles fled and disappeared into the dark streets of Tijuana.

Thankfully, with the help of so MANY friends on BOTH sides of the San Diego-Tijuana border, (including everyone at Old Town Trolley) from publicity in the newspaper, on radio, the internet, Facebook, 100s of full-color fliers, a feature story on the local TV news, AND a hefty reward of 10,000 pesos (about $650)... Twinkle, thinner, dirty, hungry, and terribly dehydrated, defied the long odds stacked against her, and was FOUND and returned home SAFE and sound. Welcome home Twinkles. You were missed.

Annual Safety Visit

by Bob Ross, Safety Officer

In the month of September 2015, Old Town Trolley and SEAL Tours of San Diego received our annual safety visit audit. This year National Safety Director Jim Lamberson was joined by National Risk Manager Bill Meagher and his lovely wife Patricia. Also participating were our local Liberty Mutual Insurance rep. Matt Glovinsky and Ron Taylor. James Peterson and Justin Reese represented our insurance broker Hub International. During the visit the safety team went on multiple Trolley, La Jolla, Ghosts & Gravestones, and SEAL Tour ride als. They also performed evaluation assessments of the
The Nation’s Storyteller

Trolley/SEAL records, maintenance shop, Old Town Market, and our new Visitor Information Center at the Embarcadero. At the completion of the visit we were presented with a short list of minor corrections which we were able to address quickly, in some cases before the visit was over.

**Ghost Tour Wraps up Solid Year of Hauntings**

San Diego’s Ghost and Gravestones has been growing for the last two years. The tour was resurrected in 2013 with four ghost hosts. Today we have six with two more being trained for the upcoming year: **Chris Chiotras** as Grimsley, **Donald Kaye** as Wyatt Earp, **Larry Usall** as the Professor, **Rodney Foster** as Ace the Dead Gambler, **Richard Smith** as the Descendant and our newest hostesses, **Melissa Sewell** as Sinderella.

In 2014 the tour ran year round for the first time! The tour ridership finished at 55%. In 2015 the success keeps growing! We have added additional tour times and days, plus a second vehicle for October. All the hard work and effort paid off with October up 76% over last year. We are proud to announce we are adding a second permanent ghost trolley for 2016.

**Veteran of the Year Awards Luncheon**

by Mark Keeler, Head SEAL

Each year, Old Town Trolley Tours and SEAL Tours of San Diego participate in the annual “Veteran of the Year Awards Luncheon” held at the Scottish Rite Masonic Center in Mission Valley. This year was no exception. A delicious meal, the awards ceremony and official song from each branch of the military was enjoyed by OTT Leadagers, some who happen to be veterans themselves.

**Veterans Day Parade**

OTT and SEAL Tours donated our vehicles to Veteran organizations that need transportation in the annual parade. The SEAL Tour was again “drafted” into serving the “Vietnam Unit Memorial,” representing the “Swift Boat Sailors Association.” We have had a long and happy association with the “Swifties” for many years. Our own, SEAL Tours (Retired) **Captain Don Ferrell** is an active member of the association and aids in the coordination of the SEAL to participate in the parade each year.

**Mother Goose Parade**

The Annual Mother Goose Parade in El Cajon, California kicked off the Holiday Season in Southern California. Each year, a few trolleys and our SEAL vehicle are invited to carry dignitaries and celebrities in the Largest Parade of its kind West of the Mississippi. Many community organizations participate in the parade and Hollywood is always well represented by famous celebrities that are showcased on the back of cool and classic cars as well as in our Trolleys and SEAL.

**La Jolla and San Diego Beaches Tour conductor personally welcoming guests before departing.**

**Jeanette Perez, Visitor INFO Center Manager with her new penny machine**

**Fausto Reyes Garcia, maintenance, cleaning up our grounds and doing his part to keep good housekeeping standards**

**Longtime CASTmember and Veteran Bill Fox**

**Robert Hatcher with a Veteran**
CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Linda Florentino
Sales Representative, San Diego Visitors Center

Meet Linda Florentino, a proud San Diego native and passionate Old Town Trolley San Diego CASTmember. Linda grew up in National City and attended Sweetwater High where she met Joe, her high school sweetheart and husband of 44 years. Together they raised three children and today they’re grandparents seven times over!

Linda’s journey with San Diego OTT began twelve years ago. Hiring on as a conductor, she discovered her passion for assisting visitors in her hometown. After two years, Linda decided to leave OTT to further her hospitality skills and to expand her knowledge of San Diego. She did that by working in the destination management field as a guide. Three years passed and the fond memories and friendships she developed with the Old Town Trolley CAST inspired her to return so she was welcomed back with great enthusiasm as a First Mate on the SEAL. After only one year, Linda wanted to expand her relationship with San Diego visitors so she transferred into Sales where she honed her skills for the next five years.

This year, Linda embarked on a new journey with the latest addition to OTTSD, the San Diego Visitor Information Center. Using her knowledge and talent as an Information/Sales Representative allows her to meet people from all over the world and assist them in planning their perfect stay. Linda jokes, “The only thing left is to be a mechanic!” …and if we know Linda, she’s already working on it!

What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?
Procrastination

What is your favorite vacation spot?
San Francisco

Which talent would you most like to have?
To play the accordion (but my husband says, No!)

If there was one place you would like to live besides San Diego, where would it be?
San Francisco

What three things will you always find in your refrigerator?
Eggs, cheese and hot sauce!

Twitter: twitter.com/sealtours  Facebook: facebook.com/sealtours
Twitter: twitter.com/sandiegotour  Facebook: facebook.com/sandiegotours

October CASTmembers of the Month

John “Red” Lindsey, SEAL CASTmember of the month. Photoed with Mark Keeler

October
Susie Vetter, Conductor
Barbie Harrell, Sales Rep.
1st Mate David "Hollywood" Erdman, SEAL
John “Red” Lindsey, Specialty Tour
Old Town Market Team: Christian, Evan, Martin and Ricardo, Supporting

November
Scotty Love, Conductor
Barbie Harrell, Sales Rep.
Capt. Jay Bernstein, SEAL
Ghosts Hosts: Wyatt Earp, Gimsley, Ace, The Professor, The Descendant, and Sinderella
Specialty Tour
Carrie Nunez, Supporting

HAPPY anniversary

NOVEMBER
Rodney LaBranche, 17 years
Alberto Guzman, 17 years
Barbara Harrell, 9 years
Dale O’Brien, 9 years

SEALS
Gerald Coulson, 10 years
VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Best Western Plus Bayside Inn
by Rod LaBranche, Director of Travel Industry Sales

This month I would like to showcase one of our vendors who has been with us since we started in 1989 – The Best Western Plus Bayside Inn. The 120 room BW Bayside as we fondly call it, just went through a 1.4 million dollar renovation. They renovated their lobby, pool area and added a Fitness Center. Their General Manager, Tracy Wickens, has been there over 30 years. Rita Llagas, the Front Desk Manager has been there for 26 years and Front Desk Agent, Horacio Gonzalez, has been there 23 years.

Located just three blocks from the Embarcadero and one block from Little Italy, the hotel’s location is perfect for tourists. They have many international guests who stay there and they send them all on the Old Town Trolley Tour which is only two blocks away. Thank you to the entire team at the BW Bayside for being such long-time loyal supporters of the Old Town Trolley Tours. We appreciate you all!!

San Diego Receives New Trolley’s

NEW TROLLEYS arrive in San Diego! Yes, NEW – NEW

Rod Visits Boston

Old Town Historic Golf Classic

Conductors Richard Smith, Susie Vetter and Jon Laws enjoying a day on the greens for the annual Old Town Historic Golf Classic. Proceeds go to support the education program in Old Town.

Conductors Scotty Love, Rick Diaz and Patrick Nettles

Halloween

The CAST took advantage of new Halloween dress attire, what a freight!
Offseason Preparations

by Eric Holmes, General Manager

It’s 1:30pm on November 10, 2015. Already today I’ve had meetings with my Safety Officer, Trolley Operations Manager, Depot Manager, Maintenance Manager, and Arlington Operations Manager. Believe it or not this does not include our weekly Leadagers meeting that was held at 9:30am. Most of these meetings involved planning and preparation for our 2016 – 2017 CAST. The 2015 – 2016 season is slowly coming to an end, but without blinking an eye, or taking a deep breath, it’s time to prepare for our first training class of the season. For some reason five little words continue to pop into my thoughts… “Play Nice in the Sandbox.”

I’ve learned over the past few years that people value a fellow CASTmember, or Leadager that they can easily relate to. The reality is that people prefer working with a lovable fool, rather than a knowledgeable jerk. In our business, the hospitality industry, it’s extremely important that our CAST have good people skills, the ability to play nice with others, and they have to be a great team player.

One of the things I’m stressing to all Leadagers is not only to look for the person with the right skills, but also someone who will bring a positive attitude to the CAST. Our roles are so dependent on one another, that if we can’t find people to add value to the CAST, we’re not going to be able to grow this company, and provide the level of service that HTA is known for. Furthermore, Leadagers are not the only ones that should have input. I’m considering having a few frontline CASTmembers involved, so I can get a sense of how well a potential CASTmember will mesh with the current CAST.

As children we learned the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. To put it plainly “treat people like you want to be treated”. If we truly learned everything we need to know in Kindergarten, then I think by our third decade of life we should all be required to take some continuing education classes. The first class would be...“How to Play Nice in the Sandbox” by Jerry Miller. Let the hiring and training begin!

Who CAN? We CAN!!

by Terrie Thomas, Director of Sales and Marketing

I deal with a lot of organizations in my job here at OTT-WDC. CANstruction® struck me as a super project and I have attached some quick information from our contact, Marco Pieri who works with Cooper Carry, an architectural firm.

Here is a brief history about CANstruction® as a whole:

Our Mission: To feed and inspire the world – one can at a time.

Who CAN? We CAN!!

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Our Mission: To feed and inspire the world – one can at a time.
Kevin Lindsay
Gerardo Pena
David Soto

RETAIL
Sharona Standley

JUNE
Jeff "Buckeye" Shaner,
Conductor
Angelina Culmer, Sales Rep.

JULY
Richard "Smiley" Simon,
Conductor
Suly Cruz, Sales Rep.
Willis Green,
Supporting

AUGUST
Richard "Smiley" Simon,
Conductor
Suly Cruz, Sales Rep.
Brentford Davis,
Supporting

The Nation’s Storyteller

Jewel
Proud Owner: Abe Burgos

Hello. My name is Jewel. Abe Burgos, the most fantastic awesomest person in the world, is my owner. I am four years old and am a widow. My hunk of a husband died of cancer about eight months ago. But I still love him. My favorite things to do is run, jump, and have my belly rubbed. Whenever my owner, Abe, comes home all I want to do is tell him about my day. I tell him about the dream I had when I slept on the couch. Then I tell him about the dream I had when I slept under the bed. Then I tell him about the dream I had when I slept on the bed. Then I tell him about the adventure I had while dreaming when I slept in the shoebox in his closet. I decided to do the CASTmember bio. So here it goes:

What is your greatest fear?
My shadow, loud noises and cucumbers. It’s true. Search on YouTube cats versus cucumbers. You will find hilarity.

On what occasion do you lie?
Whenever I take a nap. Who wants to sleep standing up?

Which talent would you like to most have?
I want to be a hound dog and have a keener sense of smell. Plus I would like to learn how to pee in the toilet.

What is your favorite occupation?
Is Nap taker a job? If not I want to be an exterminator.

If you could choose one reality show to be on, what would it be?
Anything on Animal Planet. That and Keepin up with the Kardashians. WHEW! And they think I’m katty?

Linden (Randolph John-Baptiste)
Mechanic: Old Town Trolley Tours of Washington DC

BACKGROUND
I was born and raised in the US Virgin Islands. My brothers and I enjoyed sunny days ripping and running up and down miles of sandy beaches every summer day of the week. When we were tired, we would sail the warm clear waters in our 15’ dinghy. The warmth of the island reflected the warmth of the people. It wasn’t until I moved to New Jersey at 18 years old that I experienced racism. What a culture shock! But I guessed the cold weather reflected the attitudes of the people.

My decision to move to the DC metro area had little to do with the weather and everything to do with the ratio of men to women. What better way to overcome racism than to trade cold weather attitudes for a lady’s warm heart!

I worked at Forestville as a mechanic when one of my customers suggested that I apply to Old Town Trolley Tours. I interviewed with Malcolm and the rest is history!

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
Going fishing on my own boat!

Which living person do you most admire?
My mother!

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Amsterdam or Bora Bora!

What do you consider your greatest achievement?
My children!

What do you most value in your friends?
Loyalty!

NOVEMBER
Andrew Smith, 8 years
Vincent White Sr., 7 years
John Snyder, 3 years
Anthony Stoddard, 3 years
Wesley Thomas, 3 years
Juliet Tate, 2 years

RETAIL
Robert Gibson, 10 years
Tracey Paturzo, 1 year

OCTOBER
Mikel Godbolt, 4 years
Jamie Hamilton, 3 years
Keith Moore, 3 years
Gregory Riley, 3 years
Almost Off Season
by Charles Brazil; General Manager

October and November represent one last “push” before we head into the “off-season” which for those of us on the Leadagement CAST means a wave of frenetic planning and preparation, recruitment, on-boarding, training, certification, project completion, etc. before the page turns and we find ourselves back at Valentine’s Day and ramping up for the insanity to return on the streets. Many exciting initiatives face us this off season, as well as the completion of many projects that we’ve been working on throughout the year. One was premiered to great fanfare at the Dine South event in October our brand spankin’ new “WEDDING TROLLEY.” This custom vehicle will be the envy of every bride who decides to make Savannah their destination wedding. Kudos to Marcie, Bruce and all others who were involved in the project, as you can see by the attached pictures it is a beauty! Rod LaBranche joined us for the event and for his annual audit, and we were happy to host our fellow CASTmember from the West. It is always great to have Rod visit our operation and give us his fresh eyed take on what we are doing well and where we can continue to improve.

In October we joined community partners in supporting the 200 Club of the Coastal Empire’s BBQ in Ellis Square event. This terrific organization provides support for the families of our first responders (police, fire department and EMS) when the people who often put their lives on the line for our health, welfare and safety lose their lives. In return for our sponsorship of this worthy cause, we received 10 plates of YUMMY barbeque and our CASTmembers were the fortunate recipients. To support this great organization and their efforts in your community check out their website at www.twohundredclub.org.

So much going on, you would think we didn’t have time for anything else, but NO, with everything else we decide to host 25,000+ of our closest friends for this little event we like to call “Rock & Roll Marathon!” We provide ALL the transportation logistics and vehicles to transport everyone involved in the event over the course of four days and I have to say it is one of my proudest moments watching our entire team execute such a HUGE endeavor with such surgical precision and exemplary guest service. As with prior years the Competitor Group sent a note to us with big time KUDOS for a job well done. I will add my own praise for Marcie Covington, Jon Watkins, Jacqueline “Bean” Kelly, Jim Rafferty, Kayla Black, Kenny Gresham and the entire CAST and our partners at Above and Beyond for another year of incredible execution of this monstrous service. I took advantage of the opportunity to revisit my own personal R&R back in 2012 to run with my buddy Josh in the ½ Marathon Relay. It is a fun event, and I had a great time. In the months ahead I look forward to continued opportunities for the Savannah CAST to shine and for new ideas and projects to be hatched and completed.

Budgets loom on the horizon, and the arrival of our newest GM Steve Burress to Savannah for several weeks to drink a bit of Savannah “Kool-Aid.” I am proud to serve this group of great folks and hope this season of “Thanksgiving” finds you similarly blessed.

Operations
by Jon Watkins; Operations Manager

We have recently promoted Andrew Hill to Head Conductor. After going through season not having a Head Conductor it will be a big help to get this position filled. Now I will be able to focus more on the strategic things again to move the business forward. We had some awesome candidates and I want to thank those that threw their hat in the ring through the interview process.

Season has wound down and we continue to make plans for a huge 2016. Due to the state of the economy in Savannah we are...
trying to get a jump on our hiring so we are ready to roll when the tidal wave of guests hit. For the last few years we have hired our Conductors in January. This year we are getting a jump on it and have already hired two new conductors and Kim from our Ghost program will be coming to the daytime tour. If you know any good candidates for the position send them our way.

The trolley storage sheds at the Louisville Road location have been completed and it’s great to have many of the trolleys covered. We’re continuing the construction project with the rehabilitation and paving of the parking lot. It’s a big lot and needs a lot of rehabilitation prior to being paved. With all of the rain we have had in the last month or so we are making progress, though at a slower rate than we wanted.

Rock’n’Roll Marathon has brought 20,000+ runners to Savannah in early November for the past five years. The festivities for race week start with an expo on Thursday and Friday at the convention center. Saturday is the marathon and ½ marathon. Sunday is the 5k, 1k and kids race. We are the transportation provider for the event and it requires a huge amount of planning and literally everyone on deck to make this work. For the marathon on Saturday conductors and shuttle drivers arrive at 3:00am to get started to their designated pick up spots. The fun then doesn’t stop until we get the participants back to their pickup locations at 2:30pm. This year it was unusually hot with the temperatures hovering around 80 degrees and very humid. Because of the safety concerns with the heat the marathon was actually cut short. The city recently signed a five year contract extension for the Rock and Roll marathon so the fun will definitely continue in early November 2016. A huge thank you to everyone that participated in making the event a great success again this year. I want to especially thank Marcie Larkin (Groups Manager), Kayla Black (Training Officer) and Bean Kelly (Dispatch/Conductor) for being the cogs in the wheels that make this event go off without a hitch.

Safety
by Kenny Gresham, Safety and Training Officer

Each Monday morning a random person in briefing will draw from a hat the safety message that Sam is focusing on. It will be displayed on the Orange VW replica that was used for intimidation and now painted chalk board black to display the message. Excellent idea. The VW cutout is the last thing the driver sees as he leaves the carbarn.

The fun part is that each month I pick a sales rep. and a conductor to be the Eyes of Safety Sam who will be anonymous. He will be looking for those individuals who exhibit high standard consistency in, or in some cases, “above and beyond” safe practices each month. At the monthly CAST meeting, this individual will be recognized and given a star to wear on their shirt. They will also receive a flag or sign for their depot or trolley that says, “Safety Sam saw me.” And if Charlie agrees, a fifty dollar gift card. We’re still ironing out the particulars.

The preceding two paragraphs were written for the last Storyteller and I’m happy to report that Sam is still alive and gathering steam here in Savannah. Sam did lose some of his luster as we realized that some of the goals we wanted to achieve, like a new Safety Sam person every week and new message were just too much to accomplish. The safety message on the black VW is changed about every 10 days and done by a volunteer, Michele Price, pictured in said VW, who has a refreshing outlook and very different approach to safety. Every conductor, if they have their eyes open, will view it as they leave the Carbarn every morning.

This was our lone accomplishment, until after several attempts to jump start our ad hoc committee on the development of Safety Sam, I received several laudatory compliments on one driver, Brenda Hankinson (pictured with the Grim Reaper) who had gone above and beyond in her safe maneuver of our trolley and its guests during an ambulance emergency. She had to pull over because the vehicle was coming up behind her and had the foresight to pull way over and leave plenty of room in case the ambulance had to travel down the ramp to River St. The ambulance did. A couple of guests called the office praising our driver for her proactive safety consciousness. Brenda received the very first Safety Sam award.

Say goodbye to the old no fun, no frills Grim Reaper (and my costume for five years) Safety Officer, my favorite disguise and favorite persona, and say hello to the new jolly, laugh a minute fun Safety Officer and new torch bearer Safety Sam underneath. The picture was taken at our Halloween CAST meeting.

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

It’s been a very productive last few months for the Ghost Program in Savannah. Our actors and drivers have been kept very busy with large ridership goals and the unrelenting heat. They all do a great job for the program and continue to improve their performances each time.

We are currently learning a new script for The Andrew Low House, a magnificent mansion on Lafayette Square. Our guests will soon learn about the spirits that still call this house their own. We
hope to include this in our tour within the next few weeks.

We also recently had some photos done of our ghost hosts and conductors. Check out all the cool shots on the Ghosts & Gravestones website.

**Human Resources**

by Renee Mercer; HR Manager

What a fun couple of months! Besides decking out Maintenance and Mechanics in shiny new uniforms and aggressively tackling open enrollment, we hosted our first Health Fair and celebrated Halloween!

Our Health and Wellness Fair went wonderfully with about half of our CAST participating in the event and a healthy number completing their Biometric Screening. We provided healthy breakfast options for our CAST and had some great businesses participate, each one offering gift certificates for their services. Offerings included - but were not limited to - acupuncture, chiropractic, and yoga. When it was all said and done, we had 10 door prizes available and happy CASTmembers! All the hectic and seemingly never-ending planning was worth it and I can’t wait to see what next year will bring.

Although it is one of the few meetings held on-site, the October CAST meeting is popular at OTT Savannah! Besides Fire Safety training, we held our Annual Costume Contest. This year, Conductors took over the Winner’s Circle. We had a great competition with traditional and creative costume entries. In the end, First Place was awarded to **Tony Hall** as Boy George (sans Culture Club), and Second place to **Ted Wall** as Mario!

**Groups and Charters**

by Marcie Covington; Group Sales Manager

We survived the 2015 Rock’n’Roll Marathon! The temps were in the 80’s and the humidity was even higher, but everyone did great. Fun seeing Rascal Flatts as the headliner for the finish line concert.

Nothing like seeing 46 vehicles in a caravan through town at 3:30am staging to pick up runners. Can’t thank our partner, Above and Beyond Transportation, enough for all their help. Hollis Johnson, Owner of Above and Beyond, was up with me, without sleep, until the end. Thank you! Your TEAM is amazing!!!

I don’t think words can describe how huge the Marathon is and how much time and energy, goes into planning this four day event. We begin with the Health Expo transportation on Thursday and end with the transportation for the 5k run in Daffin Park on Sunday. In some way over this event, we touch all 20,000 runners.

I would especially give praise to **Craig Armstrong**, Sales Coordinator, **Kayla Black**, Training Officer, **Jim Rafferty**, Depot Sales Manager and **Jaqueline “Bean” Kelly**, Dispatcher, and all of our CAST Members. The lack of sleep and the months of planning couldn’t have taken place without each and every one of you! Can’t wait to Rock’n’Roll with all of you next year!

**Vendor Life**

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

Well another month under the belt! Things continue to happen here in the Vendor Department with the addition of **Steven Plunk**. He’s been a very valuable asset to our department. We have recently invited **Kathy Vaccari** to transfer to the Vendor Department from her position as a Sales Rep/Concierge at the Hampton Inn. Kathy’s transfer is being processed so we look to hit the road running once she is onboard. We continue to strategically grow the company and the Vendor Department!

**Maintenance**

by Bruce Smith; Maintenance Manager

As we wind down from our busy summer, we are taking this time for some painting and woodwork on our older fleet. We had new rubber roofs installed on all of our older fleet, that don’t leak, and they are white in color to help keep the heat down in the summer.

We have 14 Mollys in our fleet now, helping our operation to keep up with our growing ridership. We are also getting our parking lot repaved along with installing two buildings, trolley ports, to help
old town trolley tours of savannah

keep the weather off of them.

We are also in the process of repowering five of our Enterprise trolleys for the Nashville operation, converting them from propane back to diesel, with the assistance of our fearless National Fleet Manager, Joe Moyer who is assisting us through this project.

We would like to welcome our new Lead Mechanic Mike Tessanne, who worked here back in 2006. He has been a big help with the 2nd shift, helping me keep the flow of work going, and the trolleys rolling, along with of our team, Adam Blankenship, Donovan Scott, and James Gibby who have been with us for a few years now. Have a great fall!

**Depot Sales**
by Jim Rafterly; Depot Sales Manager

As we moved out of season and back to our normal tour times we were looking for the weather to cool down a bit and the humidity to die down. We were not so lucky, it stayed hot and humid with plenty of rain. Schools in Georgia and other parts of the country started school 2 weeks earlier than ever before and it showed. We struggled through August and September.

The Savannah Voice Festival ran through the month of August and we were able to add 6 shows to our Gateway Seasonal Menu as well as provide transportation. This event continues to grow and hopefully we can add more next year.

We are also in the works of adding more attractions to Gateway in the coming weeks. Some of these attractions are out of the normal for us, but one thing I can say is we will have Savannah covered with anything our guests could ever want to do.

Congratulations to our August Sales Rep of the Month Jane Erskine and our September Sales Rep of the Month Janice Emerson. Well done!!!

**Training**
by Kayla Black; Training Manager

An awesome month for Training! It seems strange to be training for our holiday tour, the Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley, when it’s still in the high 70’s outside, but that’s Savannah for you! We’re set to start our Holly Jolly tour the day after Thanksgiving, so we have to get cracking early. We had a whopping 18 conductors sign up to do the holiday tour this year, and everyone has done a great job preparing. It’s going to be a great Winter Season for us at OTT Savannah.

Edie Chancey and Dennis Pellegrino train for the Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley Tour

Holly Jolly training is “Go” with Vee Wooten, Dennis Pellegrino, and Scott Leekley

Caught you! “Undead Charlie” (Charlie Brazil) attempting to devour winners “Boy George” (Tony Hall) and “Mario” (Ted Wall)

Sales Reps, Termaine McComb and Janie “Lady J” at our Halloween CAST Meeting

General Manager, Charlie Brazil, dressed as a zombie

The Chief Conductors Trophy is a concept recognized by the Risk Management department to award our cities for great safety results. Please refer to Chris Belland’s article “Safety is First and So is Boston” article in the Vol. 19 No. 44 April-May edition of the Nation’s Storyteller for the complete story.

**3RD QUARTER STANDINGS**
**RACE FOR THE CHIEF CONDUCTORS CUP**

1. SAVANNA
2. BOSTON
3. WASHINGTON DC

The Nation’s Storyteller

**Halloween Contest Winners**
Tony Hall as Boy George

General Manager, Charlie Brazil, dressed as a zombie
Wedding Trolley

The new wedding trolley in Savannah!

CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Maleah Gasque
AP/AR Clerk; Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah

BACKGROUND
My name is Maleah Gasque. I am a local, having grown up on Wilmington Island. I’m even lucky enough to have lived in the famous Hamilton-Turner Mansion for a few years! I attended Jenkins High School and Armstrong University. I am a single mother of a 15 year old boy, Logan. In my spare time I enjoy spending time with my family and I am an avid scrapbooker!

I’ve worked in an office setting my entire career, from a Real Estate Closing Agent to Property Management. I was looking for a change in my career field and I stumbled across an ad for OTT and was intrigued. I was excited when I got the job! I’ve really enjoyed my time here and plan on planting my feet and growing with the company.

What is your idea of perfect happiness?
My idea of perfect happiness is being able to provide everything for my family that they need and being healthy and financially stable.

Who do you admire most?
My mother…she is the definition of a true “Southern Belle”

Who is the greatest love of your life?
My son, Logan. There is no love like the love of a child.

What do you most value in your friends?
Loyalty and honesty.

What three things can we always find in your refrigerator?
Pickles, Diet Coke, and yogurt

CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Savannah Electric Bike Company
by Robert “The Colonel” Hunter;
Human Resources; Vendor Rep

We would like to welcome the Savannah Electric Bike Company as our latest Vendor. We are so excited to have them on board! We are selling their tickets on Gateway, Online Vendor and Trusted Tours. We are glad they came to Savannah and look forward to a long term relationship with them!

OCTOBER
Edie Chancey, Conductor
Wanda Raimo, Sales Representative
Kirsty Hastings-Jones, Ghosts and Gravestones
Eric Coney, Supporting

OCTOBER
Michael Lenze, 3 years
Barbara Crane, 2 years
Darion Williams, 2 years

Vivian Colon, 7 years
Moulton Bailey III, 1 years

NOVEMBER
Jacqueline Kelly, 10 years
Michael Smith, 10 years
Juanita Erskine, 5 years
Rance Shell, 5 years

WELCOME ABOARD
Maleah Gasque
William McFadden
Bryce Muhlenberg
Carla Callaway-Simmons
Christopher Maudlin

HAPPY anniversary
Michael Lenze, 3 years
Barbara Crane, 2 years
Darion Williams, 2 years

Vivian Colon, 7 years
Moulton Bailey III, 1 years

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Michael Lenze, 3 years
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Darion Williams, 2 years

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NOVEMBER
Jacqueline Kelly, 10 years
Michael Smith, 10 years
Juanita Erskine, 5 years
Rance Shell, 5 years

November - December 2015
Hello from Nashville, TN, Music City USA! While I am not there while writing this article, I will be by the time it prints. I have spent some amazing weeks with the CASTmembers of St. Augustine and Savannah, and I cannot wait to take the knowledge that I have gained at each of these locations, as well as my experience and years in Key West, to Nashville to create a unique and exciting Old Town Trolley Tours of Nashville. What an amazing opportunity! We are adding our seventh OTT city in the country, and the first opening in 13 years! I get to be a part of making the Nashville operation become a reality and I’m excited beyond belief! The team that I am putting together in Nashville has bits and pieces of knowledge from all over the place. We have a sprinkling of Key West, a dash of St. Augustine, a healthy salting of Savannah, a pinch of San Diego, a dusting of Boston, a dose of Washington DC, and most of all, a coating of some down home Nashville residents. From this recipe, we are building an amazing and strong team. The excitement level is high. We will keep you posted as things progress. I can’t wait to share more photos and stories from Music City!

Benefits Call Center & Website

WHAT IS THE HTA BENEFITS CALL CENTER?
The Benefits Call Center can assist with inquiries about coverage levels, effective dates, and more. Additionally, we can help navigate through the enrollment process, as well as assist callers with interpretation of benefit comparisons, and other benefit issues. Active employees, dependents and HR representatives are all users of this valuable service.

Our Call Center Representatives are available to assist you with all of your benefit questions, and help you navigate through the confusing departments within the various insurance companies. They also can be reached via telephone to help with other inquiries, such as:

ENROLLMENT QUESTIONS
“How do I access the online enrollment system?”

BENEFIT QUESTIONS
“What is the difference between a traditional OAPIN and a HRA?”

ELIGIBILITY INQUIRIES
“My child is sick and the pediatrician’s office says the insurance carrier indicates my child is not eligible.”

LIFE EVENT MANAGEMENT
“I am getting married and want to know how to add my wife to my benefits.”

CLAIMS ISSUES
“My insurance carrier sent me an Explanation of Benefits. Am I supposed to pay it?”

ENROLLMENT AND OPEN ENROLLMENT SUPPORT
“I can’t understand my enrollment options online.”

HTA Benefits Call Center
Available online 24/7
www.htabenefits.com
Toll Free
888-416-1095
Office Hours
Monday-Friday
6:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. (Pacific)
9:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M. (Eastern)
OTT Hosts the 14th Annual Hospitality Anniversary Party
by Jeanne Coyne; Asst. to the General Manager

This year we were happy to have Billy Buchanan and his band provide the entertainment. He did an awesome Ray Charles tribute! The crowd loved the music!

Along with the wonderful food prepared by The Tasting Room, we also had a pig roast provided by Smokin' D's BBQ. The crowd loved watching Smokin' D's drive up in their fire truck, lights and sirens blaring, and on board, a roasted pig! The pulled pork did not last long!

We also had the Spice & Tea Exchange with their amazing Bloody Mary's (Chris's fave!), the St. Augustine Distillery was on board with their newest Discovery Series Rum, the San Sebastian Winery came with everyone's favorite wines, and our newest addition this year, Ancient City Brewery, came with kegs of beer. The Raintree Restaurant was a favorite of everyones with many delectable desserts.

We also had the human powered snow cone machine. Yes, that's right – a human powered snow cone machine that is a Hamster Wheel. People were able to walk inside the wheel and make the snow cone machine shave the ice. This was a huge hit with all of the guests.

Amber from Mint Magazine was on hand with so many wonderful gifts to raffle off. And we also had Victory Casino Cruises raffling off some great gifts as well.

Each year our Anniversary party gets bigger and better. This year was surely our best yet! Where else can you find Mrs. St. Augustine next to a life-sized hamster wheel and a roasted pig brought in on a fire truck!

Thanks to everyone who attended our party and a special thanks to all of our partners and sponsors for helping us make this the best party yet!!

Potter's School Tour

We have added a new school tour to our educational tours. Teachers can now bring their students to Potter's Wax Museum to see the historical figures we have from George Washington Carver to President Lincoln to Ponce de Leon. But this isn't just any tour, we offer a scavenger hunt. The kids can play "Who Am I?" and get to try and find which figures go with which questions. It makes it a fun learning experience that the teachers and the students both enjoy. Kathy and Tyna were happy to give our teachers another option for tours here in St. Augustine.
Which living person do you most admire?

Hands down, Aung San Suu Kyi, chairperson of the National League for Democracy (NLD) in Burma (now known as Myanmar) who was under house arrest for over 15 years because of her protests against that country’s military dictatorship. In 1991, she won a Nobel Peace Prize for her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights. Married to a British citizen who was living in England with their two children, she was granted freedom on the condition that she leave Myanmar never to return. She opted to stay rather than desert her people. I admire her intellect, resiliency, and unwavering loyalty to the Myanmar people and her adherence to the principle of democracy. If that was me, I would have booked out of there on the first plane!

What do you consider your greatest achievement?

I have two - the first was achieving my BA in Communications (Minor in Publishing) in 3-years (Simon Fraser University, British Columbia); the second - at my age, I’m still winning and/or placing in running races! Currently, I am first female overall in Run St. Augustine Race Series, a series of 11 road races that commence in January with the Matanzas 5k, and culminate in December with the 5k Santa Run at St. Augustine Beach. Last month I organized a running team from Old Town Trolley and HTA to run the Corporate 5k “Let’s Get Pedestrian.” Our 10-person team placed 2nd overall and 1st overall “Costume” (thanks for the idea Ryan Darrah - our theme was “tourists”). A win-win situation - it was the first ever road race for at least three of our runners - needless to say they did quite well! Thanks to Dave and Old Town Trolley for their enthusiastic support and for picking up the registration tab.

What is the trait you most deplore in others?

Cruelty towards animals.

What is your greatest fear?

Losing the ability to lead an active, physical life.

On what occasion do you lie?

When I’m playing scrabble.
You’re well-situated to explore the Historic City of St. Augustine from this campground on Anastasia Island...

And there is no better way to explore “Historic St. Augustine” than with an Old Town Trolley Tour. So convenient for the KOA guests; the staff sells the trolley tickets at the front desk and the Old Town Trolley Beach Bus stops right at the KOA to whisk the guests off to start their Trolley Tour.

They offer three ways to stay; RV Camp Sites, Cabin Accommodations and Tent Camping Sites.

You’ll find Jenn, Kelly and Ivory so willing to make your stay as memorable as possible with suggestions on what to do and see while visiting St Augustine.

You're well-situated to explore the historic city of St. Augustine from this campground on Anastasia Island. Visit the Fountain of Youth Park (known as the site where Ponce de Leon landed in 1513), the St. Augustine Lighthouse and Museum and the Lightner Museum - filled with artifacts from America’s “Gilded Age.” Anglers can cast for snapper, grouper, amberjack and other tasty fish on a deep-sea charter or from the pier that’s just a mile away. From your Camping Cabin, RV site or tent site, take a 3/4-mile walk to the ocean or enjoy on-site amenities, including a pool, fishing pond, paddleboats and Kamp K9, where your pup can run and play off-leash!

Pool: Open all year.
Max pull thru: 75 ft.
Your host: Jenn Ross.
Cruising Through October

John Welby, General Manager

October is typically one of the busiest months of the year for Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston and this year was no exception! Can you say “cruise ships”? The cruise business has exploded here over the last few years with more and more cruise lines sending more and more vessels to enjoy Boston on their Canada/New England Fall Foliage itineraries. In the month of October alone, we had thirteen days where we provided tours for the 18 ships with which we had contracts. On five of those days we had contracts with two ships that were in port at the same time. The first week of October had a six-days-in-a-row stretch where we serviced eight ships. Although the Boston cruise season officially runs from April through November, October is the single busiest month. Just on cruise ship tours alone we carried 5,289 passengers in the month of October, which is 47% of all of our total cruise ship ridership for the year which was a whopping 11,189 for 2015. In addition to that we saw huge numbers of guests arrive at our special cruise port stop (#18A) with pre-purchased e-tickets as well as large numbers of guests purchasing tickets upon arrival from our sales reps. Carrying such big numbers is no small task (operationally speaking) and we are lucky to have the type of CASTmembers in Boston that are always willing to help out. On cruise ship days it’s an “all hands on deck” mentality and everyone pitches in from conductors to sales reps, actors, mechanics and leadagers all of whom are asked to do things that are outside the normal scope of their job responsibilities. Thank you one and all!

I have been very fortunate during my tenure here to be one of the Boston representatives to the cruise industry. Although I am now the General Manager, I have continued to represent OTT Boston at some of the various cruise industry events/conferences. During the first week of October I, once again, attended the annual Florida-Caribbean Cruise Association’s annual trade show and conference. This year it was held on the beautiful Mexican island of Cozumel. Yeah, I know what you’re all thinking, but as I’ve said in the past, it doesn’t matter where it’s held as I am in meetings all day, well, most of the day anyway. I had the pleasure of being accompanied by Linda Test and Andy Kirby who were there representing our Key West operations. We met with cruise line executives, attended panel discussions and checked out the booths on the trade show floor. It was a very successful event for HTA CASTmembers. Thank you to Michael Chandler for arranging the event.

November 5th was the annual “Great American Smoke Out”. John Welby met up with Key Wester’s Andy Kirby and Linda Test at FCCA

November is the time we transition into our off-season mode, but we still had two big events. On November 5th the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum hosted a Wellness Event for HTA CASTmembers. This gave CASTmembers the opportunity to participate in biometric screenings in order to qualify for discounts on health insurance. There were several raffle prizes given away and the event was a big success. Thank you to Jean Gordon and everyone at BTPSM for putting it together. Great job!

November 19th was the annual “Great American Smoke Out”.

pm to 10:00 pm, for a total of 25 tours in one night. Most of the departures were “doubles” meaning we sent two trolleys out at the same time. We used our five black G&G trolleys plus four orange & green trolleys. The entire staff of G&G was working, plus we brought back a former CASTmember (Jonathan “Sparks” Krieger) to help out because it was so busy. Typically Halloween itself is not as busy, but since it fell on a Saturday this year, we encountered increased demand for Ghosts & Gravestones. So, we had another huge ridership day as a result and carried 592 guests! A big THANK YOU goes out to the entire G&G CAST, MOD’s, conductors and Steven Johnson (Tour Entertainment Manager) for a job well done.

The entire CAST of OTT Boston was able to relax, unwind and enjoy each other’s company at an “end of season” gathering at Tia’s Restaurant on October 27th. It was a great way to end such a busy month. (see pics) The food was great and the company was even better. Thank you to Linda Test and Andy Kirby for helping to arrange the event.

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November 19th was the annual “Great American Smoke Out”. (see pictures)
BACKGROUND

I was born in Melrose, Massachusetts in 1990 and I’ve lived in Malden my entire life. I’m the middle child between two brothers and I come from a large, close knit family with several aunts and uncles and dozens of cousins. I went to Malden High School and in my senior year, I started working at the Stop and Shop Supermarket Company where I still work part time in the florist department.

After finishing high school in 2009, I attended Salem State University where I graduated with a degree in Public History and Political Science. Along with history, one of my greatest passions in life has always been traveling and I’m happy to say I’ve started to make that dream a reality. I most recently traveled out of the country for the first time and went to Athens, Greece in March with my best friend. I’ve also been to amazing places such as Las Vegas, Disney World, Disneyland, New York City and Washington D.C. to name a few, and I hope to travel as much as I can in the future! In my free time, I enjoy being with friends and family, reading and walking my dog, Rocco.

I’ve always loved Boston and all the history associated with it, so when I saw the opportunity to work for HTA, I was immediately interested. I started working at Old Town Trolley in May and I really enjoy it. It’s awesome to welcome guests from all over the country and world to this wonderful city! Not only that, but working here has given me a much deeper appreciation for Boston and all that it has to offer.

What is your favorite vacation spot?
Probably Maine. My family spent a lot of time in York, Wells and Ogunquit when I was younger and I have great memories of that.

What’s your most treasured possession?
My dog and cat.

Who are your favorite writers?
JK. Rowling and Stephen King.

If there was one place you would live besides your current city, where would it be?
Washington D.C. I’ve been a couple times and I always find myself wanting to go back. There’s so much history and a lot to do there. It’s a beautiful city.

Who is your favorite hero of fiction?
Atticus Finch from To Kill a Mockingbird.
On December 16, 1773, scores of men boarded three vessels docked at Griffin’s Wharf and systematically destroyed 340 chests of East India Company tea. For several weeks prior to the destruction of the tea, the citizens of Boston were attending town meetings, debating the continued “taxation without representation” being forced upon them by King George III and Parliament, and discussing what was to be done with this tea once it reached Boston Harbor. On a daily basis, we strive to tell the compelling tale of the events of this fateful night, but every year on December 16, we put on one of the largest moving theatrical productions in the country!

The Annual Reenactment of the Boston Tea Party is a historical presentation like no other! The planning of this event is a year-round affair taken on by The Creative Team of the BTPSM (Evan O’Brien, Josiah George, and Kelly Horan Galante) in conjunction with our partners at Old South Meeting House. As the years pass, the footprint of this event in the city of Boston continues to grow.

The planning stage unofficially begins on the morning of December 17 during the “debriefing” meeting with Shawn Ford (Executive Director), The Creative Team, Ted Galo (Site Manager), Dan O’Neill (Asst. Site Manager), and, if he’s in town, CEO Chris Belland. The bleachers are loading out on the 17th and we are discussing how the previous night went and immediately begin to think about how to make next year even better! Our meetings begin to ramp up in late summer as we begin the permitting process.

An experience such as this includes many moving parts – the rehearsals with Reenactors from across New England, the scripting of the multiple legs of the evening, meeting in Boston’s City Hall in the permitting process, meetings with the light and sound design teams, the prepping of the site, etc. The Annual Reenactment is a true light and sound extravaganza! We are lucky to collaborate with very talented contractors for this event. Our lighting designer, John Cuff, and sound designer, Rick Brenner, have worked with groups such as Boston Ballet, Boston Lyric Opera, and the Celebrity Series of Boston. MARR Scaffolding provides the bleacher seating set up along the waterfront. This year, with cooperation from the city of Boston, we are aiming to add 600 seats – bringing our total to 1500 seats for the viewing of the “destruction of the tea”! We are hoping for upwards of 5000 spectators to join us as we “dump the tea into the sea”!

All of this would not be possible without the hard work in the realm of crowd control by Dan O’Neill. Dan spends several weeks reaching out for volunteers in various forums - using Craigslist, visiting local colleges, and presenting for our sister company at Old Town Trolley Boston. Our volunteer corps continues to grow and we are honing our practices to aid in the safety and security of our thousands of guests!

The Annual Reenactment is the biggest night of the year for the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum. Everyone on site is asked to take part in some respect and to help make this a huge success! We are proud to tell this story everyday but this night is truly special for all of us. If you haven’t joined us in the past, you should consider making THIS part of your yearly tradition!
Puika Yuen is the newest concierge at the Sheraton Boston. Puika was born in Hong Kong and came to Massachusetts when she was three years old. Her parents moved to this area so that their three children would have better educational opportunities. Puika grew up in South Boston – close by the OTT trolley barn. After high school, Puika moved to San Francisco to try out West Coast living. She worked in real estate and after three years she decided to move back to Massachusetts to be closer to her family. Soon after moving back, Puika became reacquainted with an old friend named William. They started dating and 9 months later he proposed. 4 months after that they got married and one year later their son Travis was born.

In addition to family life, Puika keeps busy with work and school. She is working toward a bachelor’s degree from Regis College in Nursing and Public Health. She has two more years to go. Eventually Puika would like to work in developing countries to help provide better medical equipment and care and help improve health hygiene and vision to people. In the meantime, she is very happy to be working as a concierge at the Sheraton Boston. Puika has fallen in love with the job. She quite enjoys helping people explore Boston and letting them discover how beautiful the city is. Puika told me that she never realized how beautiful the city of Boston is until she took the Old Town Trolley tour. She happily recommends our tour to her guests. She likes that our tour guides have inside knowledge of and know little known facts about Boston and are funny and detailed. Puika also likes that the Old Town Trolley Tour allows guests to see almost all of Boston in the most efficient manner.

In her free time, Puika enjoys catching up on some favorite TV shows on Netflix, snowboarding and doing cross stitch. A new favorite hobby of Puika’s is swimming. She just learned to swim this year so that she would be able to participate in her son’s swim lessons. Thank you Puika for all you do to promote Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston.
The Nation’s Storyteller

KEY WEST
by Linda Test, Key West General Manager

Key West always has something happening, whether it is a small local event or a nationally recognized event. Each November, we are visited by the rumble of Super Boat International, with dozens of large power boats and their support teams. Seven different classes of boats raced over three days, with some boats averaging over 114mph on the water. The best view on the island came at the top of the Shipwreck Treasure Museum (let’s not let that secret out!) where the unobstructed views made it easy to see every turn.

In the middle of the race week, we pause for something more somber: Veteran’s Day. In Key West, we close Duval Street and showcase our military, veterans, and community organizations that are proud to support our veterans. Each year, trains and trolleys participate in the parade, usually with our own veterans driving. To all those who have served in the military, thank you for your service.

Passing the Torch
by Leslie B. Allen, Head Conductor

By the time this article goes to print I will have assumed the role of Head Conductor at our Old Town Trolley Nashville operation, a role I am looking forward to with great anticipation for the exciting challenges to come. However, that sentiment comes with equal parts sadness for those wonderful people and places I’ll have to leave behind.

If even once in their lifetime a person gets to work with a group of folks like the ones I’ve worked with the past four years, that person can count themselves blessed. It goes without saying that they are all hard working, dedicated HTA CASTmembers committed to providing safe, fun, quality tours. But... these folks are much more than that. They are my family.

I’d like to thank: Linda for believing in me, Luis and his wife Heather for taking me boating to Marvin Key, Vee for driving my car out of flood waters before they reached the tailpipe, Tim for making me laugh even when I was perturbed, Sawaya for loving everyone, Grace for being Grace, Pam for her healthy appreciation of the absurd, Justin for giving me faith in a younger generation, John G. for his commitment to boce (who knew?), Aaron for his Disney soundtracks, Judi for her matching Tervis, Richard G. for allowing me to rename him Warburton, Kevin S. for his good nature, Kevin D. for his backbone, Phil for seeing the humor in things, Marta for putting up with us and for playing a great “straight man”, and all the other fantastic folks who keep the trolley wheels turning while keeping daily life interesting. Even if I haven’t mentioned you by name, you are in my thoughts.

As for my replacement; Kristy Zabosky, a stellar storyteller, Key West Native and veteran OTTKW driver is taking hold of the reigns here as Head Conductor. She is very familiar with the nuances of the tactical dispatching required to keep our trolley operation running smoothly at full speed. She also has an attention to detail and, most importantly, a good rapport with her fellow CASTmembers. I have every faith that she will continue to be a strong addition to the Leadagement team in Key West. Please offer her your continued support. Good Luck, Kristy!

Bon Chance, my friends! Off to Nashville!

Cruise Ship World
by Kevin Delahanty; Cruise Ship Liaison

We are heading to beginning of season now. The cruise ships are increasing. Between December and January there are 90 ships. With the hard work of our sales team we are increasing ridership time and time again. There is always constant training with the Ship staff and our sales reps. Ship staff changes frequently so it’s an ongoing process. We like to have all sales reps work cruise ships to help with their street sales. The process of approaching guests and closing the sale in short time is a technique that is mandatory on the piers. We continue to look for ways to improve what we do, whether it is changing tours, improving sales techniques or just taking a breather before the next round of organized chaos.

Happy anniversary

OCTOBER
Gail Sibley, 13 years

NOVEMBER
Rodney Buster, 9 years
Christopher Holmes, 5 years
Kurt Brandt, 2 years
Norman Bruein, 1 year

WELCOME ABOARD
James Sottile
Gary McDonnell Jr.
The concept for Weddings to Go Key West™ came as a result of Ray and Eileen’s own wedding(s). They decided to get married twice, once in New England where they lived at the time, and once in Key West where they hoped to eventually live and luckily for them, they do now!

They’ve seen so many couples STRESS OUT about their weddings and end up not enjoying the day at all. They didn’t want that to happen to them, so they opted to put together the most simple but fun wedding.

Their first wedding in New England was held at their home and was a backyard barbeque for about 20 family members and friends. One of the guests said it was the best wedding she had ever been to, and that if she ever got married she wanted hers to be exactly the same way…simple and stress free. The best part was that they never told anyone they were getting married! It was that element of surprise that made it so much fun for everybody.

Their second wedding for their family that lives here in Key West was at sunset at Fort Zachary Taylor Park at “our” spot. Very simple, with only a few family members in attendance. Dinner later, at one of Key West’s finest restaurants with special entertainment just for them capped off their evening. (Simple, and yet those that attended still talk about it fondly today.)

It was at that spot at Ft. Zachary Taylor just a few years later that Weddings To Go Key West™ was conceived.

Their wedding packages aren’t for everyone. They’re designed for those couples who want to concentrate on the marriage…and not just the “wedding”.

They’ve had lots of experience with weddings, as a Town Clerk and Justice of the Peace in Massachusetts, as a wedding photographer and of course, with their own weddings. They’re both Notaries Public and Wedding Officials in the State of Florida and Eileen is a CWP (Certified Wedding Planner) through the Wedding Planning Institute.

They will personalize your ceremony for you, if you’d like. No two couples are alike and no two ceremonies should be, either.
We all know that our health is the most important thing we could ever possess, and it’s so great that we work for a company that is so dedicated to preserving it! As everyone knows, HTA has kicked off a new Wellness Platform and we have all hit the ground running sending out letters to make everyone aware of it. Big parts of this initiative are the wellness fairs/biometric events, and now that they have come to a close, I wanted to take a moment to thank everyone for their participation and hard work! Pulling off the feat (and what a feat it was at times!) of planning and execution of events like this can be daunting, but the GM’s and office managers made the process almost completely painless while still managing to run their operations.

Just a quick snapshot: it was great to see how each city really embraced the idea of having local people/health organizations at their individual fairs. San Diego’s fair was first; they had several vendors that ranged from Jamba Juice to Team Beachbody. Key West’s most popular vendor was Dr. Ashley Hoyt who does alternative medicine. She brought a massage therapist who did massages and was in high demand the entire time, she also did acupressure and acupuncture. St. Augustine made their fair unique by having an all organic food truck on site. Savannah had chiropractors and a Yoga studio. Washington, D.C. had a great turnout with Planet Fitness and Boston did a healthy food sample-and even included doggie treats for the furbabies. All in all, the fairs were very successful and I am already excited to see what everyone does next year!

Paul Walker, the famous actor, said: “You know, all that really matters is that the people you love are happy and healthy. Everything else is just sprinkles on the sundaes.”
Once again, Boston goes cold turkey for The Great American Smokeout®. According to the American Cancer Society, smoking kills around 480,000 Americans each year, a number that Boston is taking great strides to lower. So on November 19, 2015, Leadagers rolled up their sleeves and made turkey sandwiches for a good cause—a day of national smoking cessation. Tommy the Turkey took great pride in hand delivering them to CASTmembers out in the field along with information on how to quit smoking. Like HR manager, Tracey Paturzo says: “That’s just how we roll”. Way to go Boston!
**BACKGROUND**

I was born and raised in Augusta, Georgia and was one of the few students that went from 1st grade to 12th grade in the same small town of Hephzibah, Georgia. My father was in the Army and retired the year I was born, so when my parents bought their first home in Georgia, we stayed there. I have 2 living sisters and 1 that passed in 1992. My dad passed away from cancer in 2003, but my mother, thank goodness, is still alive and still lives in Augusta.

While attending high school in Hephzibah, I was in charge of the new automotive service department at the high school, so you could usually find me underneath the hood working on race cars. I was the first female to graduate from my high school with a Certificate of Automotive Repair. When I graduated, I stayed in Augusta for a few years after marrying my high school sweetheart. I wanted to travel and get out of the area and he didn’t, so he stayed and I moved to Jacksonville.

After living in Jacksonville for a year, I moved to New York for a brief time and then to Woodbridge, New Jersey. I worked mostly retail during these years, but knew I wanted to do more with my life. After leaving the worst snow and ice storms I had ever experienced, I moved back south to Charleston, South Carolina. In Charleston, I completed my undergraduate degree in Business and Computer Technology.

On September 9th, 1989, my entire world changed. I was living on the Isle of Palms, a small island off Mount Pleasant, South Carolina when it was hit by Hurricane Hugo. I lost all of my possessions including my clothes, personal items like pictures of my family and friends, and my apartment. I was lucky that I was safe, but it took the wind out of my sails for a long time. I moved back to Augusta and lived with my parents until I could figure out what to do next.

I think that event changed me and how I looked at life. I decided then to live life to its fullest every day and never “wait” for the right time to do whatever you want to do. Fast forward to May 2008 when I decided to move to Key West and I never looked back and have no regrets. Life is too short…live it!

**Which living person do you most admire?**

I would have to say my mother. She has overcome some many personal obstacles in her life from being brought up in an orphanage from a very young age, losing her daughter (my sister) and her husband (my dad) and surviving cancer when she was 42 years old. She turned 80 years old this year and is still as active as ever!

**What is your greatest fear?**

My greatest fear is to be diagnosed with any form of Alzheimer’s. The thought of losing my memories of my life and my loved ones would be unbearable. Which is why I am a supporter of stem cell research.

**What is the trait you most deplore in others?**

The most deplorable trait I see in others would have to be those individuals who “bad mouth” the United States. My father fought in WWII and the Korean conflict in order for me to have my freedom. Supporting and respecting our leaders should be the norm but there are those who choose to speak harshly about their decisions. Everyone has the right to their opinion, but it think it can be expressed in a more respectful manner.

**What is your favorite occupation?**

My favorite occupation is my current position as a Buyer! I’m not just saying this as a plug either! What other job can you work with fun people, travel and shop for a living! Every woman’s dream I would say! Seeing the new trends and having the freedom to make decisions based on my collective knowledge of the industry, then seeing it pay off in the sales at the store level is basically the best reward of all.

**What do you most value in your friends?**

In my small circle of friends, I most value their honesty and their ability to “pick up where we left off” when I see them again. Some friends I see frequently and others not as much, but my true friends never make me feel bad for not picking up the phone every week or two to talk to them. When we do connect again, it is like we just saw each other the day before. My friends, like myself, will always give you an honest answer to any question – good, bad or indifferent.

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**Undefeated!**

HTA sponsored CIT Office Manager, Mary Martinez’s son’s team the HTA Cowboys. They were undefeated for the C Division of Junior Football League.
Congratulations!

Human Resource Payroll Manager, Dell Lundsford got married to his husband Donald Allman in Key West. Officiating the ceremony was Pastor Steven Braddock.

Florida Keys Community College Alumnus Ed Swift (center) receives a LeRoy Collins Distinguished Alumnus Award from the Association of Florida Colleges (AFC) at a gala held during the association’s annual conference in Orlando on November 12. L to R: AFC Executive Director Michael Brawer, AFC Marketing and Communications Commission Chair Travis Jordan, Swift, FKCC President Dr. Jonathan Gueverra, AFC President Dan Rodkins.

Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum manager, Evan O’Brien recently got married to his wife Kat in Massachusetts.

RETAIL DIVISION
- Evan Sellers
- Dion Clarke
- Steven Radloff
- Dana Oursbourn
- Bernard Novack
- Chrislord Riche

ADMINISTRATION
- Kristina Vilciauskaite Shephard

GHOSTS AND GRAVESTONES
- Robert Hill
- Kyle Caskey

OCTOBER RETAIL
- Curtis Craig, 19 years
- Nelson Nodal, 18 years
- Violeta Mihaylova, 12 years
- Svitlana Gladka, 4 years
- Lisa Chubbuck, 4 years
- Kristina Agent, 3 years
- Matthew Hudak, 2 years
- Kate Ferguson, 2 years
- Gergory Carey, 2 years

GHOSTS AND GRAVESTONES
- Mindy Tucker, 3 years
- Jennifer Sisley, 1 year

LITTLE WHITE HOUSE
- George Lennox III, 5 years
- Bruce Woodard 3 years

KEY WEST AQUARIUM
- Aubry Tucker, 1 year

NOVEMBER RETAIL
- Dalia Angelosanto, 21 years
- Magdalena Witczak, 20 years
- Robert Basista, 10 years
- Kelly Summers, 9 years
- Lisa Quast, 3 years
- Mary Dalton, 2 years
- Karen Brandt, 2 years

GHOSTS AND GRAVESTONES
- Ashley Dixon, 2 years

LITTLE WHITE HOUSE
- Paul Hilson, 11 years
- Bruce Julien, 3 years
- Chris Stone, 1 year

KEY WEST AQUARIUM
- Robert Murphy, 6 years