2013 National Meeting

by Ed Swift IV; COO of Historic Tours of America

Historic Tours of America’s General Managers and Department Heads recently gathered together from around the country to attend the 2013 National Meeting. This year the host city was Savannah, Georgia and boy oh boy did they roll out the red carpet for our Leadagement team. If you have not been to Savannah, you really need to put it on your bucket list as the city’s beauty is so profound that it even touched General William Tecumseh Sherman and influenced him to leave the town unscathed during the Civil War.

It may be worth a trip to Savannah just for the food alone. “Put a little South in my Mouth” is now one of my favorite sayings which is something we all did at Lady & Sons Restaurant, featured on our Paula Deen Tour.

The meeting wasn’t all fried chicken and gravy as we spent much of it focused on identifying ways to increase guest satisfaction by improving our systems and processes. Our emphasis on guest experience and tour quality lead to a discussion on what our greatest strength is and it was unanimously agreed that it was our people. From our front line CAST to our Leadagers and department heads, we are all focused on guest service and I feel truly blessed to work with such amazing people.

Our management team was treated to an Old Town Trolley Tour of Savannah by the uproariously entertaining Denise who regaled us with stories about pirates, cotton, the port and the history of the revolutionary town plan dating back to 1733. Our CAST in Savannah truly treats guest service as an art form and everyone in attendance appreciated their southern hospitality.

As part of our company philosophy states we attempted to, “make work days into play days” by having some fun between presentations on insurance, marketing, city reports, network updates, ticketing, recruiting and others. Christian Belland and Kevin Beede dressed as superheros (photo right) during their outstanding presentation.

Thank you to everyone that made the 2013 National Meeting a success! Visit page 38 for some more great photos!

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With what happened a few weeks ago, we have to ask ourselves, “Is America still great?” Yes, we have the largest economy on the planet and, for a great many, one of the highest standards of living ever achieved in history. We also have close to a thousand military installations around the globe and are expected to step in for any and all conflicts deemed immoral but then we are chastised as bullies and berated as imperialists for such incursions. Against the backdrop of some measuring sticks that might say we are a great nation, however, we also have burgeoning problems with an increasing number of our population falling below the poverty line while wealth is being concentrated into fewer and fewer hands. Our education that purports to “leave no child behind” is leaving an entire generation behind while our hungry global neighbors advance in virtually every category of education.

Perhaps the most egregious thing of all which may even be the root of so many of our problems is the tragic inability of our national leadership. One has to start with the president who, while purportedly a great communicator, cannot seem to translate vision into practice. Congressional leaders are living in a bubble of electoral isolation and see their duty as no longer serving the people but in getting re-elected. As I have said many times before, this is a primary cause of the fact they no longer spend any time together knowing each other as human beings but as partisan fundraisers for agendas that never connect.

Certainly, it was the events of the past several weeks that started me thinking about this but it was also the serendipitous receipt of something called the Buffet Rule which purportedly is the thoughts of the famous Nebraskan investor, Warren Buffet. I cannot vouch for the validity of whether these thoughts are his but I believe most of the factual information is correct and whether his or not, they are some pretty good ideas. While it is too extensive to relate here, it goes something like this. The problem with our country is we have created an elitist class of “rulers” that gives retiring presidents and congressional members’ salaries for life that are approximately $200,000 per year while the average salary of a teacher or that of a deployed soldier is around $40,000. If we want to make cuts to the national budget, he and I have some suggestions on where to look. It is interesting to note that these elected positions which, at least I thought, used to be viewed as honorary service are now lifetime entitlements. Once elected to office, these salaries and the attendant benefits go on for life. In this regard, and in the same sentiment, all laws passed for citizens should apply to the lawmakers. In order to solve the entitled elitist attitude of our highest leadership we should:

1. Not provide lifetime tenure or pension.
2. Congress should pay into and receive the same Social Security as all citizens.
3. Congressional pay raises should not be voted upon by themselves but rather the electorate or they should merely receive cost of living increases.
4. Congress should, as all citizens do, invest in their own retirement plan.

Most of all, however, congressional leadership should have term limits and should not be allowed to make any laws for the citizens of this country that do not apply to them. Perhaps it is the mark of a great nation that it is represented by those who sincerely believe in service and that it is an honor to do so. I still think America is a great country because we have the power to change things we do not like. In this day of incredible and very democratic ability to communicate, it seems to me that if we do not like what we are presently experiencing in terms of the bickering, indecision and global adventurism that is bankrupting us spiritually and financially, we have the means to change. At the same time, it is a great nation that has the will to do so and, after all, we are the land of the free and the home of the brave … aren’t we?
Out with a Bang!

by John Welby; Operations Manager

Normally we end our season in October with a bang, busy with leaf-peepers, cruise ships and Ghost & Gravestones tours. This year was all that plus we ended it with a few more “bangs”; the General Manager left, the Depot Sales Manager left and one of our Vendor Reps went out on maternity leave. Oh, and did I mention, the Boston Red Sox won the World Series! (sorry Charlie). Of course the World Series Championship Parade took place on Saturday, November 2nd; a day that our last cruise ship was in town and a day yours truly was out of town. Needless to say we had our hands full. But, being the true professionals that they are, the entire CAST of OTT Boston banded together, stepped up and got the job done. Thank you to one and all for your hard work, dedication and support during a challenging time.

Matthew Murphy’s going away cake and gathering.

Above is the picture of young Sam Carter (middle and his mom). On October 19th, Sam was the BTPSM’s 200,000th paid visitor since we re-opened in 2012. Ironically, Sam is a 5th Grader at the AMERICAN HERITAGE SCHOOL in Pleasant Grove, UT. Sam was very excited to be our 200,000th guest. He says that his teacher is going to be so excited because he is a big history geek and knows EVERYTHING about the Boston Tea Party!

We gave Sam a Tea party Mug and Tea (thank you Retail), and complimentary tea and cookies in Abigail’s (thank you Tea room), as well as taking his picture and making him feel important.

Sam loaded this pic to his Instagram account right away and said we could use it to post on our Facebook and twitter…etc (hello Kelly!)

An excited fifth grade history student from an American heritage school; I couldn’t think of a better 200,000th guest.
I would like to start out by saying congratulations to John McKinnon, lead concierge at the Hilton Boston Downtown Hotel, for becoming Boston’s newest member of the Les Clefs d’Or. After months of filing paperwork, answering tough questions about Boston and the service industry in general, and getting tons of recommendations from fellow concierges, John received notice that his keys were on their way on September 10, 2013. Way to go John!

John McKinnon has worked at the Hilton Boston Downtown Hotel for the past eleven years. It has been his first and only hotel job. As lead concierge he heads up the terrific concierge staff which, besides himself, includes Kristen Gatta and Jolene Connaire. The Hilton concierges are big users of the Trusted Tours & Attractions website. When asked why the Hilton concierge desk only uses Old Town Trolley Tours, John said that they “are absolutely the best tour in Boston”. The two day ticket with the Boston Harbor cruise and the Boston Tea Party Ships & Museum is a huge selling point for them. When guests are in doubt of what to do, John shows them that Old Town Trolley Tours is the best deal in town and happily off they go.

Old Town Trolley would like to thank John, Kristen, and Jolene for being loyal vendors over many years. I look forward to seeing John wearing his Les Clefs d’Or keys the next time I am at the Hilton Boston Downtown Hotel. He has worked very hard to earn them and will wear them proudly.
BACKGROUND
I was born December 28, 1973 in the midst of a blizzard. I guess that’s why my family calls me “a force of nature”. I’ve lived in Boston (Dorchester), MA my whole life. No matter where I travel to the Boston accent comes with me and I use it with pride! Immediately after high school I knew I had to work. A friend of mine was employed by Old Town Trolley Tours of Boston and encouraged me to apply. I did. Before I knew it, I was welcomed as part of the family. Being a sales representative for about a year and a half really taught me a lot; not only about making a sale but about interacting with the general public and getting a feel for what they are looking for in terms of a great stay overnight in Boston or a family fun week packed with educational and exciting things to do. Back then, we had to carry our booths and metal money boxes in one hand while balancing the tickets and a huge radio. It was a lot of work but it remained the one job I always looked back on and wondered, “What if I stayed?”

Well, several jobs and many years later, I find myself back at Old Town Trolley. This time, as an administrative assistant, I can use all of my experience from the past and apply it to my position. My co-workers and management staff really make a huge difference. I’ve honestly never met a nicer group of people. They encourage me to do more both with my career as well as my education. Currently, I attend the University of Massachusetts, Boston majoring in Communication Studies. My plan is to attend Boston University in the spring of 2015 for Film and Television Writing

Q | Which historical figure do you most identify with?
A | Joan of Arc (Jeanne D’Arc)

Q | Who are your favorite writers?
A | Dan Brown, Robert Ludlum, John Douglas

Q | Who is your favorite hero of fiction?
A | Robert Langdon

Q | If you could choose one reality TV show to be on, what would it be?
A | Dance Moms. I’m not a mother myself but I’m addicted to the drama!

Q | What do you consider your greatest achievement?
A | I’d like to think it hasn’t happened yet.

Congratulations Beth!

On October 28, 2013 Beth Cohen, one of our Vendor Account Managers, gave birth to twin baby boys. Beth and her husband, Rob Josephs, and proud parents of Corey Samuel Josephs (4 lb. 13 oz.) and David Kenneth Josephs (5lb. 4 oz.). Beth and her twins are doing well. We wish the new families a lot of love and happiness.
I’m in “The Club”
by Jerry Miller; General Manager

When I walked into 2640 Reed Street in Washington DC eight months ago, I really didn’t know how the CAST was going to respond to me, to my personality, and to my leadership style. Dave had been here for a long time and had been instrumental in building the CAST, both front line and Leadagers.

Yes, I have received [positive] comments from CAST members, expressing their feelings about me being here, and yes, a few Leadagers have told me how glad they are that I am here. I have received calls from Chris, Ed III and Ed IV, expressing congratulations on our ridership and P&L numbers. I have even received congratulatory calls from other General Managers!

It makes a “newbie” feel good.

But the best so far for me came after this morning’s briefing. When I was done with our briefing and was ready to dismiss the CAST, Lauren Sheldon stood up and began talking about how important Halloween was to her. She went on to say, “and in celebration of Halloween, we all wore our favorite costumes.”

I was puzzled because as my eyes scanned the room, nobody was in a Halloween costume. I was looking at a sea of white shirts, navy blue pants, etc. At about the same time that I finished scanning the room, everyone in the room held up an 8.5x11 black and white picture of me. The room fell out!

Once you become the brunt of a joke, you know you have been accepted, and are now a member of “The Club”.

Empowerment is Service with a Smile…
Operationally Speaking
by Eric Holmes; Operations Manager

What a great couple of months. We were graced with the presences of Ed Swift III, Chris Belland, and Piper Smith. If I didn’t know better I would have thought we were having an old fashioned evaluation.

Fortunately, that was not the case but it was good to see some of the executive staff here in Washington, DC. For me personally it was good to see Mr. Swift again. He shared information with the CAST about the direction of the company. Then, as we talked one-on-one, he shared with me the fact that he carries a copy the fourth chapter of Philippians around in his bag wherever he goes? After talking to him I preached that same chapter in a sermon entitled “Everything You Need is in You” Thanks Mr. Swift.

Mr. Chris Belland arrived in Washington a few weeks after Ed left. The CAST was scared and excited because some of them had never met him before. During and after his stay with us, several CAST members expressed their surprise and delight that the CEO of the company spent time just talking to them. My response was simply “That’s the way he is.” During our talk he asked, “How is the family?” It dawned on me that he not only knows me but most of my family as well. He has officially changed my name to Reverend. I think I’ll order a new name plate for myself. Thanks Mr. Belland.

Then finally after about 9 – 10 years she showed up. Piper Smith made her way back to Washington. It was great to see her again. The last time she was here, she and her crew gave our office a total make over. They cleaned from top to bottom. We didn’t get any of that this trip, I guess she was too busy. She spent most of her time riding tours. Maybe I was right, this was an old fashioned city evaluation. I can’t wait to read her comments.

Operationally, we are still busy, busy, busy. Even with the government shut down, the wheels on the trolleys kept turning. Busy is not normally associated with the month of October for Old Town Trolley Tours of Washington, DC. However, that is exactly what we are. There are several projects going on simultaneously. Even with all the backstage preparations and planning going on, we managed to exceed my expectations by delivering flawless service to the thousands of people who participated in the Army 10 Miler this year. Despite the challenges we faced, we managed to pull it off again!

Special thanks to Eric Chapman for coming up with the plan and executing it to perfection. Eric’s original assignment was to drive a trolley during this massive undertaking. That plan quickly changed while myself and a few other Leadagers were trying to come up with a way to turn lemons into lemonade. We were not given enough barricades to do what we wanted, exactly the way we wanted, to ensure we could provide great service. Then Eric showed up. He quickly assessed the situation and offered another plan. I liked the plan so much, that I decided to change his assignment. Eric was now site supervisor of the north parking lot. He was in charge of set up and operations of plan C. Plans A and B just were not any good. So, with the help of three rookies BJ (Ticket Rep), Johnny (Ticket Rep), Suly (Ticket Rep), and Loretta (Operations Manager Trainee), and a host of other foot soldiers, including myself, Eric executed a great plan. While everyone that
One CASTmember did an outstanding job, one CASTmember quick thinking and willingness to step up and take charge made Old Town Trolley Tours of Washington DC look really good to thousands of people. I believe we cut our wait time down to 15 – 20 minutes this year. That being said I’ll take all the credit for a job well done. It was my quick thinking to switch CASTmember roles that saved the day. Well that is the way I’ll tell the story!

Writing this reminds me of something that was shared with me in February 1996, and something that I’ve been sharing with every training class since 1998:

Empowerment Is “Service From The Heart”

We Believe:
• That we must attempt to handle problems at their source;
• That you have the responsibility to do what it takes within your realm of authority to satisfy the needs of our guests and each other;
• That you were hired for your good sense. Use it to take care of each other and our guests.

Depot Sales
by Teresa Butts; Depot Sales Manager

There’s not much to report in the Depot Sales Department. The government shutdown took the wind out of our sails (sales?) for October. The Ducks more or less shut down early, and overall sales were not good. However, having the awesome team that I do, they didn’t complain, but instead kicked it into high gear and made the best of it. They tried even harder. So, even though our sales weren’t fabulous, my sales team sure was! Thank you DC sales representatives for being a sales team I can be proud of! Sales representative of the month for September was Calvin Watson with 137%, and for the month of October was Anthony Sadler with 107%.

Dennis is a One Man Fixing Crew
by Malcolm Barton, Maintenance Manager

Hard working, dedicated, and professional are just a few of the terms that describe Dennis Laqua, one of the fantastic team members on the service lane crew. Dennis is originally from the island of Grenada and has been working for Old Town Trolley since June of 2012. Although generally quiet and reserved, Mr. Laqua’s positive attitude and upbeat nature are a great asset to the maintenance team. He’s the type of person who sees something that needs to get done and then he does it. He is a self starter and incredibly reliable. If given an additional specialized project, his ability to complete it along with his regular work in a timely manner is very impressive. I am fortunate to have him on my team.

Safety is Social
by Stephen “Mr. Holiday” O’Brien; Safety Officer

Great challenges are met, and the “impossible” is accomplished. An individual might coordinate and inspire such feats, but ultimately, it’s the group (us!) who make great things happen. The so-called Greatest Generation is certainly an example of this. Today, the term “crowd sourcing” and “social” are popular. The power of group awareness and of focused mental and physical energies is awesome.

What challenge at HTA is most worthy of a social focus? Hint: It’s the condition without which no business activity would be possible. Yes! Safety is social...and here’s why...and how it can become more so.

Lots of things are unsafe. It might be a habit, an intersection, a sidewalk, a shelf or an attitude. There’s no way all unsafe things can occur to each of us individually. However, when we talk, share, and discuss what we know and observe, our safety readiness is dramatically enhanced. Is your morning briefing “safety social?” Isn’t there an observation you’d like to share? Maybe it’s a trick or practice that keeps you safer. Maybe it’s the altered timing of a traffic light that you observed for the first time yesterday. We should all hear about it. Share it!

Our perception of the importance of safety grows as we all talk about it. It’s good for safety to become more important to us. Share. Be a Safety Socialite...because Safety really is Social.

Charters Rule
by Abe Burgos; Charter and Group Sales Manager

Greetings charter fans. After October’s Army Ten Miler, I must congratulate my entire city. Yes folks, as I write this, it is November and I have made my year goal.

Since Eric has already touched on the Army Ten Miler, I think I’m going to end it there. Short, sweet and to the point. Actually, I want to include something. I got an email asking why should someone come to DC in the winter. Because I was already up to my nose in charters and We the People Educational tour, I gave the question to Stephen O’Brien. Here’s what he wrote:

Washington is filled with remembrances of service and sacrifice. The sacrifices did not take place at room temperature; most included a lot of walking and...
The Nation’s Storyteller

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weathering of elements; even unfathomable discomfort. The lack of crowds, too, in the wintertime enables a kind of reflection and contemplation not available during other seasons. An increased gratitude flows from this enhanced act of remembrance. Yes, come to Washington in the winter. Dress warmly, and remember warmly.

Well said Steve O. Well said.

Conductor Keith Moore getting ready for the madness that is the Army Ten Miler.

old town trolley tours of washington, dc

CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Eric Chapman
Head Tour Conductor; Washington DC

BACKGROUND
I was born in Southeast, Washington, DC. Sadly, my civil servant parents decided to give up government work and move back to their home state of South Carolina when I was child. Of course, I went kicking and screaming, strapped to the hood of my dad’s Ford Thunderbird. I attended elementary and high school in Chesterfield, SC with the Golden Rams. I played the saxophone in elementary, I avoided playing the drums, intentionally, not to be compared to my “Superstar Drummer” brother, Kirk. That lasted until the 9th grade. Then I was intrigued by “the call of sports”. I was fast, still am, so I tried out for football. Then the coach instructed me to run a post pattern across the middle of the field. After the birds stopped singing, team manager became a more appropriate assignment for me. I was the teacher’s pet in every class, but English literature, Mrs. Foote’s Class. I wondered if being her next door neighbor had anything to do with it.

My first job was at a place called “Grits and Groceries”. I walked into the store at the age of 13, and the manager asked me, “Do you want a job?” I responded, “I gotta ask my dad!” After telling my dad of the opportunity for employment, he proceeded to go to “Grits and Groceries” and interview the manager. At the age of 14, I received my commercial driver’s license. The school district allowed high school students to drive a school bus, they called it “get paid to go to school”. Yes, I am really that old. I returned to Washington, DC and took the Civil Servant’s Exam and scored fairly high. I was called within an hour of taking the exam to schedule interviews with the IRS, Department of Energy and Department of Commerce. After a brief tour at Energy, I finally landed at the IRS. I moved up through the ranks fairly quickly. After 12 years, I decided to start my own business. After nearly 12 years, I closed up shop and took a brief two year respite, called a recession.

After my brief respite, I was encouraged to return to work by my daughter, Aliyah. Her encouragement was simple, “Dad can I have…?” After being motivated to return to work, I noticed a job announcement on Craig’s List for a conductor at Old Town Trolley. So I applied. After talking to “Super Fly Abe” on the telephone and auditioning with him in person, I was interviewed by “the visionary”, Eric Holmes. After spending a couple of years as a conductor, I am honored to be the Head Tour Conductor of Old Town Trolley of Washington, DC. Come take a tour on a trolley!

Q | Which historical figure do you most identify with?
A | Frederick Douglas
Q | What is your greatest fear?
A | Slamming my finger in the car door
Q | Which talent would you most like to have?
A | Piano player
Q | What three things will you always find in my refrigerator?
A | Ketchup, Relish and Salad Dressing
Q | Who is your favorite hero of fiction?
A | Wonder woman, need I say more?

Our job is done and we celebrate with our new hats!
As Old Town Trolley Tours of Washington DC continues to explore new avenues of business in Old Town Alexandria by adding new vendors, it takes a lot of effort and commitment to make things happen, and one of our great new partners is The Ramsey House Visitor’s Center on King Street.

Melanie Fallon, the assistant manager to Renee Cardone, is a true Virginia Lady with a genteel personality and an infectious smile that greets hundreds of visitors each week. Her passion for the color and history of Alexandria comes to life as she leads guests through the streets that Washington walked with her informative commentary as well as her knowledge of where to go and how to get there. This year, guests can now broaden their Northern Virginia experience by picking up their tickets for Old Town Trolley Tours in Washington DC at Ramsey House.

A resident since age eight, Melanie is a native if you ask her, and more than happy to discuss the beauty of Mount Vernon, the drama of The Torpedo Factory history, or just offer suggestions for a great place to lunch as visitors enjoy their “Extraordinary Alexandria” experience. The folks at Ramsey House and the Alexandria Convention and Visitor’s Association are true “Caretakers of The American Spirit”.

Look for future pieces in the newsletter regarding our 401(k) plan and retirement savings. For questions, please contact Marc at meichberg@ingham.com or (305) 671-2200 ext. 1103.
Our 12th Anniversary Party fell on a very auspicious date this year – 11/12/13. All the stars must have been aligned just right, because the party simply couldn’t have been a bigger success. Over 500 people came to enjoy our cookout, which has become an annual tradition for the local hospitality industry in St. Augustine. Chefs from the First Coast Technical College Culinary School cooked the hamburgers, hot dogs, and sausages, while A1A Aleworks supplied the side dishes and manned the beer tent. Wine was courtesy of the San Sebastian Winery, and the Spice and Tea Exchange provided mulled wine and Bloody Mary’s. The Raintree restaurant served up samples from its outstanding dessert menu. Mint Magazine hosted the raffle and donated all the door prizes, which ranged from custom flower arrangements to gift cards to several local restaurants.

But this year we added something special – SNOW! To kick off the holiday season, we brought in plenty of snow, along with traditional Christmas carolers and even Santa and Mrs. Claus to kindle the holiday spirit for all our industry partners as we lead up to the Nights of Lights.

Other sponsors this year were Coca-Cola, Verizon wireless and the Jacksonville Sharks, with music provided by Night Wing and D.J. Dan. A great time was had by all!

Halloween Express 2013

Our Ghosts & Gravestones CAST had a blast this Halloween season with the roll-out of our latest Halloween adventure, Halloween Express 2013. Realizing there was a market for a more family-friendly product, we created an interactive ghost-busting experience for young and old alike.

As our guests checked in for their adventure, they were given “ghost clappers” to hang around their necks, as their Ghost Host explained that they might need these, in the unlikely event that a “displaced spirit” tried to intercept them in the course of their tour through the Nation’s Oldest City. Maybe it was something in the air in the month of October, no one was quite sure, but there did seem to be a little more ghostly activity than normal. But, the Ghost Host assured the guests, this was very rare, and all they had to do to shake their ghost clappers and yell “Be Gone!” to any spirit they encountered, and they would be perfectly fine.

Of course, not just one but three of the infamous spirits interrupted the course of the tour. First, at the Old Jail complex, guests encountered “THE INMATE”. This poor spirit was doomed to be hanged the next morning and was attempting to board the trolley with his stories of woe and mistreatment. Guests screamed with delight as he threw his rats into the crowd then demanded them back so he could have them for supper.
VENDOR SPOTLIGHT

Casa Monica
by Melissa Mezick; Vendor Representative

The majestic Casa Monica Hotel, named after the mother of St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is an exquisitely restored 1888 landmark in the heart of historic St. Augustine.

Franklin Smith built the Casa Monica, using the poured concrete method that he brought to St. Augustine, in a Moorish Revival style that gives the building the look of a castle. But with only three guests registered on its opening date of January 1, 1888, Franklin Smith decided to sell the building and everything it contained to Henry Flagler, only four months after it opened, for $325,000. Flagler renamed it The Cordova Hotel.

Later (in 1903) Henry Flagler decided to build a walkway to the Cordova from the Alcazar, and the hotel began to be referred to as the Alcazar Annex. In recent years, it has regained its original standing. It was acquired by Richard Kessler in 1997 and completely renovated. It reopened as a hotel December 10, 1999. After many changes, today it is a Kessler Autograph Collection hotel and was given back its original name—the Casa Monica. The Spanish/Moorish design along with the hotel’s first-class service and elegant decor transport visitors to a world and another time, when Flagler’s grand hotels attracted Gilded Age luminaries.

The luxurious accommodations are complemented by amenities such as a relaxing outdoor pool and the 95 Cordova Restaurant. The staff at this AAA Four-Diamond-rated hotel are always happy to have you take a look inside.

Then it was off through the night with stories galore until the next spirit was encountered, that of Ida Alice Flagler, Henry Flagler’s second wife who delved deep into the occult and eventually was declared insane. Dressed to the nines in 1890s high fashion, but totally mad, Ida implored the guests to take her to a séance, telling them the Tsar of Russia wanted her as his bride, but not until she got rid of Henry! She passed out her “magic stones” and sweetly asked to be allowed aboard the trolley. When denied a seat, Ida Alice went totally mad and, to the delight of the guests, she was fended off by the “BE GONE!” and use of the ghost clappers.

Leaving a screaming and wailing Ida Alice behind, the tour made its way towards the Castillo de San Marcos. It was there that our guests met their final unfortunate soul, Don Diego. Searching for his lost ancestral ring, with broad displays of bravado and charm, Don Diego tried his best to get the guests off the trolley to help him in his quest. As his frustration built and his demands increased, giggling guests grabbed their ghost clappers and yelled in unison “BE GONE!” At that, Don Diego turned and stomped off in indignation to continue the quest on his own.

Amid laughter and giggles, with guests adding the sound of their clappers to their applause, the Halloween Express arrived safely back at the Welcome Center, having had a Halloween adventure that is sure to become a yearly family tradition!

Our thanks go out to everyone involved – Noble Lester, Susan Harrell, and Amanda Pinkerton, who created, scripted and directed the tour; all the talented ghost hosts who participated and, most especially, to The Inmate, Ida Alice, and Don Diego.

The Halloween Express 2013 cast: Kevin Baetz as The Inmate, Marcia Vojcsik as Ghost Host, Julie Ferry as Ida Alice, and Justin Register as Don Diego.

October - November 2013
Randy Rose  
Operations Manager, St. Augustine

BACKGROUND
I was born in the town of Winchester, Tennessee, just off I-24 between Chattanooga and Nashville. My family moved to Palatka, Florida, when I was 12 years old. I come from a long line of truckers. There was never any doubt in my mind what career I was going to choose, since my family has been in the trucking business in one form or another for many generations.

The trucking industry went through some hard times a few years ago, and my Dad suddenly took a job for a trolley company in St. Augustine called Old Town Trolley. I thought he must have taken leave of his senses. But as the trucking business got even worse, it was only a couple of years later that I joined my Dad as a conductor for Old Town Trolley.

That was the best move I ever made. I have loved every minute of my two years working for Old Town Trolley. Several months ago, our General Manager, Dave Chatterton, took a chance on me and promoted me to Operations Manager. I know I have found the best job in the world for me. I can’t imagine doing anything else.

Q | What talent would you most like to have?  
A | I’d love to be able to paint and draw. Anyone with that talent really impresses me.

Q | What three things will you always find in your refrigerator?  
A | Bologna, mayo and Dr. Pepper

Q | Which living person do you most admire?  
A | My Dad. I would be happy to be remembered as half the man he is.

Q | What is the trait you most deplore in others?  
A | I don’t care for people who lie.

Q | What is your greatest fear?  
A | I really, really, really dislike spiders.
E-COMMENT CARD

TOUR: 2 Day Old Town Trolley Savannah Pass
Amount paid: $71.98
Type: Trustedtours.com

ORIGINAL TICKET USER: T. Moneyhan

CUSTOMER COMMENTS:
The first trolley we rode was good and Tony was a good guide. After that one and only ride, The trolley was the only bad portion of the trip. Trolley stops were not marked, except on a cartoon map. The corners had no trolley stop signs. One we went to said the stop had been changed to another location. We never found the stop and ended up driving our car. Did not use the day 2 ticket. When we tried to get info from one stopped trolley, the driver refused to give us directions. The large, middle aged Afro-American lady driver just yelled at us and kept driving. You could hear her loud mouth as she drove off. She told us to call her supervisor. Class act.

COMMENT CARD RESPONSE:
Did you have a good time: NO
Was it worth the price: NO
Will you recommend us: NO
Safety grade: Good
Cleanliness grade: Good
Employee/Guide grade: Good
Employee name: Tony was good. Other lady horrid
Where did you stay: Hotel
Length of stay: 4 days
Method of travel: Car
Where did you hear about us: Web Search
Your age range: 61+

CUSTOMER RESPONSE:
Good morning,
I must say I am a bit surprised to hear from you, but I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please understand that we did indeed use one of the days tickets, but not the second. I truly did not expect a refund and am impressed that your company and your actions offer such. Thank you. You have restored my faith in good business. I, too, regret this situation.
T. Moneyhan

OUR RESPONSE:
Thank you for choosing Old Town Trolley Tours. My name is Jennifer Gregg. I am the Guest Relations Coordinator for all of the Old Town Trolley Tours and attractions owned by Historic Tours of America. It is very upsetting to hear of the poor service you received. Please allow me to extend my apologies for the negative experience. I am passing your comments on to the General Manager Charles Brazil, I’m sure he will share my feelings of displeasure and regret.
This tour is 100% refundable and I will be assisting you with this process. Please consider this a confirmation of your request and me your primary contact from this point forward. I will be writing you a check and mailing it to you via the USPS. It takes approximately 4-6 weeks to process your request. My numbers and addresses are listed below.
Thank you for your feedback. I will be forwarding your comments to the GM of the city, as well as the CEO of the company. We consider our guests feedback valuable in improving our services and locating opportunity areas.
If I can assist you further please let me know.
Sincerely, Jennifer Gregg

CUSTOMER RESPONSE:
Good morning,
I must say I am a bit surprised to hear from you, but I appreciate your interest in this matter. Please understand that we did indeed use one of the days tickets, but not the second. I truly did not expect a refund and am impressed that your company and your actions offer such. Thank you. You have restored my faith in good business. I, too, regret this situation.
T. Moneyhan
Fall in Savannah is one of the most beautiful times of the year. The weather is perfect and folks come from all over to visit one of the most beautiful (and at this time of year temperate) cities in the United States. October is a very strong month for the Old Town Trolley Tours of Savannah operation, and this year was even better than most, with total ridership of over 32,000, harkening us back to the boom days of April. November has been strong so far as well, and the banner week of Thanksgiving promises to be a terrific way to finish the “season” and settle into the quieter times of December and January. Don’t be deceived though, just because the loop isn’t all that busy doesn’t mean we aren’t running around like ants with our anthill kicked over taking advantage of our small off season to prepare for a banner 2014!

We are all abuzz here with talk about our National Meeting, taking place for the first time EVER here in Savannah in November. We cannot wait to show our Executive Staff and the General Managers of our great company all the things that make Savannah THE BEST operation in the HTA Nation and all of the unique beauty, mystique and history that makes Savannah such a great city. We plan to roll out the red carpet and give heaping doses of southern hospitality, southern cuisine and southern personality, that even the crustiest New Englander in the bunch (Welby) will have a y’all on his lips when he departs.

We launched a new tour in October, the “Eat It & Like It Tour” which is a progressive dinner done in conjunction with a local (set to be picked up regionally) television show hosted by news personality Jesse Blanco (www.eatitandlikeit.com). Our guests get to sample cuisine and wine pairings from five different local restaurants throughout the city and hear about the burgeoning culinary “scene” here in Savannah. The tour is offered every Sunday, and we are looking forward to exposing a lot of our guests to the wonderful food experiences available to them in what is becoming recognized as an up and coming “foodie” town.

We also added another great asset to our Leadagement Team in the form of our dedicated “trainer” - Kayla Black. With her background in history and education she will take our script content, tour product and conductor performance to the next level. She is currently working with Garry Patrick on revamping our Ghosts & Gravestones script, and I look to see more great things to come with her involvement. Welcome aboard Kayla! We also welcomed Larry Clearman to our operation as a tour conductor. Larry previously worked in our Boston and Key West operations, and we are happy to have him join our team. One less conductor Jon Watkins has to recruit for the winter class!

There is so much going on in the city as well, from Halloween in “America’s Most Haunted City” to the first annual Savannah Food & Wine Festival, to the third running of the Rock & Roll Marathon-Savannah, that we sometimes don’t have a moment to enjoy the terrific work that our entire CAST is doing day in and day out, but rest assured, we appreciate it, as do our guests. Looking forward to the arrival of all our visitors, whether our CEO, President and COO, or one of our 300+ thousand guests coming to experience Savannah as you can only aboard the Orange & Green. Ready Welby, say it with me: “all aboard y’all”- and “see y’all soon.”

Safety and Training
by Kenny Gresham; Safety and Training Officer

It never seems to cease; we have a big training class in the beginning of the year, do retraining early summer months (stuff I missed initially), have some G&G training during the summer, and then start the fall training for our Holiday Tour. Our Holiday Tour started very humbly just over ten years ago with me having to beg my sister and niece to come and ride, so that the newspaper people would have someone to interview. Actually, the tour started a few years prior to that but was short lived. We had one conductor read from a voluminous script while we pattered along. Fortunately, she just touched on the high points and we never hit anything. We had an actor portraying James Pierpont who came on board and played the banjo. Remember, he wrote Jingle Bells either here in Savannah or in Massachusetts. That is still up for debate. The song was originally called “One horse open sleigh”. I came on board the trolley at one point and did a weak portrayal of Father Christmas while trying to be funny (no wonder the tour was short lived). I think we did two or three tours. The current Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley Tour actually began in 2002.

For the Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley Tour we start training in October with the tour going live the day after Thanksgiving and...
Gingerbread Holly Jolly Trolley!

running until Christmas Eve. One year we trained on Halloween in the black Ghost and Gravestone trolley (it was the only trolley that had a cd player at that time) with the trainees on board in costume for that evening’s Halloween CASTmeeting. We were playing Christmas songs as we tooled around and had people looking at us at every turn. I hadn’t had a lot of sleep the night before and felt like I was on the airplane with all the convicts in the movie, Conair.

Our Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley Tour has a short script primarily a couple of paragraphs between songs. The training consists of timing and working the songs into the tour seamlessly. The route is pretty simple. The tour is two hours long and stops at the Davenport House (a historical landmark in Savannah) to see what Christmas in the early 1800’s was like, and at the Westin Resort where the guests get gingerbread cookies and cider. They also get to view the area’s largest gingerbread village; magnificent gingerbread houses and creations that were made by locals and judged for their brilliant detail. One cannot imagine the detail that goes into these gingerbread homes, businesses and creations. They are a sight to behold.

After the Gingerbread village, we drive through the Festival of Lights that has over 90 different light displays. From lighted snowmen to reindeers to castles. The road we travel on goes through the Westin golf course and one of the displays has a lighted golfer swinging his golf club and the lighted club actually moves. Pretty neat. During this ride, we have Christmas carols playing in the background.

After the Festival of Lights, we are now ready to start back to the Historic District. We’ve spent almost two hours having fun. The tour has something for everyone. The script, though short, has some gems like; Woolworth sold ornaments for the price of a nickel or dime (remember, dime store) and sold over $25 million worth in just a few years. I believe that is something like seven billion ornaments. Our guests experience the history from the Davenport House, the amusement and awe at the gingerbread village, and Christmas lights at the golf course. Savannah is still steeped in Victorian period ambiance and does not have a lot of Christmas lights in the downtown historic district. This was a complaint on previous Christmas tours. No complaints anymore, just fun!

Just when one begins to think, “How will the next Code Red rear its ugly head”; believing I’ve covered all the bases, everything is safe and we’ve done all this before...BANG! Our stopped trolley got struck on Bay St. BANG AGAIN! Our Vendor Rep., in his personal vehicle, gets hit while delivering tickets. AND AGAIN Our ghost supervisor gets struck head on by another vehicle whose passenger was shouting, “WHOA” as their truck made an illegal left turn into the headlights of our now defunct Mazda. Fortunately, our CAST member was just shaken up. It never ceases.

This year our Savannah Operation will drive over 300,000 miles and the one constant I’ve learned is that if you don’t think it will happen, it will. Everything that one supposes will never happen to me is just a yet. Meaning - yet to happen. Just when I thought we had maybe turned the corner here and had a handle on what we needed to work on to improve on our safety record, people started hitting us. I understand mirror deflection on highly truck traveled Bay St., but the three BANG, BANG shots were pretty significant. We talk about defensive driving, but hard to defend when struck from the rear or by a very careless other driver.

The lesson I got from this and try to convey to all our drivers is to not take anything for granted and believe that if I’m not doing what I’m supposed to do like using turn signals, doing safety spiels, and using seat belts, that I’m opening the door to a bunch of non-needed grief that could have been avoided. The BANG BANGs were unavoidable, painful accidents that one could consider life things that are meant to be hard to deal with. Not doing what one is supposed to do safety wise is not one of those life things that is supposed to go bad, but is one that is supposed to go, “Thank God I asked the guest to sit” or “Whew. Glad I had my seat belt on. I had a gut feeling to use it today.” If we cover the bases and keep covering them, what we reluctantly do in the beginning becomes habit in the end and safety becomes second nature. The unexpected becomes the expected. Most of the time.

HR Report
by Claude Fleeman, Maintenance Administrative Assistant and Jaimee Drayton, Director of first Impressions
Jon Watkins; Director of Human Resources

It has been a whirlwind of activity in our call center in October and November. The recent launch of our Living Social Promotion where guests can purchase tickets (B.O.G.O.) has caused an increase in our reservation activity. While October is usually busy, the Living Social Promotion made October feel like July.

The October CASTmeeting is our absolute favorite of the year and we were excited to congratulate conductors Jacqueline (Bean) Kelly and Ms. Lillie Belle Shaw as costume contest winners and recipients of restaurant gift cards! Also, kudos to all the other people who came in costume to the October cast meeting to make our evening so festive.

Never missing a beat we moved right into The Rock and Roll Marathon the first week of November. This was our third year of a five year contract to provide transportation for the runners. With over 20,000 registered runners this year they kept us busy; which is just the way we like it, especially during such a fun environment. This event is a great opportunity for the city of Savannah and we have helped to make it a success every year. It truly makes Old Town Trolley and The City of Savannah feel like a team.

Yet, there is only a brief moment to catch our breaths as we are...
already preparing for our “Holly Jolly Holiday Trolley” tour and shuttle service for the Festival of Lights on Hutchinson Island. This too is a fun event every year and seems to grow in popularity with our local residents as well as our many visitors during the holiday season. How many companies can you work for where you can be so tired at the end of the day and yet have a smile on your face because of the activities in which you just participated? Not to mention the feeling of comradeship with your fellow co-workers and with the city in which you live.

In just a few days we will be welcoming our fellow OTT managers from the other five locations to “The Hostess City” of Savannah. We look forward to having you here and meeting you all. Welcome to the South, y’all!

We are always grateful for a late taste of season until we spring back into things next March! As our OTT Philosophy manual states, “Laughter is a sign of success!” While our Human Resource Manager, Jon Watkins enjoys his European Cruise, we have remained light hearted and jovial despite the higher volume of calls. We would like to officially welcome Darion Williams and James Collins to our fantastic Maintenance team, and Larry “Dallas” Clearman as our newest Conductor. Sadly, we bid a fond farewell to Tommy Alitzer. Thank you Tommy for your hard work and dedication during your time here, you will be missed!

Happy Holidays to ALL of our fellow OTT CASTmembers. May your holidays be Happy and bright.

**Operations**

*by Marcie Larkin; Operations Manager*

It’s been Rock ‘N’ Rollin’ here in Savannah! We are getting ready for our 3rd Annual Rock ‘N’ Roll Marathon. We have spent a multitude of hours preparing for this. Bruce, Maintenance Manager, has had our Mechanics working all night and day making sure our fleet is ready for our ride out to Tybee Island. We will pickup an estimated 750 runners to bring them to the starting line at 5:00am. Kenny, Safety/Training Officer, has pulled just about every hair out of his head trying to make sure we are all following our Safety Procedures. Joyce, Charter Manager, will be my roommate here at the office because there is no time for sleep! Love ya, Joycee! Overall, we are honored to run all of the transportation for this event. Our rookie CASTmembers have been asking questions about this event and it’s so hard to explain it to them; how amazing and exhausting it is at the same time. I sure hope our visiting guests have a great time and can take advantage of watching this event.

**Maintenance**

*by Bruce Smith; Maintenance Manager*

Our slow season is upon us, after a busy October and the first week of November with the Rock & Roll Marathon when the whole fleet went out for transportation, traveling distances they don’t normally travel; it went off without a hitch. Marcie Larkin (Operations Manager) and Joyce Ellis (Charter Manager) did an awesome job coordinating and executing the transportation; it went very smooth.

We are still in the process of converting our fleet to propane. Our five Molly’s are now completed and we just completed one of our ghost trolleys #134. #126 is next; the goal is to have all completed by February. All the ones that have been converted are doing very well. The Conductors like them because they don’t need to stop at the gas station after their tour and also saves time and payroll.

We completed removing the windows in two of the Victorians #126 and #250 and installed the isinglass; that ends all of the window issues we were having. #173 and #165 are next. We are also going to install chairs in the ghost trolleys like some of the other cities for the ghost host to sit; it will be safer for the host instead of standing and add a different feel to the tour.

I will be going to Ft. Lauderdale to pick up our 15 passenger van that Joe Moyer found for us to add to our shuttle fleet. I have the painstaking task of going to the beach to pick it up; I am always willing to take one for the team. It should take me about five days, or longer.

**Vendor Department**

*by Robert “The Colonel” Hunter; Vendor Sales Manager*

As we welcome the cooler temperatures of the Fall season, the pace tends to slow down a bit allowing us to catch our breath and enjoy the upcoming holidays. Cool crisp mornings, the changing colors in the trees, the smell of wood fireplaces...all great things that help us welcome a cooler and slower time in Savannah.

Just before Halloween, Charlie, Garry and I visited current and potential vendors as part of our “cookie” program. What better way to have fun and sell ourselves than reanimate “Ghost Busters”! Yours truly was excited to play the ghost, with special thanks to our Lead Ghost Host Kristina Prince for her costume and make up skills!

It was a pleasure hosting the General Manager’s meeting and having the opportunity to visit with so many folks that we rarely get to see face to face. It was also great to see Rod LaBranche again and we look forward to his audit review. A special thank you to Vince Leone for spending so much time with Craig and me discussing the upcoming Order Entry system. We are very excited about this new system and look forward to getting it up and running in Savannah!
Wishing you good tidings through this holiday season! “Enjoy the Christmas spirit; God came into this world to serve, not to be served. We must be servants of others. Put others ahead of yourself.”

**Depot Sales**
*by Jim Rafferty; Depot Sales Manager*

Summer has officially ended and Fall is upon us. October offers Savannah some of the best weather of the year and the guests showed up to enjoy it. We had an outstanding October.

As we dive headlong into our Fall season I would like to give a shout out to our rookies who have been doing a fantastic job; Tramaine McCombs, Ed Pulkinen, Holly Edenfield, and Maggie Beneviedes. As they continue to learn and grow, I could not be more proud of how they have stepped up. They continue to impress as they get more experience. A special thanks to our concierge at the Hyatt, Sally Kruger, who was instrumental in helping set up Concierge Night at The Westin Savannah Harbor Golf Resort and Spa. The event was well attended as concierges from all over Savannah attended and shared ideas and experiences.

A big congratulation goes out to our Sales Representatives of the Month, Rance Shell for August and Petya Kostadinova for September; they are true professionals and a pleasure to have them on our staff.

And finally, I would like to thank the entire sales team for their hard work and dedication. They do a fantastic job every day and it’s a great feeling to know I have an outstanding group of people who give it their all every day. I would also like to thank the entire Leadagement and Administrative Staff for their help in my transition to this position as they have been there to answer my questions. Thank You!

**Haunted Happenings**
*by Gary Patrick; Ghosts and Gravestones Manager*

Greetings from the Trolley of the Doomed! I love saying that.

We’ve been having a great year on the nightly G&G program and we continue to move further ahead on beating our budget for the year. I’m blessed with an exceptional team of actors and drivers that throw themselves totally into their jobs each evening and always attempt to give the pickle. Thanks to Mike Harris our

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The Biltmore RV Park was established in 1958 by Mr. and Mrs. William Hiers. After Mr. Hiers death in 2000, Mrs. Hiers and her daughter Barbara became a team and began operating the campground together. Along with the campground they have a very interesting antique and collectible store. They are proud to say they are true Savannah natives who are able to share Savannah’s wonderful history with their camping guest. Some have said they can talk your ears off about Savannah. The Hiers Family are 5th generation Savannahians and are able to give a true account of how this beautiful city has changed over the years. They can also tell you about the many changes that have occurred in the camping industry over the last 55 years.

We are glad to have Mrs. Hiers, Barbara and their staff as vendors of Old Town Trolley Tours Savannah. We have a close relationship with Biltmore RV Park; they are like family! We look forward to many more years together.

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Hi! I’m Kayla Black, the new OTT Savannah Trainer and these are my three dogs, Radar, Link and Nora! Three dogs may sound like a handful, but they are the best fur babies you could ask for! I got Radar right out of college and he is our little corgi man. Link, the black and tan guy may look tough but he’s a big softy. Nora Jones is the pretty girl of the family, and we found her running around Savannah as a stray when she was just a puppy. They are the best thing to come home to after a long day of work, and I wouldn’t trade them for the world!
G&G Supervisor for his hard work in keeping the program running at operational level.

Ghosts & Gravestones has been going through some changes in the last few months. Always trying to keep up with the current trends in ghost hunting, we are currently in the process of having Infrared cameras added to The Gribble House portion of our tour. This will give guests an opportunity to see some spectral shadows moving through the property. We are also updating our route and script to incorporate new stories. Changes have also been made in the Chandlery Show on River Street. Thanks to Kayla Black and Ryan McCurdy for working with G&G and getting these new additions implemented.

Chris Wood, G&G actor and theater tech, recently redid our Ghostly displays at the Welcome Center and the Simply Savannah Booth on River St. We are expecting to generate increased sales with these changes. Thanks Chris! Signing out from Spooky Town...

Groups and Charters
by Joyce Ellis; Groups & Charters Manager

Well, the weather is starting to cool down, but that doesn’t mean we’re slowing down!!

We started October with providing transportation and tours for over 100 of Delta’s International Sales agents. They are stationed all over the globe and are responsible for booking and overseeing guests coming into our cities. As a thank you, I was given a nice set of wine glasses with the Delta logo. Ok, I’m not a wine drinker, but who am I to turn down a free gift? Thank you Delta, keep sending guests our way, everyone loved Savannah!!

The following week, we transported and toured the State of Georgia Department of Transportation, Board of Directors, for their annual meeting. This is a good group to show off our transportation skills to.

By the middle of October, Marcie Larkin (Operations Manager) and I were invited to the Historic Savannah Foundation’s annual Gala. We are their preferred provider and transported guests from Cocktail parties to the Gala. All of the CAST loved seeing Marcie and I dressed in something other than our usual work costumes. Geeeshh – you’d think they’ve never seen two women in evening dresses by the way they flocked around us like paparazzi with videos, cameras....wait.....where’s that red carpet! Once again, we surpassed the expectations and everyone had a great time!!

We continue to exceed expectations whether it’s weddings, or small cruise ships or Paula Deen tours/transportation. Effective the end of this year, we will be the ONLY tour company providing the Paula Deen Tours in Savannah. We recently transported guests to Uncle Bubba’s restaurant for a Deen Family book signing.

We are heavily involved with the Concierge Council, part of our Tourism Leadership Council of Savannah. The Westin recently hosted approximately 50 guests consisting of concierges, sales reps and front line staff across Savannah. I’m pleased to say that OTT-SAV represented 1/3 of the guests there. You’ll notice the photo of Merry Bennett (concierge at the Westin) and me enjoying the s’mores at the end of the evening.

November 7th – 9th, Savannah once again hosted the 3rd Annual Rock-n-Roll Marathon and for the 2nd year OTT-SAV ran the transportation and shuttles. This year we had 19,000 runners plus friends & family members. After three long days with very little sleep, Marcie, Bean and I are glad it’s over until next year. We hired and coordinated approximately 59 vehicles including motor coaches, trolleys and everything in between. Once again, everyone arrived to race on time and returned to their hotels safely. Can’t ask for anything better than that!!!

As of this writing, we’re eagerly awaiting everyone’s arrival next week as OTT-SAV plays host to our annual meeting. Welcome to Savannah, y’all!!! We have exciting things in store for y’all. Remember, what happens in Savannah, stays in Savannah.

More fun and travels from Savannah coming, stay tuned!
BACKGROUND
I was born July 17th, 1958 to Peggy and Ray Strippy. I'm named after my mother (Peggy Joyce Strippy), it's a southern thing. As a true native of Savannah, I was born in the "old" Mary Telfair Hospital. I had the idyllic life growing up on the water on Isle of Hope. Graduated high school at the age of 16, with a full four year scholarship to Armstrong Atlantic University.

Unfortunately, I only went two years and quit. I thought I knew everything I needed to know as an 18 year old. Boy was I wrong, and that's my biggest regret to this day, not finishing college when someone else was paying for it.

I have two daughters; Kristen is 33, living in Jacksonville, FL with my three grandchildren (Isaac is nine, Lauriana is six and Brae is 14 months) and Melanie is 23 and just moved back home from Atlanta, GA. I'm fortunate that she's both a daughter and friend as a roommate, along with her (or is he mine now?) dog Hudson. He's a lab/poodle/Jack Russell mix; he's the body of a lab/poodle with some hyper activity of a Jack Russell. Found on the side of the road in the back of a pick-up truck.

I was an insurance agent with a major firm in downtown Savannah for many years. Then my father passed away in 1998 and I started to rethink about life in general. Life is too short not to be happy. I decided to leave the insurance world behind and applied for a job with Old Town Trolley Tours as a sales rep.

I was interviewed by Eric Holmes (yes, THE Eric Holmes of DC fame), and he persuaded me to apply for the conductor position instead. Boy, I'm glad he did. I started my career with OTT-SAV on March 22, 1999 and never looked back. I'm gone from Conductor to Safety/Trainer to Group & Charters. Charlie Brazil had to persuade me to take this position in June of 2006. Boy, I'm glad he did!!! I'm having fun and doing what I love; meeting new people every day and making their memories of Savannah the best possible ever.

Q | What is your greatest fear?
A | Having one of my children or grandchildren die before me.

Q | What is the trait you most deplore in yourself?
A | Procrastination

Q | If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?
A | A cherished, pampered, lovable family dog like a lab or golden retriever. Everyone loves them, they're great service animals and I'd get to play, relax, eat all day and have someone rub my tummy.

Q | What is your most treasured possession?
A | My mother's recorded voice.

Q | What three things will you always find in your refrigerator?
A | Eggs, milk, juice.
Our new double decker trolleys showcasing the US Capitol Building
Families Enjoy “Kids Free October”

by David Thornton; General Manager

During the entire month of October, families with children can enjoy special deals at more than 105 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 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 and 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 region’s sunny weather and warm temperatures and enjoy a number of fun-filled fall activities.

September Sees the Return of Cruise Ships

The Port of San Diego will kick off the 2013-2014 cruise season with the arrival of the year’s first ship, the Holland America Zaandam. The 1,432-passenger vessel will be returning from a four-day Pacific Coast cruise which began in Vancouver, B.C.

Old Town Trolley sees a nice bump in business with charter tours booked through the cruise ships. Our day’s ridership will go up 30-50%, so we welcome the ships back to San Diego.

The Port of San Diego’s cruise season runs from September through May. Currently 70 vessels are scheduled to arrive, but that number may change as the season progresses.

Although the number of cruise calls has declined over the past few years, the Port of San Diego is confident that business will rebound. The Port of San Diego estimates the cruise ship business will improve late 2015-2016.

Veteran’s Day Parade

On the 11th day of the 11th month, thousands of San Diegans gathered to see, honor and celebrate our active and retired military. The Embarcadero along San Diego’s Big Bay waterfront hosted the.

Hello Erica,

I could send you a book full of pictures but I wanted you to see some of the “stories” of the day with the Honor Flight trolley in the Spirit of ’45 entry of the parade. The trolley allowed the WWII veterans to be in the parade but also gave the kids access to talk to the veterans, to thank them, to perform for them, to learn from them. Thank you to the Old Town Trolley Company for making so many opportunities for the veterans and the kids on Veteran’s Day! Dave Smith and his team at Honor Flight took such great care of the veterans (of course as always!)........I heard a couple of the veterans say, “Wow, what more could they do for us? We have everything we could want for this ride in the parade”.

During the parade when the trolley stopped, the parents would come to bring the kids to shake hands with the veterans in the trolley. This was so touching.....even as the trolley started up again, the veterans were reaching out to shake hands with the kids.

Thank you again for make this amazing day possible. We love Old Town Trolley Company! And we are so grateful!

My best,
Linda

27th annual Veteran’s Day parade. The San Diego Veterans Day Parade is produced by Veterans Week San Diego. The parade is open to all and free of charge to view or to participate. President Eisenhower dedicated November 11 as Veterans Day in 1954, and called upon all citizens to participate. As Veterans Day is observed
nationwide, the San Diego Veterans Day Parade recognizes the contributions of all of our Veterans from every branch of Armed Forces in all eras of service. Our 2013 Parade includes “A Tribute To Vietnam Veterans”, during the USA 50th Year Commemorative of the Vietnam War 1962 – 1975. A long-deserved special thank you will be shown to all US Veterans who served in uniform during those Vietnam War years. The entire San Diego community participated in this important Veterans Day tradition, and welcomed all sponsors, donations, and volunteers alike. Look at the photo of “Rosie the Riveter” in front of a trolley on the left.

Old Town Trolley Tours and San Diego SEAL Tours were represented having donated five trolleys and a SEAL to carry various veterans groups. The SEAL, as in previous years’, represented the Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument Fund. The trolleys carried Eagle’s Wings (Eagle’s Wings offers Bereavement Support to Widowed Veterans and Spouses), American Ex-Prisoners of War, the Distinguished Flying Cross Society, Honor Flight San Diego and VIP’s to the viewing stands before the parade. It is both an honor and a privilege to have our vehicles in the Veterans Day Parade driven by some of our CASTmembers, who are all veterans themselves.

San Diego SEALS
by Mark Keeler; Head SEAL

Just at the Autumnal Equinox, Captain Darrell McNurlan and 1st Mate Simon Kedward hosted the SEAL for enthusiastic guests at the Chula Vista Harbor Festival. For a nominal fee guests of the Festival could take a 30 minute tour on land and into the Chula Vista yacht basin aboard our Amphibious SEAL vessel.

In November OTT and SEAL tours were invited to the Veteran of the year Awards Ceremony held at the Scottish Rite Temple in Mission Valley. Each year, along with OTT leadager, a veteran from the staff is invited. This year’s invitation went to Darrell McNurlan. Darrell served in the United States Navy in the “Silent Service” the Submarine Navy, and is now serving as a captain in our Amphibious Navy of San Diego SEAL tours.

Also in November The SEAL was the “Float” in the Veteran’s Day Parade carrying friends and family of the “Vietnam Unit Memorial Monument,” a memorial to Swift Boat and River Boat crew that proudly served in the Vietnam War. Captain Darrell McNurlan, U.S. Navy, Captain George Adams, U.S. Coast Guard and 1st Mate Matt Lester, U.S. Army, acted as crew hosting their fellow Veterans.

The SEAL crew held their annual “End of Season Dinner” hosted by Captain Darrell McNurlan at his Coronado Cays Yacht Club. Nearly 30 SEAL crew, past and present, and guests attended the annual gala.

Trolley News
by John Savage; Operations Manager

Recently Chris “Curly” Chiotras, Mike Devin and Vidal Sisneros completed the Marine Corps Boot Camp Challenge. They successfully navigated a three-mile obstacle course on paved roads and hard-packed dirt. Over 40 obstacles, including hay jumps, tunnel crawls, log hurdles, six foot wall, trenches, cargo net crawls, and push up stations. All of it complete with USMC Drill Instructors at each station offering their special brand of encouragement! Way to go guys!

Halloween is always a fun time with the Trolleys and this year was no different. KUSI news reporter Leslie Lopez did some
Sales Depots Have a Busy Fall Season

by Tyler Grubenhoff; Depot Sales Manager

Autumn has arrived – and with it cruise ships. The San Diego sales team has been having a lot of fun with hundreds of cruise ship passengers joining our tours. It is a lot of fun for us to meet people from all over the world and to be able to show off our gorgeous city to them.

The sales team worked very hard all summer long and we broke goal for September and October. Good job team!

Barbie Harrell won the sales rep of the month for September and Robin Russell won it for October. Great job!

Charter and Group Happenings

by Erica Frost; Charters and Group Sales Manager

It has been a whirlwind several months for San Diego Group Sales and Charters. As a matter of fact, this “off season” was one of the busiest in recent years; which is a great sign of things to come! We carried many corporate groups, associations and Senior Groups. Of course the weddings were also plentiful and the weather was beyond gorgeous for the occasion.

October Breast Cancer Awareness fundraising Event

by Carmen Thulin; HR and Finance Manager

Old Town Trolley Tours of San Diego once again partnered with UCSD Moores Cancer Center to raise awareness and money in our efforts to fight breast cancer. Once again our campaign was a huge Success!

We started right away with our first bake sale and continued each Thursday in October for a total of six bake sales. Thanks to several of our CAST bringing in the baked goods we had a grand total of $736.86.
also had for a $10 donation, you could receive a pink baseball cap with our logo in white that helped raise $340.00. We also had two raffles that had donations of gift certificates from City Lights, Boot World, McP’s Irish Pub, Napa Auto Parts, hotel stays, a movie basket, and a Tequila Basket to name a few. It brought in a total of $393.

Our total campaign brought in...Drum roll, please! $4,195.76!!! We were elated that Key West supplemented the difference of $804.24 to make our check a Grand Total of $5,000!!!

We were very thankful and appreciative of all our great CASTmembers and the Community for supporting our efforts together towards the UCSD Moores Cancer Center during October’s Breast Cancer Awareness Campaign.

Old Town Market
by Brenda Martin; Old Town Market Operations and Leasing

We are so lucky in San Diego because as many of our visitors know, Fall is the best time of year here at the Old Town Market! Starting with the Fiestas Patrias to Day of Discovery aka Columbus Day Celebrations where we all wore the colors of Mexico, Green, White, and Red.

Our most popular celebration at the Old Town Market is not Cinco de Mayo, it’s Dia De Los Muertos—three day celebration of the Day of the Dead. Beginning with Halloween All Hallow’s Eve, Dia de los Innocentios (All Saints Day) and culminating in Dia de Los Muertos (All Souls Day). The celebrations incorporate death as a natural process of life. Throughout Old Town, the businesses construct themed altars commemorating deceased friends, relatives, artists. The Market altar honored employees of the trolley and the market. This year, we hosted two local television stations interested in the cultural significance of the Dia De Los Muertos celebration. We all dressed up, painted our faces with the traditional Calaveras face—laughing in the face of death! As the host of the Candlelight procession, tens of thousands of people from all over the world gathered in front of the Aguirre House to walk to the El Campo Santo Cemetery. This is an event not to be missed and gives everyone a reason to remember loved ones and celebrate life!

The vibrancy of the Old Town Market and our neighborhood is something that can’t be beat! Our Trolleys keep the State Park and the Market hopping from sunrise to sunset, and even after dark! We hosted the Zumba Thriller Dancers for Halloween, and The Hummingbirds Aztec Dancers for the Dia de Los Muertos celebration. Behind the scenes, we couldn’t do it without our terrific staff and vendors.

Martin and the Dia De Los Muertos Group

Contributing to the vibrancy of our Market: Our wonderful entrepreneurs who keep our Market full of wonderful products and contribute to our fun! New to the Market: Collect Your Name and Old Town Magic!

Collect Your Name is owned by Reshad Aziz and features custom black and white photographs from San Diego that you can put together to create your name, or a special message. Reshad is a young entrepreneur from Afghanistan who is a great example of American persistence and fun! Speaking of fun, Old Town Magic features face painting, gifts and gags and magic from around the magical world! Owners MaryJo and Patrick Abney retired from the military and decided to put their international experience and their MBA’s (and their families) to work! People waited in line for over two hours to have Old Town Magic paint faces during Dia de Los Muertos. Are we having fun yet at the Old Town Market? YES!
This month I would like to showcase the staff at the Best Western Plus Island Palms Hotel and Marina part of the Bartell Hotels collection. The Island Palms Hotel has 227 rooms and is located on beautiful Shelter Island situated on San Diego Bay. They have amazing views of the Bay as well as the San Diego skyline. Shelter Island has a strong Hawaiian influence in the architecture throughout the island and our SEAL Tour splashes into the San Diego Bay from Shelter Island. The staff at the Island Palms Hotel is lead by Bill Orman, Director of Guest Services. The Front Desk staff includes Danny Cozart who has been there for eight years, Ebony Wingfield, Jessica Perham, Kyle Gordon, Alison Bildsoe, Brianna Baer, McGarrity Harney and Caitlin Mincer. They all sell our products through our Trusted Tours online ticket program. They were one of the first hotels to switch over to Trusted Tours. Their Bell staff includes Ray, Brandon and Broc who use our boarding passes as well. I would like to thank the entire team at the Best Western Plus Island Palms Hotel and Marina for all their continued support for Old Town Trolley Tours and SEAL Tours of San Diego!
Isaias Velazquez
Maintenance

BACKGROUND
My name is Isaias Velazquez. I’m 54 years old and I was born and raised in Tijuana, Mexico, until I moved to the U.S. I have two wonderful children named Esteban and Amor. Esteban just graduated college to be an Architect and he enjoys photography. Amor is passionate about science. She’s in school to become a Nanotechnologist and she’s really close to graduating. Since I can remember, I’ve loved working with leather. I’ve been working with leather for 35 years now.

Q | What is your favorite vacation spot?
A | Cancun, Mexico. You can see the emerald beaches from the airplane. The people are so nice to the tourists.

Q | Which talent would you most like to have?
A | I would love to learn how to dance but I have two left feet.

Q | What or who is the greatest love of your life?
A | With no doubt, my children Amor and Esteban and the woman who changed my life, Carmen.

Q | What is your most treasured possession?
A | My health.

Q | What is the trait you most deplore in other?
A | Liars.
Gearing Up

by Steven Burress; Operations Manager

The ships are returning after their summer away and we are gearing up for season. I’d like to welcome all new and returning conductors and sales reps. Danial Jones has returned from Michigan, Chris Holmes has returned from his year and a half journey around the country, Mike Dorenkamp is back from a summer in Michigan, Richard Burton came back after a summer of fun and a few new faces have joined us. Heather Clement returned to OTT after a seven year stint in other parts of Key West. We welcome new conductors Josh Thurston and Isabel Perdomo. Jack Sibley is back for season on the sales side. We also welcome new sales reps, Cynthia McCoy and Rob DeRouse.

We have been excited to add tours in Spanish for some of the cruise ships. Isabel Perdomo, one of our new conductors came to us from the Ghost and Gravestones tours and is very fluent in Spanish. We are able to offer the guests an hour tour in Spanish before they join us on our hop on/hop off tours. This exciting addition has been well received.

We hope your winters are kind, as I know for many of our operations, this is the time you begin to slow down. Think of us this winter as we begin our busy season and our little island begins to hop!

What Off-Season?

by Justin Bahl; Depot Sales Manager

Traditionally, the off-season in Key West comes right at the end of summer, with September often being the slowest month. Kids go back to school, less cruise ships are traveling the seas, the streets are less crowded, and typically sales take a slight bump. Not this year! Despite things slowing down, the sales reps in Key West surprised everyone in September by smashing their goals and putting up one of the more impressive off-seasons in recent memory. The strong showing has everyone excited for the rush that is sure to come over the next several months. In October, we enjoyed one of our annual festivals on the island – Fantasy Fest. Often deemed “Mardi Gras on steroids,” Fantasy Fest is a celebration that takes place the last 10 days of October which brings “interesting” characters from all around the world to Key West. To true form, our CASTmembers not only put up some great numbers during this time, but even found ways of their own to get involved in the fun that was happening on the island!
The beginning of fall always brings a flurry of activity for the HR Department! We were busy getting ready for our annual Open Enrollment, which this year had the added challenge of having to be in compliance with the new Affordable Health Care Act. Our HR Department did a fantastic job of coordinating all the new rules and the paperwork involved.

Since our first Silent Auction in May of this year was such a success, we decided to have a second one at the end of August. Many of the items are brand new—such as clothing, hats and souvenirs, as well as lost cameras and phones—which have been left on our trolleys and never claimed. The money raised goes to fund special events for our CASTmembers. Suzanne and Georgianna did a great job organizing the event, which is always a lot of fun for all. And an easy way to shop for yourself or gifts for friends!

Even though we live in the tropics, it can get downright chilly here in the winter. (Well, for us at least!) So we have been busy ordering the winter costumes to make sure everyone gets them in time for the change in temperature!

Halloween this year was great fun, as many CASTmembers got into the spirit of the holiday and dressed in costume. There were many innovative and distinctive creations, such as Peter Pan, dressed in green from head to toe, a frightful zombie football player, a cute, devilish vamp, and a flower child. Needless to say, the morning briefing was full of laughs and admiration for the creativity on display.

Changing Hats
by Laurie Skinner; Head Conductor

I have been with Historic Tours of America for three years and found that everyone wears several hats. My first hat with HTA was a black top hat I wore as “Raven Cadaver,” supervisor of Ghost and Gravestones. The next one was a train engineer hat as lead driver of the Conch Tour Train. I am very excited about my new hat as trolley head conductor of Old Town Trolley. I have been very fortunate to work with some outstanding people at Ghosts and Gravestones and the Conch Tour Train and am very excited now to become a part of the Old Town Trolley family. I look forward to the many hats I will wear as head conductor.

‘Tis the Season
by April Roskovensky; Safety Officer - Key West Operations

That’s right, season is starting to wind up down here in the southernmost city. That means a lot of new hires learning the ropes, a lot of mole days (aka a lot of shuttle transports to and from ships) and a lot of traffic and pedestrians everywhere! To help with this and through the combined efforts of the Old Town Trolley, Conch Tour Train and Tropical Shells and Gifts we were able to put up a convex mirror in Mallory Square recently. Mallory is where all of our tours begin and end (and many of our shuttles go through as well) which means a lot of vehicle traffic this time of year. The street through the square is one way and often bicyclists and electric cars find themselves heading the wrong direction. This new mirror allows our drivers to see what is coming before they round the corner; making the square safer for everyone involved!

That being said, the SAFE way to start the season is a GREAT way to start the season! At the end of October, Old Town Trolley Key West celebrated two months accident free with delicious breakfast sandwiches from the Cuban Coffee Queen restaurant (A place to definitely stop by if you are ever in our neck of the woods) and they are still on a roll when it comes to accident free days!!

Group Sales
by Tammy Osterhoudt; Charter Representative

A warm hello from the Key West Group Sales Charter Department! We have just completed another successful holiday season with a record number of charters on our Trains and Trolleys. Groups enjoyed tours on our Trains and Trolleys with caroling and lights around our tropical winter wonderland.

The Group Sales Department has been extremely busy setting up charters. Wedding, school, senior, wholesale and corporate groups are booking in astounding numbers guaranteeing that 2014 will be an outstanding year!

Heather Clements
Cynthia McCoy
Richard Burton
Robert DeRouse
Christopher Holmes
John Sibley Jr.
Joshua Thurston

The Key West Shipwreck Treasure Museum in the reflection of the new mirror for our drivers in the square.
Happy Holidays!
by Eva Conway; General Manager

Well we made it thru the slowest and hottest month of the year which is September. Now we are on our way heading back up to season.

We are starting to see an increase in our cruise ship visits as well. In September we had 14 cruise ships, October we had 23, November we had 30 and December we will have 43. Of course they don’t spread out and come on different days. We usually have two to three and as many as four in a day. Conch Tour Train relies on cruise ships for the majority of our riders.

In October we had Fantasy Fest. This year there where about 75,000 people here in Key West for Fantasy Fest. Key West’s average population is 25,000. There were no rooms available. It is a little like Madi Gras. There is a week of parties and contests. The end is a big parade on Saturday night. This year Diana Nyad was in the parade. For those of you may not know Diana is the woman that swam from Cuba to Key West this summer. The one day of the year we are closed is Fantasy Fest Saturday.

There are so many people and road closures that it makes it impossible to give a tour.

We had several CASTmembers dress up for Halloween this year. Our sales rep Tommy Allen dressed as Albert Einstein. Jessica Statts was a minion from the movie Despicable Me. Taylor Sanderson was Rosie the Riveter and MJ (Michael Jordan) was Super Dispatcher/Head Driver. Notice the orbs behind MJ. It is Halloween after all.

The depot MJ is standing in front of was donated to the original owners Mr. and Mrs. Kroll in the late 1950’s. It was a one man barbershop owned by the Culbertson family for over 50 years. Now we know it’s haunted.

In November we had the World Championship Power Boat races. There are two races during the week and the Championship was on Sunday.

Never a Customer, Always a Guest
by Andy Kirby; Cruise Ship liaison

Game time is on!!! There will be 201 cruise ships scheduled to pull into Key West from December 1, 2013 till April 30, 2014 and we will be ready for each and every guest that walks off the ship to visit Key West. Swinging at every pitch, closing as many sales as we can, treating everyday as on the first day, staying with the basics and treating everyone as a guest. When Disney land opened, Walt announced the theme park’s motto: “Visitors are our guests.” Understanding our customer base coupled with drive for perfection will result in repeat business. The truth is that it costs five times more to attract a new customer than it does to keep an old one. A five percent increase in customer retention results in a 25 to 95 percent increase in profits. Frontline equals bottom line; deliver unforgettable front-line customer service and the bottom line dollars will follow. Disney’s hit song “Be Our Guest” should help us all when selling.

When you treat people as a guest and not a customer, you will see what a different response you will get from the potential guest in the eagerness to purchase the product. Guests can tell if you are sincere; before anyone buys anything, they buy you first. It all starts with the basics; smile, and good eye contact goes a long way, and treat guests as you would treat your family. Everyone I meet I tell them we are the Nation’s Storyteller, I also use every possible tactic to earn the business. I have always felt if you deliver more then you promised this will lead to repeat business time after time. So everyone stay true to yourself and believe in yourself and the products we represent. Enjoy your next sunset!
The Fighting Conch Award has been presented to the Shore Excursion Team of RCCL Majesty of the Seas with a letter of appreciation for their Outstanding Support with an Increase in Sales in excess of 839 Sales. Since this photo has been taken the new Sales high has been set to 956 sales off this ship which is over a third of the ship.

In Photo from left to right: Kevin Delahanty (HTA), Laura MCHUGH (RCCL), Bobby Bermeuter (HTA), Jonathan Armenta (RCCL), Sabrina Franchini (RCCL), Andre Kleynhans (RCCL), Andy Kirby (HTA) “The difference between ordinary and extraordinary is that little ‘extra’.”

In Photo from left to right: Kevin Delahanty (HTA), Laura MCHUGH (RCCL), Bobby Bermeuter (HTA), Jonathan Armenta (RCCL), Sabrina Franchini (RCCL), Andre Kleynhans (RCCL), Andy Kirby (HTA)

Jonathan Armenta (RCCL), Standing behind an Awesome Shore Ex Desk aboard the Majesty of the Seas.

Sabrina Franchini (RCCL) Standing to the far end of the counter, Laura MCHUGH (RCCL) Standing in front. Notice in the photo HTA Train & Trolley Brochures ready for them to sell our products.

CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Joyce Dahlberg
Conch Tour Train

BACKGROUND
I was born and brought up just five miles outside of Boston Ma. I have a BS and Med in Psychology and Counseling. For 28 years I owned and operated a Nursery School and Day Care Center. In addition to teaching I had a therapy practice working with addiction in young mothers.

I began my HTA career as a sales rep for the Old Town Trolley one summer.

After many visits to Key West I was hooked and ready to retire my snow shovel. So I sold the school and moved to a house in Key West.

I drove the Bone Island Shuttle moving my way into management. I became Ops Manager for Bone island Shuttle.

After Hurricane Wilma Bone Island Shuttle was downsized and

I became Head Sales Rep for the Conch Tour Train. After a few years I decided to just be a sales rep and that is what I am doing now.

I have been with my wife Judy for 31 years. In 2004 we were legally married in the state of Massachusetts. We are enjoying our retirement home in Key West with our menagerie of cats, dog and bird.

Q | What is your idea of perfect happiness?  
A | My life in Key West gives me great happiness.

Q | Which living person do you most admire?  
A | I am a dedicated supporter of Hillary Clinton. I sure hope she will run for President.

Q | What or who is the greatest love of your life?  
A | My wonderful wife Judy is the love of my life.

Q | What is your favorite occupation?  
A | I really enjoyed being a Therapist.

Q | Who is your favorite hero of fiction?  
A | Michael Pauley

October - November 2013
At the entrance to the island in a waterfront location and shaded by abundant tropical foliage, Coconut Mallory Resort & Marina offers a unique combination of amenities that make it a great vacation spot. It is a place where guests can just kick back and relax, where families can find room for the kids to be active, and where visitors can use as a comfortable home base while engaging in all the activities Key West has to offer.

Its waterfront location is one of its best features. Located on Cow Key Channel which leads right out to the Straits of Florida, the marina offers docks to keep a boat or to just hang out observing sea life, watching aquatic birds and taking in beautiful sunsets without having to leave the property. Waterfront activities, two pools, a children’s playground and the rustic Boathouse give guests a lot of on-site entertainment. Spacious two bedroom condos with fully equipped kitchens have balconies which bring the tropical breeze inside, and offer a great place to greet the morning or end a fun-filled day.

The friendly front desk staff is always ready to help their guests plan a full day of fun. Yenisey, Arianne, Emmaly, and Erica get to know their guests to better guide them in making their island plans. They take their time with each one, letting them know it is their pleasure to arrange excursions and day trips, on land and at sea. We are pleased that they include the Old Town Trolley, the Conch Tour Train, and the Ghosts & Gravestones tour in their recommendations.
The Little White House to Get Improvements

The Little White House most recently got lights placed in the lawn to help with all the fabulous parties they throw. They also got a brand new set of men and women restrooms that turned out great. Paul of course was the last visitor of the makeshift outdoor facilities.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

OCTOBER
Curtis Craig, 17 years
Nelson Nodal, 16 years
Violeta Mihaylova, 10 years
Harry Steele, 3 years
George Lennox III, 3 years
Svitlana Gladka, 2 years
Lisa Chubbuck, 2 years
Kristina Agent, 1 year
Bruce Woodard, 1 year
Mindy Tucker, 1 year

NOVEMBER
Dalia Angelosanto, 19 years
Paul Hilson, 9 years
Robert Basista, 8 years
Kelly Summers, 7 years
Yoshi Cummings, 5 years
Robert Murphy, 4 years
Willia Crowl III, 3 years
Lisa Quast, 1 year
Bruce Julien, 1 year

KW AQUARIUM
Leah Burroughs

RETAIL DIVISION
Candace Busald
Ricardo Polynice
Victor Cristea
Guerdeline Metellus
Kristin Moats
Alex Toranzo
Marie Riche
Maresa Sanchez
Matthew Hudak

OFFICE / ADMINISTRATION
Jerry King
Gregory Carey
Kate Ferguson

October - November 2013
What’s That Smell?

by Jesse Panrock, Supervisor

A common question we get here at the Key West Shipwreck Treasure Museum is: WHAT’S THAT SMELL? That’s sea water! Our museum has something unusual for a building in Key West, a basement! Located one foot below sea level, what was once used as a lobster hatchery is now a theater, dressing room and storage. There are a few challenges in maintaining a basement below sea level, especially at high tide. There are two pumps running 24/7 to keep the water at bay and rubber boots located right next to the entrance for when they break down. During a threat of a hurricane everything has to be moved up to the first floor. Even when there is a bad rain storm during business hours, our cast members are armed with squeegees to beat back the encroaching water keeping the flood at bay.

Welcome Aboard!

Treasures of the Florida Keys and Ghosts & Gravestones would like to welcome Judi Burton AKA Ms. Lily Lynch!

As a CASTmember Judi Burton partakes in dual roles for HTA.

By day she works as a sales associate for HTA’s Water Sports Cart at the World Famous Conch Tour Train Depot in Key West. She helps folks with all their watersports needs. Whether it be arranging a voyage out to the Dry Tortugas or captaining their own vessel on a backcountry snorkel/eco tour, she’s there to please her seafaring guests.

Ahh… But it is the moment when the sun disappears below the horizon a green flash occurs, signaling the spirit world that something a bit more ominous is ready to take place. Judi Burton manifests into Ms. Lily Lynch! A prisoner turned plundering pirate that once had ties to Black Cesar. She wretchedly succumbed to Commodore David Porter and the Mosquito Fleet, leaving her to roam the Isle of Bones at night to tell her tales aboard The Trolley of the DOOMED!

Take a moment to stop by 501 Front St. to see what kind of adventure Judi has in store for you.

twitter.com/keywestaquarium
facebook.com/keywestaquarium

twitter.com/trumankeywest
facebook.com/trumankeywest

Q | What is your greatest fear?
A | Not living to see all of the glorious places on Earth I have circled on my world map and enjoying them the "local way."

Q | Who are your favorite writers?
A | The initialed ones : J.K. Rowling, C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and last but not least, few of you may have heard of him but he is fantastic, L.A. Meyer.

Q | Who is your favorite hero in fiction?
A | Undoubtedly, Bloody Jacky Faber, written by L.A. Meyer. She goes on great adventures all over the world with a colorful cast of characters. She starts as a ships boy, and progresses into pirate, lady, spy, musician and finder of treasure in the deep. She is where I get a lot of my pirate speak from.

Q | What is your most treasured possession?
A | My sweet dog Jax who is a half black lab, half border collie rescue, and my partner in mischief.

Q | Which historical figure do you identify with?
A | Grace O’Malley, a female pirate in 16th century Ireland who led an entire fleet of men. She met Queen Elizabeth I, to negotiate for her son’s release and refused to bow to her as she did not recognize Elizabeth as Queen of Ireland.
On Thursday Sept 19th, four mates from RCCL’s Majesty of the Seas took an underwater excursion to the sunken ship the USS General Hoyt S. Vandenberg. Transported to the ship aboard the Miss Iris, Captained by HTA’s Bobby Bernreuter, mates Eric, Johnny, Laura, and Virginia experienced one of the real treasures of the international diving community. The second largest artificial reef in the world, the Vandenberg has solidified Key West as a world class diving destination.

The ship first saw duty as a U.S. Army troop transport named the Gen. Harry Taylor. In 1963 it became the Gen. Hoyt S. Vandenberg and tracked U.S. space program launches off Cape Canaveral. It also served in the Pacific monitoring U.S. defense missile test launches and eavesdropped on Russian missile launches during the Cold War. But the ship received its most public exposure when cast as a Russian science ship in “Virus,” a 1999 motion picture starring Jamie Lee Curtis, William Baldwin, and Donald Sutherland. Ten years later it was sunk in 140’ of water near the Western Sambo’s reef, seven miles southeast of Key West.

From One Ship to Another
Bobby Bernreuter; Special Projects

Miss Iris parked in front of the RCCL’s Majesty of the Seas.

CASTMEMBER SPOTLIGHT
Dave Kaffenberger
Historic Tours of America, Information Technology

I was born and raised in a rural area of Northern Kentucky, just south of Cincinnati, Ohio. Growing up in an area with room to run was a blessing for me but a nightmare for my parents I suppose as most times I guess they just hoped I would come home at night as that was in the days before cell phones were popular and there was no keeping track of me. I left home for the Marine Corps at 17 and after 10 years in the military returned to school at Northern KY University. Still not settled down apparently I hit the road again doing contract IT work and traveled about the country for a few years wherever the work took me.

My family life needed some stability and I found that in the countryside of Arkansas working for a brokerage firm that provided a good career environment as well as a beautiful state to live in and raise kids in. I had two daughters who somehow survived my inept fatherly attempts to guide them into adulthood and even managed to get off to college so I must not have done too badly.

When I was just a wee lad of 2 years old my parents began driving me to the Keys every year for vacation. Year after year of 24 hour drives back and forth, back and forth, Fishing, snorkeling, kayaking, boating and eventually they bought a vacation home on Sugarloaf. How could I turn that down since they weren’t using it all the time so when I met a beautiful lady in Arkansas I started dragging her down here too! Then we got married on the beach in Key West and decided that since our kids had (mostly) moved out we should live where we wanted to. I was fortunate enough to find employment with the IT department here at HTA and with a little Beverly Hillbillies style move we are happily settled in on Big Pine.

Q | What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A | Warm sunshine, clear water, a full tank of air and my wife at my side as we go over the rail.

Q | What is your favorite vacation spot?
A | I live in my favorite vacation spot, how sweet is that?

Q | Which talent would you most like to have?
A | I would like to be able to play the guitar but unfortunately the coordination required seems to elude me!

Q | If there was one place you would like to live besides your current city, where would it be?
A | Tahiti, I mean really, how could you go wrong with Tahiti?

Q | What is your favorite occupation?
A | IT, I am fortunate in that I really do enjoy my work.
Hello! I was born and raised in Cincinnati, OH, where I lived until I moved to Key West this year. I grew up exploring the woods, playing hockey, skating at skate parks, and trying to impress my parents with animation and art I created. I attended Miami University for Systems Analysis and University of Cincinnati for Biology. I landed my first real job working for a Cincinnati ISP where I met Cast Member Johnny Earls before he had grey hair. After the ISP, I worked IT for Luxottica doing similar work to here at HTA. From there, I moved to aero-space engineering for a satellite company of General Electric, and from there to Patheon Pharmaceuticals. I guess you could say I like to be well rounded. During this time, Johnny Earls had moved to sunny Florida and was working IT for HTA. A position opened up, and the rest is history! I feel really lucky to have the opportunity to be with the company, and hope to settle here! I'm easy going, and love a good laugh. You can find me working on my Jeep, hanging at Fort Zach with my wife to be, skating at the skate park, or on my computers at home.

Q | What is your idea of perfect happiness?
A | Sunbathing in the grass with my cats and listening to the wind. Oh, and not paying bills. Winning a massive lottery and setting up everyone I know would be sufficient, also.

Q | Which living person do you most admire?
A | Right now, it would be Carlos Murray. He puts up with my antics and insanity five days a week, and that is pretty admirable. Even more admirable, would be if he had a handle-bar mustache. We should start a petition.

Q | What is your greatest fear?
A | Not “going out” in a blaze of glory – like being eaten by a super-lion that escaped from a secret facility – and instead, just dying in my sleep… unless I sleep walk into a super-lion den. I’m ok with the best of both worlds.

Q | On what occasion do you lie?
A | When I want to be mischievous. I learned very young that I’m pretty terrible at lying. Even if I wasn’t, my mother is a teacher and she is married to a police officer. So even if I was a practiced liar, there was certainly no getting it by them. I found I could get around lying by telling my parents most of what I was going to be doing. For example: “I’m just hanging out with Chris at his parent’s house tonight, mom” instead of, “I’ll be at Chris’ house building Chinese-style fireworks and blowing holes in his backyard while his parents are out.” I called it telling a “half-truth.” This way, I wasn’t lying to my parents, and I still got to go over to my friend’s house and blow craters in the yard before getting grounded.

Q | If you were to die and come back as a person or thing, what do you think it would be?
A | Hopefully, as a massive Dinosaur… or King Kong… or a Dinosaur-Gorilla hybrid from the future, and I would be able to talk and fly.
Thanksgiving Picnic on the Lawn

Lean Benner plants a smooch on Paul Hilson!

Sandy, Claire, and Julie at the buffet line.

The party decorators! ICS Team, Sherry Wright, Kate Ferguson, Michele Ross and daughter, Sarah

Dalia and Nelson

Jenae, Kristin, and Maria from the Sponge Market

Sandy, Claire, and Julie at the buffet line.

Dell and Cruz

Clinton Curry with his wife Julie and daughter Parker

Hail to the Chef! Mr. Swift was the carver for the day.

Chef Greg and Ed

Rosemary Pumar and daughter Jillian

Nigina and Irina

Finance girls Mariola, Magda, Natalie, and Candice

The HPM crew, Franklin, Oreste, Cruz (finance), Alexis, Raul and Illeana
national meeting photos

Dave Chatterton and Charlie Brazil
Concierge’s Sally Kruger and Michael Lenze
The finance department got the Counting Train game for their presentation
Freddy Varela doing his presentation
Vince Leone shows off his meal onboard the Riverboat Cruise

Ben McPherson and Chris Belland
Chris presented the IT department, Ryan and Layfield, with the Tote and Go Laptop

Vince, Dave and Charlie
David, John, Piper and Rod

The whole crew took a trolley ride to dinner on the river
The Risk Management Department, Bill Meagher and Jim Lamberson, receive Band-Aids

Shawn Ford and Joanna Huestis
Freddy and Ben pose with their favorite bartender Becky
The Blackdog crew (Jessica, John, Mitch and Erica) get a Magna Doodle for all their creative work they do for the company

Ed Swift IV, Iris and Bobby Bernreuter
The ladies of Blackdog, Jessica Thomlin and Erika Jacoby
Ed IV and John Welby

Joanna, Debra, Layfield, Iris and Bobby onboard the trolley

The Nation’s Storyteller
Tour conductor Denise was fabulous

Paula Deen, Chris Belland, and Michael Groover

Paula thanks Chris for all his kind remarks

Iris and Bobby chow down on Paula Deen’s famous fried chicken

Buffett dinner at Paula Deen’s restaurant, Lady and Sons

Paula and Bill

Bobby, Paula and Iris

John and Linda share a hug

Charlie and David with the Trolley Stop Gift Shop ladies

Nelson and Ed Stop into the store

Ed is sharing a chat with Ryan McCurdy

Jon Watkins gets presented with a shape sorting clock from Charlie and Chris

Debra received a medical kit

Bubbles were distributed!

Christian, Charlie and David all show off their medals

The incredible hulk (Bobby) and Chris

Joanna shows off her best Savannah fashion

Nelson with store manager Shari

Terry Strickland and Chris compare smoking pipes

The boys waiting to get on Ghosts & Gravestones