

DELIVERING BUSINESS ESSENTIALS TO NTA MEMBERS

NOVEMBER 2018

Courier

What a rush

British Columbia's Gold Rush Trail is a thrilling ride.

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DON'T STOP TILL YOU'VE SHOPPED

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SPOTLIGHT ON CAPE TOWN

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► JANUARY ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

West U.S.

Alaska, California, Nevada, Oregon, Washington
Belgium, France and the Netherlands
Ireland and the United Kingdom

SPECIAL COVERAGE

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Preview to Tucson (Contact '19)
Casinos and Gaming
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DEADLINES

Space: Nov. 2 | Material: Nov. 12

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Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina,
Virginia

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Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming

Western Canada

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SPECIAL COVERAGE

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durangotrain.com

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tulalipresort.com



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Courier aims to facilitate member-to-member partnering by spotlighting member product and destinations worldwide, to provide information on current industry trends and issues, and to inform members about NTA initiatives, events and benefits.



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I'M OF TWO MINDS. I can see both sides. I use my left *and* right brains. I even have left and right computer monitors.

Maybe it's my upbringing. I grew up (and still live) in a small town named Midway; it's halfway between two cities. I can turn east or west.

And yet I'm always surprised to learn that people I see as one thing are also adept at something else. Right here at NTA Headquarters, Phillip Strunk is our education guy, but he also can create cool graphics that help explain things. Kay Saffari is our FTA coordinator, but she also teaches Spanish at a local college. *Courier's* own Pat Henderson not only masters magazine writing, but he also understands fantasy football better than Bill Belichick.

That brings me to Kendall.

Kendall Fletcher was hired to collect materials from advertisers and promote NTA publications. But it turns out she can write and take photos, too. And this issue is Kendall on parade.

A recap of her exploration of British Columbia with the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association is on pages 17–19. Then turn the page to read her feature story “Don’t stop till you’ve shopped” (pages 20–22). Kendall also wrote an essay about her time in New Orleans with Tourism Cares, page 48.

And hey, she’s even on the cover. (Kendall is front left, dodging a facefull of river water.)

We also have some non-Kendall stories in this issue. Pat takes us to Cape Town for a City Spotlight, pages 24 and 25, and to the sunny Caribbean, starting on page 36.

Pat and I share coverage on Egypt, Israel and Jordan, pages 38 and 39. And I am firmly anchored in Atlantic Canada provinces, including photos from my time in Nova Scotia—pages 33–34.

Patti Nickel covers member product (and U.S. history) in her Compass articles on America’s Historic East on pages 26 through 31.

I’ve also got a story about an incredible, *iridescent* remake of Aquarium of the Bay in San Francisco. I spent a beeee-yutiful 48 hours there, with a couple of good nights’ sleep at Hotel Zephyr. (The story is after page 16.)

But wait. There’s more. With this issue of *Courier*, you also meet the winners of our 2019 Distinguished Dozen awards, including the 12 gold medalists. And if you’re a tour operator, you’re getting a fact-filled, photo-heavy booklet of info on Contact ’19 in Tucson. (Suppliers and DMOs, your booklet is coming soon.)

It’s a lot in one bag of *Courier*, I know. But that’s the thing about publications ... and people: You think you’re getting one thing, but there’s always something extra.

Read on,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob'.

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On the cover:
Rafting on the
Thompson River in
Lytton, British Columbia
Photo: Tyler Cave Productions





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Get ready, get set ... Engage

NTA's new online community to provide a year-round business, professional connection

NTA'S NEW ONLINE RESOURCE can best be described by its name: Engage.

Set to launch Nov. 5 during the opening ceremony at Travel Exchange '18 in Milwaukee, Engage is an online community platform that allows NTA members to share information, pitch product, discuss best practices, fill tours and troubleshoot challenges.

The platform's potential is enormous, says NTA President Pam Inman. "Our members can form discussion groups where they'll get advice from colleagues they trust," she says. "NTA folks have a world of experience, and this private forum is their opportunity to solve problems and create new partnerships."

A few members got a sneak peek at Engage in August, when they served as beta testers during the final stages of the platform's development. After her trial run with Engage, Michelle Pino, co-owner of Northeast Unlimited Tours in Sandwich, Massachusetts, is eager to connect with NTA colleagues in a new way.

"I like that Engage gives us direct contact with the NTA community so we can reach people with the click of a button," Pino says. "There are times when a question arises, and I would love to reach out to companies in other parts of the country to see if they have had a similar experience and, if so, how did they address it."

During the Milwaukee convention, Nov. 4-8, delegates will have several opportunities to learn how to use Engage. NTA members can also learn how to get started on the platform by tuning in to a Dec. 12 webinar, which will be archived on NTAonline.com.



Part of the appeal of Engage is that it provides a way for NTA members to connect with each other outside of the association's major events, says Christina Werner, CTP, a tour operator with Custom Holidays in Allen Park, Michigan.

"Engage discussion groups can help us keep the conversation going in between Travel Exchange and Contact, when we tend to lose touch," Werner says. "The platform's library is a great place for suppliers and DMOs to upload their sales sheets and sample itineraries so that operators can access those files digitally."

As members become familiar with the platform, they can tailor their participation to fit their needs, Pino says.

"I foresee myself starting or joining groups that relate specifically to our type of company," she says. "I am always open to finding creative ways to do business better, and Engage will give us an opportunity to brainstorm together across the miles."

Engage has been part of NTA's plans for nearly two years, and association leaders recently received confirmation they are on the right track, Inman says.

"One of the top recommendations from our consultant's report this summer was that NTA build a 365-day engagement strategy," Inman says. "And Engage is an enormous step toward accomplishing that objective."

Because Engage is integrated with the NTA database, members can access the platform when they are logged in to NTAonline.com. Members who don't know their username and password can email headquarters@ntastaff.com.

For questions about Engage, members can reach out to Morgan Maravich, NTA industry and member engagement manager, at morgan.maravich@ntastaff.com.



NATH HASANI

Beginning this month, conversations that are started at Travel Exchange can be continued online, through Engage.

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COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Tourism Cares set for Puerto Rico event in 2019

In 2019 Tourism Cares will continue its recent practice of hosting work projects at destinations that were impacted by hurricanes by sponsoring an event in Puerto Rico May 8–10. That effort will come on the heels of the organization's 2018 work projects, which took volunteers to the Florida Keys in May and to New Orleans in September.

Tourism Cares for Puerto Rico is a three-day program designed to harness the transformative power and the collective strength of the travel industry. There is already much progress underway to build a more resilient tourism economy for the island

nation, and the event offers industry professionals a chance to be a part of the next chapter.



In addition to its volunteer work project, Tourism Cares also will mobilize the industry's intellectual capital and expertise to advise local tourism professionals on how they can continue to successfully rebuild and connect to the global marketplace. Dozens of local enterprises and organizations will interact with volunteers in workshops that offer a unique opportunity to exchange knowledge and further Puerto Rico's entrepreneurial spirit.

The cost is \$399 per person, which does not include travel or accommodations. Registration for Tourism Cares members begins in December then will open up for nonmembers in February 2019 (if spaces remain).

For more information, go to tourismcares.org/puertorico. ☎

To read more ...

- ▶ Check out the recap of the September Tourism Cares for New Orleans event on page 48.
- ▶ To get a firsthand perspective on the recovery process in Puerto Rico, go to page 37.



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RELATING TO GOVERNMENT

INSIGHTS ON U.S. LEGISLATIVE ISSUES AND INDUSTRY TOPICS



FAA Reauthorization Act benefits passengers

AFTER MONTHS of negotiations, the United States Senate and House of Representatives came to an agreement on their versions of the Federal Aviation Administration Reauthorization Act of 2018, H.R. 4 and S. 1405 respectively.

The House and Senate successfully reconciled differences between these versions, and the negotiated version of the FAA Reauthorization, H.R. 302, passed the House and the Senate, and was signed into law by President Trump on Oct. 5. It contains robust provisions that will improve aviation safety and air travel.

NTA members and their clients are set to benefit from the air travel provisions and safety improvements contained in this legislation. A poor air travel experience at the outset of a trip can negatively impact that trip and future business. While it is impossible to improve every single aspect of air travel, the FAA Reauthorization takes a positive step.

There are a few important provisions that travel professionals should be aware of, including requirements that will increase aviation safety, increase passenger comfort and ensure the consumer is fully aware of their rights should certain air service disruptions occur.

The bill extends rest and duty requirements for flight attendants from 8 hours to 10 hours, which may not be reduced under any circumstances. This provision was included to combat flight attendant fatigue, which has become an issue under current regulations, and to ensure flight attendants are rested to perform their critical tasks. The bill also contains a provision that directs the FAA to review aircraft cabin evacuation procedures to ensure every passenger can evacuate an aircraft safely within the time frame currently required.

Passengers frequently complain about the size of seats on airplanes, as airlines have made seats smaller to accommodate more passengers. Not only are there comfort issues related to reducing seat size, but there are legitimate health concerns as well. The bill directs the FAA to set minimum leg room, width and length requirements for passenger seats on commercial flights.

The bill also prohibits cell phone calls and the use of e-cigarettes on commercial aircraft.

Being stuck in an airport due to weather, computer issues or other unforeseen circumstance can be frustrating for travelers. The FAA Reauthorization Act requires airlines to post, via a link on their website, exactly what will or will not be offered to passengers in the event of a disruption in air service.

To further increase transparency, the bill also requires air carriers to develop a one-page document, accessible on

Now boarding

The 2018 FAA Reauthorization bill directs the U.S. Department of Transportation to take action in several areas (it's an enormous bill), including the following:

- Ban cell phone use during a domestic flight (not currently allowed by any airlines, but now prohibited by law)
- Examine airlines' on-time reporting, based on actual wheels-off and wheels-on times
- Review airlines' compensation for involuntary changes to itineraries that involve additional stops or significant time changes
- Require that airlines post online a page of passenger rights, including compensation for flight delays, lost baggage and overbooking
- Expand the TSA PreCheck program by making it easier for the public to enroll
- Integrate trusted traveler programs—such as PreCheck and Global Entry—administered by different federal agencies to allow enrollment from a single website

their websites, outlining numerous passenger rights, including compensation offered in the event of a flight delay, flight cancellation, lost bag and other circumstances.

Flying can be stressful, but these provisions, among others, will help improve the experience of flying. The needs of passengers will continue to evolve, and our hope is that Congress continues to adjust and revise regulations and policies accordingly. 🌐

Signal Group is a Washington, D.C., lobbying firm retained by NTA to advise members about travel-related issues and legislation.



CC FLICKR/ANNE WORTNER: bit.ly/20wQW89



Around the next turn

Just like a highway, this industry rises and dips, curves and coasts. It's a journey.
So what's next for NTA ... and you?

We've got lots on the road ahead:

- A loyalty program with cost-saving rewards
- An online community platform that will **Engage** you year-round
- New websites, including one that's loaded with *Courier* articles
- The China Preferred Partner Program, exclusive to NTA

NTA members are moving forward together. It's a journey, right?

So lengthen yours. Renew your NTA membership today and take advantage of everything your association has for you ... around the next turn.



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Mentored in Milwaukee

Ten students who attend Travel Exchange '18 will learn about our industry from the inside out. As recipients of awards from Tourism Cares' Bruce Beckham Scholarship Fund/NTA Mentoring Program, the students will be paired with mentors—NTA members—who they will shadow during business appointments. The students will also participate in educational sessions and networking events in Milwaukee.

So that convention delegates can recognize and greet these students, *Courier* is providing photos with name, home state or country, college, and career aspirations.

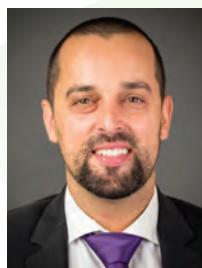


Victor Mawutor Agbo

Ghana
University of Waterloo

Career aspirations:

Become a professor of sustainable tourism, championing an all-inclusive ecotourism development, climate and environmental education, particularly in developing countries

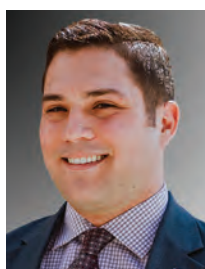


Bruno Ferreira

Portugal
North Carolina State University

Career aspirations:

Continue to carry out engaged research and contribute to making tourism a force for good



Matthew J. Bauman

Texas
Texas Tech University

Career aspirations:

Become a professor, conduct hospitality and tourism research, and teach tourism and marketing courses



Shirin Jafarinasab Kermani

California/Iran
The George Washington University

Career aspirations:

Own a company that proposes strategies for expanding sustainable tourism methods and infrastructures in developing countries



Megan Carroll

Connecticut
Johnson & Wales University

Career aspirations:

Work for a DMO and market vibrant cities to tourists



Julia Larkin

Utah
University of Utah

Career aspirations:

Work for an international company, managing operations and engaging in guide work



Jillian Charland

North Carolina
Johnson & Wales University

Career aspirations:

Market and promote sporting events as attractions



Alana Mendez

Puerto Rico
Johnson & Wales University

Career aspirations:

Obtain a master's degree in global hospitality management and own and operate a hotel on a Caribbean beach



Madeleine R. Comeaux

Louisiana
University of Louisiana at Lafayette

Career aspirations:

Serve as a manager within the lodging industry



Anne Smith

Maryland
Howard Community College

Career aspirations:

Apply my education towards the niches of romance, milestone, senior and accessible travel within my own travel agency, along with event management 🌐



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During the China-U.S. Tourism Leadership Summit, NTA President Pam Inman was a panelist at the “Culture in Tourism Product Development” seminar.

NTA represented at recent China events

BY LIN WANG

IN SEPTEMBER at the 2018 China-U.S. Tourism Leadership Summit in Hangzhou, China, NTA President Pam Inman, NTA Board Chair Chris Babb, Vice Chair Paul Larsen and I joined more than 70 United States delegates led by Brand USA President Chris Thompson.

The newly formed Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China hosted the 12th annual event, which was also attended by Sean Stein, consul general of the United States in Shanghai.

More than 200 U.S. and Chinese summit participants—including top-level executives and officials from local governments, destination marketing organizations, associations, tour companies, online travel agents, attractions and transportation companies—gathered at the summit. We discussed best practices in marketing, travel and tourism trends, and issues that impact the industry.

At the summit, Pam was a member of a panel that focused on the importance of a region’s culture in tourism development, and she encouraged tour operators to develop tours that immerse guests in local culture.

The next U.S.-China Tourism Leadership Summit will be held in Seattle next September.

Pam, Chris and I also attended the first-ever conference of the World Tourism Alliance, as well as the opening of the Xiaoshan Liaison Office held in Hangzhou, China. More than 350 members and guests attended the event.

The WTA is dedicated to engaging members, enterprises, governments and the international community in an open dialogue about social progress that benefits humankind. The organization was initiated by Chinese government in 2017.

During her trip to China, Pam also went to Beijing and delivered a speech at Beijing Tourism Global Distribution Partnership Summit. The Beijing Municipal Commission of Tourism Development hosted the event at the Temple of Heaven to explore new mechanisms for global cooperation and new ways to boost Beijing’s inbound tourism market. Pam met with Beijing Vice Mayor Zhang Gong, and they discussed how the city can work with NTA tour operators.

China has been one of NTA’s major focus markets in recent years. According to most recent statistics from the U.S. National Travel and Tourism Office, more than 3 million Chinese travelers came to the U.S. in 2017. China is the fifth-largest international inbound



Beijing Vice Mayor Zhang Gong hosted Pam Inman in his office.

market for the U.S. in terms of visitor numbers, and it’s the No. 1 market in terms of travel spending to and within the United States. 🇺🇸

Lin Wang is the director of NTA’s China market services.



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You have to Make. Contact.

"Each year Contact keeps getting better and better."

Paul Nakamoto, Aquarium of the Bay

"I get fresh perspectives on current and future issues our company will be facing."

Jim Warren, CTP, Anderson Vacations

**"Convention is where you meet the people.
Contact is where you make the relationships."**

Agustin Caparros, A Closer Look Tours

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**Villa Terrace Decorative
Arts Museum**
Final Night Party

Student musicians in New Orleans



CHERYL GERBER

Students on stage: From New Orleans to Portland

Tour operators that work with school groups can get a lot of bang for their buck at two of the United States' fun and funkier destinations: New Orleans and Portland, Oregon, especially if performance options are the order of the day.

In the Crescent City, festive street parades are an ingrained part of the local culture, taking their place alongside Mardi Gras, beignets and jazz music. During a visit to New Orleans, bands can experience what it's like to take part in a traditional parade by marching through the streets of the French Quarter.

These experience can be coordinated with New Orleans & Company. The DMO's Thu Tran says such programs often include routes that go past many of the quarter's historical buildings—St. Louis Cathedral; the Presbytere and Cabildo, which house the Louisiana State Museums; and the Pontalba Apartments, which are the oldest apartment buildings in the U.S.

Another music-themed option is a one-hour private educational experience at one of the city's most iconic entertainment

venues, Preservation Hall. In addition to hearing about Preservation Hall's mission to protect, preserve and perpetuate traditional New Orleans jazz, students take part in a Q&A session with members of the legendary house band then they get to perform on stage.

Out in the Pacific Northwest, Portland, known as the Rose City, lives up to its name thanks to its iconic June festival and its popular public gardens. But Oregon's largest city also is home to a blossoming theater scene that is led by Portland Center Stage at The Armory.

Located in the heart of the fashionable Pearl District, The Armory includes two theaters, and its repertory company has been ranked among the top 20 regional theater companies in the country.

In addition to seeing a show and touring the facility, which was the first performing arts venue in the U.S. to receive a LEED Platinum environmental design rating, students can get a firsthand perspective on the world of theater through specialized programs. Workshops led by actors provide a more immersive experience, and backstage interview sessions with performers are available following most matinees.

According to Ashley Kingman, tourism manager for Travel Portland, another good stop for performance groups is the Portland Japanese Garden.

"With the addition of the Cultural Village last year, the Portland Japanese Garden has gained more opportunity to welcome students into its classrooms for performances, demonstrations and lectures pertaining to Japanese culture," she says.

For more information on New Orleans, contact Tran at ttran@neworleanscvb.com or go to neworleanscvb.com. To learn more about Portland, contact Kingman at ashley@travelportland.com or go to travelportland.com. —K.F.

Theater students at Portland Center Stage



KATE SZROM

Matera and Plovdiv are 2019 European Capitals of Culture

The cities of Matera, Italy; and Plovdiv, Bulgaria, are set to take their turns next year as the European Capitals of Culture. These featured destinations will be promoted extensively throughout 2019 by the European Union, which organizes the initiative as a way to highlight unique spots across its member countries.

The program is designed to promote increased unity with the European Union by celebrating the cultural similarities of EU citizens, as well as promoting the richness and diversity of its members.

Located in the southern tip of Italy, Matera, dates back to the Paleolithic period and is one of the world's oldest continuously inhabited cities. It lies in a small canyon and is known as the Subterranean City, and many of its stone structures are carved into the rock with their roofs forming some of the local streets.

Twenty-five years ago, UNESCO added Matera's historical center, Sassi, and the Park of Rupestran Churches to its list of World Heritage sites. Sassi contains a number of caverns that have been restored in recent years to their centuries-old glory. Other caves have been modernized and now are some of Matera's most popular restaurants, bars, shops and hotels.

The city has established five themes



Matera's Sassi historical district

for the year-long celebration: Ancient Future, Continuity and Disruptions, Reflections and Connections, Utopias and Dystopias, and Roots and Routes. These values will be expressed through special exhibits and events, as well as other cultural programming.

The other cultural capital, Plovdiv, also traces its roots back for millennia (to the sixth century B.C.). It is the second-largest city in Bulgaria and is located in the south-central region of the country.

During its time in the spotlight, Plovdiv will showcase many aspects of local culture, ranging from music and contemporary art to architecture and design. The programming will integrate the creative efforts of the region's diverse ethnic and minority groups with those of talented international artists.

All told, Plovdiv's offerings will include nearly 500 events and more than 300 expositions and projects, many of which will elaborate on the city's theatrical heritage. One of the most famous landmarks is the Roman theater that dates back to the first century A.D. The horseshoe-shaped seating bowl faces the stage, and audience members have great views of the Old Town area beyond the theater.

To learn more about Matera, go to matera-basilicata2019.it. Details on Plovdiv are available at plovdiv2019.eu. —P.H.



Plovdiv's Roman theater



Welcome to geology's hall of fame.

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What will you discover?

The world's first Ecotarium

BY BOB ROUSE

SAN FRANCISCO has seen the future, and it's iridescent blue.

The future is an extensive, impressive plan to replace the city's Aquarium of the Bay with Ecotarium, a unique educational attraction that will focus on preservation, conservation and the sustainability of the San Francisco Bay.

The new structure's unique color and shape draw from the iridescence of fish scales, ocean geometry, rippling waves and the shellmounds of the Ohlone people who first populated the Bay Area.

It's a bold addition to the waterfront, one that George Jacob, president and CEO of the aquarium, recognizes will raise some eyebrows. And he expects it will take two years to gain city approval of the plan.

"This building has to break the current regulatory mold for it to make a statement. It cannot be hidden," Jacob says. "Everyone fixates on the building, but if there's buy-in for the content, we're set. It has to be a purposeful building."

The purpose will be to encourage global conversations about climate and the oceans, and to inspire local action to protect the San Francisco Bay and its ecosystems.

"We want to share the impact of climate change in a way that's interesting and understandable, whether you're 8 or 80," says Paul Nakamoto, the organization's director of strategic promotions. "We see 30,000 school kids a year, and 75 percent of our content is related to climate change. This spring we'll start making changes—and testing them—to reflect even more climate-change content."



George Jacob eyes the model of Ecotarium, which will replace the current Aquarium of the Bay in San Francisco as early as 2022.

Enlisting the support of Silicon Valley technology giants, Jacob plans to create immersive experiences that pull double duty.

"We will walk the line between entertainment and education," Jacob says, noting that interactive exhibits will impart biology, ecology and 12,000 years of history. "Environmental issues—with statistics and warnings—can be overwhelming. We will connect the dots between the changing temperatures, rainfall and climate, and turn it into a call to action."

Aquarium leaders hope not only to increase visitation to their attraction, but also to enhance the entire city.

"We want to help tourism; you'll have to come to San Francisco to see the Ecotarium," Jacob says. "And the multiplier effect will be times seven. If we gross \$30 million, the area will see \$210 million."

But there's that fine line, Jacob

reminds us.

"Some 80 percent of the people walking down the Embarcadero are tourists—from 130 countries—and we know they aren't here for hard science and complicated charts. So our delivery platform must combine storytelling with theatrical immersion—and fun."

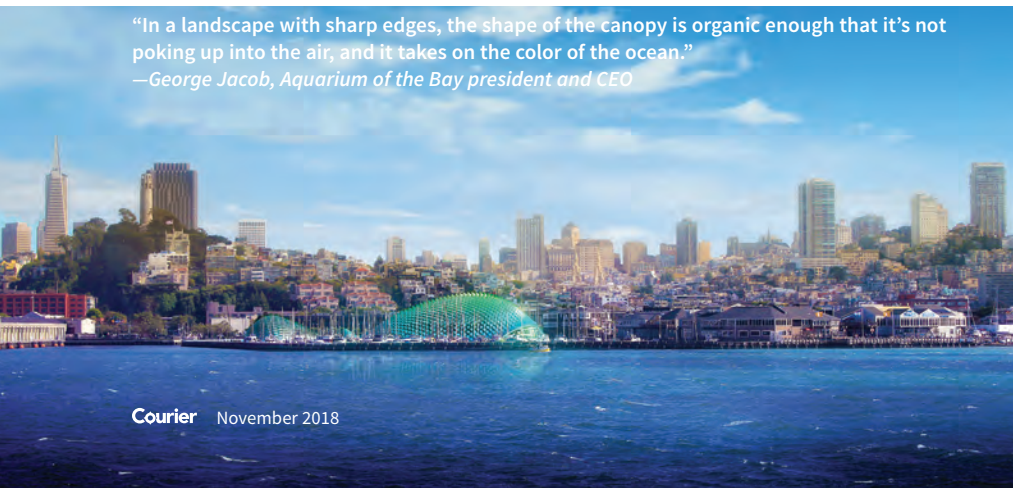
San Francisco residents—and thousands of visitors—who go to the Ecotarium will see the Bay Area's past, and they'll also look into the future of immersive education and entertainment attractions.

"You won't feel the power of technology, but this will be a giant leap in tech-induced experiences," Jacob promises. "It'll be an enhanced aquarium encounter that no one else has attempted."

For information about visiting Aquarium of the Bay, contact Cathy Tolentino, director of sales and marketing, at cat@bay.org or visit aquariumofthebay.org.

"In a landscape with sharp edges, the shape of the canopy is organic enough that it's not poking up into the air, and it takes on the color of the ocean."

—George Jacob, Aquarium of the Bay president and CEO



An NTA enclave

To gather firsthand information for this story, I traveled to San Francisco, met with Paul and George, toured the **Aquarium of the Bay** and enjoyed myself (and my mini doughnuts) at **PIER 39**. I stayed at **Hotel Zephyr**, a quirky-cool, comfortable place that's a four-minute walk from both the aquarium and Pier 39. And all three are NTA members. I felt right at home by the bay.

All that glitters is not gold, but the Gold Rush Trail is a gem

BY KENDALL FLETCHER

I WASN'T SURE WHAT TO EXPECT on my first trip to Canada. I didn't know anyone, I'd never been outside the United States, and we would be traveling about 500 miles from Vancouver to Williams Lake, British Columbia, on this Fam trip (my first one of those, too).

All I knew is I wanted to see a moose.

Beverly Evans, trade travel representative with the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association, was there to greet me at the Vancouver airport when I arrived. There was little time to waste, so I loaded up in the company Suburban and our group hit the trail. The Gold Rush Trail.

We discovered the region's history, explored its adventurous nature, and sampled the excellent dining options and accommodations, including the Quesnel location of NTA-member Sandman Hotel Group.



Historical sites



Fort Langley This was the site of the Hudson's Bay Company fur trading post. Our guides, Andrew and Hazel, were extremely knowledgeable and passionate about the fort's history. Hazel is an elder in the local indigenous tribe and shared the significance of cedar trees and other plants and their many structural and medicinal uses.



Barkerville Historic Town & Park It was cold, rainy and muddy, but I enjoyed Barkerville so much that I didn't really mind. (The remarkable) Miss Florence Wilson was our guide, and the reason this place feels so authentic is this: They never break character. The streetscape has more than 125 buildings, each with a shop, a museum or some replica of the town's rich history.



Xat'sull Heritage Village Here, we saw original petroglyphs, learned about medicinal plants, saw fishing areas in the Fraser River and enjoyed a traditional dance by a member of the Bonaparte band on Soda Creek. Groups can experience walking tours, see a fishing demonstration and stay the night in a teepee at the site.



Spout Lake at Ten-ee-ah Lodge

Outdoor attractions

Hell's Gate Airtam "We had to pass where no human being should venture, for surely we have encountered the gates of hell!" said Simon Fraser about the area during his 1808 exploration. Good thing I was in a gondola passing over the most treacherous section of the Fraser Canyon! In addition to incredible views and gold panning, this place has a great veggie burger.



TYLER CAVE

White water rafting Thankfully, we had an incredible guide with the Kumsheen Rafting Resort, Elliot, whose sense of humor and knowledge of each rapid's personality on the Thompson River were calming. We power-rafted through the likes of the Terminator, the Washing Machine, the Jaws of Death, and my personal favorite, the Mother-in-Law. These are the third-largest rapids in North America.



ALONSO GORDOA

Ten-ee-ah Lodge In Lac La Hache, we stayed in a big, cozy cabin and ate traditional European meals. Visitors can go horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking, fishing on the beautiful, tranquil Spout Lake, and take scenic flights in a floatplane. Canoeing the lake was so peaceful, and our horseback riding adventure was a fun one (it brought me back to my Kentucky roots some 2,500 miles away). The name Ten-ee-ah translates to "big animal" or "moose," but I still didn't see one.

Hell's Gate Airtam



KENDALL FLETCHER

Lodging and food

Sasquatch Inn The inn in Harrison Mills was quaint and rustic (and recently underwent some renovations). I was quite exhausted when we arrived, so I mostly noticed that the food was good—the restaurant is known for its pizza and burgers—and the beds were comfy.

Kumsheen Rafting Resort In the desert land of Lytton, Kumsheen has unbeatable mountain views, a striking multi-level pool and hot tub, unique accommodations and a lovely restaurant. I slept in a teepee, peering out at the stars, hearing only the comforting hum of the nearby train, and breathed cool, fresh mountain air.

Wells Hotel This hotel was so cute, and so was the entire town. All the buildings were painted bright colors and sat against a tree-lined, mountainous backdrop. The little restaurant inside had an amazing Vietnamese noodle tofu bowl (and a great breakfast skillet).

And as we drove out of town, there she was, crossing the road—my moose, and her baby!

When our time on the Cariboo Chilcotin Coast came to an end and I said goodbye to new friends, I thought fondly about my week of listening to their stories of world travel, hearing about their families or past jobs, and knowing how they liked their eggs cooked. I'm learning in my second year at NTA that travel isn't *just* about seeing incredible new places. It's also about getting out of your comfort zone and forming those long-lasting relationships with all kinds of people.

The gorgeous scenery is a pretty good perk, though. 📍

Each place contributes its own unique piece to Gold Rush Trail history, and here are a few other stops we made:

- Alexandra Bridge
- Ghost Lake Falls
- Green Lake
- Hat Creek Historic Site
- Klowa
- Lytton Chinese History Museum
- Quesnelle Forks Historic Site
- Sunset Theatre
- Tuckkwiowhum Heritage Village
- Yale Historic Site

At Kumsheen Rafting Resort, visitors can choose accommodations in teepees or canvas cabins, and the resort also has RV and tent sites.



My roommates/breakfast, lunch and dinnermates/fellow trailblazers for the week, from left: Jonny Bierman, the CCCTA's social media guru; Beverly Evans with CCCTA; Alonso Gordo with Eisa Travel in Mexico City; Tyler Cave with Tyler Cave Productions; Kristi Denby, CCCTA's Gold Rush Trail manager; me; and Melanie Bingham with Indigenous Tourism BC.



DON'T STOP YOU'VE SHOPPED

A look into six diverse shopping destinations

BY KENDALL FLETCHER

THE OUTLET OUTLOOK



OUTLETS AT TEJON

Outlets of Tejon

Arvin, California

With 60 stores offering sales up to 65 percent off, the center, located off I-5 between Los Angeles and San Francisco, is the perfect stop for groups.

First things first: Visitors can find the best bargains by opting in to the center's app, where they can receive instant notifications via text message about sales and events.

For groups booked 48 hours in advance, a meet-and-greet is available with a representative who will step onto the coach and provide an overview of the stores and some insights on the season's hot items. Each group member will receive a VIP tote bag with welcome packets and select store and restaurant discounts. There's also plenty of on-site, complimentary parking for motorcoaches.

Outlets of Tejon also has an incentive program for tour operators and drivers, who can earn a \$15 gift card to the outlets for bringing groups of any size. When an operator books five trips, he or she and the driver earn an additional \$50 gift card.

Shoppers can find stores like Coach, Columbia, Gap, Old Navy and Pottery Barn and can grab a pretzel at Auntie Anne's or lunch at Don Perico's. The Kate Spade outlet opened last summer, and Bath and Body Works will soon open for the holidays. There will also be a Hampton Inn opening this fall just north of the center.

Outlets of Tejon is a part of the collection of shopping destinations and attractions under the umbrella of NTA member SHOP*DINE*PLAY*USA.

For more information, email Becky Swiggum at rswiggum@tejonoutlets.com or go to tejonoutlets.com.



TANGEROUTLET.COM

Tanger Outlets

With 44 locations in 22 states and in Ontario and Québec, Tanger Outlets has all the familiar brands plus shops that are exclusive to the location. Shoppers can find stores like J. Crew and Michael Kors at most of the outlets, but in Savannah, Georgia, they can shop BoldSoul Boutique, and at Lilac Shade at the Phoenix/Glendale location.

"We speak groups," says Tanger Outlets' General Manager Angela Harness. "We offer advance online reservations, and when your group arrives, we have coupon books and center maps ready. We offer plenty of coach parking as well."

When groups make reservations, their check-ins are expedited, and select outlet centers offer meal vouchers.

"We are flexible and we can put together special shopping packages just for your group. Have a quilting group that loves Vera Bradley? Let us know. We will see about getting special discounts and offers," Harness says.

Tanger recently launched its Partner Perks Program, which offers paid incentives for FIT and group visits. Each FIT guest that checks in receives \$5, and each client gets a shopping tote and book of savings. Incentives for group visits include a \$100 gift card for three groups of 30 or more, a \$200 gift card for five groups of 30 or more and a \$500 gift card for 10 groups of 30 or more.

"Groups are looking for experiences that create memories. At Tanger Outlets, creating memories is our specialty," Harness says.

For more information, contact Harness at angela.harness@tangeroutlets.com or go to tangeroutlet.com.

THE LOCAL SCENE

Asheville, North Carolina

There are shops at nearly every turn in Asheville, and many help further the city's artsy feel by offering something local, unique or hard-to-find.

"Asheville's creative spirit influences every facet of the destination, and that includes its diverse shopping scene," says Explore Asheville's Sales Manager Beth McKinney. "Whether you're looking for antiques, vintage clothing, craft galleries, specialty-food shops, bookstores or your favorite national retailer, the mix of independent and name-brand offerings provides something for everyone."

McKinney adds that groups have a variety of shopping experiences to choose from, including the eclectic boutiques downtown and in West Asheville, stopping at some of the colorful studios of the River Arts District or exploring Historic Biltmore Village, just outside the gates of Biltmore Estate.

Visitors can find glass-blowing shops and bookstores downtown at places like Lexington Glassworks and Malaprops. Grove Arcade, a historical shopping plaza known for its unique architecture, offers dining options and regional crafts. Lexington Avenue is the go-to street for boutique and vintage shops.

McKinney says West Asheville is known for its hip vibe, independent shops, music venues and ever-growing food scene. The River Arts District houses more than 200 artists and their working studios, where shoppers can see works in paint, pencil, pottery, metal and fiber.

If groups are looking for name brands, the Asheville Outlets have familiar retailers and offer groups of 15 or more a coupon book. Extra incentives for tour operators also are available.

For more information, contact McKinney at bmckinney@exploreasheville.com or go to exploreasheville.com.



TRAVEL PORTLAND AND TORSTEN KJELLSTRAND

Portland, Oregon

"One of the greatest draws to our city as a destination is that Oregon has zero sales tax," says Travel Portland's Tourism Manager Ashley Kingman.

"I also believe Portland has done a great job of laying out the shopping districts to complement the neighborhoods, many of which reflect the style of the people living there."

"Downtown, you'll find your national brands and shopping malls. Nob Hill and the Pearl District offer boutique shops with local handmade goods, while the Alberta and Hawthorne districts have a more bohemian and artsy shopping feel to them," she says.

Kingman adds that many of the local makers and designers live in these neighborhoods or down the street from where their business is located.

Portland is a walkable city, and Kingman suggests operators allow plenty of free time for groups to walk the city blocks and discover that unique, handmade Portland souvenir or vintage find.

"A stop at Powell's City of Books is an absolute must-do. With over 1 million new, used, rare and out-of-print titles, it's the largest new and used bookstore in the world," she says.

On the weekends from March through Christmas Eve, visitors can see Portland's Saturday Market, located on the waterfront and nationally recognized as the largest continuously operated open-air arts and crafts market in the country. They also can make a stop at MadeHere PDX to browse products and gifts designed and created in Portland.

Kingman says Travel Portland provides group VIP coupon books with exclusive offers at many of the nearby shopping malls, a welcome gift and a meet-and-greet.

"The visitors love this and I believe the tour operator gets to shine in a moment like this," she says.

For more information contact Kingman at ashley@travelportland.com or go to travelportland.com.

FROM GIFT SHOPS TO ONE-STOP SHOPS

The Carolina Opry Theater

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

“Our gift shop is always changing. You never know what treasures you might find from season to season,” says Margaret Wallace, the Opry’s group sales director. “We always have a rotating selection of nautical items, from driftwood wind chimes to sea glass jewelry to mermaid reading glasses. We also have all of those classic memorable souvenirs, like logo tee shirts, caps, magnets and anniversary items.”

Around the holidays, the gift shop has a vast selection of novelty ornaments and Christmas collectibles. They feature a different nativity scene each year, and many visitors return to add to their personal collections.

“Here’s the best part: Our valued groups receive a 15 percent discount and, because the gift shop is not our main product (that’s entertainment!), our items are actually much more affordable than a standard gift shop already,” Wallace says.

For more information, contact Wallace at mwallace@gilmoreentertainment.com or go to carolinaopry.com.



THE CAROLINA OPRY THEATER

Wonders of Wildlife National Museum & Aquarium

Springfield, Missouri

In addition to its aquarium, this attraction is under the same roof of the original Bass Pro Shops.

“One of the most popular itineraries here is to start in our Wildlife Galleries Museum, then shop in Bass Pro Shops, then continue the Wonders of Wildlife experience through our award-winning aquarium,” says Group Sales Manager Chris Dodson.

Visitors have over a mile of immersive experiences to take

in, including the Wildlife Galleries and the wondrous displays of aquatic animals. Dodson says it takes about three-and-a-half hours to tour the galleries and the aquarium, and with the chance to shop, it’s an all-day stop for visitors.

Groups can also dine at one of the restaurants inside the aquarium or Bass Pro Shops.

For more information, contact Dodson at cmdodson@wondersofwildlife.org or go to wondersofwildlife.org.



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Cape Town

BY PAT HENDERSON



For more information, contact Deon Kitching of Embrace South Africa Tours at deonkit@mweb.co.za or go to embracesouthafricatours.com, or reach out to Virginia Dionisio of South African Tourism at virginia@southafrica.net or go to southafrica.net.

THERE ARE THREE THINGS you should know about Cape Town. First, it is a stunningly beautiful place. Second, a mountain runs smack dab through it. And third, if you really want to experience its rich culture, contact Deon Kitching.

While I'd been to Morocco for five hours a few years back, this was my first real visit to Africa, and Cape Town was a great place to start. The city itself is very

cosmopolitan, but not overwhelming, and based on the country's British lineage, there was no language barrier.

It is perched on the far southern tip of the continent, right alongside the Atlantic Ocean. You also have a number of nearby mountains, and the combination of water and peaks reminded me a lot of Vancouver, British Columbia.

During my eight days in the South African wonderland, I was in the capable hands of Deon, who is the founder and CEO of Embrace South Africa Tours, and also a pastor. The company's early tours consisted of faith-based packages and voluntourism vacations, and while those are still popular, Deon he has added deep-dive cultural programs that offer a fresh look at South Africa, and that's the type of tour he set up for me.

On the pages of *Courier*, I typically write a lot about 21st-century travelers' desire for unique, authentic and highly localized experiences, and Deon delivered that in full. To wit, for most every tried-and-true Cape Town tourist hot spot we visited, there was another encounter that included meaningful conversations—often one-on-one—with friendly people. Plus, Deon is one of the most thoughtful people I've ever met, and that was reflected in how he crafted my itinerary.

The cape of good views

The first full day of touring started with a gondola ride up Table Mountain, and it offered the unexpected bonus of helping this map geek get his bearings right away, which was great. The combination of stunning views, excellent hiking trails, and crisp, clear air didn't hurt, either.

That evening, Deon had arranged for us to join one of his pastor friends for a *braai*. A *braai* is a South African tradition—think backyard cookout—that focuses on the grilling of meats and leisurely conversation. I'm a fan of both, and our evening of eating and chatting with the couple and their teenage daughters helped give me a perspective on real life in Cape Town.

The following day, it was off to Boulders Beach, a park in coastal Simon's Town that is a protected refuge for thousands of African penguins. As we made our way along the boardwalk perched a few feet above the sand, we watched the tiny creatures strutt, scratch, contort and relax along the rocky shoreline.

We then headed on south to the Cape of Good Hope, and the drive itself was a treat. The main road stays pretty close to the ocean—think the Pacific Coast Highway in California—and the sweeping views are stunning.

African penguins at Boulders Beach



PAT HENDERSON

TOP: CC FLICKR/PAUL SCOTT; BH/2/3TRB



Courier's Pat Henderson (left) and Embrace South Africa Tours' Deon Kitching

A very special Sunday

Deon had arranged for us to attend worship at JL Zwane Church a few miles north of downtown on Sunday, which offered a chance to experience another aspect of local life. Even though I didn't fully grasp everything that was going on—I'm a little rusty on Afrikaans—the joy and passion the congregants had as they sang, danced and worshipped was contagious.

I also got to sit in on an hour-long session with leaders from the church, who discussed the role JL Zwane has played over the last two decades in shedding light on the AIDS crisis. Nombeko Mpongo, who works as an HIV-AIDS activist, has been leading the charge for the church, and hearing her stories was both eye-opening and encouraging.

We headed to nearby Langa Township, which is the oldest black township in Cape Town, for a tour and lunch.

The restaurant was packed with a cross-section of noisy, happy locals, and the delicious food was complemented by some tasty tunes from a meringue group. When the band played Bob Marley's "Three Little Birds," the energy surged even higher, and every little thing was absolutely gonna be all right.

That memory of that dining experience was one I'll treasure for a long, long time, and I would bet even the most intrepid of travelers would never end up at this magical place ... unless they know Deon.

Getting a history lesson

During visits to Robben Island and the District 6 Museum over the next couple of days, I got a lesson on Cape Town and South Africa's apartheid history.

You take the ferry from Cape Town out to Robben Island, which is the maximum security prison where Nelson Mandela was held for 18 of the 27 years he was incarcerated during apartheid rule. Seeing the tiny cell where Mandela stayed, as well as the general conditions at Robben Island, gave me even more respect for this extraordinary man.

The first-person stories from Noor Ebrahim, the main tour guide and de facto proprietor at the District Six Museum, were even more chilling. District Six was a "colored" residential neighborhood in the city center that Cape Town officials declared a whites-only area Feb. 11, 1966. Over the next decade, more than 60,000 of its inhabitants were relocated to townships on the outskirts of the city.

The Ebrahim family had owned property and lived in District Six for a number of years before the forcible removals began. During our tour, Noor shared many personal stories from that tumultuous period, including one about the day their house was torn down.

He said his father wanted to be there, so the two of them made the dangerous journey back into the restricted area. Noor said he'll never forget seeing tears stream down his dad's face as the workers bulldozed the family house; "It was the first time I'd seen my father cry." Hearing this very personal and very poignant tale put a face to the apartheid struggle for me.



And that interaction was a pretty perfect encapsulation of my visit to Cape Town. While I encountered lots of history, lots of great attractions and lots of natural beauty, the connections with the people that Deon orchestrated helped give those things a much more personal—and unique and authentic and highly localized—feel. 📍

NOTE: My visit to Cape Town also included spending two nights in Paarl, which is half an hour east of the city, for wine touring and volunteering at a cheetah sanctuary. To read more about those adventures, go to NTAcourier.com and search for "The time I walked a Cheetah."

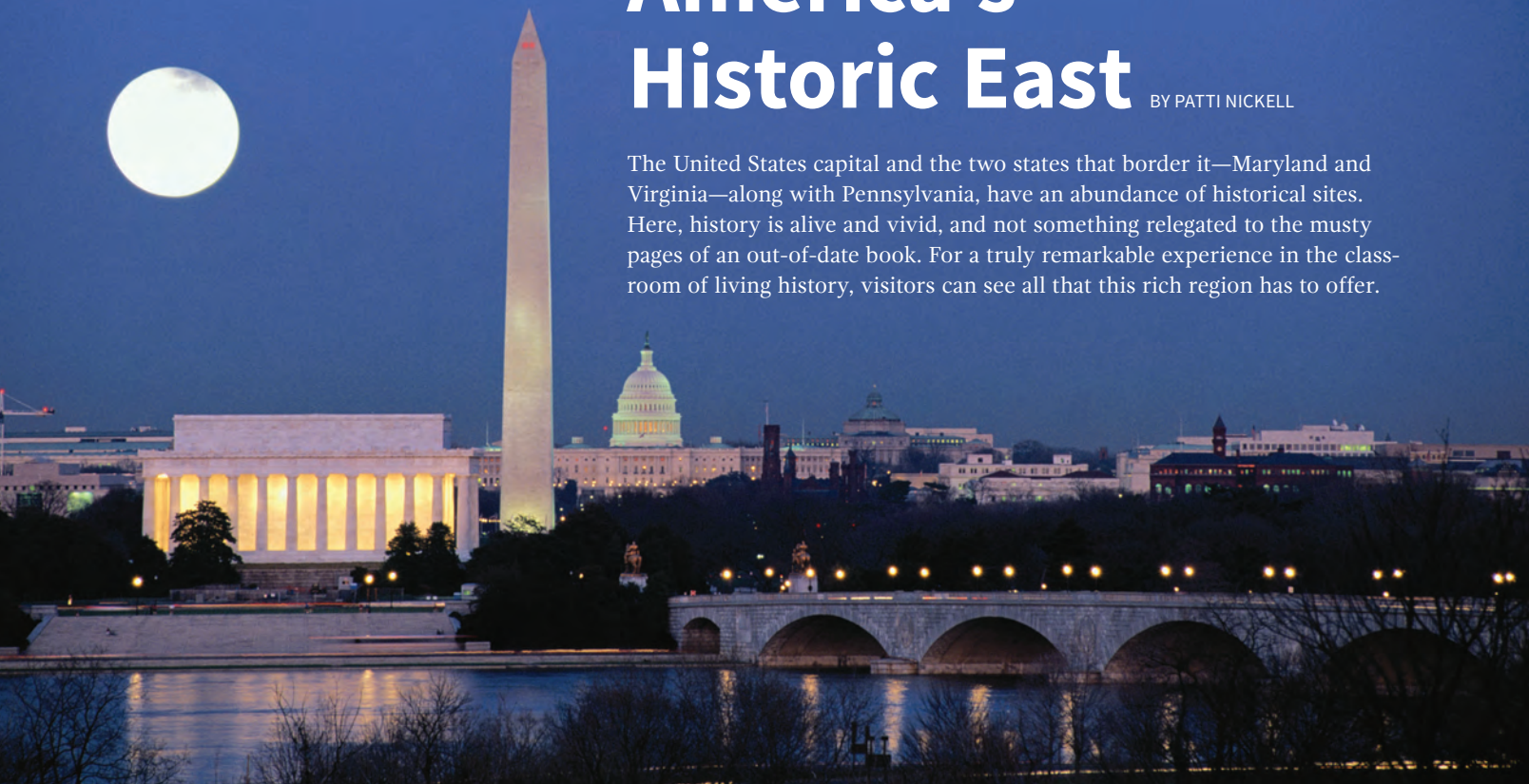


Writer/activist Noor Ebrahim shares his family story on tours at the District Six Museum.

America's Historic East

BY PATTI NICKELL

The United States capital and the two states that border it—Maryland and Virginia—along with Pennsylvania, have an abundance of historical sites. Here, history is alive and vivid, and not something relegated to the musty pages of an out-of-date book. For a truly remarkable experience in the classroom of living history, visitors can see all that this rich region has to offer.



A hotbed of American history

It would take a herculean effort to catalogue the number of historical sites found in Washington, D.C. A living museum of government in action, D.C. holds hardly a place you can go and *not* see something that represents the building of the United States.

For starters, there's the symbol of democracy, the U.S. Capitol Building. Tour operators can request free tickets for a public tour, or if their group is made up of students, they can request admittance to special seminars on government and how it works.

In addition to its function as an incubator of the political process, the building is known for its art and for Benjamin Latrobe's architecture, and tours can be geared to that aspect as well.

Most visitors come for the monuments and memorials, honoring Americans from presidents to veterans to Native Peoples. A popular option for tour operators is a night-time viewing of the Jefferson Tidal Basin, the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial bathed in moonlight.

Washington is more than its majestic memorials and monuments, as visitors find out. You can book a tour at the National Cathedral and marvel at the leering gargoyles or arrange for a special tea in the Cathedral garden.

Groups also can visit the Library of Congress with its 158 million items, including books, maps, photographs, manuscripts and films.



Library of Congress

WASHINGTON.ORG

And of course, there's an incomparable collection of museums awaiting your exploration, from the Smithsonian's iconic collection of attractions to niche museums, such as the International Spy Museum, Newseum, Museum of the Bible and the National Law Enforcement Memorial and Museum—all NTA members.

Finally, for a special evening, book a tour and performance at Ford's Theatre, the site of Abraham Lincoln's assassination and still an operating theater.

For a rundown on all that the capital city offers, contact Destination DC's Lindsay Hill at lindsay.hill@destinationdc.com or visit washington.org.

TOP: JAMES P. BLAIR



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Abingdon: Where history is something you feel

"History isn't just something you learn about; it's something you feel," says Amanda Livingston, marketing manager for the Abingdon Virginia CVB.

And here, in this town in the Appalachian Valley, it is easy to feel history surrounding you. Abingdon was founded in 1778, just two years after the United States was formed, and its citizens' passion for preservation has resulted in intact architecture spanning three centuries.

For an 18th century experience, groups can enjoy dinner at The Tavern (1779). Its Colonial-era architecture is immaculately preserved, and its menu features authentic German-American fare.

One of the town's most popular attractions is another 18th-century site. The Abingdon Muster Grounds is home to a comprehensive Revolutionary War exhibit, showcasing backcountry Virginia and artifacts from the Battle of Kings Mountain.

A unique experience exclusive to groups is a living-history program in which the males portray the patriot militia and the females take on the roles of backcountry women. Their demonstrations include working with medicinal herbs, textiles and crafts, and cooking over an open fire.

Next, move on to the 19th century with a show at the Barter Theatre. (Its name comes from the Great Depression,




JASON BARNETTE

when out-of-work actors bartered theater tickets for their supper—their slogan being "Hamlet for Ham.")

Now the state theater of Virginia, the Barter is known for its Broadway-caliber shows. An exclusive feature for groups is a backstage tour, where they can learn how the building evolved from 19th-century opera house to town hall (complete with jail) to Depression-era theater and finally, today's multi-million-dollar entertainment facility.

To bring your experience full circle to the present, embark on a walking or driving tour of downtown Abingdon, accompanied by a noted historian. That interpreter will recount Abingdon's past as a frontier town and center of art and commerce. And you might even hear a ghost story or two.

For more information about Abingdon, go to visitabingdonvirginia.com or contact Monica Hall, group sales manager, at mhall@abingdon-va.gov. 





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Founded the same year as the United States, 1776, Hagerstown is home to Fort Frederick, the only such structure remaining from the French and Indian War, as well as to picturesque 19th-century stone arch bridges and the Chesapeake & Ohio Canal.

However, it's the area's Civil War heritage that often lures visitors. The city is less than an hour's drive from Gettysburg and Harper's Ferry, where John Brown carried out his infamous raid.

Hagerstown's own major Civil War site is Antietam National Battlefield (where, trivia buffs will be interested to learn, the medical process of triage was born, thanks to Clara Barton, who came here to nurse the wounded soldiers).

After spending several hours at the battlefield, visitors will doubtless be ready for something a bit lighter. The Antietam Highland Wine Trail, with its Red Heifer, Knob Hall and Big Cork wineries, provides just such an excursion.



SCANTNER PHOTOGRAPHY

Burnside Bridge,
Antietam National Battlefield

"Tour operators love us," says Betsy DeVore, director of marketing and communications for Visit Hagerstown. "We offer a variety of options for any type of group, whether it's a general group tour or a specialized reunion or wedding tour."

To get more details, reach out to Audrey Vargason, director of sales for Visit Hagerstown, at audrey@visithagerstown.com or go to visithagerstown.com.



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A costumed interpreter instructs a young visitor at Yorktown's American Revolution Museum.

Blueprints for the nation's beginnings

Perhaps no two locations have more significance in America's early development than Jamestown and Yorktown in Virginia, and no organization has done a better job at keeping that legacy alive than the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation.

Living history displays at Jamestown and the American Revolution Museum at Yorktown are ideally suited to groups of all sizes, ages and interests. Thanks to an array of unique artifacts and the costumed interpreters who are on hand to answer questions, visitors get a fascinating peek into the American colonies of the 17th and 18th centuries.

Groups can experience the beginning and end of Colonial America in just one day, starting with a two-and-a-half hour guided tour of Jamestown Settlement in the morning, followed by a two-hour guided tour at Yorktown's American Revolution Museum in the afternoon. In between, groups of up to 50 can arrange for a private lunch at Jamestown Settlement Café.

Visitors to the area from November 2018 through January 2020 will get a bonus with a special exhibition at Jamestown Settlement, "TENACITY: Women in Jamestown and Early Virginia."

Through captivating personal stories, you will get a sense of the tenacious spirit that allowed these women to endure countless hardships in the colony.

This special exhibition features artifacts, images and interactive displays—some seen in the U.S. for the first time—to tell their riveting stories. The artifacts, which range from a 17th-century Ducking Chair, a form of punishment usually reserved for women, to an elaborately carved court cupboard, are on loan from prestigious museums, including London's Victoria & Albert and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

For more on the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, visit **historyisfun.org** or contact Joan Heikens at joan.heikens@jyf.virginia.gov.

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The National Constitution Center: An essential Philadelphia experience

Considered Philadelphia's premier destination for groups, the National Constitution Center combines exhibitions, live performances, rare artifacts and hands-on activities to help visitors appreciate the Constitution as not just a document, but as the guiding principles of a nation.

Those educational components include the 17-minute multimedia theatrical performance, "Freedom Rising," and the center's dynamic, interactive main exhibit, "The Story of We the People." However, your favorite activity may well be visiting Signers' Hall, where you can place your name on the U.S. Constitution while standing alongside 42 life-size bronze statues of the Founding Fathers.

Insiders Tip: A special tour—Lurid Lives of the Founders—is offered exclusively to adult groups. Learn what Ben Franklin was up to when he wasn't flying kites ... and discover George Washington's activities when he was away from Mount Vernon.

Groups of 15 or more receive discounted admission to the museum's must-see exhibits and exclusive access to themed tours, packages and programs, as well as private evening tours reserved exclusively for them.

"A visit to the 'Story of We the People' provides groups a window into the nation's past and what it means to be an American today, allowing visitors to be inspired and excited by our founding documents," says Annie Stone, director of marketing and communications.

For additional information, contact the center's Gina Romanelli at gromanelli@constitutioncenter.org or visit constitutioncenter.org. ☎



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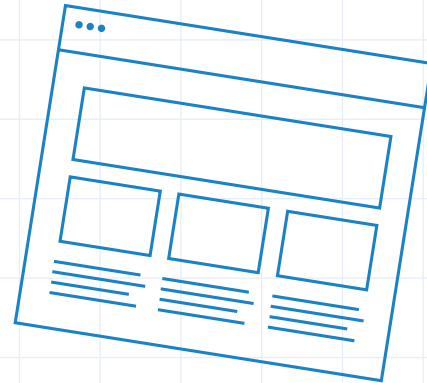
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Courier



What began as a four-page newsletter in 1974 evolved into a four-color **magazine** loaded with original articles that explain new and upcoming tour product, focus on destinations, provide insight into industry trends, and inform National Tour Association members about the events and benefits.

With the launch of **NTAcourier.com**, articles are now more easily accessed, read and shared, not only by members, but also by the larger travel community—and by anyone with an internet connection and a yearning to explore.



Also providing a digital multiplier, *Courier* uses social media **@ntacourier** to cultivate and push content to followers, who in turn share those stories that are meaningful to *their* followers.

Courier's engaging articles and insightful information is now disseminated in print, online and via social media. Now with a wider audience, we can better promote NTA members and the many ways they enable people to experience the depth and breadth of meaningful and memorable travel.





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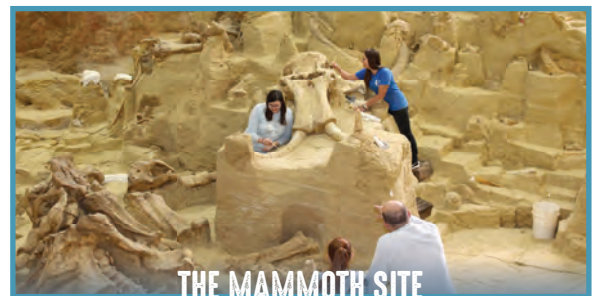
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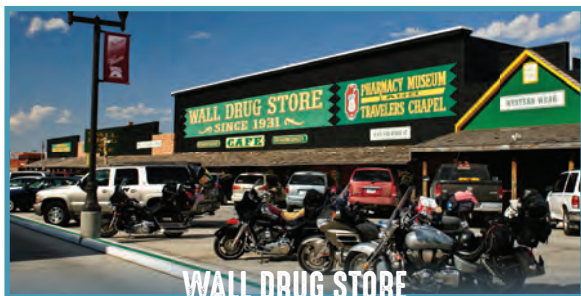
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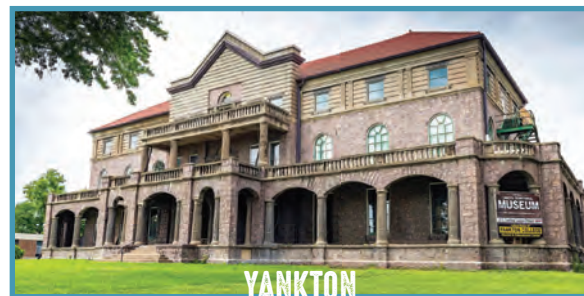
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South Dakota

Atlantic Canada

BY BOB ROUSE

Nova Scotia's Acadian shores

I'm proud to say I'm a CFA. That's what maritimers call a visitor to Atlantic Canada who wasn't born there: a CFA—Come From Away.

I was in Halifax in May for Rendez-vous Canada, and after attending the country's premier travel show, I joined with other CFAs—tour operators from seven countries—to explore Nova Scotia's southwestern shores.

And let me say that springtime in Nova Scotia is beguiling. Our visit was just ahead of tourist season, but in every town and at every attraction, the locals welcomed us to their beautiful surroundings and shared their fascinating heritage.

My city tour of Halifax and the Fam trip down the coast were both led by Gary Biddle of NTA-member Atlantic Tours & Travel; he works with Richard Arnold, who I know from every NTA convention I've attended. Those guys really do wear kilts every day.

Our journey along the shores of the Atlantic revealed quaint fishing villages that welcome visitors during the warm months. We feasted on lobster and lore. The region was home to Acadians, French colonists who were booted out by the British and, in many cases, returned to the province to repopulate their communities. And where the cultures of England and France meshed with the region's native peoples, a unique story emerged.

I'm glad I learned that story—or part of it, anyway. I won't feel like I'm coming from so far away the next time I visit.

For details about Halifax, email Michele Bourgeois at mbourgeois@discoverhalifaxns.com. To get information about Nova Scotia, email Meghan Lloyd at meghan.lloyd@novascotia.ca.

Karen Farrar, a tour operator from Leeds, England, snaps a photo of our guide, Gary Biddle of Atlantic Tours & Travel, with another traveler as the group explored the windy and wonderful Cape Forchu. (I wrote a horrible poem that ended with "a cape for me and a ca—..." Sorry. I can't bear to finish it here.)



I feasted on fresh lobster—not this particular giant—at Hall's Harbour Lobster Pound & Restaurant in Centreville. The locals say that when they were growing up, only the poor kids brought lobster to school for lunch every day.



An interpreter at the Halifax Citadel, in the uniform of a soldier in the 78th Highlanders regiment, describes what life inside the fort was like for the British troops stationed there in 1869.



An old cannon rests atop the grassy ramparts of Fort Anne National Historic Site in Annapolis Royal. The site, where French and British troops clashed regularly until 1710, is said to be the most fought-over territory in North America.



Interpreters at the Historical Acadian Village of Nova Scotia depict life in the early 1900s—with cookies in the kitchen—of families in the fishing community of Lower West Pubnico. Carefully maintained buildings include a blacksmith shop, boat shop, fishing shanty and a typical house.

PEI meads and musicals

Grant MacRae of Tourism PEI says that Prince Edward Island has many options for visitors. There are two, though, that he's most eager to tout to NTA tour operators:

The Island Honey Wine Company "Recently opened in the village of Wheatley River," MacRae says, "the Island Honey Wine Company has four mead wines, all of which are made with some amazing local ingredients." The winery is part of La Serena Farm, a certified organic farm.

The Charlottetown Festival Kicking off in early June and running until mid-October each year, the festival presents some of Canada's finest performers in a professional showcase of musical theater and comedy. The 2019 edition will feature "Anne of Green Gables—The Musical" for the 55th successive season; "Kronberg—The Hamlet Rock Musical;" "Atlantic Blue," a celebration of east coast songwriters; and the return of the hit musical "Mamma Mia!"



LOUISE VESSEY

Cast of "Anne of Green Gables—The Musical"

For more information, contact MacRae at rgmacrae@gov.pe.ca or visit tourismpei.com.



A beach boil-up in Gros Morne National Park

WESTERN NEWFOUNDLAND DMO

Out west in Newfoundland

"We have new experiences, food tours, festivals, new builds and expansions in Western Newfoundland," says Laura Barry Walbourne, director of travel trade and media relations at Western Newfoundland DMO. Here are a few things on her list:

Soft adventure experiences Guests taking a guided birding excursion in southwestern Newfoundland can spot many of the area's 350 species of birds. Marine tours include a look at resettled fishing communities and a chance to try your hand at cod fishing.

New builds and expansions Theatre Newfoundland Labrador, a state-of-the-art facility, is set to open next June. A new luxury hotel debuted this summer in Gros Morne National Park, and two more are slated to open next summer, one in the park and another in Deer Lake.

Food tours Speaking of the park, it has two tours for foodies: A Taste of Gros Morne and a traditional beach boil-up at the Little Red Fishing Shed.

Festivals Walbourne says two annual events stand out: The Iceberg Festival in early June celebrates the annual arrival of icebergs, and the Trails, Tales and Tunes Festival will strike up the band May 17–26, 2019.

For details, reach out to Walbourne at laura@gowesternnewfoundland.com or visit newfoundlandlabrador.com/western.

Eat, drink and be artsy in Fredericton

Fredericton has been the provincial capital of New Brunswick since 1785, but the "new" just keeps on coming.

As an example, Mary Ellen Hudson of Tourism Fredericton can point to a festival that debuts this month and will return every November.

"The Maritime Oyster Festival features fresh oysters, live music and Atlantic Canada's best craft beer, wine and spirits," Hudson says. "We're set to slurp some of Atlantic Canada's best oysters!"

Also new in Fredericton are several restaurants and bars:

- Gahan House Riverside, featuring two patios and an oyster bar
- RustiCo, serving Neapolitan-style pizzas with ingredients imported from Italy
- The Provincial Gastro Lounge, a pub and café featuring modernized French charcuterie
- Bowl-a-Drome, recently purchased by Trailway Brewing, will become a craft beer bowling bar in 2019.

Next year will mark the 60th anniversary of the Beaverbrook Art Gallery, and the attraction will host special exhibitions and events throughout 2019. The gallery recently unveiled an \$11.5 million expansion, which added exhibit space, a café, an artist-in-residence studio and a pavilion overlooking the Saint John River.

For more information about Fredericton, contact Hudson at maryellen.hudson@fredericton.ca or visit tourismfredericton.ca.



Beaverbrook Art Gallery

ROB BLANCHARD



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Caribbean

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Cayman Turtle Centre

CayTours offers more-than-OK tours

“The Cayman Islands are the envy of all the Caribbean,” says Victor Johnson, managing director of CayTours. “We have the sun, sea and sand, and the Cayman people are very friendly. They extend their hospitality to everyone that comes to our shores.”

The company, which was founded five years ago, showcases many aspects of island life and culture throughout its itineraries. Johnson touts a full island tour—covering attractions such

as the Cayman Turtle Centre, Pedro Castle, the observation tower and the local craft market—as a good option for first-time visitors.

“During the tour, our guests will see the world famous turtle center, which was founded in 1968 and does vital education and research regarding the conservation and protection of the species,” he says. “Pedro Castle is a refurbished plantation home built in 1780, and it boasts a multimedia theater presentation that explains the history of the islands and the house itself. It is the birthplace of our democracy and a national historical site.”

One of the tallest structures on the islands, the 75-foot tower at Camana Bay provides sweeping views of Seven Mile Beach, the North Sound and George Town. Those three areas are all popular spots where visitors and locals gather and mingle.

Johnson recommends two other, ahem, hot spots: the Tortuga Rum Cake Factory and Hell. At Tortuga, travelers get to see how the company’s signature cakes and rums are made, as well as enjoying samples of both.

“Hell is situated in the West Bay district and has a rock formation that, to the best of my knowledge, is not seen anywhere else,” says Johnson. “Legend has it that during the early 19th century two Englishmen were there hunting birds. One of them was shooting and missing, and kept shouting ‘Oh, hell!’ Since that time, it has been named Hell.”

For more information, contact Johnson at info@caytours.com or go to caytours.com.

Cayman Craft Market in George Town



J.D. MOSLEY/MATCHET/CAYMAN ISLANDS TOURISM ATTRACTION BOARD

TOP: LAWSON WOOD

Puerto Rico: A portrait of recovery one year later



Jorge Pardo

Courier: What is the status of Puerto Rico, in terms of tourism, since the hurricane?

Pardo: Our island has been open for business since December 2017. After being closed for two months due to the hurricane, we started offering our company's cultural immersion tours again in late December. Since then, we've hosted hundreds of student and adult travelers.

Courier: Talk about your company's involvement in the recovery efforts.

Pardo: We raised over \$23,000 as part of our hurricane relief efforts. Through the fund, our staff purchased and delivered

much-needed goods and food to affected communities right after the hurricane. In addition, we donated items, repaired schools and homes, and brought in groups that got involved in all kinds of rebuilding projects.

Courier: What would you say to tour operators thinking about taking groups to Puerto Rico?

Pardo: I would advise them to follow the steps of Lin Manuel Miranda, who decided to bring "Hamilton" to Puerto Rico two months after Hurricane Maria hit us so hard. He realized that the best thing he could do was to bring revenue and revitalize our economy and then continue to encourage people to visit. And, from Jan. 8–26, 2019, "Hamilton" will be performed in Puerto Rico with Lin Manuel reprising his award-winning role.

Moreover, I urge all group leaders and tour operators to come and inspect our island, even if they just visit it for two days. I guarantee they will be amazed at the unbelievable contrast between what the media portrays and the comfort and the true recovered status of Puerto Rico.

For more information, contact Pardo at jorge@vamonostours.com or go to vamonostours.com.

The long and the short of Bermuda

Although it is debatable whether Bermuda is technically part of the Caribbean, there is no doubt the country shares many similarities with its neighboring island nations to the southwest: beautiful beaches, tropical forests and a laid-back coastal vibe.

"Bermuda offers a variety of badge-worthy experiences year-round," says Simon Boden, director of sales and business development for the Bermuda Tourism Authority. "One of my favorites is a food and culture tour offered through the Island Tour Centre. Attendees can fish with local fishermen, visit organic farms and taste delicious cuisine at our mom-and-pop food stands."

Boden also recommends an area known to natives as Tom Moore's Jungle. The 12-acre nature reserve includes a system of tunnels that connect aqua pools, grottos and craggy caves with the outside world.

One of the park's signature spots is seeing the Blue Hole, a large aqua pool surrounded by mangroves and limestone rock formations. A visit to the nearby Crystal Caves pairs well with swimming at the Blue Hole.

Other popular options for groups visiting the 21-square mile island—which is reachable via short flights from many East Coast U.S. gateways—include riding the Railway Trail, touring the town of St. George and enjoying catamaran, jet ski or diving excursions.

"And, one of our best-kept secrets is that every year the humpback whales return to our island waters in February," Boden adds. "If you are visiting then, book a whale-watching trip."

Contact Boden at sboden@bermudatourism.com or go to gotobermuda.com to learn more. 📍



JULIE MAKINSON

Tom Moore's Jungle in Bermuda

Egypt, Israel and Jordan



CATHERINE PRATHER

Amman again BY BOB ROUSE

This is my go-back.

When I wrote about visiting Jordan as part of Tourism Cares with Jordan earlier this year, I said almost nothing about Amman. But this modern city, full of vitality, history and hills, is a must-see. (Add it to the list of must-sees I described in the June/July issue: Petra, the baptism site, Jerash and the seas—Red and Dead).

Amman has been the capital of Jordan for just under 100 years, but it shows its true age (in a fascinating way) through the presence of ancient ruins. The Roman Theatre, completed in A.D. 177, is located in the heart of downtown and is easily viewed from another Roman ruins site, Citadel Hill, or Jabal Al Qal'a.

Even if it weren't packed with ancient temples, colonnaded streets and residences, Citadel Hill would be a marvelous place to do just that: marvel at the city below. But it is loaded with places—even a palace—to explore.

I visited the Jordan Archaeological Museum on Citadel Hill and discovered what I considered my doppelganger from the Neolithic Period. (See photo at left.) We saw even more antiquities at the newly opened Jordan Museum. We didn't have time to take in all of the beautiful galleries that tell the story of Jordan's culture and history, but we did see its collection of Dead Sea Scrolls, including the Copper Scroll, from around A.D. 70.

We're all familiar with "living history" activities, but sometimes it's cool to just stand and stare at the past.

We were very much in the present during our time in Amman, though. Here are three activities I'd recommend to any visitor:

- **King Abdullah Mosque** Along with many in our group, I was eager to go inside a mosque. This is the only one in the city open to non-Muslims. (Remind me to show you a snappy photo of my coworkers Kami Risk and Catherine Prather in their head coverings.)
- **Beit Sitti** This interactive cook-and-dine experience—perfect for our group of 20 or so—was one of my favorite meals in Jordan. The food was fantastic, and the neighborhood women who work there made us think we were great cooks.
- **Wild Jordan** The downtown center houses artwork and a conservancy society, but I appreciated it for two things: It has a gift shop featuring pieces by Jordanian craftworkers from all over the county, and it offers a spectacular view—especially in the evening—of Amman.

I began by saying this is a go-back article, as I had neglected to describe Amman in a previous story. But also, I'm determined to go back to this vibrant yet ancient city.

For more information about Jordan, contact Malia Asfour of the Jordan Tourism Board at malia@visitjordan.com or go to visitjordan.com. And read "Meaningful and magnificent" on NTAcourier.com; search for "Jordan."



BOB ROUSE

At Beit Sitti, guests fix and feast on traditional Jordanian fare.



BOB ROUSE

One of the oldest statues ever discovered, circa 8,000–4,000 B.C.

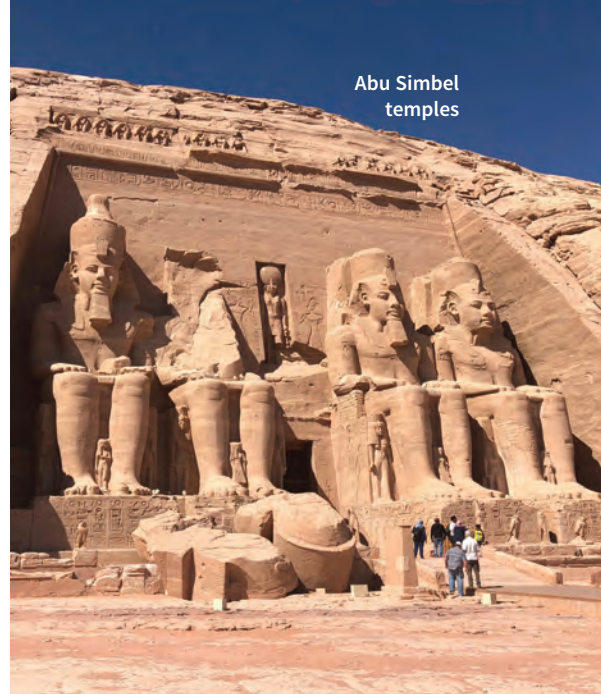


Roman ruins on Citadel Hill, or Jabal Al Qal'a

BOB ROUSE



Camel ride at the Great Pyramids



Abu Simbel temples

'I cannot believe I am here'

BY PAT HENDERSON

For Romani Gaballa, the lure to starting his own travel company was simple. The founder of Giza-based Egyptian Educational Travel wanted to blend his fascination for history—he does, after all, have a degree in Egyptology—with showing off the country's legendary sites to travelers.

"I feel really touched when I see a guest in my group gazing at the Pyramids and Sphinx saying, through tears, 'I cannot believe I am here. This was my dream since I was a child,' " says Gaballa. "This typifies what Egypt means for so many people and makes it the top of everyone's travel list."

While nearly all of EET's itineraries include the iconic—the Pyramids, the temples of Luxor and Karnak, the Nile River—the company's offerings go beyond those A-list sites. Diverse themed tours range from architectural highlights and faith-based packages to agricultural programs and beach vacations.

True to his training as an Egyptologist, Gaballa is most passionate about the architectural tours.

"Egypt is the cradle of civilization and the birthplace of architecture as well as of Imhotep, who is the father of all architects," he says. "His revolutionary ideas sparked the building of the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx, as well as the magnificent temples along the Nile Valley."

He says these programs also include tours of fourth-century churches and cultural visits to Nubian villages and homes. "Plus, we go to monasteries where the Holy Family hid during their flight into Egypt. Our groups also can meet with people of various faiths and hear lectures from experts on many topics based on their interests."

And, for those seeking a relaxing complement to all the historical sites, EET has a number of coastal and beach offerings.

"They can enjoy diving, snorkeling or even just sitting on the beach or taking a sea trip on a yacht," he adds.

Contact Gaballa at romani@egyptianedutrael.com or go to egyptianedutrael.com to learn more.

Tour operators add to regional mix

In addition to the members featured in the other two stories, NTA has five local tour operators that cover the region's highlights. These companies have been in business for a combined 221 years, and their offerings run the gamut from multi-week itineraries to three-day city break tours and day-long sightseeing options.

Groups can work with these destination specialists on nearly any type of tour package covering the Holy Land. In addition to traditional pilgrimages and Jewish and Christian tours of the region, the companies can provide a range of themed programs—everything from architecture programs and culinary-based itineraries to wellness and beach vacations—as well as conference, special event and transportation services.

Reach out to the member contacts below to learn more about the packages they offer:

Amiel Tours

Member contact: Arie Abend
arieh@amiel.israel.net
 Yehuda, Israel
amiel.com
 Founded in 1976

Diesenhau-Unitours Incoming Tourism

Dov Sarid
dovs@diesenhau.com
 Tel Aviv, Israel
diesenhau.com
 Founded in 1926

Karma House

Ghada Najjar
ghada@karma.com.jo
 Amman, Jordan
karmahousejordan.com
 Founded in 2003

NET-Near East Tourist Agency

Sami Abu-Dayyeh
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 Jerusalem, Israel
netours.com
 Founded in 1964

Tailor Made Tours Ltd.

Josephine Zinder
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 Tel Aviv, Israel
tailormade.co.il
 Founded in 2000

Courier's Guide to NTA Corporate Partners and Associates

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NTA's Corporate Partners offer programs and discounts that can save your company money and offset the cost of your NTA membership. Take advantage of savings on business services, crisis- and risk-management solutions, insurance, itinerary planning, marketing and networking platforms, office supplies and shipping services, payment processing, ticketing solutions, travel protection coverage, vehicle rentals, web booking engines and job postings. The following valued partners provide these services and solutions. Visit NTAonline.com to see full profile and program details.

The information was provided by the member contact and was current as of Sept. 27, 2018. Please check NTAonline.com for updates on the association's corporate partners.



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Associates

NTA's Associate Members offer products, services, tools and resources that benefit NTA members. The following companies provide services and solutions in areas such as insurance, marketing, technology and tour operator products. Visit NTAonline.com to see full profile details.

The information was provided by the member contact and was current as of Oct. 9, 2018. Please check NTAonline.com for updates on associate members. Members that are also members of the Faith Travel Association have an FTA logo by their name.

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Generali Global Assistance, formerly CSA Travel Protection, is among the top five travel insurance providers in the U.S. We are dedicated to listening to your needs and providing custom insurance solutions that work for you and your customers. As our partner, you receive commissions from policy sales, plus marketing support and sales

training, valuable products with coverages your clients can count on and the financial backing of a leading global insurer. Discover the Generali difference: us.generaliglobalassistance.com/solutions/partner-with-csa-sell-travel-insurance.

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Courier shines a light on the remarkably rewarding and diverse components of packaged travel that National Tour Association members provide to their clients and customers—and to each other. Our writers create original articles that explain tour product, focus

on destinations, provide industry insights, and inform members about NTA events and benefits. *Courier* is the magazine of NTA, whose members collaborate to offer unique, creative programs to a traveling public that is eager to enjoy authentic experiences.

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Milwaukee
Nov. 4-8, 2018



Fort Worth
Dec. 8-12, 2019



Tucson, Arizona | March 27-30, 2019



Anchorage | March 18-21, 2020
Anchorage, Alaska | March 18-21, 2020



Washington, D.C. | April 10-11, 2019



COMMUNITY

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE NTA FAMILY



TOURISM CARES; BOTTOM RIGHT: KENDALL FLETCHER

About 200 travel industry volunteers came together Sept. 21 for Tourism Cares for New Orleans, and they contributed more than \$60,000 through investments in the community and volunteer labor value. Their 960 collective hours donated (saving months of work for nonprofit partners) were spent clearing 10 trailer loads of debris and planting 900 native seeds for restoration—all in one day. Turn to page 48 to read Kendall Fletcher's reflections on the project.

Meet the Members

Evaneos

ÎLE-DE-FRANCE, FRANCE

NTA contact: Mariana Sarciotto,
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Office phone: +33.1.83.81.65.96

Website: evaneos.net

NTA member since: 2017

Tell me a little about Evaneos.

Evaneos is the leading online platform that enables travelers to book tailor-made trips with local agencies. Evaneos helps travelers to design, prepare and experience authentic trips from carefully selected local agencies around the world. Our adventure started in France in 2009, and we are now active on 11 markets, both inside and outside Europe, with more than 300,000 people who already traveled with us with a satisfaction rate of 96 percent.

How did you get your start in the travel industry?

I was a high school exchange student in Pennsylvania, and before that, I lived in Belgium. I always enjoyed discovering new places, new food and figuring out how different

people live their lives. My interest in understanding people's motivation to travel led me to start working at the Brazilian Tourism Board. Most of my career was spent working for tourism boards, promoting destinations and trying to understand the market trends.

What destination is on your travel bucket list?

I am really into the concept of sleeping in the transparent bubble tent: I would love to see the northern lights in Finland or Iceland while lying in my bed. I am planning to hike to Machu Picchu. I will probably go there next year. At some point, I would love to go to the Galapagos Islands to hang out with some giant turtles.

Have you read any good books lately?

At the moment I am reading "A Series of Unfortunate Events." I really like because it takes me to a parallel world. The chapters are short and it's easy to finish them in the Parisian metro when I am going to the office. I don't like to stop reading a chapter in the middle.



For more information, contact Sarciotto at mariana.sarciotto@evaneos.com.

Cedar Valley World Travel

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

NTA contact: Angela Decker,
co-owner and president

Office phone: +1.319.366.8200

Website: cedarvalleyworldtravel.com

NTA member since: 2007

I see that Cedar Valley World Travel is a family business. Tell us how it came to be.

My grandfather, Lew Hillard, and his brother, Jim, started running shuttles from Galena, Illinois, to the Savanna Army Depot and grew that into Tri-State Travel. When they retired, my dad, Rick, and his cousin Mike took over. When my dad was ready to retire, we separated the company, and our family took this location, as my husband and I were already running and managing it, and Cedar Valley World Travel was born.

What are two of your most popular packages right now?

We have trips in 2019 to the Panama Canal and Mackinac Island that are already filling up.

What's your favorite vacation spot?

I love to vacation anywhere with water. Sitting on a porch overlooking a beach, lake, etc., while enjoying my morning coffee is definitely my happy place.

What are the latest tunes in your music library?

Oh goodness, I have a wide variety of music in my iTunes library: classic rock, country, pop, classical, show tunes, oldies. You name it, and the odds are pretty good I have something from the genre in my library.



Have you taken up any hobbies?

In our spare time, we enjoy boating, biking and spending time with family and friends.

For more information, contact Decker at angela@cedarvalleyworldtravel.com.

Southern Nevada Regional Office – Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority

LAUGHLIN, NEVADA

NTA contact: Meg McDaniel,
senior manager, regional sales

Office phone: +1.702.298.3022

Website: visitlaughlin.com

NTA member since: 1990

What's new in Laughlin?

The Laughlin hotels have completed some major construction projects that include new stylish resort pools overlooking the Colorado River, an elegant day spa, a fun family '50s diner with bowling and an e-games gallery, and a streetside sports pub and restaurant set to open in December. There's a new local spirits tour that explores the nearby rum and vodka distillery, a winery and a brewery.

What's an attraction you tell visitors they must see?

You can't miss it, but the crystal clear

Colorado River sets Laughlin apart from many other destinations because the river is so accessible. Visitors can easily board a narrated scenic riverboat cruise to learn Laughlin's history, take one of two 34-passenger jetboats to the London Bridge, enjoy a delicious dinner cruise at sunset or simply stroll the river walk between hotels.

What led you to tourism?

My mother and I traveled together frequently when I was in my 20s, and Laughlin was one of our favorite getaways. Then as fate would have it, I met the man who would become my husband on one of those vacations. He worked in Laughlin, so I moved here in 1992. My work experience was in sales and my education in communications, so when the LVCVA hired me in 1993, it was a dream to build a career promoting a place that I truly love and call home.



It's Saturday night. What are you doing?

If I'm not traveling for work or hosting clients locally, then my husband and I would be cooking dinner together, probably sitting outside enjoying a spectacular sunset and picking out a good movie for the night.

For more information, contact McDaniel at mmcdaniel@lvcva.com.

Courtyard by Marriott Kauai at Coconut Beach

KAPAA, HAWAII

NTA contact: Jaye Gayagas-Youn,
director of tour and travel

Office phone: +1.808.320.3638

Website: kauaicourtyardresort.com

NTA member since: 2012

What makes Kauai such an iconic destination?

The island is magnificent in its natural beauty, and it's steeped in cultural history. It is an island of rejuvenation and relaxation, but it also is an adventure island with many great hiking trails, sunset sails, zip lines and so much more.

Talk about what your property has to offer.

Visitors can take in majestic mountain and ocean vistas from our intimate, beachfront resort. They are steps away from sand between their toes and near to premier island adventures, shopping and dining. On-site, they can enjoy savory culinary

delights, signature Hawaiian cocktails, a sparkling pool and spa, and a variety of activities, entertainment and cultural events.

Finish this sentence: My favorite place to take friends who visit Kauai is ...

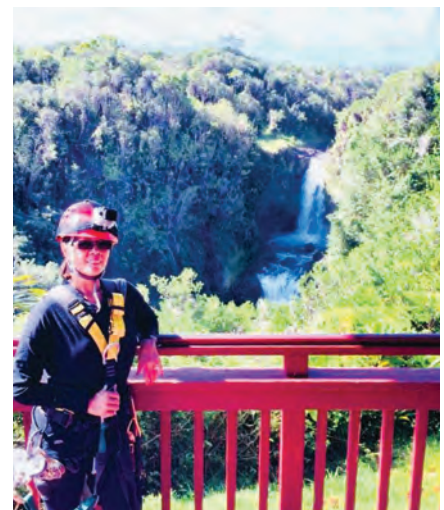
Tip Top Café to enjoy the best banana pancakes in the state.

Are you more of a beach girl, a mountain girl or a city girl?

I'm a little of all three. We have some of the most beautiful beaches, so being a beach girl is a must. I live near the mountains, and they provide spectacular views of some of the most captivating waterfalls after a good rainfall. My travels takes me to many cities around the world and, while I enjoy exploring them, it is always the best feeling to return to the peacefulness of Kauai.

How do you spend your free time?

I started painting about seven years ago.



Being surrounded by beautiful lush valleys, incredible sunrises and sunsets, and the white sand beaches ... this island is a dream come true for artists!

For more information, contact Gayagas-Youn at jyoun@courtyardkauai.com.

Introducing ... NTA's newest members

Green Bay Packers

GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN

Tour supplier

The Green Bay Packers Hall of Fame and stadium tours of Lambeau Field are premier attractions and activities in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Fans can learn about the rich history of the Packers, and multiple tour options of Lambeau Field are available.



Krissy Zegers

Hall of Fame and stadium tour manager
+1.920.569.7132
zegersk@packers.com
packers.com

"I have been with the Green Bay Packers organization for over 13 years, welcoming guests to our attraction. I am excited to be part of NTA!"

Grand Gateway Hotel

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA

Tour supplier

The Grand Gateway Hotel is a family owned and operated full-service facility. Its location in the center of everything the Black Hills has to offer allows travelers to unpack only once and enjoy Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial, Custer State Park, and the beautiful Black Hills and Badlands.



Anna M. Vandegrift

Sales manager
+1.605.342.1300
sales@grandgatewayhotel.com
grandgatewayhotel.com

"As an Air Force veteran and graduate of Black Hills State University, I've been in the hospitality industry since 2004 and in my current position for almost two years."

Mystic Lake Casino Hotel

PRIOR LAKE, MINNESOTA

Tour supplier

Mystic Lake has 24/7 gaming action on one of the Midwest's largest gaming floors. Located 25 minutes from the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport, the hotel offers luxurious rooms, a spa, a championship golf course and distinctive bars and restaurants.



Heidi Keyho

Account executive
+1.952.403.5344
heidi.keyho@mysticlake.com
mysticlake.com

"My favorite quote is, 'If travel didn't cost, you'd never see me again!' I love to meet new people and explore new places, and I look forward to my new NTA membership."

USA Hotel Management Services

LA VERKIN, UTAH

Tour supplier

USA Hotel Management Services owns and operates properties in Utah, Connecticut and Virginia. The company specializes in serving groups and their needs and strives to offer a warm welcome and a comfortable stay at a competitive price.



Hemendra Patel

Owner
+1.562.230.1193
phemendra@hotmail.com

"I was born in India, and I've been in the hospitality industry for almost 18 years. Meeting and serving guests from all over the world is my passion. I am very excited to join NTA."

Switzerland Tourism

NEW YORK CITY

DMO

Switzerland Tourism, rejoining NTA and proud to be the association's first international member, is the national marketing organization promoting Switzerland as a vacation, travel and conference destination. Travel professionals can consult the dedicated landing site to find useful information, receptive operators and sample itineraries.



Martin Oester

Sales and marketing manager, North America
+1.212.757.5944, ext. 233
martin.oester@swisstravelsystem.com
mystsnet.com

"Until I moved to NYC in 2018, I had lived all my life in a mountain resort in the Swiss Alps. My passion is selling Switzerland."

Milwaukee Public Museum

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

Tour supplier

The mission of the Milwaukee Public Museum is to inspire curiosity, excite minds and increase desire to preserve and protect our world's natural and cultural diversity through exhibitions, educational programs, collections and research.



Tim A. Malenock

Director of visitor services and group sales
+1.414.278.6174
tim.malenock@mpm.edu
mpm.edu

"I'm Midwest born and raised. I worked for a Chicago tourist attraction, then migrated to Milwaukee for this great city's top cultural attractions!"

NEW MEMBERS

The following list shows organizations that joined NTA recently. Companies that also joined the Faith Travel Association have an FTA logo by their name. To access complete information on each of these new members, log on to NTAonline.com and go to the member searches.

DMOs

Aurora Area Convention & Visitors Bureau

Lisa Wisner
Aurora, IL 60506-4129 USA
enjoyaurora.com

Central Counties Tourism

Tamara Russell
Markham, ON L3R 0M3 Canada
centralcounties.ca

City of Prescott, AZ Tourism Office

Ann Steward
Prescott, AZ 86303 USA
visit-prescott.com

Cottonwood Chamber of Commerce- Visit Cottonwood

Michelle Masters
Cottonwood, AZ 53216 USA
cottonwoodchamberaz.org

Leiden Marketing

Minckle Pijpers
Leiden, 2312 AV Netherlands
mayflower400leiden.com



North Coast Tourism Council

Richard Strom
Fort Bragg, CA 95437 USA
northcoastca.com

US Connections/Mayflower 400

Amanda Lumley
Plymouth, PL1 3BJ England
mayflower400uk.org



TOUR OPERATORS

Badger Coaches Inc.

John Meier
West Allis, WI 53214 USA
badgertours.com

Best Travel Inc.

Tony Lyu
Puyallup, WA 98374 USA

Mega Travel Inc.

Erchao He
New York, NY 11714 USA
megatravel.us

The Guestbook

Matt Hamm
West Hollywood, CA 90069 USA
theguestbook.com

TJ Holiday Inc.

Shunyan Tong
Chino, CA 91708 USA

Tuniu.com

Shaoying Zhang
Shanghai, China

TOUR SUPPLIERS

Bay View Printing Co.

Ashley Town
Milwaukee, WI 53207 USA

DoubleTree By Hilton NYC Financial District

Kathynn Falzon
New York, NY 10004 USA

FiRE + ICE Restaurant

Jennifer Butler
Boston, MA 02116 USA
fire-ice.com

Great Lakes Distillery

Jen White
Milwaukee, WI 53204 USA
greatlakesdistillery.com

Hilton Santa Fe Buffalo Thunder

Diane Hunter
Santa Fe, NM 87506 USA
buffalothunderresort.com

Lakefront Brewery

Chris Ranson
Milwaukee, WI 53212 USA
lakefrontbrewery.com

Lucky Eagle Hotel & Casino

Ben Scholl
Rochester, WA 98579 USA
luckyeagle.com

Luna Park

Jeremy Medanich
Brooklyn, NY 11224 USA
lunaparknyc.com

Marco Polo Cruises

William Landrum
New York, NY 10002 USA
marcopolocruises.com

MCR Hotels LLC

Amanda Ekborn
Dallas, TX 75234 USA
mcrhotels.com

Miller Brewing Company

Kimberly Cotichia
Milwaukee, WI 53208-2866 USA

Milwaukee Brewing Company

Elise Strupp
Milwaukee, WI 53204 USA

National Churches Trust

Heritage Services
Emma Clarke
London, SW1P 3QW England
explorechurches.org



Sheraton Suites Chicago Elk Grove

Amit Bansal
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007 USA
sheraton.com/suiteselkgrove

Sprecher Brewery

Anne Sprecher
Glendale, WI 53209 USA
sprecherbrewery.com

Stratford Festival

Heather Martin
Stratford, ON N5A 6V2 Canada
stratfordfestival.ca

TopJump Trampoline, Crave Golf Club, Lumberjack Feud

Ryker Parton
Pigeon Forge, TN 37863 USA
topjump.com

Travelite (India)

Nitin Sharma
New Delhi, 110037 India
traveliteindia.com

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That NOLA-Mom-beignets-TC combination

BY KENDALL FLETCHER

IF THERE'S ONE THING New Orleans does well, it's air conditioning.

And food. And hospitality.

This is what I noticed about the city: the brilliant combination of so many things. In the 90-degree-plus temps, we walked slowly and gratefully past businesses that left their doors open to share their cool air with passersby. I had some outstanding Mexican food at El Gato Negro and some great vegan fare at Seed. Also, I must say, I've never experienced politeness like I did there—everywhere I went.

And the combination of people from all over the world at the 15th anniversary of Tourism Cares' first volunteer program made for a celebration.

Our group was led from the host hotel to the opening reception at The Chicory by New Orleans & Company's fantastic jazz band. This was Tourism Cares' third time in New Orleans, the others were 2004 and in 2008, just after Hurricane Katrina. The organization's new CEO, Paula Vlamings, emphasized the importance of empowering the people in the city's communities through our work, as 43 percent of New Orleans' revenue comes from its tourism.

My mom joined me on this journey. (You may recall our first entertaining work

trip together to Clarksville, Tennessee, last year). She used to live a few miles outside of New Orleans and was excited to get back.

It was my first time there, as was the case with my coworker, Jane McIntyre. This was one of my bucket-list cities.

For our work project, we headed to the Woodlands Conservancy in Belle Chasse, where Hurricane Katrina wiped out 84 years of tree growth. The forested wetlands act as a sponge, absorbing so much water each year that it offsets drainage costs by millions. It's also a haven for migratory birds; about 2.5 million stop daily in Louisiana to feed and rest, so the habitat is vital.

So vital that they thought giving me a machete was a good idea. I opted for the loppers instead, and off we went over a mile into the wetlands to clear trails of invasive vegetation and trash. The area serves as a great recreation destination, with walking and horseback riding trails.

Our team also planted 1,200 seedlings to add to the newly built nursery. They will be transplanted into restoration areas next year.

This was my second Tourism Cares experience, and I love getting to work side-by-side with people from all over.



NTA's Kendall Fletcher, her mom, Mimi Sparks, and NTA's Jane McIntyre prepare for their work day at the Woodlands Conservancy in Belle Chasse.

NYC & Company's Reagan Stulbaum attended Tourism Cares New Orleans in 2008. "It was cleaning up and getting everything up and running last time," she said. "Now it's 'how do we help communities and create sustainable tourism' and introducing new places to tour operators. There's a whole different essence and meaning to it."

At the closing reception at the Jazz Market, I spoke with Bruce Beckham, who was Tourism Cares' CEO when the organization was founded in 2003. He discussed the organization's evolution and the original New Orleans projects.

"New Orleans is like no other place in this world because of its tradition and culture and music, and its architecture and food. It's one very, very special city, and people love to come here. And people love to come back," he said. "It's not a 'been there, done that' city. It's one of those 'been there, go back' cities. It's one of my favorite cities in the world."

After our work day, my mom, Jane and I stayed the weekend to explore. We walked nine miles around the French Quarter and the Garden District, ate beignets, shopped and listened to beautiful music on the street. I even met up with my cousin, who I hadn't seen in 15 years.

New Orleans was just the best combination of things. ☺



From left, Katie Brasted with the Woodlands Conservancy, NYC & Company's Reagan Stulbaum and the Student and Youth Travel Association's Carylann Assante plant seedlings at the conservancy's newly built nursery.

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