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FEBRUARY 2019

Courier

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and bays for thrills ... or to chill

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Resurrection Bay near Seward, Alaska



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PLANNING AHEAD

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► APRIL/MAY ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

Midwest U.S.

Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska

West South Central U.S.

Arkansas, Oklahoma, Texas

Latin America

South Pacific

Australia, Guam, Hawaii

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Faith-based Travel

Food and Drink

DEADLINES

Space: Feb. 1 | Material: Feb. 11

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DESTINATIONS

Deep South

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas

Mid-Atlantic U.S.

Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania

Pacific Northwest

British Columbia, Oregon, Washington

Germany and Switzerland

SPECIAL COVERAGE

North American National Parks

Travel Exchange '19 Preview (Fort Worth)

DEADLINES

Space: April 5 | Material: April 15



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I CAN THINK of a few love songs.

For example (I'll consolidate to save space): "Best of My Love Me Tender is the Nights Are Forever Without You Give Good Love in an Elevator." (That's a whole lotta love.)

But it's a love song in essay form—written by Elaine Moulder—that tops the NTA charts. "A match made ... in Branson" is on page 48.

We all love to travel, of course, and even in the dead of winter, travel ideas start to bloom when we see NTA members' destinations and products. In this issue, we see a boatload of places to cruise for an hour, a day or a week. Pat Henderson explores several, starting on page 15, and we list all of our cruise company members, too.

You should check out the City Spotlight on a Texas town we'll be living in for a week in December: Fort Worth, home of Travel Exchange '19. Patti Nickell describes her visit to Cowtown on pages 21 to 23.

Kendall Fletcher, Patti and I each take a Compass point and provide itinerary ideas for Atlantic Coast states (page 24–29), the U.S. Great Frontier region (page 31–36) and Western Canada (page 38–40).

As much as we love travel, there are risks—for every company and organization. Two experts—Peter Tarlow and Jeff Ment—tell us how to be vigilant, not vulnerable. See pages 8 and 9.

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Courier Courage Award

We all face challenges, but every now and then, a challenge faced by one person is so monumental, the rest of us take notice.

I noticed Jeff Quire.

I already knew him, of course. Jeff's been designing this magazine since 2011; he's got an extraordinary eye and is so easy to work with.

But life wasn't easy for Jeff a year ago. When he was diagnosed with throat cancer, he began radiation treatment and chemotherapy early in 2018.

His new, constant companions were fatigue, pain and uncertainty. But he never missed a deadline.

Jeff fought his way through the treatment. He faced off with cancer ... and won. He's designing this issue of *Courier*—just like always.

Last month, we presented Jeff with the first *Courier* Courage Award. And man, did he earn it.

While I'm on that ... I would hate for NTA VP Catherine Prather to sue me, so I'll tell you that she gets the photo credit for the image at the bottom of page 43.

We don't print *Courier* every day, you know, but we can stay connected with each other via NTA's online community. From time to time, *Courier* writers will pose a question or seek input via that outlet. I hope you'll respond. Hey, it's even got a great name for Valentine's month: Engage!

Read on,

On the cover:
Whale-watching cruise in
Kenai Fjords National Park's
Resurrection Bay near
Seward, Alaska
Photo: Major Marine Tours



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I DON'T KNOW about you, but my goals (I gave up on resolutions a long time ago) for 2019 are still intact. I hope one of your goals is to get active on Engage and to share your ideas and products with NTA colleagues. The conversations on your association's new social platform are enlightening, and I enjoy seeing members make new connections.

One of my NTA goals included making some organizational changes and some deserved promotions. Todd Probus is now director of member solutions, and reporting to him is Jennifer Royse, our manager of database and membership. Morgan Maravich is director of partnerships and engagement, and Kay Saffari, manager of Faith Travel Association and Hispanic Market, reports to her.

In addition, we have taken a fresh look at our committee structure and, taking a page from the successful DMO and suppliers networks we started last year, we'll create new networks: one for buyers and one for Associates and Partners.

The issues covered by the previous staff advisory groups—Member Solutions, Education, Advocacy, Young Professionals, Hispanic Market, Faith Travel Market and China Inbound—will all be incorporated into the agendas of each of the four networks. This will give us a broad range of input and opinions on our important issues, and all networks will be managed by Morgan.

We will continue to have subcommittees from those groups that will focus on key markets: Faith Travel and Hispanic Market (led by Kay Saffari), China Inbound (led by Lin Wang) and International (led by Pat Henderson).

All of the NTA board committees will remain the same; they are Executive

Committee, Governance Committee, Nominating Committee and the Alliances Team. And to keep our dedicated past presidents and chairs informed, we invite them to attend NTA board meetings.

In January we celebrated Catherine Prather's 25th anniversary with NTA, and board chair Paul Larsen came to town to share in the festivities and to meet with all of the staff.

Catherine told the story of her first day at work, Jan. 13, 1994. There was a huge snowstorm and she walked to work, only to discover that the office was closed (remember, those were the pre-cell phone days). A lot has happened at NTA since that snowy day, but Catherine's dedication and loyalty to NTA have never wavered—nor has her leadership. Congratulations, Catherine ... here's to another 25!

I can't wait to see everyone at Contact in Tucson at the end of March. Not only will it be nice to experience warmer weather, but also we'll get to see Tucson at its best time of year—complete with stargazing in the desert. And don't forget that Tucson is a UNESCO City of Gastronomy, so the food promises to be amazing.

We can also look forward to checking out all the great items in the Bidding for Bulldog online auction, which raises money for our governmental work on Capitol Hill. Not registered for Contact yet? It's not too late to join us. Visit ntacontact.com and sign up today.

Engage!

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COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Tourism Cares heading up May 8–10 event in Puerto Rico

The next Tourism Cares program, Tourism Cares for Puerto Rico, will take industry members to the island May 8–10 for hands-on volunteering, knowledge exchanges and an exploration of business integration.

As part of the three-day event, Tourism Cares is developing a Commitment to Action with the Clinton Global Initiative Action Network on Post Disaster Recovery. That commitment—made in conjunction with the Foundation for Puerto Rico, World Central Kitchen, Discover Puerto Rico, the Hilton Caribe San Juan and the Hilton Ponce—aims to more deeply connect global tourism companies with local small business and social enterprises in Puerto Rico.

The cost is \$399 per person, which does not include travel or accommodations. Registration for members and nonmembers is open, although space is very limited.

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



GROUP TRAVEL VIDEOS

Coming up in New York City ...

On Oct. 18, the Big Apple will be the site of the Tourism Cares Inspiration Exchange. This unique event brings together industry professionals to focus on using tourism as a force for good. In conjunction with NYC & Company's existing "tourism ready" program, event participants will experience the growing initiative by visiting nonprofits and other organizations that are getting connected to the travel landscape. The event also will include organized learning sessions, networking receptions and informal meet-ups. Registration will open this spring, and you can go to tourismcares.org/tcix to learn more.



The 411 on NTA's China Preferred Partner program

Late last year, NTA launched its China Preferred Partner program. The initiative helps North American destinations, suppliers and receptive operators reach the ever-increasing number of Chinese visitors.

In addition to providing participants with access to tools and resources to help them tap into—or expand their footprint in—the market, the program promotes a list of certified partners to Chinese outbound tour operators, who can easily search and identify these destinations, hotels, attractions, restaurants and receptive tour operators in North America.

An organization can become an NTA China Preferred Partner when it is "China-ready," meaning its representatives have adapted their products and services for the Chinese market by using the tools and resources from this program. These North American companies understand, welcome and are prepared for the Chinese travel and tourism market in terms of culture, language, marketing and programming.

To learn more about the program, go to ntachinapartner.com or contact Lin Wang, NTA's director of China market services at lin.wang@ntastaff.com.

Items needed for NTA government relations auction

NTA's second annual online auction, affectionately called "Bidding for Bulldog," will take place March 18–29. The event is named for Tom Jaffa, a longtime association member who earned the nickname Bulldog for his tenacity during visits with legislators on Capitol Hill over the years.

You can help by donating any of the following items for the auction: vacation packages, tangibles representing your destination or company, sports memorabilia, group tour components, tickets, handcrafted items, artwork, one-of-a-kind experiences, etc. Items should have a minimum retail value of \$250, and bids will begin at 25 percent of the retail value. Also, vacation/lodging packages are required to have a minimum two-night stay.

Bidding begins March 18 at 8 a.m. (Eastern time) and will close during the auction finale reception March 29 at NTA's Contact event in Tucson, Arizona. All proceeds will go directly to support NTA's Government Issues Fund, which allows the association to advocate for you with policymakers on issues related to tourism and travel.

To make a donation, go to bit.ly/2Rj35yK. For additional information, contact NTA's Dawn Pettus, CTP, at dawn.pettus@ntastaff.com.

Tourism security in an age of cyber threats

BY DR. PETER TARLOW



REGARDLESS OF ONE'S ROLE in the tourism industry, the well-being of clients and staff has to be the No. 1 priority.

Over the nearly two decades since 9/11, the tourism world has known multiple threats and challenges, from airline to hotel security, and from road accidents to issues of crossing international borders. It is fair for clients to pose the question: How has your business adapted to an ever-changing world?

Unfortunately, and despite repeated warnings, many who work in the tourism industry still do not understand that leisure travel is an expendable industry, and there is nothing that can destroy the industry's reputation more effectively than a lack of security or safety. Despite the best public relations and marketing, no amount of PR can restore a ruined vacation and lost memories due to a client's physical or emotional distress. Although customers well understand that there is no such thing as total travel safety, there is much that the industry

can do to promote a safe and secure visit for its guests.

In today's world of cyberattacks and instantaneous social media, it is essential to dispel the idea that tourism security is static. Wise tour planners review policies and assumptions on a regular basis. They also realize that what may have been safe a week ago may not be safe next week.

It is essential that every tourism entity assume that, at some point, it will suffer some form of attack, whether physical or cyber.

That means contingency plans must be updated on a regular basis and security plans must show adequate flexibility to incorporate good customer service and proper protection. For example, the latest threat to the industry was underlined by the hacking of Marriott International's Starwood database,

potentially exposing the personal information of approximately half a billion people. According to news reports, unauthorized access to customers' personal information may well have been occurring since 2014.

This cyberbreach serves as an example that the world of tourism security is fast-changing.

Most customers might assume that major tour companies are doing everything possible to safeguard their clients' privacy. So when there is a successful attack, how does a business regain customer trust? Here are a few questions regarding security management—both physical and cyber—that everyone who works in the tourism industry should ask about a business plan.

Do you have a plan? It is essential that every tourism entity assume that, at some point, it will suffer some form of attack, whether physical or cyber. Do not wait for an attack to occur to begin to figure out how to mitigate the damage. Remember that an attack not only damages the client, but it also harms the entire industry.



JEFF QUIRE

Confront the risk

BY JEFFREY MENT



NTA MEMBERS, including tour operators, suppliers, hotels, destinations and attractions, all stand to benefit from the economic impact from traveler spending.

For instance, U.S. Travel Association statistics report that “direct spending by resident and international travelers in the U.S. averaged \$2.8 billion a day” and that traveler spending supported a total of 15.6 million American jobs.

To continue to reap the rewards of a booming travel trend, however, NTA members must focus on safety and security. From a legal perspective, companies have an obligation to be aware and be prepared. The stark reality for all of us is that, at any moment, some adverse security event can occur. We can’t bury our heads in the sand. Rather, we need to assess and prepare.

To do this, NTA members should devise a strategy, starting with assembling the appropriate personnel to spearhead a safety and security team. While this can certainly be managed in-house, there also are companies, such as Global Rescue, that offer these services.

In the aftermath of tragedy, often times, victims and families look to place blame, and NTA members might be in the line of fire for an eager plaintiff’s attorney. Companies could be peppered

NTA members should devise a strategy, starting with assembling the appropriate personnel to spearhead a safety and security team.

with questions about what information they had, or more significant, did the company even ask any questions about the safety and security of the destination. We need to be prepared.

Not surprisingly, we often learn from past events. As has been reported, travel giant Tui came under intense scrutiny after more than 30 of its guests were killed outside the Imperial Marhaba hotel in Tunisia.

It turned out that Tui wanted to increase security at the hotel but was afraid that its guests would be frightened by the presence of armed guards. The company was forced to admit that it was aware of an elevated terror risk in the area but that it did not want to alarm either staff or guests. Then, after the attack, Tui found itself ensnared in litigation and inquests.

Stories like this need to be avoided. Confront the risk: Be prepared, have a plan and execute it as needed. ☛

Jeffrey Ment is a travel attorney with more than 27 years of experience representing all facets of the industry. He can be reached at jment@mentlaw.com.

How do you deal with the media? The media may not always reflect an accurate picture of a data breach or tourism tragedy. All social media and post-cyberattack plans should include not only caring for impacted clients but also doing careful work with media outlets so that they have full access to—and will report—accurate information concerning the cyberbreach.

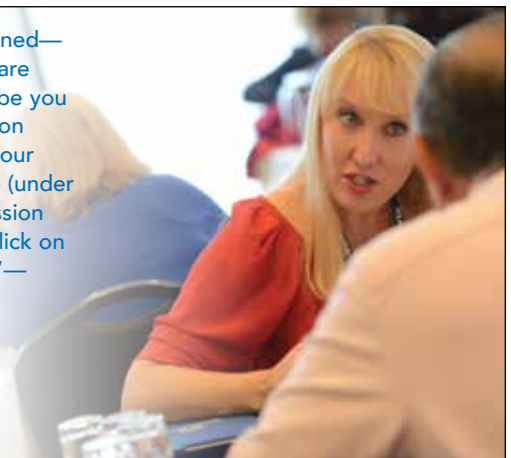
Are you telling the truth? As bad as the crime may be, larger disasters occur when businesses do not tell the truth. Once it becomes clear that there is a cover-up, the victimized business has managed to lose customer confidence twice: once due to the tourism tragedy or data breach and then again to an unwillingness to tell the truth.

How will your business rebuild confidence? Nothing hurts a tourism company more than the lack of timely and accurate information. For example, airlines have lost a great deal of credibility due to poor and inaccurate information given to their passengers. After any tourism crisis, customers are rightly upset and feel vulnerable. Make sure to publicize in as many ways as possible how your business is helping these victims. Let the victims know that they are not alone and that you have a plan to aid them in whatever way possible.

Not that many years ago, tourism security experts worried about such micro-aggressions as room invasions, personal robbery or pick-pocketing. These problems should not be minimized, and in many parts of the world they are still major issues. Nevertheless, they have now morphed into macro-aggressions—large-scale acts of violence and cybertheft—and their consequences vibrate throughout the world of tourism.

Dr. Peter Tarlow is an international speaker, author and consultant in the field of tourism security and business development. He can be reached at ptarlow@tourismandmore.com or at +1.979.764.8402.

Do you have a tip—or a lesson learned—about security that you’d like to share with your NTA colleagues? Or maybe you want to ask for advice. It’s easy ... on Engage. NTA members can access our new gathering spot via NTA Online (under the “My NTA” tab). To join a discussion or to start a new one on Engage, click on “Discussion Posts” under “Browse”—and get Engaged!



One Big Thing!

I'm not talking about the app or the book by Phil Cooke.
Let's talk social marketing.

BY CATHERINE HEEG



WHAT ONE BIG social marketing thing is worthy of your time and focus in 2019?

Every year there's another bright and shiny new marketing tip, tool or trick that makes headlines and the top-seller list. Remember Vine? Remember My Space?

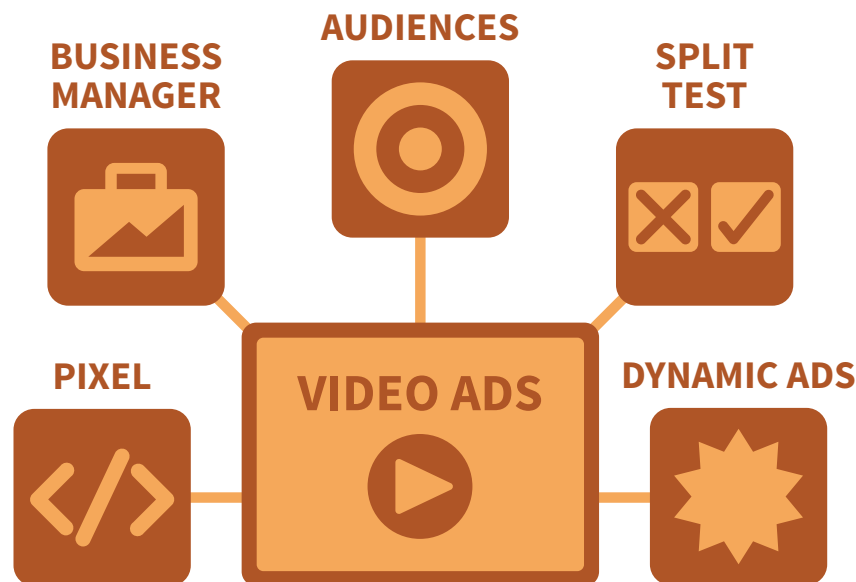
So what One Big Thing should be your social marketing focus? Video Ads!

OK, that sounds like two things, but here's the deal: Video without advertising will give you a great video library, but yield few viewers. Social ads without video mean you might be wasting money and getting lower reach and engagement. So One Big Thing needs both parts.

Does that sound daunting or doable? Or both? Here are 10 top tips to ensure your video ads work their magic for you and fill your group tours.

Start here

- 1 Create a series of short videos featuring you, your staff or even your clients. Here are some tips and tools: bit.ly/2NN9H2E. Focus these videos on destinations you'll be featuring in the future as well as top-selling favorites. Give travel tips, interview clients or showcase the features and benefits of your tours.
- 2 Remember to edit your videos and add your contact information at the end. Not only is this a subtle call to action, it gives your video a professional touch. bit.ly/2K5kFSt
- 3 Set up Business Manager on your Facebook ad account. You'll have the opportunity to create custom audiences using your own client list, so your ads are shown only to your clientele. bit.ly/2B3552Z
- 4 Set up your Facebook pixel. This small snippet of code is worth its weight in gold for future ad success. You'll be able to retarget people who



have taken action on your web and Facebook pages. bit.ly/2wsxpK6

Next steps

- 5 Promote upcoming tours with a video you've created. Post it to your favorite social site along with some enticing text, and it will be the foundation of an ad or a boost.
- 6 Check out the options for targeting an audience on Facebook and Instagram, and don't miss Trip Consideration, which targets people in the early stages of travel planning. bit.ly/2D5wQwr
- 7 Customize audiences on Facebook and Instagram that help you reach specific market segments. You can create an ad audience made up of people who love history, cruising, land tours or sports, or of people who match your other niche offerings. bit.ly/2nxjeyN

Advanced steps

- 8 Do you ever wonder what text and graphics will resonate better with your audience? The answer lies in split (or A/B) testing. Facebook will do this for you and show you the winning ad. bit.ly/2CXVSvw

- 9 And if you have a number of different ideas for your ad text and graphics, Facebook provides Dynamic Ad options. With this tool, you upload a variety of graphics, headlines and calls to action, and Facebook will mix and match from them, test each combination and then reveal the most effective one. bit.ly/2CXVSvw
- 10 You can create your new ads by using posts that already exist on your page or by creating new ads within Business Manager. Also, check out the Facebook Video Creation Kit and put together mobile-first video ads from your still images.

Daunting but doable? You bet! Once you get the hang of social advertising, setting up your video ads will be as simple as 1, 2, 3!

Getting video ads—your One Big Thing—up and running will give you more time and more ways to get butts in seats and heads in beds. 🍷

Catherine Heeg, an international speaker and trainer, focuses on social media marketing strategies for the tourism and hospitality industry. Connect with her socially and at cmsspeaking.com.

NTA announces member loyalty program

FOLLOWING FAST on the heels of debuting its Engage social platform at Travel Exchange, NTA launched a member loyalty program at the beginning of 2019. Through this new initiative, members earn points throughout the year and, as they reach certain levels, they get special benefits.

“We hope the loyalty program will give members a fun, fresh way to get involved with the association,” says NTA Director of Member Solutions Todd Probus. “We’ll award points for various ways members engage with NTA, ranging from attending events and volunteering to being a sponsor or an advertiser—things they are already doing.”

As the year goes along, companies will seek to reach one of four levels: Explorer, Pathfinder, Trailblazer and Adventurer

(the highest level). There are specific rewards for each level, with the main one being a percentage discount off either NTA membership, a Travel Exchange registration, a digital ad or an enhanced listing in the *NTA Trip Planner*.

The program rewards are based on the total points accumulated for a company, not individuals with the organization, and the count starts anew at the beginning of each year. Members will receive updates throughout the year with their current point totals.

See the boxes below for specifics on how your company will earn points, the four program levels and the rewards offered for each level.

For more on the program, contact Probus at todd.probus@nta-staff.com or go to ntaonline.com/mynta/nta-loyalty-program.

How do I earn points?

Here is the list of the categories in which member companies can earn points, along with the values for each. Some of the categories are based on individual actions, and those count toward the organization’s total. *NOTE: A company only earns one set of points per category even if they have multiple employees that qualify for individual points.*

Attend Travel Exchange	5 points	Be a speaker at an NTA event	2
Attend Contact	5	Purchase a print advertisement	2
Serve on NTA Board of Directors	4	Purchase a digital advertisement	2
Full participation on Leadership	3	Sponsor at Travel Exchange	2
Have earned CTP designation	3	Sponsor at Contact	2
Refer a new member	3	Update company profile at NTAonline.com	2
Renew membership by Dec. 31	3	Update individual profile on Engage	2
Contribute to NTA’s advocacy efforts	3	(1 bonus point is awarded if Engage profile is completed by March 31)	
Volunteer at Travel Exchange	2	Use NTA logo on company website/collateral	1

Point levels and rewards

There are four levels companies can reach through the NTA Loyalty Program: Trailblazer, Adventurer, Explorer and Pathfinder (and, yes, we realize they sound like late-model SUV names!). Point totals and rewards for each level are as follows, and a company will receive the rewards only for the highest level it reaches:

LEVEL (points required)	REWARDS	
Trailblazer (40 or more)	25 percent off one of four things * Reserved seating at a Travel Exchange luncheon Additional recognition at Travel Exchange In-depth article in NTA’s <i>Courier</i> magazine Mention in NTA’s <i>Tuesday</i> newsletter	<p>* A member’s company can choose to use its percent off discount for one of the following four things:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NTA membership • Travel Exchange registration • One digital advertisement • One enhanced listing in the <i>NTA Trip Planner</i> (only available for tour operators) ☛
Adventurer (36–39)	20 percent off one of four things * Mention in a <i>Courier</i> article Mention in NTA’s <i>Tuesday</i> newsletter	
Explorer (32–35)	15 percent off one of four things * Mention in NTA’s <i>Tuesday</i> newsletter	
Pathfinder (28–31)	10 percent off one of four things *	



Folklorama at 50

One of Canada's most well-known events, Folklorama, is turning 50 this year. This popular festival, held in Winnipeg for two weeks each August (2019 dates are Aug. 4–17), showcases the multiethnic heritage of the dozens of cultural groups that call Manitoba's capital region home.

During the event's August run, more than 30 international cultures are represented in the various pavilions that are located across the city. The featured pavilions offer live music and dance performances—as well as traditional food and drink—three times per night.

According to Folklorama's Group Tour Manager Hart Jacob, most groups opt for the VIP program, which includes visits to three of the pavilions over the course of an evening. Jacob works with tour

operators to select a diverse set of pavilions to ensure that groups get a well-rounded experience.

The VIP package includes pick-up/drop-off at hotels, transportation to each pavilion, skip-the-line passes and reserved seating with food service. Add-ons including late-night and behind-the-scenes components also are available.

And groups that aren't able to make it in August can enjoy some of the signature elements of Folklorama year-round. Jacob regularly works with the cultural organizations to provide live performances and meals for leisure travelers, conventions and corporate groups visiting in other months.

For more information, contact Jacob at jacobh@folklorama.ca or visit folklorama.ca. —P.H.



TOP: CC FLICKR/ROBERT LINSDELL: bit.ly/2svqgqg

TOP: CC FLICKR/ROBERT LINSDELL: bit.ly/2svqgqg

Vicksburg's Civil War significance

Located along the Mississippi River, Vicksburg National Military Park recalls the battle that is often viewed as a turning point in the U.S. Civil War. Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant led an offensive in the western Mississippi town from March to July in 1863 that resulted in Confederate forces losing control of the key port city.

Many groups opt to follow a 16-mile road that weaves throughout the park. Perfect for motorcoaches as well as passenger vehicles, the road connects many of the battlefield's significant sites, such as the Shirley House, Fort Hill, Battery Selfridge and the Vicksburg National Cemetery.

A number of ranger-led and living-history programs offer an in-depth look at many aspects of Vicksburg and its significance. From late May to early September, ranger chats are held at the visitors center, and gunboat talks take place at the USS Cairo Museum—both are available three times a day.

In addition to twice-weekly cannon and musket demonstrations during the summer months, other living-history events—which range from the signature anniversary commemoration



VISIT MISSISSIPPI

Vicksburg National Cemetery

(July 1–4) and Texas Camel Corps Day to re-enactments of the Battle of Port Gibson and the Assaults on Stockade Redan—offer perspectives on more specific aspects of the Union's Vicksburg campaign.

Call +1.601.636.0583 or go to nps.gov/vick to learn more.
—P.H.



THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE

A hundred years of Harlem heritage

The New York City neighborhood of Harlem—only 10 minutes from the hustle and bustle of Times Square—is known for its creative energy and vibe. Beyond the famous Apollo Theater, Harlem is full of surprises, including turn-of-century architecture,

scenic parks and public gardens, unobstructed views of the Hudson River—even the home of Alexander Hamilton.

The neighborhood was the central point of African-American culture, art and jazz during the Harlem Renaissance, from 1918 through the early '30s. That rich history is being commemorated through a series of special events.

“The two-year celebration of the Harlem Renaissance centennial in 2020 will include programming in museums and galleries, along with dance and music in venues throughout Harlem,” says Yuien Chin, executive director of Harlem One Stop, an NTA member since 2015. “We want to bring that history forward, highlighting its impact today, and we invite the world to join us in celebration.”

Visitors can experience different aspects of Harlem Renaissance 100 through hands-on workshops and neighborhood tours. A wide-ranging group of gallery exhibitions, musical and theatrical performances, lectures, guest speakers and cultural activities also are being offered throughout the centennial.

To learn more, contact Harlem One Stop’s Chin at tours@harlemonestop.org or visit harlemonestop.org. —B.R. 📍



Dance performance at Harlem’s Apollo Theater

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Courier's guide to NTA-member cruises

A great way to sea some national parks

BY PAT HENDERSON

Going on a sightseeing excursion is an exciting experience no matter where you do it, but if the tour happens to be in a national park, that adds to the thrill. The following four companies are among the NTA members offering cruises featuring North American national parks. This diverse batch of suppliers covers sites in Alaska, Wyoming, Utah and Canada's capital city, Ottawa.



MAJORMARINE.COM

Major Marine Tours & Harbor 360 Hotel

Jara Haas | jara@majormarine.com
Anchorage, Alaska | majormarine.com

The beauty of Kenai Fjords National Park is on display as part of Major Marine's seven different in-park itineraries. As part of each voyage, passengers cruise through the glaciers, fjords and jagged peaks that welcome many species of whales, porpoises, sea lions and shorebirds. Tours vary in length from 3.5 to 8.5 hours and are available from mid-May to September (dates depend on the cruise).



CANYONLANDSBYNIIGHT.COM

Canyonlands by Night & Day

Rachel Paxman | rachel@canyonlandsbynight.com
Moab, Utah | canyonlandsbynight.com

This family-owned company has been operating tours in the shadows of the orange-hued walls of its namesake national park since 1963. In addition to the daytime and sunset cruises along the Colorado River from May to October, the company has developed two specialized offerings in recent years—the Sound and Light Show Jet Boat Tour and the unWine'd & Dine Jet Boat Tour—that are popular with groups.



TRIANGLEX FLOAT TRIPS

Triangle X Float Trips

Lauren Turner | rivertrips@trianglex.com
Moose, Wyoming | nationalparkfloattrips.com

During its season, which goes from mid-June through the end of August, Triangle X offers three 10-mile float tours (sunrise, afternoon and evening) and a 12-mile dinner cruise that showcase Grand Teton National Park. Each of the 2.5- to 3-hour trips offer groups of 12 per raft the chance to see the Teton range, spruce forests, colorful wildflowers, sagebrush plateaus and a variety of wildlife along the Snake River.



OTTAWABOATCRUISE.COM

Ottawa Boat Cruise

Julia Oliveira | julia@ottawaboatcruise.com
Gatineau, Québec | ottawaboatcruise.com

Sightseeing rides through the Rideau Canal National Historic Site provide a look at the ancient and modern history of the Canadian capital city. As the tour moves from Ottawa's bustling urban center out to the city's less-crowded residential areas, groups can see the diversity of landscapes along the famous canal. The 90-minute tours depart multiple times a day, and the 2019 season goes from May 10 to Oct. 7.



Hornblower's San Diego Whale & Dolphin Watching Tour

Grays and blues and a wonderful cruise (or two)

BY PAT HENDERSON

While sunshine, sandy beaches and street tacos are three things that come to mind regarding San Diego, the southern California city also is a hot spot for spotting whales year-round.

During the winter and spring months, gray whales can be seen in the area's warm Pacific waters as the creatures migrate between Alaska and Cabo San Lucas, Mexico. (Mid-December to April is prime time). The summer season brings blue whales, with up to 3,000 of the magnificent mammals feeding in an area a little farther off the San Diego coast.

Groups visiting the city can head out on sightseeing excursions offered by a pair of longtime NTA supplier members,

Flagship Cruises & Events/San Diego Harbor Excursions and Hornblower Cruises & Events. These companies have many years of experience in helping travelers cross "seeing a whale" off their bucket list, and their tours also cover a broader range of marine animals and shorebirds.

Flagship Cruises, which was founded 104 years ago, employs naturalists from the Birch Aquarium at Scripps to provide narration for its whale-watching tours. During the prime months, 3.5-hour excursions on the *Marietta* depart twice a day. The luxury yacht includes viewing areas on both its main deck and upper sun deck that allow groups better views of the whales.

Hornblower delights passengers during its San Diego Whale & Dolphin Watching Tour. With sailings at 9:30 and 1, the company spotlights not only migrating gray and blue whales, depending on the season, but also covers the area's playful dolphins. Scientists from the San Diego Natural History Museum provide insights on the many creatures that groups see as they sail around the city's harbor.

Both companies also offer a number of other regular departures—ranging from harbor tours and meal-themed cruises to special-event sailings—throughout the year.

For more information on Flagship's excursions, contact Scot Rockman at scot@flagshipsd.com or go to flagshipsd.com. To learn about Hornblower's tours, reach out to Estelle Miller at emiller@hornblower.com or go to hornblower.com.



Flagship Cruises & Events offers nature-based tours around San Diego harbor.

G. MURPHY PHOTOGRAPHY

TOP: HORNBLOWER CRUISES & EVENTS

A Seaview review

MSC Cruises' newest ship, at least until the *MSC Bellissima* enters service this March, is the mammoth, eye-popping *MSC Seaview*, which began sailing last June.

At approximately 154,000 tons, with 2,066 attractively decorated staterooms and suites, the *MSC Seaview* accommodates 4,052 guests, double occupancy, or a maximum of 5,331 should all upper berths be utilized. The ship has a multilingual crew servicing its 20 decks, 17 of which are accessible to passengers. There are 33 elevators, 19 of them for guest use, that incorporate the latest technology to minimize wait times.

The *MSC Seaview* has eight restaurants, two very large main dining rooms with three nightly dinner seatings, two buffets (on decks 8 and 16) and four specialty (extra cost) dining facilities. Its bars and lounges assure cruisers that their favorite beverages are always close at hand, while two "Venchi 1878" outlets serve chocolates and gelatos.

The extensive variety of entertainment and activities available ranges from evening productions in the 934-seat main showroom, Teatro Odeon, to music in intimate lounges. Plus, there is always something happening in the spectacular four-deck Atrium.

Daytime opportunities include all manner of hands-on classes, demonstrations and lectures, as well a full-service spa,



The *MSC Seaview*

gym, pools and jacuzzis, and the unique Forest Aquaventure Park. There are also private facilities for residents of the luxury, all-suite MSC Yacht Club, glittering Swarovski crystal staircases, multiple shopping outlets and even three glass-floored "bridges" on decks 7 and 16 offering views looking straight down.

MSC Seaview sails the Mediterranean from spring through autumn, and the South American coast (primarily Brazil) during the winter, although her sister ship, the largely identical *MSC Seaside*, departs year-round from PortMiami on Caribbean cruises.

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NTA



A tour that really floated my boat

BY PAT HENDERSON

I grew up in rural Iowa, and Chicago was a place my family visited every year or two—mainly because my dad and brothers were Cubs fans. As an adult, I have kept the city in heavy rotation for vacations, and during a weekend trip last year, my wife and I took our first architectural sightseeing cruise.



Architectural boat tour on the Chicago River

PAT HENDERSON

Kelli and I visited during shoulder season and, even though it was a chilly day, our 90-minute tour with the Chicago Architecture Foundation was packed. Temperatures were in the 40s, but it was a sunny day, and the mid-afternoon rays did the photographers on board *Chicago's First Lady* a favor by perfectly lighting up the vast majority of the buildings we passed.

The cruise boarded at a dock by Michigan Avenue and Wacker Drive and then headed west along the Chicago River. Even though we've seen a number of the structures the tour covers before, we were fascinated by the deep-dive narration.

Our interpreter did an excellent job of detailing the past and current uses of the historical buildings along the route. Some are still owned by the same company and used for the same purpose. But a number of the structures had changed hands and had been transformed by the new owners into luxurious boutique hotels, hip restaurants, sleek condos or ultra-modern office spaces.

To learn more about the organization's cruises and other tours, as well its new exhibit space at the Chicago Architecture Center, contact Deb Rodak at grouptours@architecture.org or go to architecture.org.

The following list has information on NTA's members with a fleet of ships that organize and offer their own cruises, including both companies that provide multi-day cruise itineraries and those specializing in shorter sightseeing excursions. The information was provided by the member contacts and was current as of Dec. 19, 2018.

With this and all other guides that appear in *Courier*, members can contact sales@ntaservicesinc.com to enhance their presence.

MULTI-DAY CRUISES

OCEAN CRUISES

Celestyal Cruises

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2801 NE 183rd St., Suite 2204
Aventura, FL 33160
877.346.3032
i.brown@celestyalcruises.com
celestyalcruises.com

Fantasy Cruises

Jeff Behrens
P.O. Box 448
Pierson, FL 32180
800.234.3861
fancruz@rockisland.com
smallalaskaship.com

Holland America Line Inc.

Heidi Jo Davis
450 Third Ave. W.
Seattle, WA 98119-4002
+1.971.226.5686
hdavis@hollandamerica.com
hollandamerica.com

Katarina Line – Incoming Croatia

Katica Hauptfeld
V.Spincica 13
Opatija, Croatia 51410
+385.51.603.400
info@katarina-line.hr
katarina-line.com

Norwegian Cruise Line

Liz Finn
1620 SW 56th Ave.
Plantation, FL 33317
+1.954.530.8310
efinn@ncl.com
ncl.com

Oceania Cruises

Tricia Wolf
1579 Brass Lantern Way
Reston, VA 20194
+1.703.919.3691
twolf@oceaniacruises.com
oceaniacruises.com

Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.

Anthony Meloro
1080 Caribbean Way
Miami, FL 33132
+1.305.539.4455
ameloro@rccl.com
royalcaribbean.com

Variety Cruises

Naomi Kabak
545 Eighth Ave., Suite 720
New York, NY 10018
+1.212.500.4275
nkabak@varietycruises.com
varietycruises.com/english

RIVER CRUISES

Abercrombie & Kent USA LLC

Keith Baron
1411 Opus Place, Executive Towers West II, Suite 300
Downers Grove, IL 60515
+1.630.725.3400
kbaron@abercrombiekent.com
abercrombiekent.com

American Queen Steamboat Company

Bob Salmon
One Commerce Square Bldg.
40 S. Main St., 21st Floor
Memphis, TN 38103
+1.901.654.2600
bsalmon@aqsc.com
americanqueensteamboatcompany.com

Celebration River Cruises

Susan Yarolem
2501 River Drive
Moline, IL 61265-1671
+1.309.764.1952 (204)
susan@celebrationbelle.com
celebrationbelle.com

CroisiEurope America

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365 Route 304, Suite 206
Nanuet, NY 10954
+1.845.507.4068
jmcglade@croisieurope.com
croisieuropeamericacruises.com

Euro River Cruises

John McGlade
365 Route 304, Suite 206
Nanuet, NY 10954-1601
+1.845.623.6100
jmcglade@eurorivercruises.com
eurorivercruises.com

Globus Family of Brands' Avalon Waterways

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Littleton, CO 80123
+1.303.703.7000
phoffee@globusfamily.com
globusfamily.com

Riviera River Cruises

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1515 Black Rock Turnpike
Fairfield, CT 06825
jana.tvedt@rivierarivercruises.com
rivierarivercruises.com

Tauk

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Wilton, CT 06897
800.468.2825
info@tauck.com
tauck.com

Uniworld River Cruises Inc.

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Los Angeles, CA 91316-3964
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info@uniworld.com
uniworld.com

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ganboatline.com

Hornblower Niagara Cruises

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niagaracruises.com

Mariposa Cruises

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+1.416.203.0178 (206)
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mariposacruises.com

St. Lawrence Cruise Lines

Daniel Beals
253 Ontario St., Suite 200
Kingston, ON K7L 2Z4
+1.613.549.8091
danielbeals@stlawrencecruiselines.com
stlawrencecruiselines.com

Québec

Lachine Rapids Tours Ltd.

Elena Magni
47 de la Commune W.
Montréal, QC H2Y 2C6
+1.514.284.9607
elenamagni@jetboatingmontreal.com
jetboatingmontreal.com

Ottawa Boat Cruise

Julia Oliveira
895 Jacques-Cartier St.
Gatineau, QC J8T 2W3
+1.819.918.4972
julia@ottawaboatcruise.com
ottawaboatcruise.com

UNITED STATES

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Sharon Heim Mahay
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Talkeetna, AK 99676-0705
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mahays@mahaysjetboat.com
mahaysjetboat.com

Major Marine Tours & Harbor 360 Hotel

Jara Haas
9170 Jewel Lake Road, Suite 202
Anchorage, AK 99502
+1.907.274.7300
jara@majormarine.com
majormarine.com

Phillips Cruises & Tours LLC

Lisa Kruse
519 W. 4th Ave.
Anchorage, AK 99501-2211
+1.907.276.8023
lkruse@26glaciers.com
phillipscruises.com

Stan Stephens Glacier and Wildlife Cruises

Colleen Stephens
P.O. Box 1297
Valdez, AK 99686-1297
+1.907.835.4731
colleen@stephenscruises.com
stanstephenscruises.com

Arizona

Desert Belle Tour Boat

Kara Good
P.O. Box 18607
Fountain Hills, AZ 85269
+1.480.984.2425 (715)
info@desertbelle.com
desertbelle.com

California

Blue & Gold Fleet

Dennis Swayne
Pier 41, Marine Terminal
San Francisco, CA 94133
+1.415.705.8290
dennis@blueandgoldfleet.com
blueandgoldfleet.com

Catalina Channel Express

Carol Elliott
385 E. Swinford St., Second Floor
San Pedro, CA 90731
+1.310.519.7971
carol@catalinaexpress.com
catalinaexpress.com

Flagship Cruises & Events/ San Diego Harbor Excursion

Scot Rockman
P.O. Box 120751
San Diego, CA 92112-0751
+1.619.522.6160
scot@flagshipsd.com
flagshipsd.com

Hornblower Cruises & Events

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hornblower.com

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Arkansas River Tours

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Illinois

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grouptours@architecture.org
architecture.org

Mercury, Chicago's Skyline Cruiseline

Jason Garvett
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mercuryskylinecruiseline.com

Shoreline Sightseeing Company

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shoresightsighting.com

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whalewatch.com

Hy-Line Cruises

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hy-linecruises.com

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+1.508.548.5011 (306)
kmchugh@steamshipauthority.com
steamshipauthority.com

Michigan

Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry

Chris Shepler
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+1.231.436.5023
chris@sheplersferry.com
sheplersferry.com

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Star Line Mackinac Island Ferry

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+1.906.643.7635
groups@lighthouse.net
mackinacferry.com

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+1.212.630.8885
nlevy@nycl.com
circleline42.com

Entertainment Cruises

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entertainmentcruises.com

Gray Line New York/ CitySightseeing NY Cruises

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mary.cummings@newyorksightseeing.com
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lakegeorgesteamboat.com



Maid of the Mist

Tim Ruddy
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Cattle drive in the National Stockyards Historical District

CITY SPOTLIGHT

Fort Worth: Where the West begins

BY PATTI NICKELL

FOR TWO CITIES separated by a mere 30 miles and often viewed as one Texas-sized megalopolis, Dallas and Fort Worth couldn't be more different. In fact, they could be considered the Lone Star State's *yin* and *yang*.

If Dallas is thought of as a sort of southern New York, with its emphasis on arts, culture, food and fashion, Fort Worth is the very embodiment of its proud sobriquet, Cowtown.

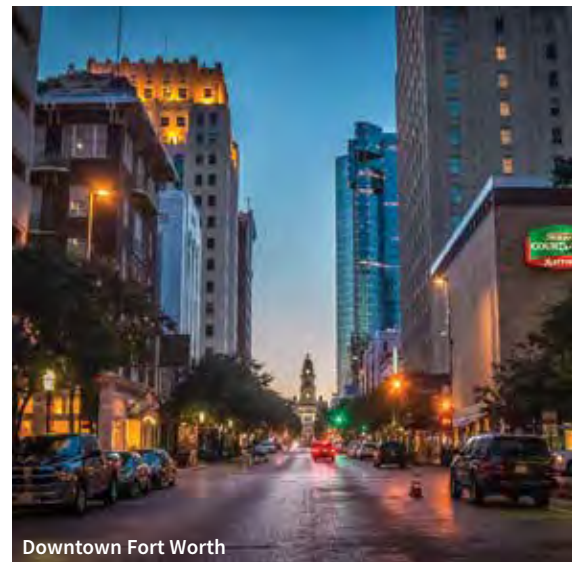
Should you need proof of this, just be standing along Exchange Avenue, the main street of the Stockyards National Historic District, any day at 11:30 a.m. or 4 p.m., when a thundering herd of beef on the hoof come careening down the drag, along with several drovers

attempting to "head 'em up and move 'em out."

Well, that may be a *slight* exaggeration. The small group of Longhorns isn't exactly thundering—more like moseying—and the drovers don't have to do much droving. This herd is pretty chill and appears to know just where it's going.

Where it's going, for the record, is once around the block and then directly back to the holding pens behind the Livestock Exchange Building, where tourists with cameras anxiously await its arrival. These pampered steers are never going to have to worry about being on someone's dinner plate.

Although the "cattle drive" is one of Fort Worth's most popular tourist



Downtown Fort Worth

attractions today, it is also symbolic of the city's role in the industry.

As early as the 1850s, Fort Worth was an important stop on the legendary Chisholm Trail, along which millions of head of cattle were driven north to markets in Kansas and Nebraska. It quickly became a bustling, brawling boomtown and was soon dubbed Cowtown. It's a name the city enthusiastically strives to live up to, even today.

For tour operators charged with wrangling wannabe cowboys and cowgirls, there is plenty to keep your group occupied. Start with a walking tour of the Stockyards District, with its assortment of shops and saloons.

In the former category, browse for Vaquero boots at M.L. Leddy's, which has been transforming dudes into dead-eyes with their custom-made clothing and saddles since 1922. Or get your own Stetson at Fincher's White Front Western Wear and wet your whistle as you shop.

While the cowboys are kicking back over a beer, cowgirls are sipping wine at Maverick's Fine Western Wear, and on Trunk Show days, they're enjoying an assortment of cheeses and fruits that won't be found on any chuckwagon.

There's an elephant in the room

As for saloons, there's no lack of them, partner. You won't want to miss the infamous White Elephant, where cowboy hats line the ceiling, live country-western music is heard seven nights a week, and you can chow down on a bowl of Texas Red Chili and homemade cornbread.

The White Elephant's main claim to fame, however, is that at its former location in Hell's Half Acre, a raucous area of town including a saloon that was the site of a famous gunfight.

On the night of February 8, 1887, bar owner Luke Short and the town marshal, Longhair Jim Courtright, got into a dust-up over whether Short should pay protection money to the lawman to keep Short's gambling games in operation. Angry words were exchanged, guns were drawn, and—in a twist of irony—when the smoke cleared, the sheriff had been bested by the barkeep. Things are a bit tamer these days ... if you refrain from ordering the Cowboy Shot, that is.

Book your group for dinner at H3 Ranch in the historical Stockyards Hotel; the restaurant has been named one of the best steakhouses in the Fort Worth/Dallas area. And you know that those accolades don't come lightly.

One thing no group will want to miss is a line-dance lesson at Billy Bob's Texas. Originally a cattle barn for the Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo, at 127,000 square feet, it's the world's largest honky-tonk, featuring arcades, casinos and bull riding demonstrations. Yes, bull riding, as in ornery steers with wicked horns. Leave all the bucking and barreling to the pros; the giant stuffed bull providing photo ops for tenderfoots is strictly stationary.

If you're lucky, a country-western luminary such as Willie Nelson, Dwight Yoakam or George Strait might be on stage during your visit.

Fort Worth is a favorite

"Groups really enjoy the authentic Texas experience and friendly nature of our city," says Estela Martinez-Stuart, director of tourism at Visit Fort Worth. "Without fail, every time I reconnect with a tour operator who has visited, they say 'I love Fort Worth.'"

Why do groups love Fort Worth? Martinez-Stuart says there are four main reasons.

- 1 They can experience a cattle drive in the Stockyards National Historic District, followed by a meet-and-greet with the herd drovers who lead the drive.
- 2 Groups can enjoy a free tour of the Money Factory, one of two U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing Facilities, and see how money is made. Afterward, they can visit Tanger Outlets or the Texas Motor Speedway.
- 3 Visitors can tour the heart of Fort Worth's downtown and Sundance Square on themed walking tours. Groups may take advantage of Fort Worth's WorthSavings card, which offers discounts at various restaurants and shops.
- 4 They can also arrange a tour and tasting at Fort Worth's newest destination, Whiskey Ranch, the largest whiskey distillery west of the Mississippi River.

Before leaving the Stockyards area, see how many of the 221 bronze stars embedded in cement on the Texas Trail of Fame you can find. While the stars are modeled after a marshal's badge, only some of the recipients could be considered law-abiding types. Bat Masterson and Wyatt Earp are two.

Other stars include a Texas-born actor (Audie Murphy), a scout (Kit Carson), a hero of the Alamo (James Bowie), a Comanche war chief (Quanah Parker) and a hard-boiled woman pioneer (Stagecoach Mary Fields) who surely would have made good fodder for a novel by Larry McMurtry.

Travel a bit further afield to trace the history of Fort Worth through the Heritage Trail Markers. This series of 22 bronze sidewalk markers detail historic events that have shaped the city since its founding in 1849 as an army outpost on a bluff overlooking the Trinity River.

Your posse will also want to pose in front of the Chisholm Trail Mural, a



VISIT FORT WORTH

For more information about Fort Worth, contact Estela Martinez-Stuart, director of tourism for Visit Fort Worth, at estelamartinez@fortworth.com or go to fortworth.com.

three-story-tall testament to those all-important cattle drives.

Fort Worth beyond the Wild West

As much as it reveres its storied past, Fort Worth also has one foot firmly planted in its present and future, with many attractions that have nothing to do with a Stetson or a six-shooter.

One of the best is the Fort Worth Botanic Gardens, the oldest such attraction in Texas. Like almost everything else in the Lone Star State, it's large both in size and spectacle, with more than 2,500 species of plants in 23 specialty gardens.

Groups can take a guided walking tour that goes through the Four Seasons Garden, with hundreds of iris, daylilies and chrysanthemums; along the Native Texas Boardwalk, a raised pathway through the trees focusing on local flora; and to the acclaimed Japanese Garden, with koi-filled pools, pagodas, teahouse and waterfalls, as well as cherry trees and Japanese maples.

A few years back, a *Texas Monthly* article chronicled the "culture war" between Dallas and Houston, where fabulously rich oil families continually one-upped each other to endow various arts organizations in their respective cities.

They do their cultural giving a bit more on the down-low in Fort Worth, but the result is the same: financial boons for many of the city's arts organizations. Legendary Texas oilman Sid Richardson's philanthropy was such that he has a museum named after him, and what a museum it is, featuring works by noted Western artists Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell that were donated by Richardson from his own personal collection.

At the Kimbell Art Museum, the emphasis is not so much on the West, but on Western civilization, with its European art, and art of the ancient Americas. From the Mayans, Olmecs, Zapotecs and Aztecs to masterpieces by Bernini, Caravaggio, Cezanne, Goya, Matisse, Monet and Picasso, the Kimbell has it covered.

This is not to say that the museum slacks on Eastern civilization. Antiquities and Asian, African and Oceanic art are also well represented in this museum that is more concerned with quality than quantity; its collection is made up of fewer than 350 pieces. The building, designed by internationally acclaimed architect Renzo Piano, is an impressive piece of art in its own right.

If your group prefers the mods to the masters, a visit to the Modern Art Museum is a must. With a permanent collection of more than 3,000 works, it's considered one of the best showcases for post-World War II art anywhere.

Take that, Dallas and Houston.

Finally, no visitors can leave Fort Worth without going to one of the city's most beloved institutions: Joe T. Garcia's Mexican Restaurant. A Fort Worth landmark since 1935, it's housed in a hacienda-style building with one of the lushest, most beautiful patios to be found anywhere (think flowers, fountains, arches and statues).

At Joe T's, lines are long, payment is cash only (there is an on-site ATM) and no reservations are taken for groups smaller than 25. If yours is smaller, go and stand in line; the fajitas and sopapillas are worth the wait.

As Fort Worth prepares to host NTA's annual conference in December, Bob Jameson, president and CEO of Visit Fort Worth proclaims it "a big win for the city."

"With billions in development underway, including the new Dickies Arena and dramatic enhancements to the historical Stockyards," he says, "we are excited to welcome this vital segment of the tourism industry." 🍷

Fort Worth to host Travel Exchange '19

NTA's annual convention, Travel Exchange, will ride into town this year for five days, Dec. 8–12. The event will include one-on-one business appointments, facilitated networking sessions, entertaining social events, sightseeing and in-depth education.

Early-bird registration begins April 10, and members started claiming sponsorship opportunities months ago. Get the latest info at ntatravelexchange.com.



TRUITT PHOTOGRAPHICS

Boot shopping at M.L. Leddy's



VISIT FORT WORTH

Joe T. Garcia's Mexican Restaurant



VISIT FORT WORTH



Oyster tasting tour

Atlantic Coast

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The seafood scene

Virginia is for oyster lovers, says Jim Coggin with the Virginia Beach CVB.

“Visitors can experience an oyster tasting at Rockafellers, a locally owned favorite for groups. They can learn the history of the famous Lynnhaven Oyster,” he says.

That particular oyster is a local legend. The story goes that Captain John Smith described the bounty of the oysters “as thick as stones” when he visited the area before establishing Jamestown in 1607.

Culinary journeyers can also satisfy their seafood cravings with an authentic Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Feast at Blue Pete’s Restaurant.

Virginia is for farm-to-table lovers, too. “We have 126 working farms in Virginia Beach and have a great farm-to-table program. One such program is offered by New Earth Farm, an award-winning, 21-acre sustainable working and educational farm located in the Pungo area. We

also have 16 pick-your-own farms.

“One of the delights is the Pungo Strawberry. It even has its own festival,” Coggin adds.

Groups can get a taste of the local craft beer scene with the Virginia Beach Beer Trail at places like Back Bay Brewing Company and Home Republic Brewpub. The 25 stops on the trail offer unique flavors as well as locations, both oceanfront and inland. The guide even indicates which ones are pet- and family-friendly and those that have onsite kitchens and food trucks.

“Virginia Beach is known for its iconic boardwalk and beautiful beaches, but it offers so much more for groups, from great culinary options, proud American history and military heritage to dolphin and whale-watching. Virginia Beach really does have it all,” Coggin says.

For more information contact Coggin at jcoggin@visitvirginiabeach.com or go to visitvirginiabeach.com/groupstour.



Virginia Beach boardwalk



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View Georgia's oldest city anew with tours and tasty things

When groups visit beautiful Savannah, they'll find several NTA-member offerings, from walking tours of Broughton Street to seeing the city from the water.

"Even though ours is an exquisitely preserved historical city, it's important to know that we also have an abundance of new, interesting and interactive things for your groups to do," says Visit Savannah's Mindy Shea. "It's now easier than ever to add exciting elements to your Savannah itinerary, proving that what's old can indeed be new again!"



Chef Darin's Cooking School

Old Savannah Tours Nearly 40 years of trolley tours have brought this company some of its latest specialty products, including Sip & Scavenge, an adult version of a scavenger hunt and a great team-building exercise, says the company's Renae Scott. The Ghost in the Garden tour is an option for corporate and other tour groups with dinner at a haunted location. The trolley lets passengers off at the Owens-Thomas House and other spots after dark to hear stories from one of the city's legendary "ghosts." oldsavannah tours.com

River Street Riverboat Company Groups can get the ultimate Southern experience aboard the *Georgia Queen* or the *Savannah River Queen*. The chef will prepare beef starters and a bourbon ball dessert to accompany a selection of domestic cheeses. Passengers can enjoy a Savannah Lemonade, made with locally distilled sweet tea bourbon, or a Honeysuckle, made with Savannah honey and local bourbon. Shea says this pairs well with a visit to Chef Darin's Cooking School, where groups can take 90-minute culinary classes that are known for their affordability and fun atmosphere. savannahriverboat.com

For more information, contact Shea at mshea@visitsavannah.com or go to visitsavannah.com.

Art, airboats and Auntie Anne's pretzels

With 23 miles of beachfront promenades and vibrant nightlife, arts and culinary scenes and unique wildlife, Fort Lauderdale has a lot for groups searching for all kinds of adventure. Ivonne Macmillan with Greater Fort Lauderdale CVB recommends these attractions:



GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE CVB



SAWGRASS RECREATION PARK



GREATER FORT LAUDERDALE CVB

Bonnet House Museum & Gardens Built in 1920 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is one of the few remaining oceanfront estates and was the winter retreat of Chicago-born artist Frederic Clay Bartlett and his family. The grounds encompass 35 acres of a native barrier island habitat and five distinct ecosystems. All tours are guided, and visitors can see an impressive orchid collection and learn about how this historical landmark inspires creativity today.

Sawgrass Recreation Park Groups can glide through the grassy rivers of the Everglades on a 30-minute airboat adventure through the park. Passengers will learn fun facts about the Everglades' unique ecosystem and possibly catch a glimpse of the native and endangered wildlife. They can visit the reptile and exotic wildlife exhibit after the boat ride. Boats leave every 20 to 30 minutes from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sawgrass Mills With more than 350 retailers, 10 restaurants, two food courts and entertainment venues, Sawgrass Mills is the largest outlet and retail shopping destination in the United States. There are lots of high-end brands to browse at its Colonnade Outlets, including Michael Kors, Tory Burch, Versace and Burberry. The outlets offer foreign currency exchange, stroller and Smarte Carte rentals and complimentary wheel chairs.

For more information, contact Macmillan at imacmillan@broward.org or go to sunny.org.

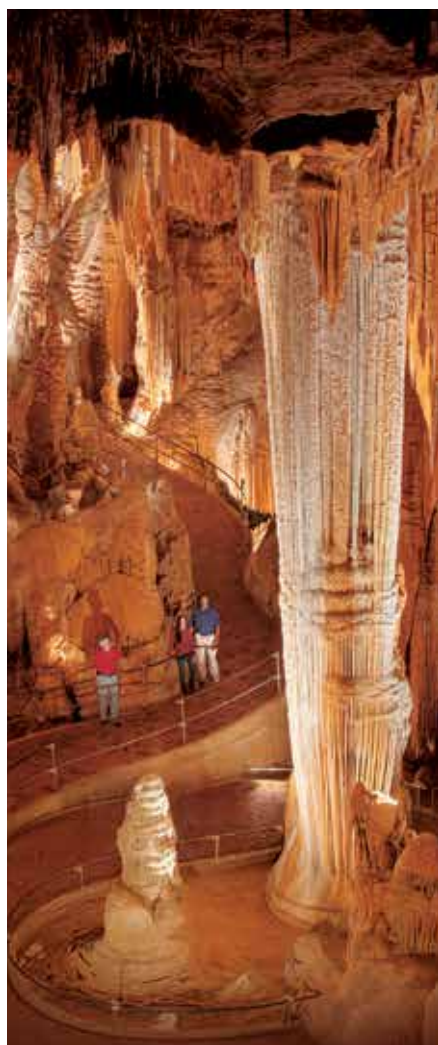
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The Outer Banks is a hot spot for unique experiences, from watching horses run wild on the beach to seeing the tallest natural sand dunes on the Atlantic Coast.

"You get the feeling of being someplace exotic with the three different islands to tour, but you're connected by bridges to the rest of the world," says Lorrie Love, tourism sales and events manager with Outer Banks Visitors Bureau.

Groups can take a two-hour tour to see the protected Corolla Wild Horses. The tours, offered by Kitty Hawk Kites, can accommodate 10 to 14 passengers in safari trucks, outfitted with outdoor seating under a canopy. Marketing Director Luke Baer says the company can operate six to eight of the vehicles at a time.

"The horses are direct descendants of the mustangs that were shipwrecked from Spanish galleons. They swam ashore about 400 years ago," he says.

May through October, groups can take a two-hour tour—led by a marine biologist—on a 30-passenger boat to view and learn about dolphins.

"Our tours work with the Outer Banks Center for Dolphin Research. Every trip that we take, we are keeping track of the dolphins that we

see. And we see the same dolphins year after year," Baer says. "And it's in the sound side, so we don't have to go into the ocean to see the dolphins. It's a very calm, leisurely experience, and very educational."

Back on land, there have been recent renovations to the Wright Brothers National Memorial visitors center that Love says will be a big hit for groups coming to her area this year.

"During its two-year renovation closure, the entire visitors center was reimagined from top to bottom on the inside, with all new exhibits and many items that have never been on public display from Orville and Wilbur's time in Kitty Hawk," she says.

For more information, contact Love at love@outerbanks.org or go to outerbanks.org.



Dolphin tour

Charleston Tea Plantation *steeped in history*

There's only one commercial tea farm in America, and it's found on Wadmalaw Island, South Carolina, at the Charleston Tea Plantation.

Business Manager Jane Knight says groups can expect to be greeted upon arrival by a staff member.

"The group will take a 35- to 40-minute educational and entertaining narrated trolley tour around the tea farm, and will be educated on how the tea plant, the *Camellia Sinensis*, is grown, harvested and propagated, with a stop at our state of the art greenhouse, which houses young tea plants," Knight says. "They will also take our factory tour overlooking our production facility, where they will learn how the newly harvested leaves are processed into black or green tea."

The plantation's backdrop is South Carolina's Lowcountry, where tea plants dating back to the 1800s are spread across 127 picturesque acres. Just a few miles south of Charleston, Wadmalaw Island is considered one of the city's most unspoiled islands, as it cannot be commercially developed.

The plantation produces nine special flavors of tea, including its original American Classic Tea. Its tea bar is open daily and stocked with the complimentary hot or iced beverage.

"Since we are the only commercial large-scale tea plantation in America, it is a must-see for both tea lovers and non-tea lovers. The gift shop offers a variety of tea, gifts, snacks and local items," Knight says.

She says they also offer boxed lunches for groups of 20 or more. Plus, motorcoach parking is complimentary.

For more information, contact Knight at jknight@rcbigelow.com or go to charlestonteatplantation.com. ☎



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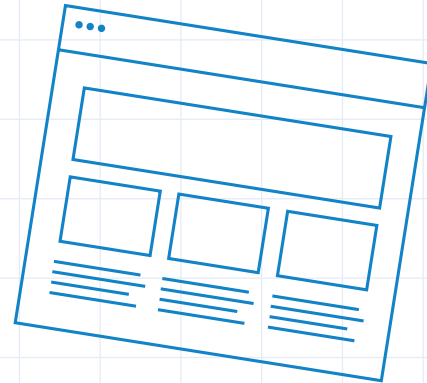
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Great Frontier U.S.

BY PATTI NICKELL



Idaho's Rocky Canyon Hot Springs

Frontier. There's something raw and rugged in the word, describing a place hard fought for and hard won. The Great Frontier—a place mythologized in song, verse, art and film ... a place held sacred in the hearts of all who ever dreamed of a vast landscape mirroring a continent's hopes and aspirations.

While considerably tamed today, the five states of Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming and Montana still offer a glimpse into that wild, woolly past that continues to intrigue travelers.

Idaho's many facets

The Gem State has it all: beauty (31 scenic highways carve their way through canyons, valleys and mountains); history (think Lewis and Clark and Sacagawea); and adventure (the Snake River offers the most raftable white water in the Lower 48). And across the entire state is the majesty of a night sky full of stars uncontested by artificial lights.

As National Public Radio puts it, "Idaho dims the lights for one of the best night skies anywhere." That alone is enough to have visitors licking their lips in anticipation.

But whitewater rafting and dark skies aside, Idaho has unexpected thrills for groups. The state is home to more than 50 wineries and 1,200 acres of vineyards, and the literal fruits of the winemakers' labors are receiving national acclaim.

The state's 150 years of grape-growing points to its deep roots, and groups can check out spots in its four wine regions. The Northern Wine Region, located near Coeur d'Alene and Spokane, Washington, offers high-quality fruit wines, including some that feature local huckleberries.

If wine soothes your palate, Idaho's hot springs soothe everything else. You can enjoy a soak in a developed site with modern amenities or seek out your own private pool tucked away at the end of a mountain path.

Finally, make sure your itinerary includes some of America's most scenic towns—from Coeur d'Alene with its namesake emerald lake to Sun Valley, a luxury resort extraordinaire that's home to the country's first destination ski resort.

To get more details about the Gem State, contact Amy Alpers, Idaho Division of Tourism Development, at amy.alpers@tourism.idaho.gov or go to visitidaho.org.



Downtown Coeur d'Alene

Helena, Montana: Queen City of the Rockies BY KAREN WEIK

Halfway between Yellowstone and Glacier national parks, under the shadows of Mt. Helena and Mt. Ascension, lies Montana's picturesque capital city.

"Helen-a," as locals say it, was born in the gold rush of 1864. She was dubbed the Queen City in the late 1800s, when more millionaires lived here, per capita, than anywhere in the nation. The leather-clad Montana Club, with its exclusive brotherhood of men who were millionaires, registered a cool 140 members.

Today, Helena's gold rush gulches have been transformed into a scenic downtown area, with lively parks and a walking mall dotted with interesting shops. Meandering down the middle is a man-made stream, right where the motherlode was discovered. The nearby mansion district stands in stately homage to the past, a tapestry of adventure, grit, debauchery and charm.

And the old prospector trails, lacing up the foothills, now hold claim to arguably the best multi-use trail system in the Rocky Mountains. Totalling 400 miles, 80 of which start smack-dab downtown, the system of trails has earned Helena the notable distinction as a "Silver Ride Center" from The International Mountain Biking Association. It's the only such designation in Montana, and one of only a dozen worldwide. A local motto claims the end of every street is a trailhead,

and a brewery sits at the end of every trail. With five local breweries, it's not far from the truth.

Visitors quickly learn this is not just a perfect layover spot, three hours between the geyser-to-glacier route, but a destination worthy of an extended stay. The Gates of the Mountains river boat tour, Broadwater Hot Springs, internationally accredited Tizer Botanical Gardens and Arboretum, Last Chance Ranch—with its covered-wagon ride and cowboy dinner experience—and Montana's opulent capitol building and historical museum entertain visitors for days.

But the city's crowning glory is the Cathedral of St. Helena. Modeled after the gothic-styled cathedral in Vienna, Austria, and commissioned by a millionaire Irish-Catholic goldminer, this focal point and its magnificent stained-glass collection will have you questioning what continent you're on.

Helena charms, just like the state she is capital to. The city lures visitors to return, for a modern-day romance with the American West, as it was, and still is—only better. As novelist John Steinbeck gushed, "I am in love with Montana. For other states I have admiration, respect, recognition, even some affection. But with Montana, it is love."

Karen Weik is tourism sales manager for Visit Helena (helenamt.com). Reach her at kweik@helenamt.com or +1.406.443.2117.



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www.WildlifeArt.org

Grab a front-row seat

Movie fans might know North Dakota more from the Coen brothers' campy film classic " Fargo " than from actually visiting the Roughrider State. That would be a shame, says North Dakota Tourism Director Deanne Cunningham, who adds that she wants groups "to be legendary by experiencing our adventurous outdoors and vibrant communities, as well as our culture and history."

At Theodore Roosevelt National Park, a 36-mile loop provides access for motorcoaches to pull over and let passengers take photographs of bison and prairie dogs or get out and hike the trails.

In Medora near the Badlands, visitors are likely to encounter a Theodore Roosevelt re-enactor, along with cowboys and cowgirls riding their horses through the streets, tipping their hats as they pass.

For the true meaning of friendship between nations, you'll want to schedule a visit to the International Peace Garden, a beacon of harmony for 87 years. Celebrating the United States' unique relationship with its Canadian neighbors, the garden has impressive attractions such as the Peace Chapel,

the 9/11 Memorial, the Formal Garden and the Floral Clock, as well as an annual planting of 150,000 flowers.

" Fargo " fanatics won't want to miss that quirky metropolis, whose young entrepreneurs have opened businesses offering craft beers and crafty cuisine. Groups will love Bonanzaville with its railroad, vintage cars and airplanes.

And for those who want to keep the spirit of Detective Marge Gunderson and hapless wannabe criminal Jerry Lundegaard alive, book tickets for the Fargo Film Festival, held annually in March.

For more information, connect with Cunningham at decunningham@nd.gov or visit ndtourism.com.



Mountain biking in the Badlands

JIM GALLOP

TOP: NORTH DAKOTA TOURISM

South Dakota, west to east

The Mount Rushmore State has an embarrassment of riches for visitors. In addition to the four presidents' faces and the state's other granite sculpture, NTA-member Crazy Horse Memorial, there are the rugged Badlands, the scenic Black Hills and the town of Deadwood, brimming with both history and casinos. And that's just in the western part of the state.

Heading east, options for itineraries are myriad. The Akta Lakota Museum, an NTA member in Chamberlain, honors the native Lakota people by exhibiting today's art alongside yesterday's artifacts. Its galleries and educational displays depict the proud heritage of the Lakota people, and the attraction provides space where local American Indian artists can display and sell their works.

In Sioux Falls, you can visit Falls Park and see the city's namesake: the Falls of the Big Sioux River. And new to the city is the Arc of Dreams, a stainless

steel structure that spans the length of a football field and rises 70 feet above the river. It's set to be installed in May.

In Mitchell, be sure to visit the world's only Corn Palace, a Moorish-inspired building decorated with murals made from corn and other grains. And in the Yankton area, follow in the footsteps of intrepid explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark.

Scenic Highway 10 will take travelers through the Coteau des Prairies (Hills of the Prairies), where glaciers once covered the land. And on the Native American Scenic Byway, South Dakota's cultural roots unfold as you travel into the heart of the Great Sioux Nation.

To get more ideas for itineraries, contact Cole Irwin, global travel and trade director for the South Dakota Department of Tourism, at cole.irwin@travelsouthdakota.com or visit toursdakota.com.



SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

Falls Park in Sioux Falls

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Wyoming: Hang on for the ride

You could say the Cowboy State is indisputably first in its class. It's home to the first U.S. national park (Yellowstone), the first national monument (Devil's Tower) and the first national forest (Shoshone). Then you could say Wyoming is



Cheyenne Frontier Days

WYOMING OFFICE OF TOURISM


first in women's suffrage, as the first female to cast a vote in the U.S. did so in the town of Laramie in 1870—a full 50 years before women gained voting rights in the rest of the nation.

Visitors can count on having their breath taken away at a plethora of natural sights, including 25 national historic landmarks and 11 nationally recognized areas, trails and monuments.

Any group will thrill at incredible backcountry landscapes, from the sculpted Wind River Mountains and the Flaming Gorge National Recreational Area to sprawling Killpecker Sand Dunes, an attraction just north of Rock Springs that has been described as one of nature's largest sandboxes.

If there's one thing that defines Wyoming, it's the official state sport, rodeo. There are indoor and outdoor events throughout the state, from Sheridan to Cody, including the national finals for both high school and college students.

But if there's one you want to be sure to see, it's the granddaddy of all rodeos, Cheyenne Frontier Days, held annually in July. From the opening of the first chute and the emergence of an adrenaline-fueled cowboy hanging on for dear life atop a bucking bronco to the final party in the downtown plaza, Frontier Days offers one heck of a ride.

For more information about Wyoming, reach out to Abigail Martin in the Wyoming Office of Tourism, abigail.martin@wyo.gov, or go to travelwyoming.com. 



Josh Duhamel

FROM THE TOP

Theodore Roosevelt National Park – South Unit

Actor and North Dakota native Josh Duhamel has something in common with President Theodore Roosevelt: a love for the Badlands. After spending time here, Roosevelt was instrumental in starting the National Park System. Visit us online to plan your next tour itinerary to beautiful Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

NDtourism.com/grouptravel

NORTH
Dakota
Be Legendary.™



You'd smile, too ...

... If you knew *Courier* would keep coming to you throughout the year. The magazine is a member benefit, see, and only NTA members are mailed a copy. If you have renewed your membership for 2019, you're in great shape: *Courier* will keep coming your way.

If you let your membership lapse, though, this is your last issue.
Cut the smiles. Cue the sad faces.

Along with great events—Travel Exchange and Contact—discounts and education, *Courier* and other NTA publications rank at the top of member benefits.
Here are a few new benefits that will bring a smile in 2019:

- A loyalty program with cost-saving rewards
- An online community platform, Engage, that strengthens connections
- The China Preferred Partner Program, exclusive to NTA
- A Concierge Program that helps multi-property members excel

So keep it coming: *Courier*, connections, cost savings—all of it.
Renew your NTA membership today and take advantage of everything
your association has for you ... and keep smiling.

Contact us at NTA Headquarters to renew your 2019 membership:



By email
headquarters@ntastaff.com



By phone
+1.859.264.6540

Western Canada

COMPILED BY BOB ROUSE



Canada Day at the Forks

Game on

Winnipeg offers visitors a wealth of cultural experiences, including Folklorama (see page 12), but groups can also get their game on when they visit Manitoba's capital city.

Any walk through Winnipeg's Exchange District National Historic Site should include a stop at Across the Board Game Café. The restaurant's menu includes salads, sandwiches, pizza, noodle bowls and assorted snacks. Guests can order up—and then let the games begin.



Across the Board Game Café

The casual café houses some 1,900 board games that patrons can play while they dine. Dedicated, on-site hosts can prepare specific games or offer suggestions, and if you really enjoy what you play, chances are you can buy (a new) one to take home.

If you're looking to up your dining game (with full knowledge there are no cribbage boards or Trivial Pursuit cards in sight), Sarah Robinson of Tourism Winnipeg recommends two downtown restaurants with great options for groups. The chefs at Peasant Cookery apply classic French techniques to local meats and fish, and large tables can seat up to 30 people. Promenade Café and Wine also focuses on French cuisine with locally sourced ingredients, and the restaurant offers seating that overlooks the downtown skyline and The Canadian Museum for Human Rights.

Also in the heart of downtown, groups can enjoy a baseball game at Shaw Park, home of the Winnipeg Goldeyes, one of the more successful independent teams in North America. The stadium arranges for visiting bands and choirs to perform pre-game at the main gate and then play or sing the national anthem. And if you're not prepared to perform, you can sing along during the seventh-inning stretch.

For more information email Robinson at sarah@tourismwinnipeg.com or visit tourismwinnipeg.com.

TOURISM WINNIPEG

TOP: APRIL CARANDANG

Farm to table ... and to glass

Saskatchewan is an agricultural powerhouse, holding nearly 50 percent of Canada's arable land. The province ranks as one of the world's top exporters of wheat, oats, canola, barley, peas and other crops, and it's the second-largest beef-producing province in Canada.

"Saskatchewan is known as the breadbasket of Canada, providing easy access to fresh, high-quality ingredients for chefs, brewers and distillers," says Amy McInnis, manager of marketing for Tourism Saskatchewan. "As a result, we have a host of delicious touring options that operators can add into itineraries, and all of them are easily accessible off major highways."

McInnis offers ideas for groups visiting two Saskatchewan cities:

Regina

- To discover Saskatchewan's microbrew scene, have lunch at Bushwakker Brewpub and follow the meal with a tour and beer school. Bushwakker is rated as one of Canada's best brewpubs both by experts and the public.
- Just down the road in the Warehouse District is another popular local establishment, Rebellion Brewing, known for the creative use of Saskatchewan-grown ingredients in its lentil cream ale.
- Twenty minutes north of Regina is the scenic Qu'Appelle Valley and Over the Hill Orchards, a certified organic grower of exotic fruits including peaches, blackberries, grapes, strawberries and prairie cherries. Guests can relax with a glass of wine and a selection of dessert appetizers on the patio and then move indoors for Supper in the Orchard—a multi-course, locally sourced meal offered weekends from May 5 to Oct. 8.



CHRISHENDRICKSON
Black Fox Farm & Distillery

Saskatoon

- Shop for a taste of the province at the SaskMade Marketplace, a retail outlet dedicated to sourcing Saskatchewan-made products. Tastings are available for groups.
- Enjoy a tour and tasting at Black Fox Farm & Distillery, winner of the best cask gin at the World Gin Awards, and take a tour of the site's massive cut-flower gardens. Continue down scenic Valley Road to The Berry Barn, which has a number of menu items featuring Saskatoon berries.
- Visit Lucky Bastard Distillers and learn the too-good-to-be-true story behind the name. While there, sip samples including Gambit Gin, which is infused with Saskatoon berries.

For details, contact McInnis at amy.mcinnis@tourismsask.com or visit trade.tourismsaskatchewan.com.

Park yourself amid BC history

Canada's national parks tell stories of the nation's multicultural past and showcase its incredible natural treasures. Among the 20 sites throughout British Columbia where Parks Canada shares such stories are these three places of historical note:



PARKS CANADA

Fort Rodd Hill National Historic Site

(Victoria) At this west coast artillery fortress that was on active duty from 1895 to 1956, you can tour through bunkers, military command posts and original 19th-century buildings while listening to the personal stories of soldiers and their families.



Gitwāngak Battle Hill National Historic Site

(Kitwanga) Climb the grassy knoll and survey the site where the Gitwāngak people defended their land from the mid-1700s to the 1800s. At a nearby village, you'll see the province's oldest collection of totem poles retained in their original context.



Fort St. James National Historic Site

(Fort Saint James) You can tour Canada's largest collection of wooden buildings restored to the 1890s, when wealth was measured in fur pelts and salmon. Visitors also can spend the night in the country's only bed and breakfast at a national historic site.

For information on these and the 200-plus other sites maintained by Parks Canada, contact Jennifer Burnell at jennifer.burnell@pc.gc.ca or go to parkscanada.gc.ca.



Bennett Lake

Have a blast in Yukon

It took 35,000 men to blast through mountains and build a railroad from Skagway, Alaska, to Whitehorse, Yukon. But much smaller groups can enjoy the ride—and the views—with White Pass & Yukon Route Railroad.

From May through early September, Yukon visitors can depart from Carcross and journey to Bennett Lake in British Columbia. The secluded lake is accessible only by train (or a 33-mile hike).

“The ride features unforgettable vistas from the comfort of vintage-inspired rail cars,” says Jacqueline Taylor-Rose, the company’s marketing manager. “The history of the region during the Klondike Gold Rush is told as you meander along the shore.”

The stopover in Bennett Lake features an interpretive center in the railway’s 1910 station house, and visitors can walk to St. Andrew’s Church, the last remaining gold rush-era building, which the railroad and Parks Canada have helped preserve.

“It’s unforgettable ride that only a handful of visitors get to see each summer,” Taylor-Rose says, adding that custom tours can be created with many of the Yukon’s transportation providers.

To learn more about rail excursions, contact Taylor-Rose at jtaylor-rose@wpyr.com or visit wpyr.com. For more information about Yukon, email Stephen Reynolds at stephen.reynolds@gov.yk.ca or visit travelyukon.com.

Horse racing, dining and dinos in Alberta

Alberta’s spectacular natural features are complemented by its fascinating history and entertaining attractions. These four activities provide a sampling of the variety of experiences in a province bounded by Canadian Rocky Mountains to the west and Canadian Badlands to the east:



Jasper food tour


BRIAN VAN TIGHEM

Walk and talk (and eat) in Jasper Foodie tours in Jasper National Park include short walks and informative talks between four downtown restaurants and several points of interest. The three-hour tour departs daily at 2:30 p.m.

Hike through history The Victoria Trail Voyageur Experience is an immersive program that links the fur trade story with Métis Crossing and Victoria Settlement Provincial Historic Site, located an hour northeast of Edmonton. Groups participate in activities that include weaving, hiking and canoeing.

Horse racing is back Edmonton’s Northlands Park closed at the end of the 2016, but a new track will open its gates in April. Century Mile Racetrack and Casino, located next to Edmonton International Airport, will offer 100 race days per year, and the multi-level casino will provide gaming as well as host concerts and festivals year-round.

Don’t forget the dinosaurs The visitor center in Drumheller is guarded by a XXXL-size replica of a Tyrannosaurus rex, and this southern Alberta town is home to Royal Tyrrell Museum of Palaeontology. Inside Canada’s only museum dedicated exclusively to that branch of science, visitors can enjoy educational programs and one of the world’s largest displays of dinosaurs.

These four activities are only the beginning. To get more itinerary ideas for Alberta, contact Desiree Gibson, business development director for Travel Alberta, at desiree.gibson@travelalberta.com or go to travelalberta.com. 

TOP: WHITE PASS & YUKON ROUTE



Chris Babb is with NTA staffers Beth Engel and Anna Pettus at Tourism Cares' Hearts of Travel Awards ceremony.



Morgan Maravich (far right) is the new president of Skål Washington. Morgan is the youngest female in the history of Skål USA to serve as chapter president. With her is Chris Babb, Pam Inman and Neil Amrine.



Agustin Caparros of A Closer Look Tours has been named Contact '19 chair.



With NTA chair Paul Larsen in Lexington to meet with the NTA staff, the group recognized Executive Vice President Catherine Prather (seated center) for her 25 years of service to the association.

Meet the Members

Amiel Tours

OR YEHUDA, ISRAEL

NTA contact: Rachel Spigelman,
sales and marketing executive

Office phone: +972.3.538.8450

Website: amiel.com

NTA member since: 2012

How long have you worked in the industry?

Almost eight years.

What are a couple of Amiel Tours' signature itineraries?

Our most popular tours are "Classic Israel" and our pilgrim tours. Our clients get to see places such as Tel Aviv, the city that never sleeps; historical Caesarea; the beautiful Sea of Galilee; and the magnificent city of Jerusalem, which dates back more than 2,000 years.

What are some benefits North American tour operators and travelers get if they book with your company?

We are known for our excellent service (always with a smile), great creativity and good prices.



Why is your NTA membership valuable?

It keeps me in touch with our clients and assists me in connecting with new potential partners.

What is a local place you always take friends or family who visit your area?

To the Machane Yehuda market in Jerusalem. We'd go to Crave, a street food restaurant in the market that's one of my favorite places to eat.

What is your favorite vacation memory?

Visiting the Dolomites in Northern Italy was magnificent. Snow in August really made the vacation, since we so very rarely see snow in Israel.

For more information, contact Spigelman at rachel@amiel.israel.net.

Adventures to Tuscany

KUNKLETOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

NTA contact: Tommy Harpster,
chief adventure officer

Office phone: +1.610.657.7894

Website: adventurestotuscany.com

NTA member since: 2018

Tell me a little about what your company offers groups.

Adventures to Tuscany offers truly unique, authentic and immersive, escorted and guided small group (12 people) adventure tours to Tuscany. We collaborate with one of Tuscany's most prominent wine and olive oil estates to provide our accommodations in a beautifully restored and rustically elegant hilltop villa with two private chefs amidst the vineyards and olive groves on a magnificent 2,200-acre estate. Experiences include historical and cultural city walking tours, outdoor pizza parties, Tuscan barbecues, Mediterranean-themed dinner parties and our guests' all-time favorite: our Festival del Bianco.

What made you fall in love with Tuscany?

The beauty of the landscape, the amazing history, the unique culture and, of course, the incredible foods and wines. Spend a week in a private villa in Tuscany and you can easily understand why they come here to make movies like "Under the Tuscan Sun."

I see that you and your wife, Terese, have traveled a lot over the years. Besides Italy, what's another destination the two of you enjoy?

So, we truly love the south of France—the Provence Region: Arles, Le Baux, St. Remy, Avignon. We're working now on a two-year project to offer tours of Provence, with the same model as our popular Tuscany tours, starting in 2021.



What destination is at the top of your bucket list?

I've promised Terese we'll get back to Paris (where I proposed to her) for our 25th anniversary next year! Who doesn't love Paris? Life is good!

For more information, contact Harpster at adventurestotuscany@gmail.com.

MeetNKY (Northern Kentucky Convention & Visitors Bureau)

COVINGTON, KY

NTA contact: Erin Hoebbel,
group tour manager

Office phone: +1.859.655.4154

Website: meetnky.com

NTA member since: 2018

What are a couple of your most unique attractions or events?

One of our most popular attractions is the Ark Encounter (life size-replica of Noah's Ark) located in Williamstown, Kentucky. Being a river city and sitting on the Ohio River, we have BB Riverboats that offer an authentic steam-boat cruise either for lunch, dinner or just sightseeing. And, of course, we are Kentucky and bourbon is king. We are an official gateway to the Kentucky Bourbon Trail. We have our own version called the B-Line, which features local distilleries, restaurants and bars.

Why do you love Northern Kentucky?

I'm from this area, and it's where I call home. It's been wonderful watching how Northern Kentucky has evolved into the destination it has become.

What places do you like taking people who visit?

When I have friends visit, I definitely want to show off our great food—interesting pockets that hold a lot of history, such as Mainstrasse Village or OTR (Over the Rhine)—and also give them some picture opps with some of our scenic overlooks throughout the area.

What do you like to do when you're not hard at work?

Of course enjoying time with my family and friends. I also enjoy experiencing, as much as possible, our local flavor in the region by going to festivals, checking out new experiences when they come online and seeing an occasional movie.

For more information, contact Hoebbel at ehoebbel@meetnky.com. ☎



Next Up: YOU!

MEMBER, NTA

NTA contact:

Your name and info here

Question 1?

Your amazing answer

Question 2?

Another scintillating response

Question 3?

Other members will want to partner with you once they know more about your organization.

Question 4?

Don't worry about editing. We love to edit.

Question 5?

With your final answer, it's decided: You're irresistible.



For more information on how you can be featured in Meet the Members, email *Courier* Editor Bob Rouse at bob.rouse@ntaservicesinc.com.

Introducing ... NTA's newest members

Friends Tours & Travel



LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

Tour operator

Friends Tours & Travel customizes reliable and trustworthy religious tours, educational tours, vacation travel and cruises to destinations all over the world.



Mitchell Jensen

Vice president
+1.501.379.9226
mitchell@travelwith
friends.com
travelwithfriends.com

"I am so excited to join NTA and share our passion for travel. For over 10 years, we have been providing full-service, all-inclusive packages to the Holy Land taken by travelers from all across the U.S."

Open Roads Tour & Travel Solutions

FAIR OAKS, CALIFORNIA

Tour operator

A receptive and custom tour operator focused on the western United States and Canada, the company is dedicated to opening hearts, minds and "roads" to those who love travel—students, senior adults and everyone in between.



Kevin Murphy, CTP

Owner
+1.916.489.2206
kevin@ortts.com
ortts.com

"I've been engaged in the tour and travel industry for 20 years, working for an attraction, a hotel, two DMOs and a tour operator. I can't imagine myself anywhere else!"

Polymath

ASHLAND, OREGON

Associate

Polymath provides business strategies, management accounting and educational services to owners of tour and activities companies. Polymath offers webinars and classes to help NTA members improve cash flow and understand the gross profit margin of each tour.



Ingrid Edstrom

Priestess of profits
+1.541.482.4849
ingrid@polymath.com
polymath.com

"I love helping companies thrive because you help us experience the adventure and beauty of our world through your dreams."

Main Event Entertainment

PLANO, TEXAS

Tour supplier

Main Event Entertainment has 42 centers across the United States. Each center features bowling, multi-level laser tag, billiards and the latest interactive arcade games. Main Event promises groups of all ages "the most fun you can have under one roof."



Robert Jenkins

Vice president, sales
+1.469.661.2573
robert.jenkins@main
event.com
mainevent.com

"With more than 10 years of industry experience, I am focused on identifying creative event and group sales solutions guaranteed to deliver WOW experiences. We are excited to be a part of NTA."

Bella Italia Tours

SELDEN, NEW YORK

Tour operator

Bella Italia Tours provides small groups (10 to 16 people) with personally escorted tours of Italy led by a Certified International Tour Manager. Programs run from 11 to 14 days, with a seven-day tour in development.



Brian Tomaine

Owner
+1.631.846.9274
brian@bellaitalia
escortedtours.com
bellaitaliaescorted
tours.com

"Although new to the tourism industry, my experience as a wedding photographer, getting my CITM certification and my extensive travel throughout Italy have prepared me for leading groups in il bel paese."

Profiles encouraged

Think of your member profile on NTA Online as a digital elevator pitch that other members rely on when making business appointments or conducting online searches. Is your profile up to date? To find out, log in and click the "welcome" words in the upper right corner. ☞





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Official NTA Corporate Partner

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.

TOUR OPERATORS

Authentic Zanzibar Tours & Safaris Ltd.



Taib Hassan
Zanzibar, Tanzania
authenticzanzibar.net

Friends Tours & Travel

Mitchell Jensen
Little Rock, AR 72120 USA
travelwithfriends.com

Gatherings Plus

Scott Thompson
Hollister, MO 65672 USA
gatheringsplus.com

Intelli.tours LLC

Jeffrey Kirkman
Clive, IA 50325 USA
intelli.tours

Kisa Safaris



Moses Muwanguzi
Kampala, Uganda
kisasafaris.com

Meile Commercial International Inc.

Min Ou
El Monte, CA 91731 USA

Switzerland Travel Centre

Christy Keller
Zurich, 8045 Switzerland
stc.ch

TOUR SUPPLIERS

Blue Lake Casino

Lisa Corral
Blue Lake, CA 95525 USA
bluelakecasino.com

Red Mile

Mary Catherine Jones
Lexington, KY 40504 USA
redmileky.com

St. Lawrence Cruise Lines

Daniel Beals
Kingston, ON K7L 2Z4 Canada
st.lawrencecruiselines.com

CORPORATE PARTNER

WordStream

Tripp Ott
Boston, MA 02199 USA
wordstream.com

NTA EVENTS

Save these dates in 2019 and beyond to connect with new partners and destinations. For more information on these events, click the EVENTS tab on NTAonline.com.

travel exchange



FORT WORTH CUB

Fort Worth | Dec. 8-12, 2019

DESTINATION CAPITOL HILL



CCF LEIG/NICOLAS RAMOND
BILLY JIMMYZZ

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

CONTACT

Tucson, AZ • March 27-30, 2019



VISIT TUCSON

Tucson, Arizona | March 27-30, 2019

CONTACT

Anchorage | March 18-21, 2020

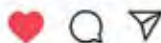


VISIT ANCHORAGE/ADVO.PHOTOS

Anchorage, Alaska | March 18-21, 2020



ntacourier
Tudor House and Garden



ntacourier got all the details of the two-part journey
walking in the footsteps of the Pilgrims on
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ideas for your
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Make. Contact.

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"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

"You never know what topic might come up for discussion or collaboration."

Suzanne Slavitter, CTP

"I come back to the office refreshed and flowing with new ideas."

Stephanie Dilling, Wells Gray Tours

Visit NTAcontact.com to register today!



A match made in ... Branson

BY ELAINE MOULDER

MOST FOLKS THINK of February as the month of love: celebrating Valentine's Day, remembering loved ones and recognizing the importance of love in our lives. Here's my travel industry love story.

It wasn't quite yet February when Tim Moulder and I met in Branson, Missouri, on a chilly day in 2006. I was an executive for the Student & Youth Travel Association and directing a fundraising event for the SYTA Youth Foundation following our summit.

Tim's travel industry friends encouraged him to attend even though the company he worked for at the time did not engage in student travel. Tim is a great storyteller, and here is how he remembers that day.

"I was sitting next to my longtime friend Mike Palmer (then SYTA executive director) when this angel appeared and spoke to Mike. As she walked away, I asked everyone around me who that angel was who just crossed the room. They all laughed and told me her name, and for me it was love at first sight."



Wedding day, 2008



The Moulders at Travel Exchange '16 in Atlanta

Tim has since named that day, Jan. 28, "miracle day," and we celebrate it each year like our own personal Valentine's Day.

He introduced himself later that day and as we chatted, we realized that we had attended many of the same travel industry events at the same time without crossing paths. Most likely, it was because I was involved in student travel and he was in the adult senior market.

We didn't begin dating right away. We lived in different cities: Tim in Branson and I in Lake Orion, Michigan. However, Tim made sure to seek me out at the next ABA conference, then he emailed and called a few times. But it wasn't until November that we went on a date. He invited me to see "Wicked" in Toronto during the annual OMCA conference. Barry Kidd with My Country Inn of Lancaster and Linda Mauzy, formally with the Laurel Highlands CVB, both NTA members at the time, were also there.

Fast forward a year and on Nov. 2, 2007, the day before NTA's annual convention began in Kansas City, Tim proposed at the Pomona Fountain in Country Club Plaza. We were the talk of the convention!

Bob Hofmann with Broadway Inbound was the convention chair that year, and he made sure everyone knew we were

engaged. He invited us to sit at his table during the last luncheon and announced our engagement from the stage. It was very fitting since we were surrounded by our travel industry family and received an outpouring of love.

We married on June 21, 2008, with several of our travel industry friends in attendance. Jim Reddekopp, former NTA chair, even sang "The Hawaiian Wedding Song" for us. If you know Jim, you know he has an amazing voice.

Since then, Tim and I have had the privilege of working together, and in 2015 we opened our own wholesale tour company, Brilliant Edventures.

Love is evident at NTA events and in the travel industry in general. There are many businesses owned by couples and families. People greet you with a hug. We learn about each other's families. Friendships are forged, and relationships play a key role in how business is conducted.

We bond through our mutual love of travel—even if it doesn't always lead to a wedding. ☺

Elaine Moulder, co-owner of Brilliant Edventures in St. Simons Island, Georgia, has been attending NTA conventions since 2002.



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