

DELIVERING BUSINESS ESSENTIALS TO NTA MEMBERS

JUNE/JULY 2019

Courier

Utah rocks!

Overarching coverage of North American national parks

PAGE 20

SIDELESS AND SEAMLESS
PAGE 13

PREVIEW TO TREX IN TEX
PAGE 16

'THIS IS WHAT NTA IS FOR'
PAGE 10

Utah's Arches National Park





BE SURPRISED!
LaGRANGE
GEORGIA



Hills & Dales
E S T A T E

HILLSANDDALES.ORG
LaGrange, GA | 706-882-3242

IN LAGRANGE, HISTORY LIVES AND INSPIRES.



**BIBLICAL
HISTORY
CENTER**

BIBLICALHISTORYCENTER.COM
LaGrange, GA | 706-885-0363



QUESTIONS ON HOW TO DO LAGRANGE?

Brittany Simmons, Director of Tourism

brittany@lagrangechamber.com or 706-645-3543



**LAGRANGE
TROUP COUNTY**
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VISITLAGRANGE.COM

FEATURES



Get ready for TREX, Tex

When Fort Worth hosts Travel Exchange '19, members will find new ways to connect and new sights to see in Cowtown.



Mission statement

As they explore North America's national parks, travelers can experience the history and natural beauty of more than 600 sites across the U.S. and Canada.



A high and mighty five

Courier's Bob Rouse joined Southwest Adventure Tours' swing through southern Utah, taking photos and notes of spectacular national (and state) parks.

COMPASS

30 Deep South

Alabama | Florida | Georgia | Louisiana | Mississippi | South Carolina

37 Mid-Atlantic

Delaware | Maryland | New Jersey | New York | Pennsylvania

44 Pacific Northwest

British Columbia | Oregon | Washington

49 Germany and Switzerland

DEPARTMENTS

4 From the Editor

6 Voices of Leadership

Business

8 InBrief

Change at the top is coming for NTA, as President Pam Inman, CTP, will step down at the end of the year and Executive Vice President Catherine Prather, CTP, will move into the position.

10 'This is what NTA is for'

When Brian Tomaine of new NTA member Bella Italia Tours needed some business advice, he posted a heartfelt message on the association's Engage platform detailing his company's struggles and asking for help. He got plenty.

12 Tangible Tucson

NTA's Contact event brought together more than 150 members, and Tucson provided just the right mix to help foster warm friendships, cool ideas and energetic events.

13 Sideless and seamless

Brooke Hamlett, who has worked in Tucson for both a tour operator company and the local DMO, details how Contact offered a full-circle experience for her.

14 What's On

Girl power

On the trail of four legendary authors

Community

52 Meet the Members

Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex

Best Western Plus Fillmore Inn

Pinstripes Bistro, Bowling & Bocce

Fairfield Conference and Visitors Bureau

54 Introducing ...

TopView Sightseeing NYC | Ameritas | French Side Travel | Visit Estes Park

55 New Members/NTA Events Calendar

56 AfterWords

Mark Hoffmann reflects on how former NTA president Pete Anderson influenced his life, and how Pete's impact is still being felt among many of the association's current leaders.

NTA President

Pam Inman, CTP pam.inman@ntastaff.com

Editorial

Editor in Chief Bob Rouse bob.rouse@ntaservicesinc.com

Managing Editor Pat Henderson pat.henderson@ntaservicesinc.com

Writer Kendall Fletcher kendall.fletcher@ntaservicesinc.com

Writer Kay Saffari kay.saffari@faithtravelassociation.com

Contributors Brooke Hamlett, Mark Hoffmann, TJ Olmsted

Graphic Design Jeff Quire

Advertising

President, NTA Services Kami Risk kami.risk@ntaservicesinc.com

Director of Sales and Key Accounts Beth Engel, CTP beth.engel@ntaservicesinc.com

Senior Manager, Membership Sales June Calk, CTP june.calk@ntastaff.com

Account Executive/Western U.S. Kelley Burchell kelly.burchell@ntaservicesinc.com

Account Executive/Central U.S. & Canada Gina Martin gina.martin@ntaservicesinc.com

Account Executive/Eastern U.S. TJ Olmsted tj.olmsted@ntastaff.com

Senior Manager, Marketing Ashley Fish ashley.fish@ntaservicesinc.com

PLANNING AHEAD

To view the 2019–20 editorial calendar, visit NTAonline.com/advertising. NTA members can submit tour product information or editorial queries to bob.rouse@ntaservicesinc.com. And for advertising information, contact Kendall Fletcher at +1.859.264.6559 or kendall@ntaservicesinc.com.

► OCTOBER ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

New England

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont

South Central U.S.

Kentucky, Tennessee, West Virginia

China, Nepal and Thailand

India

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Music Destinations and Attractions

Shopping

Guide: Theaters and Broadway Shows

DEADLINES

Space: Aug. 2 | Material: Aug. 12

► NOVEMBER ISSUE

DESTINATIONS

America's Historic East

Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C.

Atlantic Canada

New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island

Caribbean

Egypt, Israel and Jordan

SPECIAL COVERAGE

Travel Exchange '19 (Fort Worth)

DEADLINES

Space: Sept. 6 | Material: Sept. 16



PUBLISHED BY NTA SERVICES, INC. Email: kami.risk@ntaservicesinc.com

COURIER (USPS 602270, ISSN 0279-4489) (Vol. 46, Issue 5) published nine times a year by NTA Services, Inc., 101 Prosperous Place, Suite 350, Lexington, KY 40509. Periodicals Postage Paid at Lexington, Kentucky, and additional mailing offices. Subscription rate is \$60 per year.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Courier*, 101 Prosperous Place, Suite 350, Lexington, KY 40509.

COURIER is the official licensed publication of NTA®, an international trade association of the packaged travel industry. Copyright© 2019, NTA Services, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way or by any means, electrical, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without written permission of *Courier*, except for quotations made for purposes of a review. All inquiries should be sent to *Courier* magazine, 101 Prosperous Place, Suite 350, Lexington, KY 40509, +1.859.264.6559. Additional subscriptions can be purchased by calling +1.859.264.6559. Printed in USA.

Advertising rates are available upon request. For a change of address, subscribers may notify *Courier* directly, by email or letter.

COURIER'S MISSION STATEMENT

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



Courier is printed on 100% recyclable material



AD INDEX

★ New advertisers

Alaska Railroad Corporation.....15
alaskarailroad.com

American Music Theatre.....40
amtshows.com

Campbell County
Convention & Visitors Bureau.....25
visitgillettwright.com

Cheekwood Estate & Gardens.....8
cheekwood.org

★ Coos Bay-North Bend
Visitor & Convention Bureau45
oregonsadventurecoast.com

Delaware North Companies
Parks & Resorts, Inc.....23
niagarafallsstatepark.com

Delta Air Lines Back Cover
delta.com

Fairbanks, Alaska-Explore Fairbanks10
explorefairbanks.com

Graceland & Guest House at Graceland14
graceland.com

Hampton Inn & Suites Oceanfront.....11
hamptoninncoastfront.com

Harry & David.....47
harryanddavid.com

History Colorado21
historycolorado.org

Huntsville, Alabama
Convention & Visitors Bureau.....34
huntsville.org

Katarina Line-Incoming Croatia9
katarina-line.com

LaGrange-Troup County Chamber of
Commerce & Tourism Inside Front Cover
lagrangechamber.com

Maid of the Mist.....5
maidofthemist.com

Maryland Office of Tourism Development....43
visitmaryland.org/groups

Meet AC7
meetac.com

★ Natchitoches Parish
Tourist Commission.....35
natchitoches.net

★ NYC & Company19
nycgo.com

Outer Banks Visitors Bureau.....22
outerbanks.org

Patriots Point:
"Home of the USS Yorktown"31
patriotspoint.org

Ronald Reagan Presidential
Library and Museum.....29
reaganlibrary.com

Savannah
Riverboat Cruises Inside Back Cover
savannahriverboat.com

★ Smithsonian's National
Air and Space Museum39
airandspace.si.edu

Terra Lu Travel & Consult GmbH.....50
germany4groups.com

Texas de Brazil33
texasdebrazil.com

Travel Medford48
travelmedford.org

Tulalip Tribes/Quil Ceda Village.....3
tulalipresort.com

U.S. Space & Rocket Center36
spacecamp.com

Virginia Beach
Convention & Visitor Bureau41
visitviriniabeach.com/groupourt

Visit Anchorage24
anchorage.net

ESCAPE TO A DESTINATION OF PREMIUM LUXURY

Indulge in Washington's premier AAA Four-Diamond resort with eight restaurants, a luxurious spa and world-class shopping.



33 MILES NORTH OF SEATTLE
888.272.1111 | TULALIPCASINO.COM



**Bob Rouse**

Editor in Chief
101 Prosperous Place, Suite 350
Lexington, KY 40509 USA
+1.859.264.6548
bob.rouse@ntaservicesinc.com

FIFTY YEARS.

It was 50 years ago that I traveled with my family on a summertime swing “out West.” For three weeks, the five of us followed a route my dad had plotted during dark winter nights in Kentucky. We journeyed through the southern tier of western states, up the California coast, and back home along a more northerly path.

I lost my new cowboy hat in the Grand Canyon, met a touring Russian basketball team at the San Diego Zoo, heard firecrackers cackle in San Francisco’s Chinatown and marveled at Mount Rushmore.

I also went to two national parks in Utah that I have longed to see again ever since: Bryce and Zion. I must be a sucker for Bryce’s hoodoos, as I included them in a children’s story I wrote some years ago. And my memory of Zion is from a Super 8 movie, when my mom handed off the camera to one of us and gamboled down a riverside path.

I returned to those national parks—and three others in Utah—at the invitation of Jason Murray and Southwest Adventure Tours. Starting on page 26, you can read about my April trip. And at right, you can see that Zion path, 50 years later.

Fifty days ago, I was again out West, attending Contact in Tucson. There’s so much to share: a recap—including a wonderful essay from NTA member Brooke Hamlett—on pages



Zion National Park

12–13, announcements on page 8, insights on page 6 and extra photos on page 51.

I was all about national parks for a week, but Pat Henderson is *always* on parks patrol. Read his stories—plus a contribution from NTA staffer (and honeymooner) TJ Olmsted—starting on page 20.

Writers Kendall Fletcher and Kay Safari take us on extended journeys through two U.S. regions: Mid-Atlantic (Kendall) on pages 37–43 and Deep South (Kay) on pages 30–36.

The heart of NTA beats strong. See how members jumped into Engage to help a colleague who was searching for answers (page 10). And read former chair Mark Hoffmann’s touching tribute to an old friend, page 56.

Members will soon be making new memories at the next Travel Exchange. Head to page 16 to read “Get ready for TREX, Tex” and get the inside scoop on what’s new for ’19, including a Q&A on Sales Missions that will connect buyers and sellers in a new and meaningful way.

I’ll see you there in Fort Worth ... out West.

Read on,

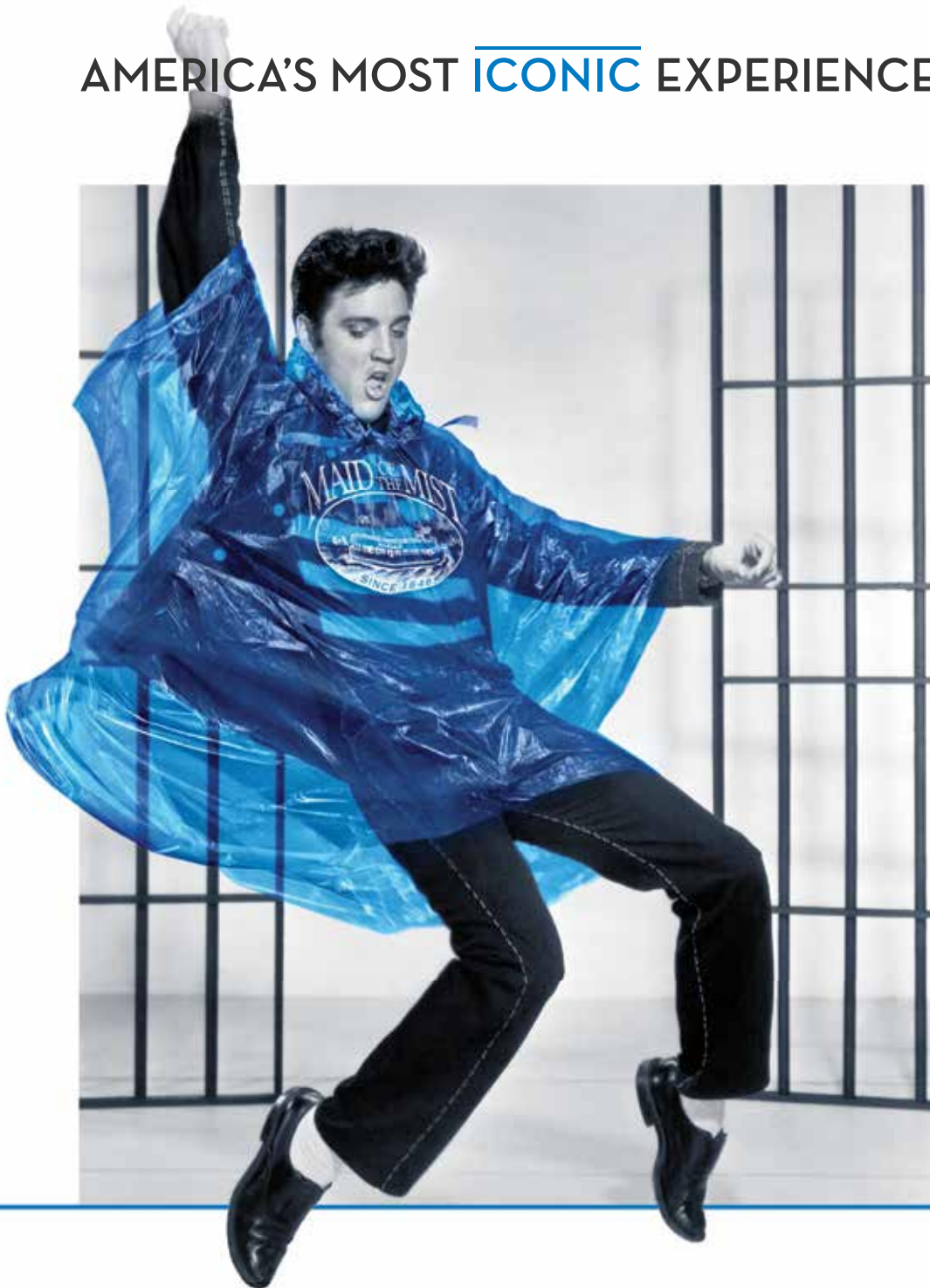
June/July Courier Destination Index

Alabama 32	New Jersey 43
Alberta 22–23	New York 14, 38, 54
British Columbia 44	North Carolina 15
California 15, 53	Ohio 14
Colorado 52, 54	Oregon 48
Delaware 40	Pennsylvania 15, 37
Florida 30, 52	Puerto Rico 24
France 54	South Carolina 35
Georgia 30	Switzerland 50
Germany 49	Texas 16–18, 21
Illinois 53	Utah 28–29
Louisiana 34	Virginia 14
Maryland 42	Washington 46
Massachusetts 15	Washington, D.C. 14
Mississippi 36	

On the cover:
Arches National Park’s
Delicate Arch
Photo: Bob Rouse



AMERICA'S MOST ICONIC EXPERIENCE



Boats depart only from Niagara Falls, USA



maidofthemist.com

716.284.8897

Tucson talk

CONTACT '19 was an incubator for ideas. Some of the best dialogue at the March event, held in Tucson, Arizona, arose during an all-attendee Power Hour session on the closing day. There, buyers and sellers addressed industry-wide issues that had arisen in earlier meetings. The statements below are a mix of comments made that day along with additional details provided to *Courier*.



Chris Babb

**The Group
Tour Company**

I offer myself to DMOs in the mid-Atlantic region to meet with their members and talk about how to work with tour operators. It's basic info about how we build our

product, what pricing structure we like to use with restaurants and attractions, contract terms for hotels and restaurants, benefits of net inclusive prices, etc. I have done this only a handful of times, but it has led to deeper partnership with those local DMOs who have invited me.

Laurie Lincoln, CTP

Main Street Experiences

Addressing tracking ...

A number of DMOs offer things like a personal greeting or goodie bags delivered to the hotel where the group is staying. It would be nice to have a place on the NTA website where we could look to see if a destination offers this kind of service. It would stimulate us to call the DMO and let them know we have a group coming their way, and they would then be able to track it.

Kevin Murphy, CTP

Open Roads Tour & Travel Solutions

Addressing tracking ...

Gatherings like Contact allow for more interaction between DMOs and tour operators, so tour operators can learn more about the needs of DMOs: how they are funded and how professionals who work for DMOs prove their worth and justify their budgets. Some tour operators treat DMOs like large-group travel

agents when that is simply unfair. It's a two-way street, with DMOs providing resources and tour operators providing tracking.



Betsy Painter

**Lowcountry Hotels
of Charleston**

Addressing buyers ...

With cities that are full of attractions, we can present the ones that we *think* you will like, but we are just guessing. You might say you want something

unique, so please tell us what kind of unique you are looking for: unique in food, unique in adventure or a look behind the scenes. If you give us some direction, we can provide the best info. That's what I'm looking for when I have my conversations with you. I don't want my destination to become stale to you.

Elaine Moulder

Brilliant Edventures

Addressing tour suppliers ...

When a person leaves your organization, please put an out-of-work reply on their email account and forward our emails to a live person. Often, we'll sign a contract, but then there's no one there for us.



Ashley Kingman

Travel Portland

Addressing buyers

concerned about restaurant recommendations from DMOs ...

I recommend that DMOs do an annual check-in with group-friendly restaurants to find

out what's new with the restaurant—updated menus, reservation policies, special offerings, behind-the-scenes experiences, etc. It's a nice excuse to reach out and say hello and let the restaurants know that I want to bring group business to their establishment. Also, I try once a year to eat at the restaurants I recommend. Great places can turn into terrible ones and vice versa.

NTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee

Chair

Paul Larsen

Ed-Ventures
pcl@ed-ventures.com

Vice Chair

Jim Warren, CTP

Anderson Vacations
jwarren@andersonvacations.ca

Secretary

Jorge Cazenave, CTP

Cazenave Argentina
jorge@cazenaveargentina.com

Immediate Past Chair

J. Chris Babb

The Group Tour Company
chris@grouptourcompany.com

DMO Director

Dave Nitkiewicz

Experience Grand Rapids
dnitkiewicz@experiencegr.com

Tour Supplier Director

Dan Flores

Maverick Aviation Group
dflores@maverickaviationgroup.com

Directors

Debra Asberry

Women Traveling Together
debra@women-traveling.com

Kelly Dean

Ottawa Tourism
kdean@ottawatourism.ca

Angela Harness, CTP

Tanger Outlets
angela.harness@tangeroutlets.com

Ashley Kingman

Travel Portland
ashley@travelportland.com

Cory Mace

North Central Group –
Hilton & Marriott Hotels
cmace@ncg-hotels.com

Fraser Neave, CTP

Wells Gray Tours
fraser@wellsgraytours.com

Chase Poffenberger

Academic Travel Abroad
cpoffenberger@academic-travel.com

Monique van Dijk-Seppola

Scandinavia Tours
monique@scandinaviatours.no

Jerry Varner

Making Memories Tours
jerry@makingmemoriestours.com

Christina Werner, CTP

Custom Holidays
christina@customholidaysonline.com

Director at Large

Lydia Fields

Delta Air Lines
lydia.fields@delta.com

OUR BOARDWALK

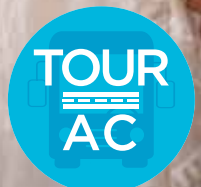
Your Story

A world of entertaining and exciting experiences awaits in Atlantic City. Up and down our world-famous Boardwalk, and throughout your entire Atlantic City stay, you'll experience the ultimate in tax-free shopping, award-winning dining for every taste, fun amusements and great local attractions. Atlantic City offers the perfect setting to experience an exciting getaway and create memories that will last a lifetime.

Atlantic City Expert Heather Colache is available at 609-449-7151 or hcolache@meetac.com to make sure you enjoy Atlantic City as it was meant to be experienced. Call today to book your Atlantic City Experience.



Meet AC received funding through a grant from the New Jersey Department of State, Division of Travel and Tourism.



TourAtlanticCity.com

Change at the top coming for NTA

During an emotional luncheon at NTA's Contact event in late March, association members learned they are losing one leader and gaining another. Pam Inman, CTP, announced she will step down from her role as NTA president at the end of this year.



Catherine Prather, CTP, and Pam Inman, CTP, following the big announcement at Contact.

"Beginning in January 2020, I am moving to something entrepreneurial in this hospitality and tourism space where I've been working in since the early '80s."

Inman said she also wants to spend time with her family, "not to mention lots more golfing and traveling."

Inman listed several priorities that were realized during her tenure, which began in 2014, including raising the association's visibility and strengthening its key events and online presence. She also expressed deep appreciation for the NTA staff and its leaders—past and present.

After the crowd gave Inman a long standing ovation, Board Chair Paul Larsen announced that Inman's successor has been chosen. "Pam informed the board of her plans in November, and following the work of our transition

task force, I'm more than pleased to announce that Executive Vice President Catherine Prather will take the reins in 2020," Larsen said.

Prather has been with NTA for 25 years, and she served as interim president in 2014.

The luncheon also included three other major announcements about the association's upcoming events:

- Improvements are on the way for Travel Exchange, starting this year in Fort Worth. Look for modifications to appointments and the addition of two new sessions to help buyers and sellers connect. (To read specifics, go to page 17.)
- Travel Exchange 2020 will be held in Reno, Nevada, from Nov. 15 to 19.
- Memphis, Tennessee, will be the site of Contact 2021 from March 17 to 20.



Dale Chihuly
Sapphire Star, 2010
© Chihuly Studio



CHIHULY AT CHEEKWOOD

APRIL 25 - NOVEMBER 1, 2020

Experience a historic estate surrounded by 55 acres of gardens and sculpture where art and nature intertwine in bursts of color and form.

BOOKING GROUP TOURS NOW

DAY & NIGHT TOUR EXPERIENCES AVAILABLE

Special rates available for groups of 15 or more.

1200 Forrest Park Drive, Nashville, TN 37205
tours@cheekwood.org | 615-353-6971 | cheekwood.org

Chihuly at Cheekwood
is funded in part by



Cheekwood is
funded in part by





Plan your 2019/2020 yacht cruise in Croatia!



Katarina Line is a leading DMC in Kvarner - Croatia and premier small ship cruise company. We offer weekly guaranteed departures from April to mid-October from the major tourist centers; Opatija, Split and Dubrovnik, with a fleet of more than 60 vessels in six different vessel categories. Our cruise or land itineraries give travellers the chance to explore the stunning natural environment and picturesque, quaint Mediterranean towns while hopping from one island to another. This unique way of travelling and exploring the coastal towns is one of the most popular and easiest way to experience the true Croatia. With our land & cruise programs travellers get the opportunity to explore coastal and continental Croatia as well as neighboring countries.

Croatia DELUXE Cruises



HR-AB-51-040009767

‘This is what NTA is for’

On Engage, NTA members support a colleague in need.

BY BOB ROUSE



Brian Tomaine

WHEN BRIAN Tomaine posted a candid appraisal of his fledgling business—and a plea for help—on Engage, NTA’s online community, he was guessing his colleagues might respond.

He guessed right.

Tomaine, the owner of Seldon, New York-based Bella Italia Tours, had taken the steps he believed were needed for his new business: research, incorporation, insurance, certification and website development. But he still needed one thing: customers.

“I feel like I’ve done everything right,” he wrote in his mid-April post. “People tell me the website looks good, and it gets hundreds of hits per week, so people are obviously looking. I think my pricing is in line with other operators



Theresa Nemetz



Tommy Harpster

offering similar products, and I think the itineraries are what people want.”

Tomaine speculated that a lack of reviews was to blame, and he closed his post by asking for advice from more experienced colleagues.

Within a few hours, Tomaine received words of encouragement from Sarna Rose, president of Poland Culinary Vacations.

“If you have the love and passion for [travel] and lots of patience and determination, you’ll make it!” Rose wrote, detailing her own challenges in selling foodie tours in Poland. “Be patient and build relationships within the industry, like with NTA, and over time your business will grow.”

Theresa Nemetz of Milwaukee Food & City Tours also responded, centering her advice on Tomaine’s website.

“Look at your Google Analytics ... you might see some trends and be able to figure out what to tweak on your website,” she wrote, suggesting that Tomaine might also add a more “Google-able” domain name. “People are more likely to Google something like, ‘guided tours to Italy,’ so maybe guidedtourstoitaly.com is more effective. You can purchase a domain like that and then just 401-direct it to your current site.”

When contacted by *Courier*, Nemetz said, “In recent years I’ve been focused on integrating technology to drive sales,

Be inspired by the light of the Aurora Borealis. Renew your energy under the Midnight Sun. Experience the warmth of Fairbanks—Alaska’s Golden Heart—and the gateway to Denali, Interior and Arctic Alaska.

 **FAIRBANKS** ALASKA

Call 1-877-551-1728 x3771 or visit explorefairbanks.com for free group tour information, itinerary assistance, visitor guides and maps.

so I wanted to share my observations about SEO, Google Analytics, etc. I've relied on the advice of mentors as I have built and grown my company, so it's only natural that I jump into the conversation."

Taunya Wolfe Finn, owner of Wolfe Adventures & Tours, suggested working with NTA operators. "Reach out to other TOs; they may have travelers that want to go to Italy ... and offer a commission to them—and to travel agents," she wrote, adding that Tomaine could attend NTA events as a seller and offer guaranteed departures to Italy to tour operators, who can resell the tour to their FIT clients and gain a commission.

Offers of help and support also came from other longtime NTA operators: Jay Smith, Mark Hoffmann and John McGlade.

Even Tomaine's direct competitors reached out.

"When I saw Brian's sincere appeal for help, I thought maybe I could help him," Tommy Harpster of Adventures to Tuscany told *Courier*. "It did cross my mind that I was reaching out to a competitor and offering specific details about our company's strategies, but I'm a Golden Rule-karma kinda guy—and I've been in Brian's shoes—so I wanted to help."

Harpster's advice included making the most of a marketing budget that, compared to the "big guys," is small.

"Develop your marketing and advertising plan and put it on paper," he wrote on Engage. "Pick one avenue, build that specific audience and be consistent with it!" Harpster also recommended specificity for tour product, advising Tomaine to identify a niche and provide customized amenities, activities and services.

"I joined NTA to give my operation a little more professionalism, validity and integrity, and in trying to help Brian, maybe we all prosper," he said. "I'm sure there will be the day that I'm the one asking for help."

Advice from another direct competitor focused on operations.

"Do not try to do it all yourself," wrote Aldo Caronia of Michelangelo International Travel. "Focus on selling ... and hire a local company to handle your contracts with suppliers and the operation of your tours. You may have the best tour in the world, but if you don't spend

at least 90% of your time selling it ... the business will never take off. Especially at the beginning, sales come first."

Asked why he would share his personal recipe for success with a competitor, Caronia said, "Brian needed help, and I saw myself in that situation when I started my own business. I believe that we are a community and we should support each other. This is what NTA is for."

For his part, Tomaine is overwhelmed by the flood of advice and support.

"I got so many great ideas, I haven't been able to digest them all yet. Some folks even reached out via telephone," he told *Courier*. "I will definitely put this advice to good use and will attend Travel Exchange in Fort Worth. This has really inspired me." ♦

To read the entire thread of advice for Tomaine, go to engage.ntaonline.com and under BROWSE at the top of the page, choose "Discussion Posts."

MYRTLE BEACH OCEANFRONT

TOP RANKED BY TRIPADVISOR.COM

Featuring 6 oceanfront pools (with hot tubs and heated pools), fitness center, golf and more. Spacious accommodations include 2-bedroom family suites with kitchenette, oceanfront master bedroom, and separate kids' bedroom with bunk beds and a queen-size bed.



OCEANFRONT RESORT

1801 South Ocean Boulevard, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
www.HamptonInnOceanfront.com or call 1-800-HAMPTON



TANGIBLE Tucson

BY BOB ROUSE



MARY BETH ROUSE

WHETHER IT WAS THE WARM SUNNY DAYS, the cool nights or the palpable NTA energy in the air, Tucson provided just the right touch for NTA members looking for warm friendships, cool ideas and energetic events. Attendees gave Contact '19 the highest rating ever, and if two-dimensional photos don't convey that sentiment, get yourself a prickly pear margarita, relax in a rooftop chair, and imagine that you're surrounded by talented colleagues in southern Arizona.



Contact '19 brings NTA members together to share information, ideas and smiles. These grins are courtesy of (left to right) Pam Inman (NTA president), Brittany Dykla (Brilliant Edventures), Keith Somers (Select Travel Service) and Jerry Varner (Making Memories Tours).



Paul Larsen (Ed-Ventures), center, contributes ideas during table discussions held in the fresh air of a rooftop patio at the Westward Look Wyndham Grand Resort and Spa.



A hidden talent for auctioneering comes into full view when Jerry Varner cajoles bidders during the Tom Jaffa Auction: Bidding for Bulldog. The event—with both live and online items—raised \$16,300 for NTA's Government Issues Fund.



Attendees enjoy a cool evening, fantastic food and great conversations during the Icebreaker at Tohono Chul Botanical Garden.



The Contact crowd rises to salute Catherine Prather after the announcement that the 25-year staffer would become NTA president in 2020.



Contact '20 is set for March 18–21 in Anchorage, Alaska, with buyer registration opening in late 2019. Suppliers and DMOs can attend through sponsorship: bit.ly/2DXHWBi.

Sideless and seamless

BY BROOKE HAMLETT

Full circle.

That's the phrase that best describes Contact 2019 in Tucson for me. You see, while I attended this year's Contact as a new tour operator member, I actually hosted NTA's Dawn Pettus and Katey Pease for their first scouting trip to Tucson back in 2016, when I worked for Visit Tucson. Now *Courier* has asked me to share my experience of moving from a DMO to "the other side."

First let me set the stage for you at my first Travel Exchange, back in my DMO days. The year was 2014. The place: Los Angeles. Pam Inman was soon to take the reins from the interim leader of NTA, Catherine Prather. (Fast forward to the change-of-leadership announcement at Contact 2019, and you have one of my full-circle moments!)

I had started my DMO job just a few weeks prior to the show. I'll be forever grateful to my Arizona city and state DMO colleagues for showing me the ropes. There is sense of teamwork that you develop with your state colleagues (in our state, at least, and probably in most). Over the next few years, I learned from not only them, but from DMO members from many other places as well.

Lesson No. 1 from the DMO side: Work together.

Truth be told, I was already coming from "the other side" at that 2014 TREX, having worked for an international receptive operator prior to landing at Visit Tucson. I could already empathize with operators' frustration with long hotel contracts. I could anticipate their requests for net rates, group dining

Brooke (second from right) and friends raise a glass.



menus and royalty-free photos. I had been in their shoes.

And I noticed that successful DMO members, even if they hadn't been on the other side, took the time to analyze their destination as an operator would and worked to find solutions based on that perspective, rather than just selling their destination.

Getting featured in a new itinerary takes more than just great scenery, hotels and attractions. For an operator to sell a destination, it must be appealing to specific end customers, and all the pieces that make a place group-friendly must come together. When it works, it's because DMOs, suppliers and operators function as partners. Nothing is one-sided.

Lesson No. 2 from my DMO days: Make partnerships.

Work together. Make partnerships. It's probably clear where I'm going with this. These lessons—along with too many others to fully explore here—are the same from the operator side. At Contact this year, conversation after conversation cemented this for me. Operators need to work together just as much as DMOs do in order to create best practices, advance with industry trends and raise the waters for all ships.

And they can't do it alone. Operators need DMOs and suppliers as partners.

After all, without new places and products for our tours, what would we have to sell our travelers?

My takeaway from *all* sides is that we work together for a common goal: to create the best tours possible so that our companies can flourish and our clients can enjoy the benefits of travel. I don't think that goal changes, no matter what side you are on.

And I'd like to make a final suggestion. What if, instead of referring to "sides," we saw ourselves as part of a circle—all connected to each other in a continuous loop of knowledge and partnership?

I've been lucky enough to experience most of the circle firsthand—from operator, to DMO, to hotel and back to operator. And I've been lucky enough to do it in an organization that already embraces this idea with its tagline, "Together. We go further."

The next time someone asks me, "What's it like to be on the other side?" I'm going to say that I've had the pleasure of simply moving to another part of the NTA circle. ☺

Brooke Hamlett is senior director of tour operations for Pleasurebent Tours in Tucson. You can email her at brooke@pleasurebenttours.com.



COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Girl power

Throughout its collection of national historical sites, the U.S. National Park Service highlights the contributions of women to many aspects of America life. The following sites focus on the significant roles in political and social movements of a specific group of women:



Maggie L. Walker National Historic Site
Richmond, Virginia

During a visit to Walker's home, groups can learn more about this staunch supporter of equal rights and opportunities for African Americans and women. Walker also was a prominent businesswoman, community activist and newspaper editor. nps.gov/mawa



Harriet Tubman National Historical Park
Auburn, New York

Dedicated to the abolitionist and Underground Railroad pioneer, the 32-acre campus in central New York includes Tubman's residence, a visitors center, Thompson Memorial African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church and the Tubman Home for the Aged. nps.gov/hart



First Ladies National Historic Site
Canton, Ohio

Visitors can tour the home of First Lady Ida Saxton McKinley, which contains exhibits featuring the belongings of all the first ladies. The adjacent City National Bank building, also part of the site, houses the National First Ladies' Library and Research Center. nps.gov/fila

Mary McLeod Bethune Council House
National Historic Site

Washington, D.C.

In addition to being Bethune's last home in the nation's capital, the historical Council House served as the original headquarters of the National Council of Negro Women. The organization developed programs that advanced the interests of African-American women. nps.gov/mamc



Eleanor Roosevelt National Historic Site

Hyde Park, New York

This attraction sheds light on the first lady's many accomplishments, such as serving as American ambassador to the United Nations, writing a popular newspaper column, and making racial and women's issues a big part of her husband's presidency. nps.gov/elro



Other National Park Service sites pertaining to the influential role women played in the development of American society include the Belmont-Paul Women's Equality National Monument in Washington, D.C., and the Women's Rights National Historical Park in Seneca Falls, New York.

On the trail of four legendary authors

While groups are very accustomed to visiting national parks that highlight the natural world—your Yellowstones, Acadias and Yosemite—the literary world is also represented in the more than 400 sites managed by the U.S. National Park Service. The following four historical homes, where some of America’s most famous authors lived and worked, are popular stops for literary buffs:

Longfellow House Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site Cambridge, Massachusetts

One of the most influential American poets of the 19th century, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow made Cambridge his home for more than 45 years. In addition to seeing the personal effects of the renowned writer, groups also can learn about the period from July 1775 to April 1776, when Gen. George Washington and his soldiers used the house as their headquarters during the Siege of Boston. nps.gov/long

Eugene O’Neill Home National Historic Site Danville, California

Within the walls of his two-story house in northern California, O’Neill wrote some of his most famous plays, including “A Long Day’s Journey Into Night” and “The Iceman Cometh.” Shuttles take visitors from downtown Danville to the site, where docent-led tours showcasing the house museum and grounds are conducted four days a week (reservations are required). nps.gov/euon

Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site Flat Rock, North Carolina

This 20th-century Pulitzer Prize-winning author’s stories depict the lives of regular Americans. A number of ranger-led programs at the home where he lived from 1945 until his death in 1967 are available, and the attraction hosts many special exhibitions and events, such as the Sandberg Folk Music Festival (May) and Sandberg Summer Stage (July and August). nps.gov/carl

Edgar Allan Poe Home National Historic Site Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The man who captivated generations of readers with tales such as “The Raven,” “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” and “The Tell-Tale Heart,” lived in this house on the north side of Philadelphia. During his time in the City of Brotherly Love, the author crafted 31 stories, and guests can learn more as part of docent-led or self-guided tours of the home, which includes Poe’s reading room. nps.gov/edal

To see more stories about national parks, turn to pages 20–28. 📍



NPS PHOTO/KATE HANSON PLUS

Study at Longfellow House Washington’s Headquarters National Historic Site

YOUR TICKET

To Bigger Commissions

We know Alaska is BIG and filled with incredible things to see and do. Provide your groups with a unique Alaska adventure, one that’s only available with the iconic Alaska Railroad. Earn greater commissions for groups of 15 or more and complimentary seating for your group leader.

Contact GroupReservations@akrr.com or call 800.895.7245.

Become an Alaska Railroad Travel Expert at AlaskaRailroad.com/GroupTravel

ALASKA

RAILROAD

An advertisement for the Alaska Railroad. It features a couple, a man and a woman, standing on a train car, looking out at a scenic view of mountains and a lake. The text is overlaid on the image.



NAIM HASAN

Get ready for TRES, Tex

NTA's annual gathering is a miraculous mashup of business development and relationship building. And this year, when delegates saddle up and ride into Fort Worth, Dec. 8-12, they'll welcome new ideas and old friends (plus new friends with even *newer* ideas).

It's a proud city that's eager to host an association that prides itself on being packaged travel's voice of experience—with a focus on the future.

So digest what's here, stay tuned to *Tuesday* and NTAtravelexchange.com ... and break in your boots 'cause we're going to Texas!

Energized by innovation

Every Travel Exchange brings fresh opportunities: new members attend, profitable markets emerge and experts offer innovative solutions. But at TRES '19 in Fort Worth, NTA members will see more of what made Milwaukee famous (at least in the association's collective mind).

Just as a bright and open appointment floor was the talk of the travel industry following TRES '18, it'll be new ways of bringing buyers and sellers together that will create a buzz about the 2019 version of Travel Exchange. Here's what's new for Fort Worth:

- Buyers will be seated all week, making it easier for them to do business—and easier for sellers to find them.
- All DMO appointments—the seven-minute prescheduled ones, anyway—will take place on Monday.
- On Tuesday, buyers are appointment-free, so sellers can connect with them in seminars and on the floor—during lunch and booth-browsing.
- Plus, buyers will be able to participate in education seminars that day.



NORMAND HUBERDEAU

Join us in thanking our Travel Exchange '19 Sponsors!

PLATINUM



Best Western
Hotels & Resorts
Registration Bags



Broadway Inbound
Monday Luncheon



Delta Air Lines
Official NTA Airline



Norwegian Cruise Line
Wednesday Luncheon,
China Inbound
Operator Dinner and
Profile Form Notebook



NYC & Company
Monday Luncheon



Pinstripes
Monday Night Party



Visit Fort Worth
Host City, Sightseeing
Tours and Icebreaker

GOLD



Aon Affinity
Insurance Services
Happy Hour and
Charging Lounge



Las Vegas Convention
& Visitors Authority
Tourism Rocks



Reno Tahoe
Thursday Luncheon



Roadrunner Charters
An Official NTA
Motorcoach
Transportation
Provider for Travel
Exchange '19



Visit Anchorage
Thursday Luncheon

SILVER



Courier Magazine
Wednesday Luncheon
and Distinguished
Dozen Awards



Discover Klamath VCB
On-site Guide



Ed-Ventures
Sponsor Appreciation
Reception, Seminar
and On-site Guide



Hilmar Cheese
Company Visitor
Center
Happy Hour:
Cheese sponsor



La Grande Roue de Montréal
Hotel Key Cards



Metro West Tourism
& Visitors Bureau
Profile Form Notebook
Appointment Sheets



Ottawa Tourism
Refreshments:
Coffee and Tea



Plimoth Plantation,
Mayflower II &
Plimoth Grist Mill
FTA Breakfast



Ronald Reagan
Presidential Library
& Museum
TREXpress Daily
and Refreshments



Sports Leisure
Vacations
Board of Directors
and Past Presidents/
Chairs Dinner



Sweet Home Alabama
Board of Directors
and Past Presidents/
Chairs Dinner

- There are two new ways for buyers and sellers to connect on Tuesday:
 - **Sales Missions** are coordinated 15-minute presentations made by several DMOs (read on to learn more).
 - **Best Pitch** is a 90-minute session when National Tourism Office reps will each give a five-minute talk to an audience of 20-plus buyers.
- Tuesday's mingle-friendly Lunch in the Hall will give sellers a chance to follow up with buyers, and it gives buyers a chance to browse sponsor booths.
- With NTA buyers as judges, NTA will award the first-ever TREXies, honoring outstanding sponsor booths in four categories:
 - Best giveaways—appeal of branded items distributed at booth
 - Most interactive—effectiveness of staff, materials, displays, giveaways, etc.
 - Tastiest treat—Hits. The. Spot. (*All refreshments must be approved by NTA.*)
 - Best of show—overall appearance, effectiveness and welcoming setting

Your Sales Mission (should you choose to accept)

The introduction of Sales Missions on Tuesday at Travel Exchange raises the opportunity for more buyers and sellers to connect in business-building ways outside of the appointment booth. It also raises a few questions—and that's only natural, right? While the complete story is still being written, we already know many of the answers:

When do Sales Missions take place?

There will be two 60-minute sessions on Tuesday morning; each hour is divided into three presentations.

How is a Sales Mission formed?

State and provincial DMOs lead the Sales Mission for their state or province, and they can invite other DMOs (and suppliers) to participate. Notify NTA's Dawn Pettus if you will lead your Sales Mission: dawn.pettus@ntastaff.com.



Who does the talking?

Participants in each Sales Mission can decide how to make the most of their 15-minute presentation.

Who does the listening?

Every Sales Mission will have an anticipated audience of at least six buyers (based on attendance figures from TREX '18).

What if my state/provincial DMO isn't attending?

NTA will make accommodations for you ... but ask those DMOs to be there. State/province-led groups will have an advantage.

How do buyers know which Sales Mission to attend?

Buyers can request specific Sales Missions when the appointment system opens. Those requests will be processed in the order of each buyer's registration date.

How do you know buyers will attend Sales Missions?

Two reasons: Attendance is part of the requirement for buyers' rebates ... and it'll be a great way to learn about packaging multiple destinations.

Anything else?

Why, yes! The Sales Mission leaders can invite tour suppliers to join the mission. You can distribute any type of collateral during a Sales Mission. And afterwards, DMOs and buyers can arrange follow-up meetings.

To learn more about Sales Missions—and to get the scoop on the Best Pitch session for international DMOs, go to NTAtravelexchange.com/about/whats-new.

Why register early?

Buyers: You get to be closer to the front of the line to pick which Sales Missions you attend. You'll also get first crack at pre-TREX Fam tours.

Sellers: Super Saver rates expire June 26, so register now to save \$400. Also, you'll get a higher priority for appointment requests, sightseeing tours and your choice of sponsorships.

DMOs: To make sure you get in the mix for the new Tuesday connections—and get in on Super Saver rates—sign up by June 26.

All members: Early registration helps you get your first choice of hotel accommodations, and it can be the difference between getting a seat on a sightseeing tour—and missing out.

Worth checking out

While details of the sightseeing tours weren't finalized by press time, we can whet your appetite for Fort Worth by revealing the themes of eight different excursions. These tours, sponsored by Visit Fort Worth, take place Sunday morning, Dec. 8. Here's what sightseers can do:

- Visit a working ranch
- Dive into the city's arts and architecture
- Learn about Texas history during the U.S. Civil War and the cattle drive era
- Enjoy a (half) day at the ball park
- Meet the tastemakers at local breweries and distilleries
- Saddle up for what's new at the stockyards (two options for this Western experience)
- Go behind the scenes at the National Cutting Horse Association World Championship



VISIT FORT WORTH

In addition to sightseeing tours, our host city is also offering pre-event Fam tours. On Saturday, Dec. 7, one full-day program will take participants north to Denton and the Texas horse country, and another daylong departure will head south to Magnolia Market in Waco.

Buyers can also choose among three pre-TREX multi-day Fam tours: West Texas, East Texas and Dallas.

Watch your email and *Tuesday* newsletter for detailed descriptions—plus the exact day we'll ring the starting bell for sign-ups.

Don't Kid yourself

NTA will base its operations in Sundance Square, a large shopping-dining-entertainment district that includes the convention center and Travel Exchange host hotels.

"I encourage delegates to spend dine-around nights in Sundance Square," says Estela Martinez-Stuart, director of tourism for Visit Fort Worth. "And everyone can do some holiday shopping at stores that are close by or just a trolley ride away."

The downtown area is named for the Sundance Kid, who, along with Butch Cassidy and the Hole in the Wall Gang, prowled the Fort Worth streets and saloons in 1900.

"They were there not to rob banks, but to enjoy the town," says Martinez-Stuart. "They had their photo taken here, and it was placed in the photographer's window. When a lawman recognized one of the gang members, they all had to hightail it out of Texas."

While those outlaw days are long gone, Martinez-Stuart says the city delights in its past. "We invite you to enjoy Fort Worth—as long as you're well-behaved." 🍷



Team Texas
Refreshments:
Soft Drinks



Tour Colorado
Refreshments



Travel Oregon
Refreshments and
On-site Guide



Travel Portland
Refreshments and
On-site Guide



Washington
Travel Alliance
Mobile App and
Refreshments

BRONZE



CroisiEurope Cruises
All-member
Power Hour



The Group Tour
Company
Government Relations
Breakfast Bistro



Louisville Convention
& Visitors Bureau
Profile Form Notebook



Ocean City, MD CVB
Profile Form Notebook
and TREXpress Daily



U.S. Space & Rocket
Center, Home of
Space Camp
Profile Form Notebook



Visit Springfield
Digital E-blast

Interested in adding your name to this list?

Email Laura McFadden at
sponsor@ntastaff.com
or visit NTAtravelexchange.com/sponsor





*Famous
Original*

NEW YORK CITY



WELCOMES YOU. ALWAYS.

GET GOING AT
NYCGO.COM

NYC
The Official Guide

Mission statement

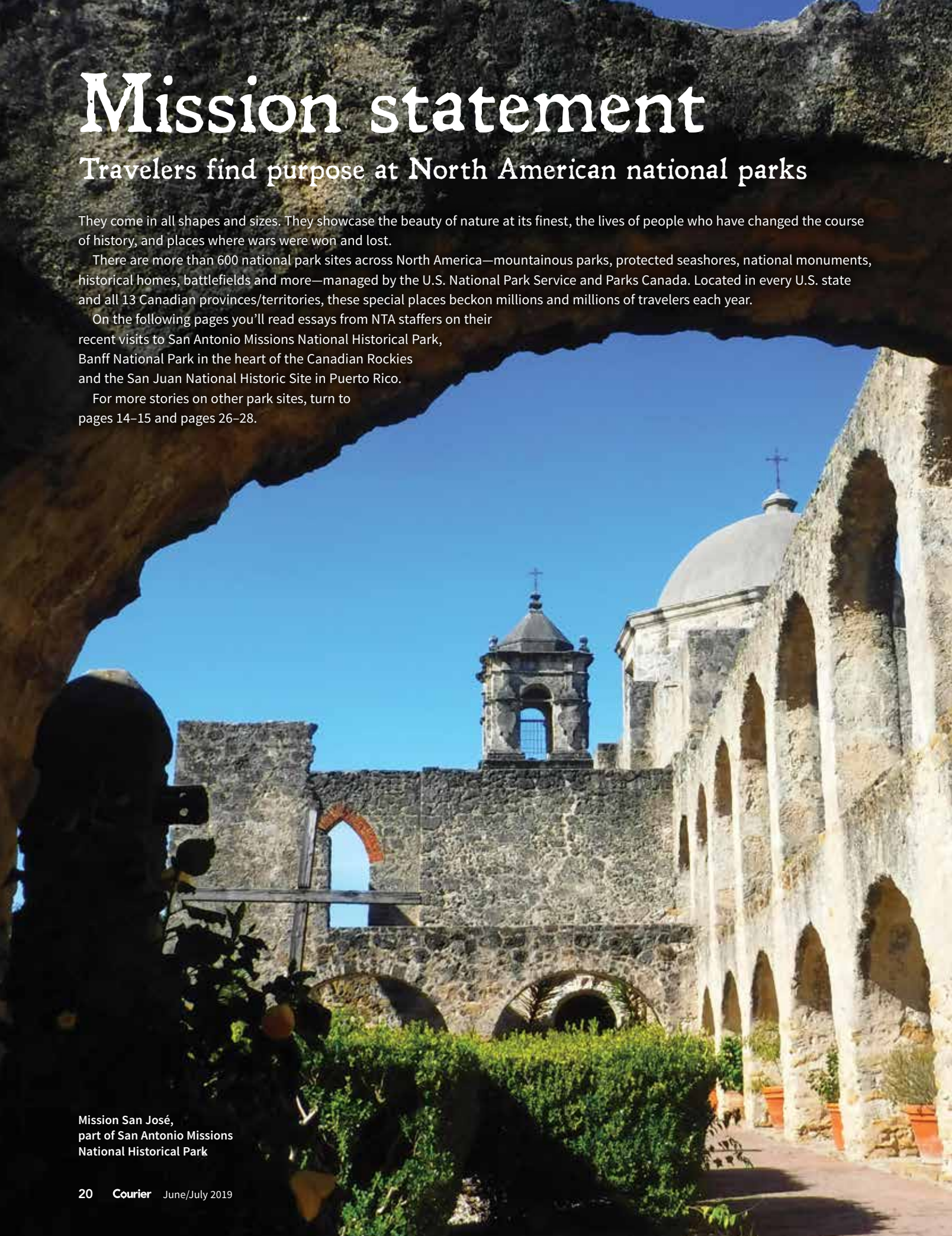
Travelers find purpose at North American national parks

They come in all shapes and sizes. They showcase the beauty of nature at its finest, the lives of people who have changed the course of history, and places where wars were won and lost.

There are more than 600 national park sites across North America—mountainous parks, protected seashores, national monuments, historical homes, battlefields and more—managed by the U.S. National Park Service and Parks Canada. Located in every U.S. state and all 13 Canadian provinces/territories, these special places beckon millions and millions of travelers each year.

On the following pages you'll read essays from NTA staffers on their recent visits to San Antonio Missions National Historical Park, Banff National Park in the heart of the Canadian Rockies and the San Juan National Historic Site in Puerto Rico.

For more stories on other park sites, turn to pages 14–15 and pages 26–28.



Mission San José,
part of San Antonio Missions
National Historical Park

Four churches, two wheels BY PAT HENDERSON

During my most recent trip to San Antonio, I spent a full day exploring the city's legendary missions. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage site and managed by the U.S. National Park Service, the four attractions stand as a reminder to the spirit of the Spaniards, who centralized their missionary efforts in Texas around the sites in San Antonio in the early 1700s.

The four churches—Mission Concepción, Mission San José, Mission San Juan Capistrano and Mission Espada—are spread along a 10-mile corridor beginning near downtown San Antonio and stretching south into the countryside. In late 2013, the city added a network of hiking, biking and paddling trails to connect the River Walk with the missions, and I chose a bicycle as my mode of transportation on that sunshiny December day.

The not-too-hilly, well-paved pathways allowed me to get good exercise and enjoy some great sights. The missions are a diverse group. Concepción and San José are home to larger, more intact buildings and stately churches, while Capistrano and Espada beckon with more rustic spaces and quaint country churches. I was fascinated by the attention the Spanish missionaries paid to not only the architectural details of the buildings, but also to the layout of grounds as they set up what really were minicommunities.

Although I didn't take time for them, ranger-led programs are available at all four sites. Additionally, each of the sites is home to an active Catholic parish and a regular worshipping congregation. The next time I visit San Antonio, catching a service at one of these historical sites is on my list.

NOTE: The fifth, and best known, mission in San Antonio, the Alamo, is not part of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park.



Ancestral Adobe • Historic Homes • Heritage Gardens • Beautiful Colorado



HISTORY COLORADO
Community Museums

Call today to schedule your tour!
719-583-0453 • h-co.org/museums



Reflections on a honeymoon at Banff/Lake Louise

BY TJ OLMSTED

“Are you going to ski?” and “What are you going to do?”

Those were the two most common questions I received when mentioning Banff, Alberta, as the honeymoon destination for me and my wife, Amanda. While there area is a hotbed of activity in the summer, my friends and family weren’t as sure what there was to do during shoulder season in Banff. Turns out, quite a bit! So much, in fact, that Amanda and I didn’t even have time to hit the slopes.

Travel around the area mandates vehicular transportation, and while car and bus rides can sometimes get sleepy, you’ll never have to worry about a boring landscape in Banff. “Scenic” doesn’t begin to adequately describe the majesty of the Canadian Rockies, and a simple drive around Banff National Park is breathtaking.

But don’t rush. With numerous roadside pull-offs, we wanted to stop and take pictures every few feet!

Located only 10 minutes away from the Banff city center, the Vermillion Lakes were a highlight of our trip. With the ice thawing, the water was so clear you could catch a perfect reflection of the mountains on the water’s surface. The paths surrounding the lakes are perfect for a daytime stroll, and with the promise of spring and a bit of luck, you can spot megafauna making their way to the water.

Hiking is available at higher elevations, too. Johnston Canyon is one of the more popular options in Banff, and the catwalks through the canyon allow a steady stream of visitors—especially in the summer—to reach their final destination, the Upper Falls.

TJ and Amanda at Johnston Canyon

Three National Parks One Incredible Destination



Fort Raleigh National Historic Site



Wright Brothers National Memorial



Cape Hatteras National Seashore

For group adventures, contact Lorrie Love;
love@outerbanks.org, or call 877-629-4386

The Outer Banks[®]
OF NORTH CAROLINA
AmericasFirstBeach.com

Amanda and I, along with our small group led by Discover Banff Tours, had a wonderful experience. By visiting in April and arriving early (8:30), we had Johnston Canyon almost to ourselves and were able to enjoy a lovely morning hike. Just remember to bring crampons, because the paths can be icy that time of year, and it's 1.5 kilometers to the Upper Falls. Your reward: a breathtaking waterfall that is still largely frozen, even in April.

Hiking not your jam? Take a drive 45 minutes north to Lake Louise. Known for its glacier-fed body of water and the beautiful Chateau Lake Louise, you can't go wrong spending an afternoon walking around the Chateau and getting a bite to eat. Outside, the lake was still completely frozen, and we couldn't pass up the opportunity to walk on the ice. One gentleman even rode his mountain bike across the frozen surface! It is impossible to put into words the feeling of standing on an ancient lake surrounded by towering mountains and viewing a glacier off in the distance.



TJ OLIMSTED

Vermillion Lakes

Beyond Banff and Lake Louise, visits to Kootenay National Park for snowshoeing, Canmore for dogsledding and Cochrane to see the Yamnuska Wolfdog Sanctuary rounded out our unforgettable honeymoon in the area.

Email Ryan Elliott of Banff and Lake Louise Tourism at relliott@banfflakelouise.com for more information and ideas.

TJ Olmsted, who has been with NTA since 2013, serves as an account executive for the association.

DISCOVER
NIAGARA FALLS STATE PARK

up to
35% OFF

NIAGARA FALLS

ONE PASS, FIVE ATTRACTIONS AND ENDLESS EXCITEMENT.

See all the Falls has to offer, and save big when you purchase a Niagara Falls USA Discovery Pass. It's your ultimate ticket for popular attractions such as the Maid of the Mist, Cave of the Winds, Aquarium of Niagara, and more. To purchase visit:

NiagaraFallsStatePark.com



Castillo San Cristóbal

PAT HENDERSON

A San Juan-derful site BY PAT HENDERSON

In early May, I made my first trip to Puerto Rico to participate in the Tourism Cares for Puerto Rico event. Before the educational sessions and work project got underway, NTA's Kami Risk and I had a chance to explore the San Juan National Historic Site, which is the only U.S. National Park Service-managed site on the island.

This beautiful park, located in historical Old San Juan, includes two fortresses that overlook the Atlantic Ocean: Castilla San Felipe del Morro and Castillo San Cristóbal. It is an easy, and pretty, 1.2-mile walk along the coast between the two sites.

El Morro, a six-level structure guarding the entry to San Juan Bay, is one of the largest Spanish forts you'll find in the Caribbean. The elaborate fortification, which dates back to 1539, helped locals monitor any invading warships and unfamiliar vessels that approached the city during more contentious times.

Kami and I particularly enjoyed wandering around Castillo San Cristóbal. Military personnel who called this sprawling series of structures along the eastern edge of the walled city home kept watch for enemies who sought to attack by land. The fortress is a photographer's dream, as it provides sweeping views of the harbor, the ocean, the back bay and the winding cobblestone streets of Old San Juan.

After exploring San Cristóbal, we sampled another part of the city's historical legacy by ordering piña coladas at nearby Barrachina Restaurant, which stakes its claim as being the birthplace of the tasty rum drink.

To learn more, reach out to Jorge Pardo of San Juan-based Vámonos Tours at jorge@vamonostours.com.

THE BEST OF ALASKA ALL IN ONE PLACE



📍 Eklutna Lake

 VISIT
anchorage
ALASKA
VisitAnchorage.net

U.S. National Park Service update: New processes and fees set to take effect Oct. 1



This April, the U.S. National Park Service sent out a fact sheet detailing upcoming changes to commercial use authorization requirements for road-based commercial-use tour operators. The information was compiled at the request of a group of nine travel associations that NTA brought together for advocacy regarding park-related matters.

Below are key points addressed in the fact sheet regarding the new requirements, which are slated to go into effect Oct. 1. To see the full version of this fact sheet, which contains a link to an ever-expanding Q&A page and to a May 6 webinar, go to nps.gov/aboutus/commercial-use-authorizations.htm.

- ▶ A commercial use authorization issued by the National Park Service allows individuals or companies to conduct commercial activities and provide services within a national park. "Road-based commercial tours" apply to itineraries that a company has packaged and sold.
- ▶ The responsibility for obtaining a road-based commercial tour CUA will fall on the company that packaged and sold the tour, and a chartered motorcoach company must acquire a CUA if it also packages and sells tours to consumers or a foreign tour operator.
- ▶ As part of the standardization process, road-based commercial tour operators will be required to obtain a CUA for each NPS unit in which they operate, pay required CUA fees and submit annual CUA reports after each CUA operating season.
- ▶ An annual non-refundable CUA fee of \$300 will be required for *each park* for which the commercial tour operator applies. And, beginning Oct. 1, road-based commercial tour operators will pay a \$5 per passenger entrance fee based upon the new rates in parks that charge entrance fees.
- ▶ NPS is creating an online centralized system, set to go into effect October 2019, for commercial tour operators to submit one CUA application for all of the parks in which they wish to operate. ➡

VISIT GILLETTE W Y O M I N G

GILLETTE BREWING CO. & GONE POSTAL PIZZERIA



LOCAL CRAFT BREWERY

BIG LOST MEADERY & BREWERY



WYOMING'S FIRST MEADERY

THE PRIME RIB RESTAURANT



LARGEST WINE CELLAR IN WY

PIZZA CARRELLO



"BEST PIZZA IN WY"
- TIME.COM & MONEY MAGAZINE

A PERFECT STOP FOR THOSE **HUNGRY** FOR SOMETHING **DIFFERENT.**

SEE ALL OUR DINING OPTIONS,
TOUR INFO AND MORE AT

VISITGILLETTE.COM

A high and mighty five

STORY AND PHOTOS
BY BOB ROUSE

SELECTIVE EROSION.

The Natural Arch and Bridge Society says an arch is formed over millions of years “by the natural, selective erosion of rock,” and I can relate. As a writer, “selective erosion” resonates. For example, this story started with 3,137 words, then I whittled out the ones that needed to go. And I did it in less than a million years.

But the selective erosion of Utah’s sandstone and other sedimentary rock that I saw in Utah’s “Mighty Five” national parks—in the form of mesas, arches, canyons, bridges ... even hoodoos and goblins—put my wordsmithing to the test.

I joined a Southwest Adventure Tours’ excursion at the end of April, and eight of us embarked on a six-day tour that took us to five national parks and several state parks in southern

Utah. We explored nature the way I prefer, spending every night in a comfortable hotel and greeting each morning with a loaded breakfast buffet.

Our days were filled with one jaw-dropping scene after another. Vanning from park to park, we were driven by our guide, Phil Douglass, a 32-year veteran of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources. When Phil talked, I listened.

And while I’m no expert in geology and I lack Phil’s knowledge of the state’s flora and fauna, I *am* an expert on how I felt whenever I turned a corner to see more of Utah’s outrageous rock formations.

Every day I was moved to write down my impressions. Twice I even committed poetry. I’ll spare you the poems, but I will share my photos, thoughts and feelings from this fantastic experience.



Canyonlands National Park

I learned a lesson at Mesa Arch: When a highlighted feature in a park requires a walk or hike from the parking area, each step on the trail adds to the sense of anticipation.

I also learned that positioning your companions or yourself in a prime photo-op spot requires patience. You have to wait your turn to snap a family pic or a selfie. And really, you might as well reset your brain: Rather than lose your patience, latch onto the happiness in the smiles of others.

Moab, Utah

At 7 a.m., Moab is moving. Groups of fleece-clad hikers—young and old, fit and ... me—gather up and board vans. Skateboarders and cyclists flash by. A school bus lumbers by, a big yellow reminder that this is a real-life town, too. Breakfast cafés see a steady exchange of diners. Delivery trucks make their rounds up and down Main Street. It might be early in Moab, but this town is moving.

Arches National Park

As we entered the park, the van was quiet. It wasn't because of the early hour, as we had been chatty on the drive from town. But that talk changed to awed silence when we cruised past soaring sculpted walls, some bulbous and some sheared—all awe-inspiring.

The 1.5-mile hike to Delicate Arch made me mindful of my own delicate condition (age and weight). The hike requires real effort, but it's rewarding. Completing a difficult hike—and enjoying the view at the end—is more than sightseeing. It's more than bucket-listing. It's prevailing.

On Monday, when we drove for half the day before hiking a bit, my step-counter watch buzzed at 10,000 just before I turned in for the night. On Tuesday, Delicate Arch day, I hit 10,000 steps by 10:30 a.m.

I chatted with Phil as I began my descent. "I don't believe there should be roads everywhere," he said. "There are some places you want to see that you should work for."

And then I met a marvelous, friendly Utahan who welcomed me to her state and asked me where I came from. After I told her, we discussed the horse-dotted fields of my Kentucky home. "It's so beautiful," she said. I replied with something I say often: "Every place has a story." Her comeback was, "Yup, that's why you've got to visit them all."

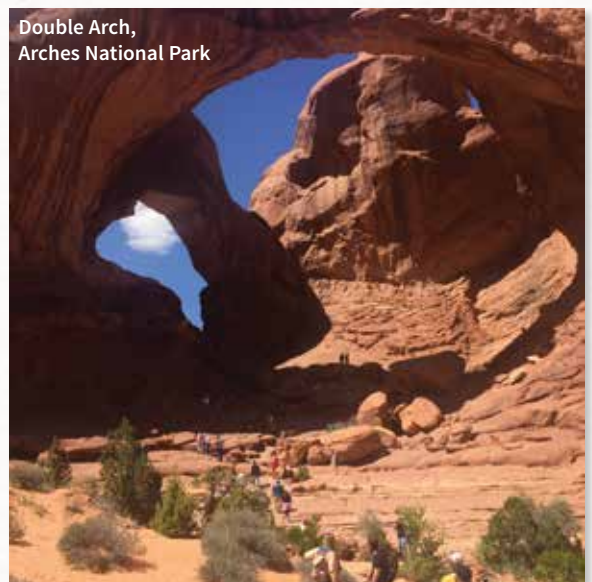
Goblin Valley State Park

These wacky sandstone statuettes, sculpted by wind and water, are like dribble castles I used to make on a Florida beach.

Wandering among the goblins, I felt completely alone ... and I loved it. I walked on firm, dusty red ground where there were no footprints. Although I knew other people had been there, and their tracks were washed clean by rain or blown away by wind—as my footprints would soon be—I couldn't help feeling like I was the first human to walk on that surface.



Mesa Arch,
Canyonlands National Park



Double Arch,
Arches National Park



Goblin Valley State Park



Capitol Reef National Park

Capitol Reef National Park

We took two hikes. One was an easy, downhill stroll through a dry creek bed that's surrounded by soaring canyon walls. Seeing chunks of rock at the base of a wall makes the effect of gravity obvious here: Huge sheafs, loosened by water and wind erosion, fell off a decade ago—or maybe a millennia. The second, to Hendricks Bridge, was more rigorous. It wasn't the length of the hike, but what Miley Cyrus sang about: "It's the climb." I had to summon the old runner in me to keep putting one foot in front of the other, and I reveled in crossing the finish line.

When we drove away from Capitol Reef the next day, we encountered an early morning cattle drive, complete with four cowboys and two dogs. We were in high country and drove past aspens embedded in deep, April snow. And on Hell's Backbone, a ridge just wide enough for Route 12, the views (and the drop-offs) were breathtaking.



Hoodoos, Bryce Canyon National Park

Bryce Canyon National Park

Victoria's Garden is a tale of two trails. The downhill walk was my introduction to hoodoos—incredible rock spires and pillars—and each vantage point was better than the last. The hike back up is strenuous, though. I suggest that you gauge your ability to return up the trail as you're heading down. Even if you walk downhill for only five or 10 minutes, you'll see some spectacular formations, and your uphill climb will be tolerable.

Shuttles—rather than cars or buses—take you to trailheads. We did use our van to get to Sunrise Point early in the morning, though. And as marvelous as the eastern sky was, when I turned my back to it, I saw the early sun cast a magical light on the colony of hoodoos.

Zion National Park

When we hiked Riverside Walk, the roaring waters of a raging Virgin River added to a symphony of busy park sounds: birds calling, mothers calling and footsteps shuffling down the sand-dusted sidewalk. I paused from time to time: Here to stare at a soaring red cliff in the same way a Midwestern kid would behold a New York City skyscraper. And there to catch some shade and savor a super-cool breeze coming off the snow-fed river. Many people, many sounds ... and unforgettable sights.



Virgin River, Zion National Park

The weather we experienced was ideal: low 70s every day except in Zion, where temperatures approached 80. If I return to Utah's Mighty Five parks, I might read up on geology beforehand and learn more about selective erosion.

Or heck, maybe I'll take a creative writing class and get better at whittling words.

To learn more about the Mighty 5 package offered by Southwest Adventure Tours, email Jason Murray at jason@southwestadventuretours.com or visit southwestadventuretours.com. ☺

Reagan Library enlightens visitors in a world of ways

The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California, is, at its heart, a museum dedicated to the life and times of Ronald Reagan, who served as the 40th president of the United States from 1981 to 1989.

Tour groups immerse themselves in Reagan's path to the White House, learn about his eight years in office, and discover how he spent his post-presidential years. But the Reagan Library strives to be more than just a memorial to the late president. It is also a community resource with revolving world-class exhibitions, family-friendly events and abundant public programming.

And where else in California can visitors walk onboard an actual Air Force One aircraft that flew seven U.S. presidents, touch an authentic piece of the Berlin Wall or lay a hand on a real steel beam recovered from the World Trade Center after 9/11?

Two or three times each year the Reagan Library puts on special exhibitions to encourage people to visit its museum. This summer, through Sept. 8, the Reagan Library will host "The World of da Vinci," a 10,000-square-foot exhibition showcasing the machines and artwork that provide visitors with a more complete understanding of the genius of Leonardo da Vinci. The exhibit also features two original and rare folios of the authentic, 600-year-old *Codex Atlanticus*, which has never before traveled with this exhibition.

For tour operators looking to book further out, the Reagan Library will be home to Egypt's Lost Cities from October 2019 through April 2020. The exhibition contains monumental statues, religious images carved in stone, exquisite jewelry and delicate ceramic that was lost more than 1,200 years ago to the rising tides of the Mediterranean Sea, only to be found two decades ago by underwater archaeologist Franck Goddio.

For more information on the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum, including its upcoming exhibits and programming schedule, call 800-410-8354 or go to reaganlibrary.com.



Air Force One



Berlin Wall section



"The World of da Vinci" exhibit

Deep South

COMPILED BY KAY SAFFARI

History, beaches and beauty in St. Augustine

St. Augustine, the oldest city in the United States, has much to offer groups. The city features more than 60 historical sites, attractions, national monuments and churches of architectural significance. These places combine old-world charm with a variety of activities for visitors to enjoy. The area also offers beautiful beaches, national and state parks, and excellent dining options.

Ponte Vedra Beach is home to the PGA tour, TPC Sawgrass and the Players Championship golf tournament. Along with other world-class golf and tennis facilities, the city offers boutique shopping, great restaurants and relaxing spas.

The beaches of Florida's Historic Coast span 42 miles from Ponte Vedra in the north to Marineland in the south. Anastasia State Park has more than 1,600 acres of natural habitat with four miles of pristine beach, a tidal salt marsh and a variety of activities—from swimming and surfing to shell collecting and hiking. The beaches along this stretch of Atlantic shoreline have been listed among *TripAdvisor's* Top 10 U.S. Beaches. The variety of resorts, hotels, condominium rentals, vacation homes and inns offer plenty of choices to accommodate your group.

Memorial Presbyterian Church



FLORIDASHISTORICCOAST.COM

Interested in a winery visit? Groups can sip a selection of Florida wines at the San Sebastian Winery or tour the St. Augustine Distillery to sample handcrafted spirits like vodka, gin, rum and bourbon.

For more information, contact Evelyn Vazquez of St. Augustine, Ponte Vedra & The Beaches VCB at evazquez@floridashistoriccoast.com or go to floridashistoriccoast.com.

New places to see in Savannah

Savannah is known for its elegant historical district and coastal Georgia charm, but the city also offers some lesser-known gems for groups to discover.



VISIT SAVANNAH

The history and the mystery

There are many museums in Savannah, but the Webb Military Museum is the only military artifact museum you'll find. Owner Gary Webb, who has been collecting military items since he was 10 years old, lived in Germany in the mid-1960s. Every item in his extensive collection comes with its own fascinating history and story to tell. Let Gary take your group on a personalized tour through his many treasures.



AFRICAN ART MUSEUM

African arts and artifacts

With over 1,000 artifacts representing 130 individual cultures, the Savannah African Art Museum offers a fascinating glimpse into African history and its impact on the city. The museum's mission is to provide an education on the art and culture of West and Central Africa. The textiles, sculptures, weaponry and statues are all part of a private collection and are housed in a magnificent historical Savannah mansion.



VISIT SAVANNAH

Live Oak Avenue

A breathtaking avenue sheltered by magnificent live oaks and Spanish moss leads to the tabby ruins of Wormsloe, the Colonial estate of Noble Jones (1702–75). Today, visitors can interact with costumed interpreters during programs and events, and view a museum with artifacts unearthed at Wormsloe. Groups can make corn husk dolls and period textiles, among other unique activities.

For more information, contact Mindy Shea of Visit Savannah at mshea@visitsavannah.com or go to visitsavannah.com.

**PATRIOTS POINT
NAVAL & MARITIME
MUSEUM**

THE LARGEST MUSEUM IN CHARLESTON, SC!



USS YORKTOWN



USS LAFFEY



APOLLO 8 REPLICA



VIETNAM EXPERIENCE

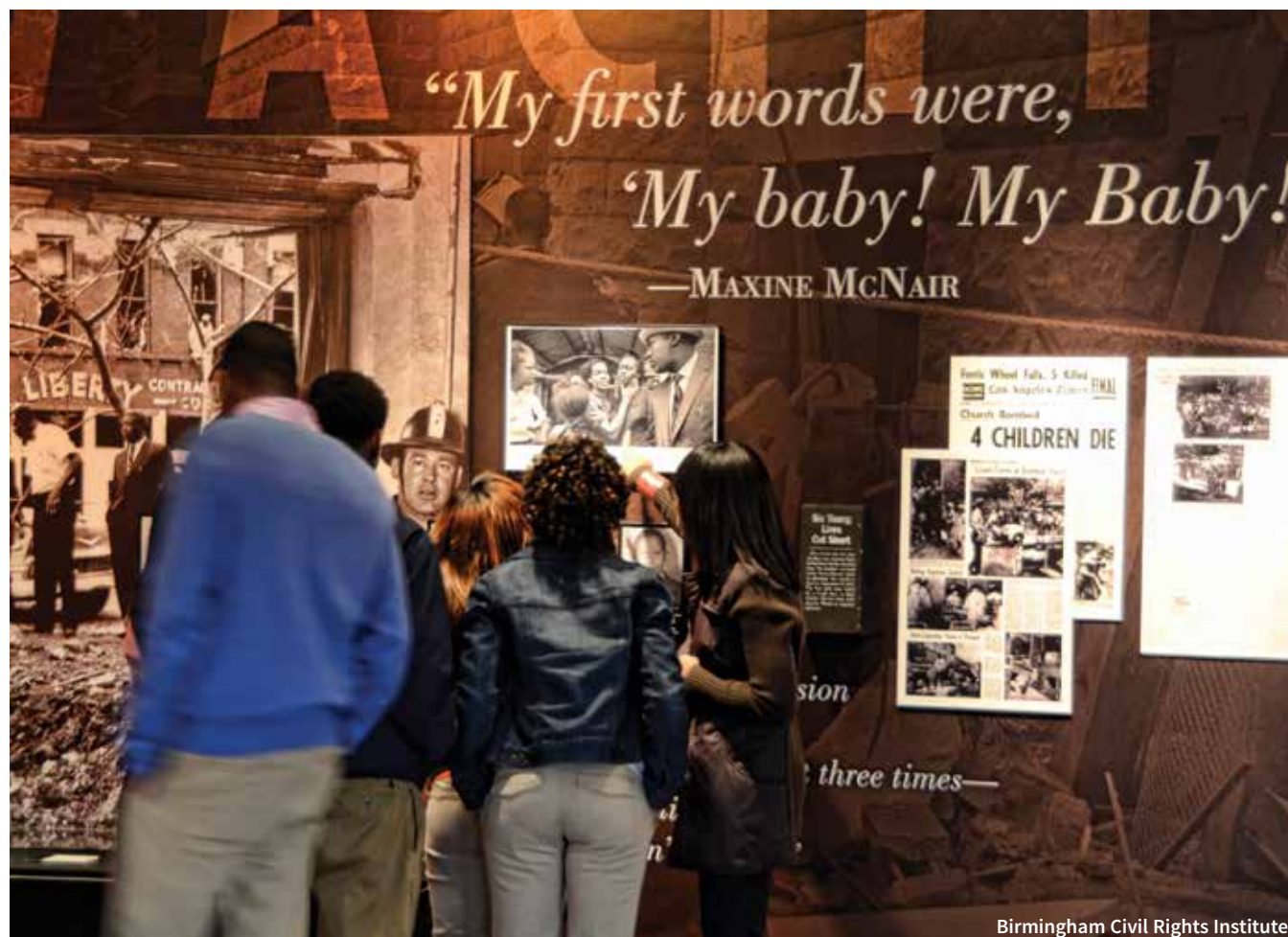


MEDAL OF HONOR MUSEUM



HISTORIC AIRCRAFT

- ★ Group Discounts Available
- ★ Group Photos
- ★ Free Bus Parking
- ★ Easy Group Check-in
- ★ Gift Shop
- ★ On-site Café
- ★ VIP Tours
- ★ Education Programs
- ★ Flight Simulator
- ★ Helicopter Rides
- ★ Audio Tours



Birmingham Civil Rights Institute

Art, food and civil rights history in Birmingham

In addition to its warm, sunny climate and equally warm people, Birmingham, Alabama, offers many appealing attractions for groups to enjoy. Visit the Birmingham Civil Rights District downtown to tour five places of historical significance in this movement that changed the course of American society.

If art is on the list, don't miss the Birmingham Museum of Art in the city's cultural center. With more than 24,000 paintings, sculptures, drawings and other works, the museum offers a look at Alabama, American and Asian art, plus other forms from around the world.

At Vulcan Park, travelers can get a panoramic view of the city from atop Red Mountain. Overlooking that peak is Vulcan, the world's largest cast-iron statue, standing 56 feet tall and made of 100,000 pounds of iron. The park includes a museum that describes the history of Vulcan and Birmingham, and it has a hiking and biking trail.

Groups can see the largest collection of antique and contemporary motorcycles in the world at Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum or they can visit Sloss Furnaces, an industrial museum. This National Historic Landmark was an iron-producing blast furnace from 1882–1971 and has been preserved and restored for public use today.

Culinary tourism is very popular in Birmingham, and groups can enjoy the city's culinary scene by taking advantage of the


various food tours offered. Be sure to try the award-winning Highlands Bar and Grill, named the most outstanding restaurant in America by the prestigious James Beard Foundation.

For more information, contact Sara Hamlin of the Greater Birmingham CVB at shamlin@birminghamal.org or go to birminghamal.org.



Barber Vintage Motorsports Museum

TEXAS de BRAZIL™

CHURRASCARIA  STEAKHOUSE

Carving a New Experience

Endless servings of flame-grilled meats cooked over
a wood-charcoal fire

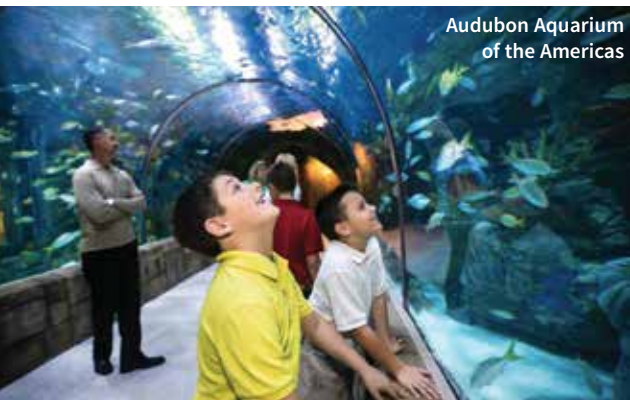
Chef-crafted gourmet salad area

Ultimate caipirinhas, award-winning wines and much more!

Group Packages | Private Dining | National Accounts Program

Contact Kerry Bowler, National Sales Manager,
at kerrybowler@texasdebrazil.com for more information

TexasdeBrazil.com



Audubon Aquarium
of the Americas



Butterfly Garden

AUDUBON NATURE INSTITUTE

Audubon Nature Institute educates and entertains

New Orleans offers more than Mardi Gras, as the lucky people who have visited the Audubon Nature Institute already know. This nonprofit organization operates a family of 10 museums and parks, all dedicated to nature and to educating and entertaining visitors while also protecting the environment.

A trip to the Audubon Zoo and Aquarium is a great choice, as both were recently nominated for *USA Today's* 10 Best Readers' Choice Travel Awards. The Audubon Zoo includes a splash park and a lazy river (available May 4–Sept. 2).

The Audubon Aquarium of the Americas is located on the Mississippi River and includes a walk-through tunnel, a 400,000-gallon shark tank and a sea turtle rescue program. Your entrance fee includes entry to the adjacent Entergy Giant Screen Theatre, which shows educational movies related to ocean life.

Housed in the 170-year-old U.S. Custom House, the Audubon Butterfly Garden and Insectarium offers a close-up view of this historical building as well as hundreds of butterflies and insects. The various exhibits at the Insectarium offer myriad ways to learn about the bug world. As they stroll through the Butterfly Garden, visitors encounter hundreds of colorful creatures freely flying in the Asian-style garden. They can head to the Underground Gallery to experience the life of an ant through an exhibit that teaches about the impact that bugs have on the environment.

For more information, contact the institute's Jeannine Becker at jbecker@audubonnatureinstitute.org or go to audubonnatureinstitute.org.

hello Huntsville, AL

Huntsville, Alabama | huntsville.org
Get ready for your adventure in the Rocket City!

5 New mixed-use developments offer indoor rock climbing, Topgolf, live music, and several new-to-market dining and hotel options

4 Shop the nation's largest privately owned arts facility at Lowe Mill ARTS & Entertainment and stay for a concert

3 Hear stories of spies, lies & ghosts while touring our Historic Districts, Historic Huntsville Depot, and The Weeden House

2 Commemorate Alabama's Bicentennial at Alabama Constitution Hall Park

1 Celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 launch, moon landing, and future human space exploration at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center ...and more!



Pam Williams
Tourism Sales Manager
256.551.2204
pam@huntsville.org

HUNTSVILLE
we're not alone
Huntsville-Madison County Convention & Visitors Bureau

 [HuntsvilleCVB](https://www.facebook.com/HuntsvilleCVB)  [@Go2HuntsvilleAL](https://twitter.com/Go2HuntsvilleAL)  [VisitHuntsvilleAL](https://www.instagram.com/VisitHuntsvilleAL) [#iHeartHsv](https://www.instagram.com/iHeartHsv)

Lake Murray Country: lake fun + a visit to the Nut House

Looking for a lake destination for your group? Head to Lake Murray in South Carolina. Surrounded by four counties—Lexington, Richland, Newberry and Saluda—this 48,000-acre lake is a popular destination for swimming, boating, fishing and watersports.

An interesting add-on to a lake vacation is the Ag + Arts Tour, which is held in June and goes to 10 nearby counties. On these free, self-guided tours, travelers can visit farms and farmers' markets that feature local artisans.

Groups will also enjoy a visit to tiny Ridge Spring in Saluda County, population 753. The town offers a great dining experience at Juniper, Chef Brandon Viele's restaurant. Viele was a recent recipient of New York City's James Beard Award.

After the meal, guests can check out the Ridge Spring Community Arts' Quilt Trail. This option includes viewing squares that resemble quilt panels painted on buildings. A self-guided tour details how the panels are linked to the history of the building, to the family creating the quilt panel or to the county.

Finally, Ridge Spring visitors can stop at the Nut House or the local pharmacy for a treat.

The Nut House sells all varieties of pecans: pecan pie, pecan logs, pecan fudge, chocolate pecans, spicy pecans, caramel pecans ... you get the idea. If nuts aren't your thing, stop at the pharmacy's old-fashioned ice cream bar.

For more information, contact Julie Colson of the Capital City Lake Murray Country Regional Tourism Office at julie@lakemurraycountry.com or go to lakemurraycountry.com.

Sailing on Lake Murray

CAPITAL CITY LAKE MURRAY COUNTRY REGIONAL TOURISM OFFICE



"Nack-A-Tish"

Natchitoches

Louisiana's Oldest City

Celebrate • Discover • Explore

- **Celebrate** at one of more than 30 annual festivals & events
- **Discover** the Cane River Creole National Historical Park, Kisatchie National Forest, Cane River National Heritage Area, plantation, and museums
- **Explore** our Historic Landmark District which offers unique shopping and dining



LOUISIANA
Feed Your Soul.



800-259-1714 • www.Natchitoches.com





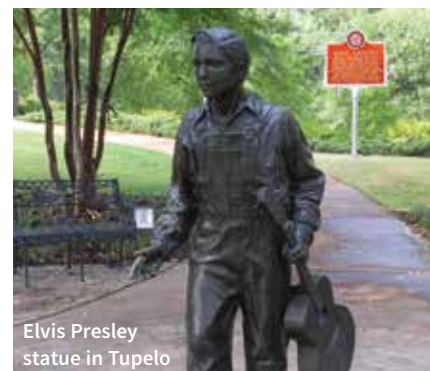
Vicksburg National Military Park

Mississippi offers tours for all tastes

Between its casinos, beaches, great weather, hiking trails, golf courses and Civil War and Civil Rights history, Mississippi ranks as a popular spot for travelers. The staff at Visit Mississippi can develop a customized itinerary to meet the needs of your group and ensure the perfect trip, or planners can choose from one of 30 itineraries available on the Visit Mississippi website, including:

- For Civil War enthusiasts, the five-day **Antebellum South & Civil War Tour** starts in Natchez, a city with more than 500 antebellum homes, churches and buildings that also was once home to more millionaires than New York City. The rest of the tour will visit Vicksburg, Jackson, Tupelo and Shiloh—all places of significance in the Civil War.
- Interested in civil rights? The six-day **African-American Heritage Tour** starts in Clarksdale and ends in Oxford. This tour takes participants to the oldest African-American town in the U.S. (Mound Bayou) and to locations along the Mississippi Freedom Trail.
- Groups seeking a tour with a more light-hearted theme should consider the three-day **Tupelo – Home of the King Tour**, which covers places related to Elvis Presley. The King of Rock 'n' Roll was born in Tupelo on Jan. 8, 1935, in a modest two-room home, and this tiny building now receives more than 50,000 visitors each year.

To learn more, contact Visit Mississippi's Karen Matlock at kmatlock@mississippi.org or go to visitmississippi.org.



Elvis Presley statue in Tupelo

SPACE CAMP

TRAINEES WANTED



Call 1-800-637-7223 today to book a group for this unique STEM-based adventure.






SpaceCampUSA
www.spacecamp.com



Mid-Atlantic

COMPILED BY KENDALL FLETCHER

Hiking to Bushkill Falls

To every thing there is a season in the Poconos

Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains region is a year-round destination, offering lots of outdoor adventures, cozy amenities, unique attractions and fun festivals. Ann Pilcher, tourism sales manager with Pocono Mountains CVB, highlights popular things to do and see in the area during all four seasons:

Spring With the mountain landscape abloom, the Poconos offer the perfect setting for hikes, bike rides, bird-watching and zip-lining. The area is a golfer's dream, with customized golf packages available and numerous places to play, from small private clubs to large resort courses. Pilcher says spring is the time to see Grey Towers National Historic Landmark, Gifford Pinchot's 100-acre ancestral mansion. Pinchot was the first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, a former Pennsylvania governor and conservationist.

Summer Groups can swim, canoe, kayak and whitewater raft in the lakes and rivers and rent pontoon boats for overnight stays on the water. During a self-guided tour, they can see the region's many waterfalls, including Shohola Falls and Bushkill Falls. Waterfalls are found in several of the parks, recreation sites and scenic attractions, and most are easily reachable from hiking trails. Visitors can stay at the Camelback Lodge & Aquatopia Indoor Waterpark and visit Camelbeach Mountain Waterpark, the state's largest outdoor waterpark.

Fall One of the most popular times to visit the area, fall offers many outdoor activities within view of the beautiful foliage. There are many autumn festivals, like this year's 20th annual Black Bear Film Festival and the 45th annual Harvest Festival. Groups can hop on a train excursion through the mountains and see charming towns and historical sites. They can visit wineries—such as Blue Ridge Winery and Tolino Vineyards—throughout the four-county region. And beginning in September, they can check the fall foliage forecast, which reports peak times to see the color zones across the region's 2,400 square miles.

Winter There are 185 trails perfect for skiing, snowboarding and tubing, particularly at Camelback Mountain. It's home to the biggest snow tubing park in the U.S., with 42 tubing lanes, and at night, the snow-covered hills light up like a disco. The surrounding woodlands set the scene for sleigh rides, horseback rides, snowshoeing and ice skating. Pilcher says the Mount Airy Casino Resort recently underwent a \$40 million expansion of convention and event space, and it's a great place to play and stay with views of the wintry mountains.

For more information, contact Pilcher at ann@poconos.org or go to 800poconos.com.



Fall foliage viewed from a canoe



Roundabout Theatre Company's "Kiss Me, Kate"

Let's play in NYC

A few things come to mind when thinking about New York City must-do's: See the Statue of Liberty. Visit Central Park. Stroll the boroughs. And on that list—possibly at the top—is to see a show. NTA has several members in the Big Apple with an assortment of theaters, ticketing groups, and new and classic shows to see, and we talk about four of them here.

Broadway Inbound

broadwayinbound.com

Broadway Inbound helps professional travel buyers plan incredible Broadway experiences for their groups, with services including dedicated account representatives, a simple web order entry system for show tickets and diligent efforts to stay within client budgets. It also offers workshops, behind-the-scenes tours and other educational resources. For more information, contact Peter Waugh at peterw@broadwayinbound.com.

"Chicago" the Musical—National Artists Management Company

chicagothemusical.com

A revived showstopper since 1996, "Chicago" is the longest-running American musical in Broadway history. With performances that gained the show six Tony Awards and a Grammy, "Chicago" is filled with catchy songs, spectacular choreography and lots of high heels. It's performed at

the Ambassador Theatre, and tickets are available through the website. For more information, contact Ken Sperr at kens@namcousa.com.

"Harry Potter and the Cursed Child"

harrypottertheplay.com

This new NTA member brings J.K. Rowling's new story with beloved characters to the Lyric Theatre stage. Harry Potter is grown with three children—one of which faces a struggle with his family legacy. The dazzling Broadway play brings back Harry's longtime friends and a slate of fresh characters. Tickets are on sale for recently added performances from this December through March 2020. Email Joe Tropia at joetropia@soniafriedman.com for more information.

Roundabout Theatre Company

roundabouttheatre.org

It's the largest not-for-profit theater company in the country with a repertoire of diverse show offerings—from classics to cultivated works that are uniquely Roundabout. The company has been recognized with 36 Tonys, and its current productions of "All My Sons" and "Kiss Me, Kate" were up for the prestigious award this year. Stars like Stockard Channing, Alan Cumming and Liam Neeson have graced the company's stages, with the American Airlines Theatre being its flagship home on Broadway. Groups receive exclusive discounts and pay no additional service charges on tickets, and the theater also offers groups a dedicated post-show discussion or a workshop with one of Roundabout's acclaimed teaching artists. For more information, contact Madeline Hurley at madelineh@roundabouttheatre.org.

Other New York City-based, NTA-member production or ticketing companies include Disney Theatrical Group, GreatWhiteWay.com Group Sales, "Wicked" the Musical/321 Group Sales, Group Sales Box Office at Broadway.com, Madison Square Garden Group Sales, Carnegie Hall and The Offstage Group/Your VIP Pass.



"Harry Potter and the Cursed Child"

HARRY POTTER AND THE CURSED CHILD

TOP: ROUNDABOUT THEATRE COMPANY

IDEAS THAT DEFY

BOUNDARIES

Charles Lindbergh's historic trans-Atlantic journey in the *Spirit of St. Louis* extended the limits of air travel to an intercontinental scale.

PRECONCEPTIONS

Weighing more than 80 tons, Space Shuttle *Discovery* is one of the largest objects to leave Earth's atmosphere—and return.



IMAGINATION

With two locations and thousands of artifacts on display, you can see the creativity and ingenuity that has transported us from lighter-than-air to supersonic flight. What will inspire you?



Smithsonian
National Air and Space Museum

On the National Mall
6th St. and Independence Ave., SW
Washington, DC

Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center
14390 Air and Space Museum Pkwy.
Chantilly, VA

Both locations are open daily from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Free admission; parking fees apply at the Udvar-Hazy Center



Visitors to Delaware's Quaint Villages enjoy tax-free shopping.

It takes a village ... or 20

There are treasures to find in Delaware's Quaint Villages, an area of Kent County full of tranquil small towns but settled near the big cities of the Mid-Atlantic region.

"Group leaders have been discovering all the unique group-friendly activities, festivals and events Delaware's Quaint Villages has to offer," says John Doerfler, sales and event manager with Kent County Tourism. "From history walking tours to outdoor activities, and from tax-free shopping to traditional maypole dancing at the Annual Dover Days Festival, Delaware's Quaint Villages is the ideal destination for any group that is looking to create a lasting, memorable experience."

There are 20 villages in Kent County, each one emanating small-town charm and possessing something different from the other. Along with wineries and farm-to-table restaurants, the villages are also the backdrop to many lively annual events.

"From springtime events to winter festivals, the list includes the Delaware State Fair, NASCAR racing, the Bug & Bud Festival, the Bowers Beach Buccaneer Bash and the Amish Quilt Auctions."

Doerfler suggests seeing these attractions during a visit:

Air Mobility Command Museum The museum's exhibits focus on U.S. Air Force history from World War II to the present. The Dover-based attraction houses more than 30 aircraft, including a retired Air Force One.

Painted Stave Distilling The distillery in Smyrna operates in what was once a single-screen movie theater. It's Delaware's first stand-alone small-batch distillery, and the attraction hosts tours and tastings.

Fifer Orchards & Country Store When groups visit Camden-Wyoming, they can wander onto the fourth-generation family farm with a U-pick experience and find fresh blueberries, strawberries, peaches, apples and pumpkins to take home. The farm also hosts other activities and events throughout the year.

For more information, contact Doerfler at jdoerfler@visitdelawarevillages.com or go to visitdelawarevillages.com.



AMERICAN MUSIC THEATRE



BIG CITY SHOWS. SMALL TOWN CHARM.

Located in the heart of Lancaster County, American Music Theatre hosts more than 300 performances each year on our incredible, state-of-the-art stage. Featuring high-quality, family-friendly original shows, our comfortable, convenient, and group-friendly theatre has something for everyone, including an unmatched ticket value, FIT options, a wonderful gift shop, and plenty more.

Book your trip to AMT and see why we get a standing ovation from a quarter million guests each year.

The 2020 AMT Show: Britain's Best • May 5-October 2, 2020
 The 2020 Christmas Show: Deck The Halls • November 3-December 30, 2020

800-648-4102 | Sales@AMTshows.com
 2425 Lincoln Highway East, Lancaster, PA | AMTshows.com/Groups

ROCKIN' THE
BOARDWALK
OCTOBER 13-16, 2020

GOOD TIMES ARE INEVITABLE



BRING YOUR GROUP TOUR TO LIFE.

Hands-on experiences and uncommon access offered exclusively for groups.
Plan your group's Live the Life Adventure at [VisitVirginiaBeach.com/GroupTour](https://www.visitvirginiabeach.com/group-tour).



Sugarloaf Mountain



Tusculum Farm



Mountains and main streets in Montgomery County, Maryland

“In Montgomery County, travelers will find a broad scope of America’s favorite pastimes,” says Visit Montgomery’s Marketing Director Cory Van Horn. “(It’s) truly close to the action, but a world apart.”

With energetic urban areas and more than 1 million residents, the county also exudes small-town vibes in places like the Rockville Town Square, Bethesda Row, Takoma Park’s historical Main Street and Downtown Silver Spring.

Groups can visit the farms on the Agricultural Reserve, where they can pick strawberries, blueberries, tart cherries and tomatoes, as well as pumpkins in the fall. They also can cut fresh trees near the winter holidays.

“Heralded as one of the best examples of land conservation policies in the country, the Ag Reserve encompasses 93,000 acres, almost a third of the county’s land resources,” Van Horn says.

In Frederick, visitors can hike Sugarloaf Mountain and take in the county’s tranquil setting: “a pastoral patchwork of farms and villages with a countryside view largely unchanged since the 19th century,” Van Horn says.

And in Laytonsville, Tusculum Farm is an ideal getaway for companies to meet with clients, corporate retreats, summits, team building and other special events in a beautiful, peaceful country setting. Van Horn says group programs are completely customizable, including everything from tables and boards to outdoor seating or taking over the deluxe theater for screenings and presentations.

In North Bethesda, the newest downtown center, Pike & Rose has become one of the most popular evening and weekend destinations in the area. Groups can visit Summer House Santa Monica, which offers California-inspired fare and wines; see a movie at the upscale iPic theaters; and go bowling or play bocce at NTA-member Pinstripes, which also serves up some extraordinary Italian and American cuisine.

For more information, contact Van Horn at cvanhorn@visitmontgomery.com or go to visitmontgomery.com.

When a hotel stay is more than Fair

With 285 oversized rooms awaiting the next group of travelers, the FairBridge Hotel & Conference Center in Somerset, New Jersey, is the ideal spot to stay near some incredible destinations and attractions.

The hotel's location puts guests within short driving distance to the bustling scenes of New York City, Philadelphia and Atlantic City. It's also near MetLife Stadium at the Meadowlands, less than a half-hour drive from New Brunswick and Princeton, an hour from Six Flags Great Adventure Park in Jackson Township and just 35 minutes from Newark Liberty Airport.

Rooms have complimentary Wi-Fi and 37-inch flat screen HDTVs with premium channels. Guests can book one of the hotel's seven deluxe suites, each filled with unique amenities. They'll find the convenience of laundry and valet services, a bar area and lounge, a fitness room, an outdoor pool, room service and a luggage hold. Also under the hotel's roof is Jersey's Sports Bar & Grill and Alexander Restaurant, where patrons will find authentic Indian cuisine as well as other fresh flavors.

For more information, contact the property's Beth Kaufman at dos@fairbridgesomerset.com. 📍



OPEN FOR RUNNING WILD

72 unique parks. More than 137,000 acres. 957 miles of seemingly endless trails. All stretching from the mountains to the coast. All within driving distance. It's easy to see why people are open to unforgettable experiences in Maryland and why 95 percent of our state park visitors think it's one of the best ways to spend time with family.



Contact Rich Gilbert at 410-767-6288 or rgilbert@visitmaryland.org to learn more.

Source: Maryland Park Service Annual Report, 2017



Grizzly bear with her cubs

Pacific Northwest

COMPILED BY KENDALL FLETCHER

Too much beautiful scenery to bear

“The coast is an amazing place to visit, as it’s like Vancouver, but there are no people and a lot of bears,” says Beverly Evans, travel trade representative with Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association. “This is an amazing place to go and disconnect in today’s busy and hectic life.”

One of the best places to spot those numerous majestic creatures is in the Bella Coola Valley of British Columbia, where

a large population of grizzlies roam the land. Evans says Bella Coola Grizzly Tours offers bear watching along with guided marine tours, and lodging in deluxe log cabins or aboard the *MV Nekhani*, a 42-foot vessel. The grizzly bear-watching tours are offered in the Great Bear Rainforest, an area consisting of the Bella Coola River watershed and the saltwater fjords of the mid-coast.

Some other accommodations in the area include:

Tweedsmuir Park Lodge With views of the Atnarko River and exquisite mountains, the main lodge is the hub for games, socializing at the bar and lounging by the fireplace. The lodge has nine private chalets and a viewing platform for watching grizzly bears as they hunt salmon in the river below. It’s an ideal location for fishing, horseback riding, heli-hiking, First Nations & Valley Tours and fjord cruises.

Rip Rap Camping Nestled near the Bella Coola River and against the mountainous skyline, the family-owned campsite offers 26 spacious camping and RV spots with and without power. The site is close to the BC Ferries terminal, the airport and the town of Bella Coola. Campers can enjoy a private fishing area, nearby hiking trails, a viewing deck on the river and fire pits. There are also four cozy cabins on-site.

For more information, contact Evans at beverly@landwithoutlimits.com or go to landwithoutlimits.com.



ELANA RABIN

TOP: THOMAS DRASDAUSKIS

Oregon's Adventure Coast

Coos Bay ~ North Bend ~ Charleston



Gorgeous Beaches | World-Class Fishing | Untamed Dunes | Museums | Theatre | Gaming



Holiday Lights @ Shore Acres State Pk



Fresh - Local - Delectable



ATV'ing on the Oregon Dunes

OregonsAdventureCoast.com | 800.824.8486

Let's take this outside

Whether it's strolling through a farmers market or viewing sea life during a scuba dive, the Seattle Southside region offers many outdoor adventures for groups.

They can take in the views of the Cascade and Olympic mountains and enjoy the Des Moines Marina—either in or on the water. The Olympic Outdoor Center offers kayak and paddleboard rentals, and Seattle Dive Tours will pick up participants, provide equipment and give guided scuba tours in the Puget Sound, where divers can see a variety of marine wildlife and vegetation. For more experienced divers, the Des Moines Wreck, a sunken 55-foot, wood-hulled ship, can be explored.

All hungry adventurers can dine at the variety of fresh, nearby seafood restaurants with outdoor waterfront seating, including Anthony's HomePort Des Moines or Salty's at Redondo Beach. They can also pair Odin Brewery and Tap Room's cold ale with its distinctive barbecue while relaxing on the outdoor patio.

The Des Moines Waterfront Farmers Market, held every Saturday in the summer (plus Wednesdays in July and August), features more than 50 farms, crafters and food vendors offering their local, sustainable products.

And for groups that want an up-close look at the city's sports scene, they can visit Starfire Sports, the training grounds for the Seattle Sounders FC soccer club, and watch the athletes practice. With more than 54 acres and 12 turf and natural grass fields, the athletic center also houses two indoor fields, retail stores, restaurants and athletic training rooms.

For more information, contact Meagan McGuire with Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority at meagan@seattlesouthside.com or go to tourseattlesouthside.com.

Top: Des Moines Farmers Market

Bottom: Paddling with Olympic Outdoor Center



SEATTLE SOUTHSIDE REGIONAL TOURISM AUTHORITY

Harry & David

A SOUTHERN OREGON ICON

HarryandDavid.com/tours



SCHEDULE YOUR TOUR TODAY

It all starts at our flagship store. From there we'll take you past our orchards to the main campus, where you'll visit our bakery, candy kitchen, and packinghouse to see the careful work that goes into growing and packing our Royal Riviera® Pears, creating our famous Moose Munch® Premium Popcorn, building beautiful gifts, and more.

CALL TOLL-FREE

877-322-8000, 8AM-5PM
Monday-Friday, or email
ntatours@HarryandDavid.com

START YOUR TOUR HERE

Harry & David Country Village Store
1314 Center Drive
Medford, OR 97501

TOUR TIMES

Monday-Friday
9:15AM, 10:30AM,
12:30PM, 1:45PM



Don't miss the boat ... or the sasquatch

There are many distinctive Pacific Northwest views to catch aboard Portland Spirit & Columbia Gorge Sternwheeler River Cruises—including Bigfoot ... maybe.

The Oregon-based company now offers cruises centered on the hairy, mystifying creature.

“The new Bigfoot cruise offers groups more than a boat ride. It’s a fully interactive experience,” says Nathan Boese, director of sales. “Even if you’re not a believer of the Bigfoot legend, this cruise will give you a firsthand look of the beauty of the Columbia River Gorge, as well as the historical rivers of the Lewis and Clark expedition. We have never offered a cruise that covers so much ground.”

The seven-hour round-trip adventure aboard a covered jet boat stretches 120 miles from Portland to the heart of the Columbia Gorge with an hour stop in Cascade Locks. Each passenger will receive wireless headsets and hear narration by Animal Planet’s “Finding Bigfoot” star, Cliff Barackman, on the sightings and history of Bigfoot.


While on the lookout, cruisers can also see the beautiful landmarks of the area along the river, including St. Johns Bridge and Kelley Points Park in Portland; Rooster Rock State



PORTLAND SPIRIT & COLUMBIA GORGE STERNWHEELER RIVER CRUISES

Park in Corbett; Multnomah Falls in Bridal Veil; and Beacon Rock State Park in North Bonneville.

The cruise is offered daily June through September, with special group pricing for more than 15 people.

For further information, contact Boese at nathanb@portlandspirit.com or go to portlandspirit.com. 




SAVOR THE UNEXPECTED



HEART OF THE ROGUE

SEE ITINERARIES AT TRAVELMEDFORD.ORG/GROUPS

Sue Price • Group Tours • suep@travelmedford.org

Germany and Switzerland

COMPILED BY PAT HENDERSON

Two takes on Germany

Having staked its claim as a hotbed of classical music, art and Modernist design, as well as beer and bratwurst, Germany remains one of the world's most-visited countries. *Courier* reached out to representatives of a couple of NTA's German-based companies—Denise Buchanan of Appina Travel and Christian Utpatel of Terra Lu Travel—to get their opinions regarding what makes the European nation such a great place and to find out about some of their personal favorites.



Christian Utpatel at Meissen Cathedral

Christian Utpatel, Terra Lu Travel

Why is Germany such an iconic destination?

Many Americans have family and faith roots in Germany and central Europe, and they live in the tradition of German culture and history—all things they can experience and rediscover when travelling Germany.

Why should tour operators work with Terra Lu?

After you met me at NTA's Contact or Travel Exchange, it is me who goes back to Germany to work on your projects with my team. Located just north of Frankfurt, in the center of Germany, we are a local supplier close to everything your clients want to see. We have local contacts and know the many little details.

What is an example of a unique experience that your company offers?

You get to have *Kaffeetrinken* (coffee and cake) with a real baron in his historical, 550-year-old fairy-tale castle.

What is your favorite German destination?

Berlin, Saxony and Thuringia

Which local beer do you like best?

Hasseröder Pilsner, which is brewed in the Harz Mountains

If you have friends visiting from another country, what is one place you always take them?

Wartburg Castle, which is close to my home and boasts almost 1,000 years of history

What is your favorite local festival?

The Altstadtfest in my town of Homberg

What is your perfect German meal?

Königsberger Klopse, meatballs in caper sauce with potatoes. But only in the style my great aunt used to cook it, which, since she died, does not exist anymore!

Reach out to Utpatel at utpatel@terra-lu-travel.com or go to germany4groups.com to learn more.



Denise Buchanan in Dresden

Denise Buchanan, Appina Travel

Why is Germany such an iconic destination?

Germany has it all: great outdoor beauty, history, delicious food, culture, architecture, the arts—need I say more?

Why should tour operators work with Appina Travel?

We have fast and thorough communication with our clients including a contact—me!—in North America. We offer high-quality, creative, flexible tours that always cover new ground. With our three offices in Germany, we can personally meet the groups/group leaders along the way and arrange for personalized experiences with locals through our network.

What is your favorite German destination?

Berlin is just so fascinating. I could spend weeks exploring the neighborhoods and diving into its history, music scene, art vibes and more.

Which local beer do you like best?

Hefeweizen (wheat beer)

If you have friends visiting from another country, what is one place you always take them?

In Berlin, to the Berlin Wall Museum at Bernauer Straße. In Dresden, to the courtyards in the Neustadt area.

What is your favorite local festival?

The Day of the German Reunion (Oct. 3). There are many celebrations in Berlin at the Brandenburg Gate, and there, you will see how the real Germans celebrate. Also Starkbierfest in Munich (March to April).

What is your perfect German meal?

Bratwurst with fresh bread and mustard

Reach out to Buchanan at denise.buchanan@appina-travel.com or go to appina-travel.com/en to learn more.



Switzerland's Schilthorn is home to two interactive James Bond exhibits.

On the trail of 007 and Alpine views

When it comes to Switzerland, it all starts with the Alps. While the European nation boasts tons of assets—ranging from culinary delights such as chocolate and cheese to an uber-efficient transportation system—the natural beauty found in its rugged mountainous landscape never fails to delight.

According to Martin Oester, sales and marketing manager—North America for Switzerland Tourism, there are many local spots where travelers can experience the Swiss Alps.

“My favorite place to hang out is Mürren,” he says. “This car-free resort

village, set high up among towering cliffs, is only reachable via cable car or a challenging climb.”

And what a cable car ride it is. Passengers can soak in the views as they are whisked in a gondola from Stechelberg up to the 9,744-foot summit of Schilthorn in 32 minutes. While in that area, visitors can channel their inner spy, thanks to two interactive exhibitions: “Bond World” and the new “007 Walk of Fame.”


Switzerland is also a country that takes train travel to new heights, both literally and figuratively, and Oester considers riding the rails a must-do.

“I love the Gotthard Panorama Express,” he says. “This is the only one of the panoramic train excursions that combines boat and train into one journey.”

And, for visitors with a high level of fitness, Oester recommends doing a hike along at least one section of Via Alpina and the Alpine Passes Trail. These two long-haul routes offer unparalleled access to the scenic mountain landscapes.

Via Alpina runs north of the Swiss Alps, goes from Vaduz to Montreux and is broken into 20 daily stages. The Griesalp-Kandersteg leg, which Oester calls the “King’s Stage,” is particularly noteworthy. As for Alpine Passes, which includes 20 sections taking trekkers through the northern Alps, he raves about the hike from Gruben to Zinal.

“Zinal is a ski resort town one valley west of famous Zermatt, and you are up amidst spectacular Alpine scenery and surrounded by Switzerland’s highest peaks,” he says. “Here, you literally hike from German-speaking territory right into French.”

For more information, reach out to Oester at martin.oester@swisstravel-system.com or go to mystsn.net. 

**Local and German:
hand-crafted tours for your groups**

TERRA LU
TRAVEL CONSULT EVENTS

www.germany4groups.com • germany@terra-lu-travel.com

Germany Office from USA: 011 49 5681 84 88 81

COMMUNITY

NEWS AND UPDATES FROM THE NTA FAMILY



ALL PHOTOS, UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, BY NAIM HASAN

Contact '19 in Tucson provided NTA members a chance not only to gain new information and develop partnerships, but also to build friendships.

1. Peter Waugh, Broadway Inbound; Brooke Hamlett, Pleasurebent Tours; Kelly Dean, Ottawa Tourism; John Marshall, NYC & Company; Monica Hall, Abingdon Virginia CVB
2. Three NTA crowd favorites joined the professional dance hall entertainers at Old Tucson Studios. They are—in white dresses, left to right—Fraser Neave, CTP, Wells Gray Tours; Phillip Strunk, CTP, NTA; Cory Mace, The North Central Group.
3. Dave Nitkiewicz, Experience Grand Rapids; Kalyne Defever, Detroit Metro CVB
4. A Tucson quartet: Denys Marquez, Desert Diamond Casino Hotel; Mary Davis, Old Tucson Studios; Joe Camarillo, Old Tucson Studios; Jalyssa Gasmen, Visit Tucson
5. The team from Wells Gray Tours: Fraser Neave, Stephanie Dilling, Pam Stewart, Shelley Clay and Paige Kimberley
6. Sasha Ednyasheva, The Offstage Group/Your VIP Pass; Sara Vowell, Space Camp at U.S. Space & Rocket Center

Meet the Members

Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex

MERRITT ISLAND, FLORIDA

NTA contact: Rebecca Shireman, public relations and communications manager

Office phone: 877.313.2610

Website: kennedyspacecenter.com

NTA member since: 1976

Tell me why the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex is a must-see attraction.

The best place on Earth for space exploration, Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex brings to life the epic story of the U.S. space program and offers a full day or more of awe, fun and excitement. There are thrilling simulators, breathtaking attractions, behind-the-scenes tours, interactive exhibits, larger-than-life 3D space films, rocket launch viewing opportunities and more.

What's new at the center?

Every mission to the moon has launched from Kennedy Space Center, so needless to say, the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission—July 15—is an event we plan to celebrate in style! In anticipation,

the Apollo/Saturn V Center will unveil new upgrades, exhibits and experiences in mid-July, which will provide visitors an even better “launchpad” to immerse themselves in the history and wonder of the Apollo missions.

Tell us how you accommodate groups.

We cater to a variety of groups, from school groups to businesses and more. We work with you to help create a memorable experience for your students, family or organization, big or small. Whether you remember the Gemini Program era or aspire to set foot on Mars, there are numerous private educational programs, team-building activities, meeting and event venues, and day trip options that will bring space exploration to life.

What's your favorite vacation memory?

Road trips with my family during the holidays. We would travel to Kentucky to see our grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. Growing up in Florida, I remember always wishing to see snow!



What's your favorite movie?

“Steel Magnolias”

For more information, email Shireman at rshireman@delawarenorth.com.

Best Western Plus Fillmore Inn

COLORADO SPRINGS, COLORADO

NTA contact: Suzy Esposito, director of sales and marketing

Office phone: +1.719.471.4331

Website: bwfillmoreinn.com

NTA member since: 2019

Tell us what makes your hotel special.

We are a beautiful new hotel, centrally located and conveniently right off the main highway. We've got modern flare with a touch of rustic chic. This hotel has genuine style, not flashy or pretentious; style that not only makes you feel special, but also very comfortable and at home.

Are there any changes in store for the property?

We will be adding a new building to the south, connecting to our current hotel with even more guest room suites and lots of banquet space. We will also be building an awesome restaurant off to the front side of our property. We're keeping the type of restaurant a secret for now, but it's going

to get your boots tapping and your mouth watering!

What are a couple of fun attractions nearby?

Garden of the Gods, the United States Air Force Academy, Manitou Springs, Old Colorado City and the second most-visited mountain on the planet, Pikes Peak, standing at 14,115 feet.

Where would you love to travel to someday?

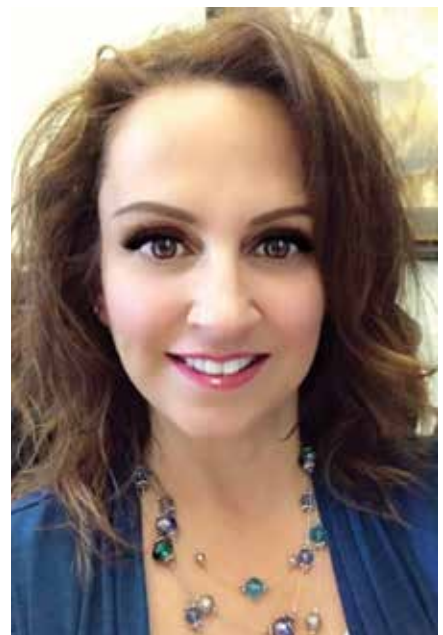
Naples, Italy; and England. Being half Italian, half English with a touch of Blackfoot Indian, I wish to go see where my family line began and the relatives that might still be out there.

What are your passions?

Horseback riding, exploring good food and great wine, and traveling.

You get to pick dinner tonight. Where are you going?

Mackenzie's Chop House Downtown Colorado Springs for the best



Lobsterscargot—garlic poached lobster with Havarti cheese served on a perfectly baked toast point.

For more information, email Esposito at suzy.esposito@bwfillmoreinn.com.

Pinstripes Bistro, Bowling & Bocce

OAK BROOK, ILLINOIS

NTA contact: Lauren Robbins,
senior sales manager

Office phone: +1.630.575.8744

Website: pinstripes.com

NTA member since: 2015

What can a visiting group expect from an experience at Pinstripes?

Pinstripes' guests can expect a modern twist on a classic pastime. We start with a scratch Italian-American kitchen. From our gnocchi to our gelato and everything in between, we pride ourselves in offering authentic, flavorful recipes that are crafted in-house daily. As an "eater"tainment venue, we also offer bowling and bocce in a Napa Valley-like wine lodge environment.

What flavors can guests find in the restaurant?

Our flavors change with the season. In the spring and summer, we have a creamy burrata with fresh berries and a balsamic finish

or a hand-stretched Margherita flatbread. In fall and winter, guests enjoy an al dente fettuccine bolognese topped with a heaping dollop of mascarpone cheese that definitely makes the dish. My personal favorite is our chicken parmesan, which is made with a bit of a twist. We toss our pasta with a creamy peppercorn sauce. So good!

What makes your attraction so unique?

The quality of our food and drinks. It's rare to find an entertainment venue with a true scratch kitchen and handcrafted cocktails. We really are focused on sophisticated fun.

What destination is on your travel bucket list?



If I could travel anywhere, I'd be heading to Morocco or Crete. Something about the Mediterranean calls to me. Also, living out my "Casablanca" dreams wouldn't hurt.

It's Saturday night. What are you doing?

On a Saturday, you can find me anywhere with live music or on a patio with a glass of wine.

For more information, email Robbins at lauren.r@pinstripes.com.

Fairfield Conference and Visitors Bureau

FAIRFIELD, CALIFORNIA

NTA contact: Christian Wentworth,
director of business development

Office phone: +1.707.399.2445

Website: visitfairfieldca.com

NTA member since: 2005

What's new in your area?

We're seeing a lot of new growth in our Suisun Valley wine region, already home to over a dozen tasting rooms. Napa Valley's Caymus Vineyards will be opening a brand-new tasting room in Suisun Valley within the next year or two. One of our established wineries, BackRoad Vines, is building what will be the largest tasting room in our area. That new facility is expected to open in early 2020. Also expected to open sometime in 2020 is the first phase of the highly anticipated Pacific Flyway Center, an interpretive and educational facility in the Suisun Marsh.

Why is Fairfield a great destination for California-bound groups?

The location. Fairfield is right in the heart of

Northern California, just one hour from San Francisco, 15 minutes from Napa Valley and 35 minutes from Sacramento. We are also best known as being the home of the Jelly Belly Factory and our thriving Suisun Valley wine region.

Why do you love Fairfield?

Because it's a small town. I love walking down the street and waving to my friends that work at our local stores, restaurants and wineries. It's always nice to see a familiar face around town.

Where's your favorite place to travel?

Anywhere in the U.S. that has that small-town feel.

Have you binged on any good TV series lately?

The best series that I have watched lately is "Billions." I always have a cup of coffee first so that I can keep up with the fast-paced, twisting storyline.



If you were stranded on a desert island, what are two things you must have with you?

My wife and my pets.

For more information, contact Wentworth at christian@visitfairfieldca.com. ☎

Introducing ... NTA's newest members

TopView Sightseeing NYC

NEW YORK CITY

Tour supplier

With the option to hop on and off at the many stops, the more than half a million customers who take the tour each year can experience the real streets and landmarks of the city. At TopView, the staff is in love with New York City and passionate about providing the best possible introduction to one of the greatest cities on earth.



Ori Mor

Customer service manager
+1.212.664.0300
ori@topviewnyc.com
topviewnyc.com

"I've been working in tourism and technology for the past seven years, joining TopView Sightseeing six months ago. On my last few trips I went to the World Cup in Moscow and saw the northern lights in Norway. But I personally think New York is unlike any other destination."

French Side Travel

AIX-EN-PROVENCE, FRANCE

Tour operator

French Side Travel is a premium to high-end DMC specializing in tailor-made trips to France and Corsica. The company prides itself on its extensive local knowledge, its network of fantastic service providers and partners, and its dedication to customer service and keen attention to detail. Each tour is 100% customized with classic products: hotels, guided visits, fine meals and more.



Mark Bonte

Director
+33.9.72.56.39.00
contact@frenchside
travel.com
frenchsidetravel.com

"My father and I started French Side Travel to share our love of France and Corsica. They really are some of the world's most beautiful and welcoming places."

Ameritas

ATLANTA, GEORGIA

Associate

Since the late 1880s, Ameritas Life has provided life insurance, employee benefits and financial services, with tradition deeply rooted in commitment to customers. Active NTA members can receive discounts on life insurance, whole life, disability, living benefits, debt reduction, income replacement and business overhead insurance. Additionally, business succession planning, executive compensation, retirement planning and employee benefits services are available.



Lindsay Waltower

Financial consultant
+1.770.882.7523
lwaltower@gmail.com
fulfillinglife.com

"My successful business owners and professional clients say, 'Lindsay, you've helped to address the urgent financial and business concerns in my life.' I look forward to serving the NTA members as well."

Visit Estes Park

ESTES PARK, COLORADO

DMO

Estes Park is an authentic Rocky Mountain town with restaurants, breweries, wineries and unique shops and stores, all in a quaint mountain setting with hundreds of lodging options and meeting locations. Visitors can enjoy outdoor activities in nearby Rocky Mountain National Park or just relax and take in the breathtaking scenery and nearby communities.



Eric Lund

President/CEO
+1.970.586.0500
elund@visitestespark.com
visitestespark.com

"I have been in the destination world for 30 years, and I love our industry! I am pleased to now represent Estes Park, next to Rocky Mountain National Park." 📍

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.



NEW MEMBERS

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

DMOs

Springfield Tourism Commission 
Stephanie McMillin
Springfield, KY 40069 USA
visitspringfieldky.com

Visit Estes Park 
Eric Lund
Estes Park, CO 80517 USA
visitestespark.com

Visit Issaquah
Beth Javens
Issaquah, WA 98027 USA
discoverissaquah.com


Visit Walla Walla
Ron Williams
Walla Walla, WA 99362 USA
wallawalla.org

TOUR OPERATORS

ESA Baltic
Agne Samkuviene
Vilnius Dstr., LT-04196 Lithuania
esabaltic.lt/tour-services

French Side Travel
Mark Bonte
Aix-en-Provence, PACA, 13290 France
frenchsidetravel.com


Guardian Music and Group Travel 
Matthew Granger
Park Ridge, IL 60068 USA
gmtravel.com

Hisam Travel Inc. 
David Song
Alhambra, CA 91801 USA
hiseas.cn

Hi-Way Tour Inc.
Yang Qiu
Westbury, NY 11590 USA

Poland Culinary Vacations Inc.
Malgorzata "Sarna" Rose
Vero Beach, FL 32968 USA
polandculinaryvacations.com


Tennessee Express Tours LLC 
Bill Oliver
Sevierville, TN 37862 USA
tnexpresstours.com

Travel Service ForYou Int'l 
Dan Li
Pasadena, CA 91101 USA

U.S. Tours
Robert Cline
Vienna, WV 26105 USA
ustours.biz

XYL INT'L Corp.
Joyce He
Malden, MA 02148 USA


TOUR SUPPLIERS

50 US Coach Inc. 
Leila Zhang
Quincy, MA 02169 USA

Cincinnati Reds 
Mason Smith
Cincinnati, OH 45202 USA
reds.com

Cincy Brew Bus
Mike Stokes
Fairfield, OH 45014 USA
cincybrewbus.com

Dollywood
Brandi Salyers
Pigeon Forge, TN 37863 USA
dollywood.com

Experience Holiday GMBH 
Josef Itzenthaler
Maisach, 82216 Germany
experience-holiday.com

Hagley Museum and Library
Bonnie Wirth
Wilmington, DE 19807 USA
hagley.org

Harry Potter and the Cursed Child
Joe Tropia
New York, NY 10036 USA
harrypottertheplay.com

HOSTMARK Hospitality Group
France Langan
Schaumburg, IL 60173 USA
hostmark.com

Hotel Indigo Savannah Historic District
Christine Marshall
Savannah, GA 31401-1110 USA
hotelindigo.com/savannah

Kings Dining
Ryan O'Sullivan
Boston, MA 02115 USA
kings-de.com

Lazy Otter Charters
Kelly Bender
Eagle River, AZ 99577 USA
lazyottercharters.com

National Geographic Museum
Brianna DeOrsey
Washington, DC 20036 USA
natgeomuseum.org

Queen Kapiolani Hotel
Oliver Cajala
Honolulu, HI 96815 USA
queenkapiolani.com

Radisson Fort Worth North Fossil Creek
Alan Small
Fort Worth, TX 76106 USA
radisson.com/fossilcreek

Ramada Plaza Niagara Falls
Nicki Winger
Niagara Falls, ON L2H 2W9 Canada
ramadaplazaniagara.com

Salishan Resort
Mark Hower
Gleneden Beach, OR 97388 USA
salishan.com


Seven Feathers Hotel & Casino Resort
Heather Brown
Canyonville, OR 97417 USA
sevenfeathers.com

Texas de Brazil
Alicia Rocha
Dallas, TX 75247 USA
texasdebrazil.com

Westwind Aviation Inc.
Gayle Lurenz
Phoenix, AZ 85027 USA
westwindairservice.com

Wildcatter Ranch
Jay Brewer
Graham, TX 76450 USA
wildcatterranch.com

TRAVEL AGENT

Davis Faith Journeys 
Marie Davis
Troy, MI 48099 USA

ASSOCIATES

Solimar International 
Gabriel Seder
Washington, DC 20001 USA
solimarininternational.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



VISIT FORT WORTH

travel exchange
FORT WORTH
— DECEMBER 8-12, 2019 —
Fort Worth
Dec. 8-12, 2019



VISITRENO-TAHOE.COM

travel exchange '20
RENO-TAHOE
NOVEMBER 15-19
Reno Tahoe
Nov. 15-19, 2020



VISIT ANCHORAGE/KIMBERLY KELLAR

CONTACT 
Anchorage | March 18-21, 2020

Anchorage, Alaska
March 18-21, 2020



MEMPHIS OVA/ANDREA ZUCKER

CONTACT 
Memphis | March 17-20, 2021

Memphis, Tennessee
March 17-20, 2021



Pete Anderson, 1937–2019



Pete and Marie Osmond



Pete, Jim Host and Bob Everidge share a laugh.

‘What will never fade ...’

BY MARK HOFFMANN, CTP

NTA HAS A LONG and colorful history. One of the characters who created some of that history was Pete Anderson. Pete was NTA President in 1988, and while his term ran only one year, his influence on our association spread out over several decades.

Pete was part of a group of men and women who took NTA from the National Tour Brokers Association (back when there were lots of restrictions and it was hard to get the proper licensing, all because strict of government regulations) to the NTA we know today. Those men and women were the mentors of the mentors of today’s leaders.

While Pete and I never served on an NTA board together, we became something far better than partners in the boardroom. We became friends. When Pete retired from NTA and Maupintour, I would catch him every few years for lunch in Lawrence, Kansas, where he and his wife lived.

Pete was a huge University of Kansas fan—basketball first, but all things KU. So it didn’t surprise me when Pete’s memorial service began with the “Rock Chalk, Jayhawk” chant, a familiar refrain for KU fans. When the presiding minister asked who in the audience wanted to share a memory, Dan Dipert, another NTA past president and leader, went to the podium.

Dan retold what has to be one of the great NTA stories of all time. When Dan was president, the convention was in Toronto, and for reasons he shared but I cannot remember, Dan (being from Texas) decided he wanted to ride a horse on stage. Pete was in charge of handling the horse once it reached the stage. As Dan told of the horse’s journey inside the stately Royal York Hotel in Toronto, I began to giggle and then laugh. I’m sure some in the memorial gathering were wondering why I couldn’t contain myself. Dan finished with a flair, and by then the entire room was smiling.

Then I shared a story of my own. We were at Convention, and I walked past a bar in the host hotel. The years have



Dan Dipert riding into the NTA convention hall in Toronto in 1982.

made the city and the hotel fade from my memories, but what will never fade is the sound of Pete’s voice. You could hear him down the hall outside the noisy watering hole. Inside, you found Pete holding court, with more than a dozen NTA members sitting around at tables loosely grouped together. Pete was telling stories and the laughter was abundant.

Even after his board service to NTA was finished, Pete continued to serve our association with his smile and his presence.

By the end of the memorial service in Lawrence, Dan, Jim Warren (one of our current leaders) and I had all shared a memory or two. The guest book was littered with past employees of Maupintour who had come to remember their friend and colleague.

Pete made certain his legacy lived on by giving of himself to our association for many, many years. He loved NTA and, just as important, he was loved by the members.

Farewell Pete. Every time I see a Kansas basketball game on TV and I hear the “Rock Chalk, Jayhawk” chant, I will smile and think of you. ☺

Mark Hoffmann, CTP, is the owner and founder of Sports Leisure Vacations in Sacramento, California. He chaired the NTA Board of Directors in 2000 and again in 2013.



THE BEST SOUTHERN CUISINE ABOARD *the Grandest Entertainment Ship!*



Savannah's #1 Dining & Entertainment Experience for Group Tours!

NARRATED HARBOR SIGHTSEEING CRUISE

Learn, Relax and View as you cruise along Savannah's historic Riverfront.

NARRATED HARBOR LUNCHEON CRUISE

Experience Savannah through our local southern cuisine and tour of the famous Savannah River!

**Lunch options available: Southern style buffet or a la carte menu (lunch on their own)*

SUNDAY BRUNCH CRUISE

Delight over an elaborate brunch buffet filled with breakfast and lunch favorites while listening to our Captain's intriguing facts and tales of Savannah!

DINNER ENTERTAINMENT CRUISE

Enjoy a specially prepared, delicious buffet dinner, live entertainment and first class service as your group dines in Savannah's most unique and only true waterfront venue!

SUNSET CRUISE

Breathtaking sunsets and captivating views from Savannah's largest, open-air top-deck patio. Your group can sit back and relax or get up and dance to the fresh sounds of our Riverboat entertainers. A sunset specialty menu and cash bar will be available.

MONDAY GOSPEL DINNER CRUISE

Enjoy local Gospel entertainment and savory flavors of the South. A true cultural and culinary experience you don't want to miss!

ADD A UNIQUE TOUCH TO YOUR GROUP'S TOUR WITH A PRIVATE CHEF'S DEMO

Our chef will delight your clients with a personalized cooking demo before setting sail for lunch!

**Pricing inclusive of sales tax and gratuity *Student and Youth programs available *Ask us about our bundled tour packages*

**Special Tour Operator rates *Driver and Escort complimentary passes*

Catering to tour groups since 1991—Savannah's Group Tour Experts!

For more details please contact our group sales department, 912.232.6404 or at www.savannahriverboat.com

OVER 5,000 TRAILS BLAZED DAILY.

Your next opportunity is a flight away. Just ask the 170 million passengers who choose to fly to one of our 327 destinations.



KEEP CLIMBING



Based on average number of Delta flights per day in the March 2016 schedule. Includes flights operated by our Delta Connection® carriers: Compass Airlines, Endeavor Air, Inc., ExpressJet Airlines, Inc., GoJet Airlines, Shuttle America, and SkyWest; Delta Shuttle® carriers: Shuttle America and Compass Airlines.