

THE NATIONAL STANDARD



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The Newsletter of the National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations

SUMMER 2018

TOURING WITH A TRANSPLANTED GUIDE

by Andrew Grocock

Conducting tours of a major Texas city with an English accent, be it rounded at the edges, is a great ice-breaker with guests. Many Texans are bemused by the fact that an Englishman is informing them of their city and state!

When I moved to my city from England 32 years ago, I could not in my wildest imagination have conceived that I would fall in love with the place, discover its history and culture, and conduct tours around town. I admit it took a while; after all I was only going to be here a couple of years! Such is this adventure we call life which led me in an opposite direction—I met my wonderful wife and put down roots that have grown pretty deep.

I had lived in Houston almost 20 years before I fully realized I knew nothing about the city beyond a superficial level. One of the reasons I initially liked the city was that, coming from England, almost everything was so *new*, seemingly having been built within the last 20 years. I have always had a deep interest in history so it seemed about time to learn something of my adopted home. It was also serendipitous to have a friend – a proud native-born Texan – who was a member of the Professional Tour Guide Association of Houston. I



How do you see your city? Two views of Houston, then and now, come alive on a historic tour.

attended some meetings and discovered that this was an ideal way to delve deeper into the city I call home with a support network of people with similar (and sometimes divergent) interests. Within a couple of years, I was conducting walking tours of downtown Houston with a historical emphasis.

Having not been born here, but rather moving to the city as a young adult, meant it was somewhat of a blank slate with no ingrained impressions or associations. The city's modern aspect is impressive but once I started to look into its history and the history of Texas, it became fascinating. I realized that here was the real story.

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TOURIST GUIDE ASSOCIATIONS

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If you have issues you wish the NFTGA Board or any of the federation's committees to address, here is a list of the appropriate parties to whom you should go. Each officer and committee chair has his/her contact information posted in the Members List section of the federation's website, www.NFTGA.COM.

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: Featured articles must be 1,000 words or fewer. Recurring columns must be 500 words or fewer. Deadline for the Autumn 2018 issue of *The National Standard* is 5:00 pm, Thursday, October 18, 2018.

SUBMIT MATERIAL TO: baker.tours@yahoo.com. Submissions will only be accepted by email except when determined through prior discussion with the editor.

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FATALLY INJURED TOUR BUS OPERATOR HAILED AS A HERO

by Joe DeGregorio

Mike Arnold, beloved owner of Gus, Gus, Fun Bus, who was described as a big promoter of the St. Louis area's sites and scenes, died on June 22, 2018 from injuries incurred earlier in the week when a carjacker of a woman's pickup truck ran him over. Arnold, 54, was in the process of recording the crime on his cell phone to turn over to the police when the carjacker spotted him and then drove the stolen F-150 into him and another witness. Arnold and his wife Suzanne had bought the 14-passenger tour bus in 2010 and began using it to shuttle people on weekends and evenings to special events and wineries. He was a longtime employee of AAA-Auto Club of Missouri and father of eight children. A GoFundMe account was set up to help the family with medical and funeral expenses. The carjacker and his accomplice were caught and arrested.

Joe DeGregorio is a member of PTGASL. To tour with Joe, contact joe.dehillboy@gmail.com.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



One of the ways NFTGA advocates for tour guides is through our Tourism Industry Partner (TIP) initiative. These are mutually beneficial partnerships with other non-profit tourism related organizations or associations and usually includes membership, registration, and exhibit space at conferences or conventions, website

display of logos, and sharing of newsletters and publications. Currently we have seven TIPs:

- American Bus Association (ABA) NFTGA has a booth at their conference and presents on of their Education Bites on the importance of using a local tour guide. We also share their weekly updates.
- American Indian Alaskan Native Tourism Association (AIANYA) We share newsletters.
- National Association for Interpretation (NAI) We share newsletters, information and participate, when possible, at conferences.
- International Association of Tour Directors and Guides (IATDG) We share newsletters, information and participate, when possible, at conferences.
- National Tour Association (NTA) We share newsletters, information and have a booth at their annual conference.
- Student & Youth Travel Association (SYTA) We share newsletters, information, have a booth and present at their national conference.
- Tourism Cares. We share information and encourage participation in Tourism Cares initiatives.

Often board members represent NFTGA at TIP conferences. However, we look for the closest association for participation. If association members attend these conferences, please be in contact with the NFTGA representative. If there are other associations with whom we should be involved, let us know!

Ellen Malasky
NFTGA President

FROM THE EDITOR



Recently, I watched the TV broadcast of the Broadway musical *Newsies* (thank you Netflix). I was struck by Joseph Pulitzer's line "If it's not in the papers, it never happened." In the show, he is referring to his very deliberate efforts to suppress publication of the newsboys' strike. But in many other contexts, we can easily neglect to report a story out of fear, indifference, or apathy. How many reasons must we come up with to *not* tell a story before it may as well have never happened?

When preparing this issue, I talked with several guides (brilliant, knowledgeable, engaging storytellers, one and all) about their experiences, interests, and ideas, mining their minds for worthy stories that I strongly believe our members would enjoy reading and from which they would benefit. Some said they didn't have time, some responded very positively and then completely disappeared, one insisted on asking their local board's permission to write the requested article and then declined because the board was "unenthusiastic", and one said "I'll do it if you really think I have something important to say." Ladies and gentlemen, let me assure you unequivocally: If you are *here*, you have something important to say. And I, for one, very much want to read what you have to say. And I think our other members will too. But if we don't write about it – if it's not in the papers – it never happened. (Or it may as well have never happened.)

So please take this as a call to two things: pride and service. Be proud enough of your own voice to recognize that it deserves to be heard. And be willing to serve your friends and colleagues by allowing them to learn from your experience and your wisdom, because you have more of both than you may realize. Share your stories. Acknowledge that they happened. Thank you.

Matthew Baker
Editor-in-Chief

TOURING WITH A TRANSPLANTED GUIDE *continued from page 1*

Houston is a city with a “can do” attitude highly amenable to development. The downside to this is that it can seem a place where anything physically built will not last. However, it is a city built on layers of memory. As a tour guide I discovered that not many Houstonians – let alone tourists – were conscious of this wonderful layering of the city and that they were not bored upon learning about it.

What I aim to bring to any tour I conduct is an appreciation of this historical layering by blending it with the present. Wonderful relationships occur between what people are physically looking at and the verbal images of what was. On some of my tours I show photographs of how things used to look.

When I develop my tours, I always ask “What is the story here? What am I looking at? Why are things the way they are?” To a degree, I still consider myself an outsider, so perhaps I bring a more abstract approach to Houston tour development.

I live in one of the older parts of the city and it was interesting that, when I decided to develop a tour of the area, it was (and still is) the hardest tour I have put together. The issue seemed to be that I was too close to the subject. I subliminally knew the location too well from driving the same streets multiple times each day, it was as though I had stopped looking.

This was a huge learning experience for me as a tour guide. Our profession is based upon looking. And sometimes looking through a stranger’s eyes can reveal things you thought you would never see or appreciate!

Andrew Grocock is a past president of the Professional Tour Guide Association of Houston, a practicing artist, and docent at the Museum of Fine Arts. To tour with Andrew, contact eagrocock@gmail.com.

TABLE ROCK LAKE TRAGEDY CLAIMS ONE OF OUR OWN

by **Barbara Larsen**

On July 19, 2018, 17 people lost their lives on Table Rock Lake. Some were on a family vacation with their loved ones. For the community, to say that this has been a heart-wrenching experience would be an understatement.

The following evening, we went up to the candlelight vigil at Ride the Ducks in Branson. In the parking lot were the cars sitting empty because their owners would never return, covered in flowers, letters, and teddy bears.

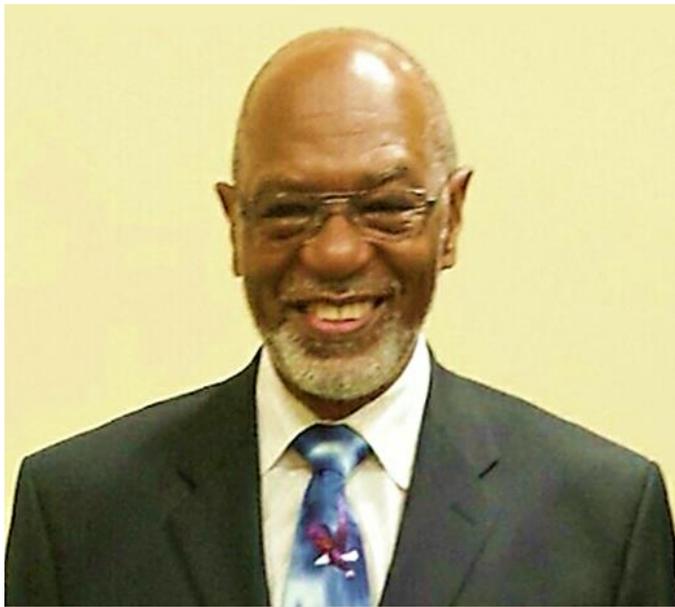
There are no words to describe the pain that those family members left behind will endure for a very long time. But we were so proud to see the outpouring of love from the citizens of Branson, Missouri, that Friday night. Many cried who did not even

know the people most directly touched by the tragedy. We hugged strangers who lost their loved ones and the presence of God was in the air.

The Branson Professional Tour Guide Association lost a very important member that day. Robert Williams was known as “Captain Bob”. Not only was he a member of BPTGA, he was a Chamber Ambassador, a former pastor, and a driver on the Duck Boats here in Branson.



Family members lay flower remembrances on the cars of those who will not come home.



Robert "Captain Bob" Williams

He was also our friend. He was a man of faith and would light up a room the moment he walked in. People from all over Branson looked up to him. He had a way about him that would make you feel special. He never judged anyone but found the good in everyone.

Watching the video footage of the Duck Boat that night, I can imagine our Bob comforting those on board and praying as he did quite often. And indeed he helped many people that evening. Family members were taken to City Hall, including his lovely wife Judith, to wait for news that their loved ones were okay. For many, that was not the news that came. Mayor Karen Best was present at City Hall, grieving with the people, and offering moral support or a shoulder to cry on. Several people there said that if it weren't for Captain Bob, they wouldn't be sitting in that room. He saved many lives that night but could not save his own.

If we take one thing away from this horrific experience, please let it be the togetherness and love seen here that night. Let's stop the bickering, the ridiculous political jabs on social media, the juvenile arguing, and take time to look at all we have. Go hug your families and your friends and pray for blessings and joy to come to them. Let this serve as a wake-up call to be good to our families as we pray for the families of the lost. God grant them peace and grant us the same.

Barbara Larsen is President of BPTGA. To tour with Barb, contact barb_larsen@rocketmail.com.

THE BUSINESS OF GUIDING

by Michael Dillinger

Guiding is a business. Guiding is a profession. This may seem obvious to most, but when I read threads on social media pages related to guiding I am often surprised at how often questions arise regarding basic working arrangements such as payment for cancelled tours or positioning fees. The date has passed and the guide is feeling used or abused because they feel they have not been treated fairly by the Tour Operator. The comments that follow contain a similar litany of complaints, suggestions on what should or shouldn't be done and musing on how to hold the Tour Operator accountable. What most of these stories reveal is how often guides accept work without a clearly set out work agreement or contract.

Issues regarding payment, hours, extra hours or overtime, location fees and cancellation fees and invoicing procedures should all agreed upon prior to commencement of the job. As a professional, often as an independent contractor, it is your responsibility to determine what you need to fulfill the job. You are not an employee; you are a business providing a service to another business. Having a written agreement or contract sets out clearly all the expectations and eliminates misunderstandings. So when the tour is unexpectedly canceled on short notice or the group is late to the meeting point there is no mystery on how to proceed. It is also wise to have similar agreements or contracts with private clients.

Hopefully, our member associations can help their members with the ins and outs of guiding as a business. It might be helpful to run workshops and other communications on this topic on a regular basis.

Michael Dillinger is President of GANYC. To tour with Michael, contact info@dillingersnewyork.com.



Table Rock Lake – Branson, MO

TARGETING TOUR GUIDES

—*the Story of a Scam*

by Jerry Perkins

Recently, I received a heartbreaking call from a fellow Las Vegas Tourist Guides Guild member advising that they had fallen victim to a scammer, and via this scam the member had lost a substantial amount of money. Though we have previously sent out similar warnings, I feel it is important that we remind our members to remain vigilant and wary of scammers.

Here's how the member was scammed: They received a payment from a supposed new client and there was extra money included in the payment which the member was to use to pay cash for the limo transportation. After the member received the check, the supposed client changed course and asked that they wire transfer the transportation costs in advance directly to the transportation company. The member deposited the check and then while at the bank wired the money using their own money. Then the next day, the member learned that the check was fraudulent and had been reversed, which thereby wiped out the member's checking account leaving them with a negative balance. If you do not know this – wire transfers are completely irreversible – once the money is sent, it cannot be retrieved. So, the member is out the money, with little to no recourse except law enforcement action, which will likely not result in a return of their money. Truly heartbreaking.

This member is not new to the field. You may ask how they could have fallen for this scam? Well, the answer is – trust. The scammer built trust via a month of ongoing communication. The scammer used the member's name and seemed to know other personal details (the scammer was likely looking at the member's social media as well as any other info found online). The scammer went over and finalized all the details for the job and always replied to emails in a timely fashion. By the time it came to the actual fraud, the member had full trust in this client, so they just went along with the “last-minute change” and wired the money to “the transportation company.”

I will say it bluntly – *never* (and I can't repeat this enough), *never* – take an “overpayment” via check and then return the balance, via any means, but especially via a wire transfer. If you get this far with a potential client and



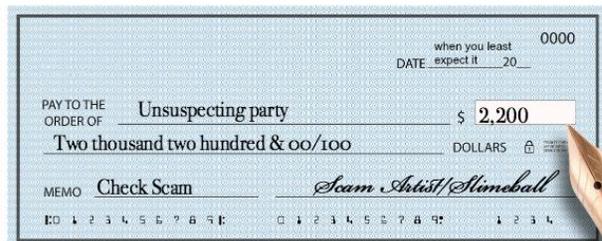
Scammers—faceless, ageless, sexless, raceless, ruthless.

receive an “overpayment” check, take that to be evidence that the entire potential job was a set-up and end the communication immediately. You can block that person's email address, you can advise you are going to report them, you could tell them you took jobs during the times they wanted (heck, the rest of the next year!), you can post a message on your local association's Facebook page warning others, but my advice is to stop there. If you still have some belief that the client is legitimate, you can ask that they send a check for the correct amount and that you will return or destroy the one with the “overpayment.” In all cases when accepting a check payment, you should allow adequate banking time to 100% confirm the validity of the check prior to providing services. *But never* accept an “overpayment” via check. That is beyond a red flag; that is a direct warning shot.

Though in no way an exhaustive list, when on guard against scammers, here are a few warning signs that you should heed:

Though we often work with international clients, language is often an early red flag. If the email request uses odd phrasing or language, I urge caution.

If an email is not addressed to you directly, or shows other signs of being a “copy and paste” message, I urge caution.



Overpayment check—the classic warning sign.

If anything strikes you as strange, I urge caution.

As a member of a trade association for professional guides, you have the resource of your board and fellow members. I urge all members to utilize each other when you have doubts about a potential client or transaction. Post a question or comment on your association's Facebook page, or email fellow member.

Thank you for your time and attention to this, and please – stay alert to scammers!

Jerry Perkins is *Vice-President of the Las Vegas Tourist Guides Guild*. To tour with Jerry, contact jerry@lvdetours.com.

KEEPING PACE WITH CHARLESTON TOURISM

by **Timothy E. Dillinger**

The summer season is in full steamy swing in the Holy City. In the words of Gershwin, “Fish are jumping and the cotton is high...” Once again, for the 6th year in a row, Charleston has been rated as the #1 tourist destination in the United States and, also, #10 in the world by *Travel and Leisure Magazine*. We in tourism are feeling the constant influx of the increasing numbers of guests from all over the globe. More and more hotels continue to pass the Planning Commission, with another 427 rooms in two venues announced last week, all to provide more overnight options for the millions of “well-heeled” travelers who visit throughout the year. Plans are in the works to build an additional 176 room hotel near Marion Square and several other projects due to be complete before 2020 when Charleston will celebrate the 350th anniversary of the first settlement at Charlestown Landing and the beginning of the colony of Carolina.

At a recent meeting of the Tourism Commission, board member Rainy Evans suggested that the perceived problem of the excessive volume of some carriage drivers and walking tour guides speaking too loudly could be solved if guides and guests were to wear headsets, as is the practice in some European cities. Referred to a committee, numerous guides spoke in protest, and this measure failed to hold much water. CTA President,



One of many new hotels rises in Marion Square

ARE YOU ATTENDING WFTGA?

The 2019 WFTGA convention will be held in Tbilisi, Georgia, in January. NFTGA is entitled to 4 delegates with one voting at the meetings. President Ellen Malasky and Past President Gene Reyes will attend, representing Washington, DC and New Orleans. We would like the other delegates to represent assns. from different geographic areas. If members of your association will be attending and would like to be considered as a potential delegate, please let us know at president@nftga.com.

Lee Ann Bain pointed out that such a ruling would be hard to enforce and would prove an expensive cost to tour operators who would be required to purchase and maintain the devices. Bain noted that the current city ordinance states that tour guides are not allowed to use amplification. There is also no current law which specifies how loud the level of voice communication can be. It was recommended that until the matter can be reviewed that the best practice was for the guides to be more aware of their audience and self-control their presentation to a reasonable level. Until this matter is solved the guides have agreed to be less vocal in residential areas.

According to CTA president Bain, “The guides generally don’t like the idea and prefer talking directly to their guests to better engage them.” She also pointed out that, “The proposal would not be cost effective for most companies and the individual guides would have to shoulder the cost of the additional equipment. Plus, effort of maintaining the units by cleaning and repairing the returned devices when the tour was over would prove an extraordinary burden for small providers who start tours from street corners, not from storefronts.” For now the best course of action for addressing the volume levels is “self-restraint” by the guides and the compassionate understanding of the home owners whose properties they showcase.

Timothy E. Dillinger is a member of the *Charleston Tour Association*. To tour with Tim, contact captaindillinger@yahoo.com.

TECH TALK—*CALCULATE YOUR RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)*

by Donna Primas

Skift, a travel news company, recently had an article (<https://skift.com/2018/06/27/meeting-planners-still-struggle-to-prove-return-on-investment/>) about how hard it is for meeting planners to prove Return On Investment (ROI) – to document or statistically prove value/worth and justify holding meetings.

That got me thinking about tour guides and what we spend time and money on: tour guide association membership dues, educational lectures, books, conference registration fees, parking and other travel expenses, marketing our business (business cards, websites, social media), museum and venue visits, familiarization trips, etc. Some readers may be assn. officers, mentor others, or teach and train guides. These roles also have costs, but do any of them have a provable ROI?

This started me thinking about the ‘W’s of what I do in my business life. Who benefits? What do I spend time doing? Where are the events taking place? When I do certain things, how do I feel? Why do I engage in the things I do? What is my desired Return On Investment? I realized that many things I do don’t offer an easily quantifiable ROI. Other than the actual time spent on a tour, most things I do in my professional life cost time and money. Most offer a sense of satisfaction, a feeling of a job well done, but very few have easy-to-measure benefits.

Have you ever looked at how you spend time and money and analyzed how it has “paid off” for you? Do you track your income and expenses using spreadsheets, a software program like Quicken, or a business accounting system? Do you keep notes of referrals or how you got a job? Do you do a quarterly income spreadsheet and look at the days or hours of employment by employer or type of work? I do all these things. It helps me look at seasonality, know if a large percent of income is from a single company, or if jobs are from a consistent source. Do this analysis for yourself. It may help you realize that you should pay more attention to that essential client or source or, alternately, think about diversifying and finding new contacts. Remember the farmer who put all the eggs in one basket?

The most basic investment for a tour guide might be membership in one or more professional organizations. An association might have a directory that helps members find clients or employers. If your association is a member of NFTGA, you may value access to the optional tour guide liability insurance policy. Giving just one tour may bring in more than the combined cost of dues and the insurance policy, and both expenditures may be tax deductible, so they are easily rationalized.

Being an officer of a professional organization might be a nice bullet point on a resume or may bring some prestige, but what about the responsibilities and the countless volunteer hours spent trying to move the ball forward on association projects and goals? Efforts might be exhausting and cause frustration, although they might provide future opportunities for one’s self or others... or not. Few beneficiaries of organizational efforts ever express their gratitude and too many may seem to correspond just to complain.

(Let me quickly go on record to express a big *thank you* to the past and current NFTGA officers – unsung heroes who have kept this organization alive!)

For me, teaching and lecturing is a way to share my interests, passions, and accumulated knowledge, while also influencing others: newcomers to tourism or those who hope to get a shortcut to success by taking a class. Yet I realized years ago that for every classroom hour, I spent two to 20 hours preparing! Not a very good ROI. Or is it? Maybe it is enough to receive a sense of satisfaction at the time and (perhaps) only years later learn that your material or effort had meaning (because you bumped into a former student).

Less easy to codify would be the networking or educational benefits from attending meetings and events. If you take a class, attend a lecture or buy a book to expand your knowledge, does the cost invested give you a direct benefit or ROI? It might, if it helps you work toward becoming an acknowledged expert in a subject matter or, if the time and money spent allows you to more confidently market your business or give a new tour.

Out-of-town conferences have bigger price tags that make them harder to evaluate in terms of ROI. I have not yet been to a WFTGA or IATDG conference. I have attended several NFTGA and ITMI conferences. A look back at my historical expenditures – registration,

transportation, meals, hotel and other related expenses – indicates that going to a multiple-day out-of-town conference can cost \$2,000 or more.

I can positively say that conferences have enriched my education and professional life and led to new friendships, but does meeting new people put food on the table or help you pay your rent? Sadly, no. Of course, if there is a job training or interview component to a conference, there may indeed be a measurable ROI. And that alone might be an excellent reason to sign up.

What’s my point? Registration deadlines are looming for several fall and winter educational conferences organized by IATDG, ITMI, WFTGA, and others. There is competition for attendees and exhibitors and enticing demands for our limited resources. Guide association officer elections or dues and insurance renewals may take place this fall.

I believe that all professional efforts should not be focused only on the easily quantifiable ROI—like income and money. For the good of all, energy should be regularly expended on things that “might” help your bottom line—volunteering, networking, meeting new people, teaching and sharing your expertise. “Liking” (on Facebook) or saying “thank you” to others who help you or who work for your benefit costs very little. And because so few seem to do it, the mere act of saying ‘thank you’ makes *you* memorable and that may lead to a future ROI.

Expand Your ROI: Impress an Employer!

Several entities that hire guides endorsed these actions.

Guides take note!

If you have the time, say “yes” to any job you are offered and qualified to do.

Suggest colleagues that might be able to say “yes”, if you are not available.

Be prepared: Read all the paperwork and ask questions before you get on site.

Maintain a professional appearance and demeanor.

Be kind to employees, venue contacts, clients, and co-workers on the job.

Never solicit gratuities.

As a freelancer on the job, don’t criticize your client or mention other companies you work for.

Say thank you when the job is done—to the clients for their cooperation and attention and to the company who hired you.

If appropriate, tell the group leader or client that they can request you for future tours.

Submit your invoice and any reports promptly.

Touch base periodically, especially when you have new skills or when your circumstances have changed.

Never stop learning or trying to improve.

Donna Primas served as the President of the Chicago Tour-Guide Professionals Association for 21 years. To tour with Donna, contact primascopy@aol.com.

NEWS YOU CAN USE by Joe DeGregorio

With the intent to improve motor coach safety Congress in 2012 passed a law requiring the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration to mandate that Motor coach drivers Electronic Logging Devices (ELD) to track driver’s hours. The rule took a while to be crafted and was finally made enforceable in December 2017 with a grace period for citations until April 1, 2018. Briefly, the rule applies to all commercial vehicles with a capacity of more than nine passengers, over 10,000 pounds, and if the driver is not compensated, a vehicle designed to carry 16 or more including the driver. Preventing driver fatigue seems to be the key factor as there is a 10-hour limit on consecutive driving hours. A driver on duty for 15 hours may no longer drive. A driver may not drive after 60 hours over a 7-day shift or 70 hours over an 8-day stint. ELD displays and logs must be readily available to inspectors. Please be aware of the new rules motor carriers and their drivers have to comply with especially how it can affect your tour itinerary length and timing.

Joe DeGregorio is a member of the Professional Tour Guides Association of St. Louis. To tour with Joe, contact joe.dehillboy@gmail.com.

NFTGA OUTREACH IN BRANSON by Joe DeGregorio

On April 16, 2018, in my capacity as NFTGA Board Member at Large, I attended a meeting of the Branson Professional Tour Guide Association in Branson, MO. The association is a very spirited and patriotic group who stay on top of all the activities going on in Branson, where entertaining tourists is the city's main business. Members are always volunteering at meet-and-greet and charity events. One of their Best Practices is to allow guest speakers to talk before the business meeting to avoid a time crunch for them. I first spoke on topics close to home, mainly the recent cuts to the Missouri Division of Tourism budget, the departure of the Director, and Missouri being put on Fodor's editorial section's "No Visit List". Other topics included the recent NFTGA Conference in Philadelphia with subject matter handouts, the creation of a Los Angeles Tour Guide Association, and the revitalized initiative of the Board to reach out to all member associations.



Joe DeGregorio (center) and members of BPTGA.

Joe DeGregorio is a Member-at-Large on the board for the NFTGA. To tour with Joe, contact joe.dehillboy@gmail.com.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW INDUSTRY PARTNER, IATDG

by Michael Dillinger

Recently, NFTGA welcomed the International Assn. of Tour Directors and Guides (IATDG) as a Tourism Industry Partner.

The International Association of Tour Directors and Guides is a non-profit professional organization for trained and experienced tour managers and guides worldwide. IATDG was formed by tour directors, tour operators, and tour guides with the common interest of ensuring "excellence in tour management and guiding", which is their motto. They started off with a bang in 2016 with a November Conference and Talent Exchange in Falls Church, Virginia, attended by more than 300 tour guides and tour directors. In addition to excellent workshops and trainings, attendees were able to meet and interview with tour operators for possible future employment. There were also number of social activities and FAM tours. Their second conference was held in Dallas in November of 2017 and attendance was even larger. The 2018 conference, set for Las Vegas this November, is shaping up to be larger still.

One of IATDG's primary goals is to increase the number of successful tours and satisfied travelers in the tour and travel industry each year. In order to accomplish this, they seek to ensure that tour directors and guides are informed, educated, skilled, and supported when leading

tours. They also want to see tour operators have constant and immediate access to these highly prepared professionals. IATDG is about success for all.

IATDG goals are:

- 1) To ensure the highest level of professionalism among tour directors, guides, and operators.
- 2) To support the exchange of services offered by tour guides & tour directors and opportunities offered by tour operators
- 3) To educate the travel industry and the government about issues important to and effecting tour directors and guides.
- 4) To develop and provide industry-related benefits and resources to their members.

IATDG's mission, to set the highest standard for service and proficiency in tour management complements NFTGA on a number of levels. We have high hopes for a very productive and mutually beneficial partnership that will add value for all our members.

Welcome Aboard IATDG!

Website – www.iatdg.org.

Michael Dillinger is serving his 2nd term as President of the Guides Association of New York City. For more information, contact him at president@ganyc.org.

OUR HOUSE — *The Degas House*

by Randy Bibb

New Few people are aware that the impressionist painter Edgar Degas had Crèole family in New Orleans and that he came to New Orleans to visit them. Most are also unaware that documented evidence confirms his shift to impressionism while in New Orleans. In a letter in his own hand he writes “I have found a more spontaneous, better art.” This, however, should surprise no one because the painting that brought him fame was *A Cotton Office In New Orleans*. It was, in fact, the only painting Degas, himself, ever sold to a museum and he was the only European impressionist artist to have painted in North America. Four of the people featured in *The Cotton Office* are his family. His brother, Achille deGas (as the family name was spelled before Edgar changed it), is leaning on a window sill, his brother, René deGas, sits reading a newspaper, his cousin’s husband, William Bell, stands at the sample table with a prospective buyer while his maternal uncle, Michel Musson sits in front inspecting a cotton sample.

Degas came to visit his uncle Michel and his cousins, Desiree, Mathilde and the widowed Estelle, who also became his sister-in-law when his brother, René, married (and then later completely abandoned) his first cousin.



A Cotton Office In New Orleans by Edgar Degas

Tour Guides in New Orleans have two opportunities to tell the story of Degas’ visit. Uncle Michel lived for a dozen years or so in The Garden District and the Musson house is a stop on every Garden District tour. After the Civil War, Musson found his finances hard hit and he left his Garden District home for a house on Esplanade Ave. which he rented for ten years and where his nephew, Edgar Degas, visited, painted, and found a “better art.”

While the house in the Garden District is a private residence and is not open to the public, The Degas House on Esplanade Ave. is an inn, event venue, and a museum open for tours. Currently, two of the docents are direct descendants and are the great-grand-nieces of Edgar Degas. The house was divided into two houses in the 1920’s and both are included in a tour which covers in detail the dramatic story of a remarkable Crèole family standing at the threshold of (and playing a vital role in) Europe’s Impressionist Art movement. City tour buses stop in front of the Degas House on Esplanade Ave. several times a day while walking tours of the Garden District stop at Uncle Michel’s Third Street house and tell the story of Edgar Degas’ Crèole maternal uncle. The story is also told in the famous St. Louis Cemetery #1 where Degas’ grandparents, his uncle Michel, cousin (sister-in-law) Estelle, cousin Desiree and others are entombed.

Randy Bibb is a board member of the Tour Guides Association of Greater New Orleans. To tour with Randy, contact randyneworleans@hotmail.com.



The Degas House on Esplanade Ave.

Save the Dates for These Important Conferences

August 24-28, 2018

SYTA Annual Conference, Baltimore, MD

September 17-20, 2018

AIANTA American Indian Tourism Conference, Albuquerque, NM

September 20-21, 2018

Tourism Cares for New Orleans Volunteer Event, New Orleans, LA

October 21-23, 2018

Bus Industry Safety Council, Lake Tahoe, NV

November 4-8, 2018

NTA Travel Exchange, Milwaukee, WI

November 11-15, 2018

IATDG Tour & Talent Exchange Conference, Las Vegas, NV

November 27-December 1, 2018

NAI National Conference, New Orleans, LA

President Ellen Malasky, Vice President Nick Cvetkovic, and Board Member Joe DeGregorio will be attending the SYTA conference in Baltimore from August 23-26. At the NFTGA booth, the attendees will distribute the federation's brochure, a pen, and information about member association. If your association has any literature you would like to have distributed at the booth at this and future conferences, please contact Pres. Malasky at president@nftga.com or Mr. DeGregorio at joe.dehillboy@gmail.com to arrange delivery of materials or copiable PDF. Thank you.

In the aftermath of the 2018 NFTGA conference in Philadelphia, the Association of Philadelphia Tour Guides (APT) led by President Ed Mauger and Vice President Jim Murphy, has been seeking to put together a comprehensive set of instructions / recommendations on "The Business of Guiding". Included in this resource would be such topics as tax considerations and practices, which business entity is best either as a freelance guide or as a guide working for other companies (or both), billing, sample contracts, insurance, etc. Rather than recreate the wheel, we imagine that some associations already have documents relating to these and perhaps other topics on the business side of guiding. If so, please send to Ed Mauger at philaonfoot@gmail.com. Once compiled, we will make it available to all our associations to distribute to their members. Thank you.