

# THE NATIONAL STANDARD



www.NFTGA.COM

The Newsletter of the National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations

AUTUMN 2018

## THE LANGUAGE OF GUIDING

by Jamie Rivaldi

If you are interested in learning a new language, go for it! Once you are a conversational speaker in a new language, you have an impressive skill to add to your resume and a new way to market yourself as a tour professional. Many employers will seek out candidates with language skills, in specific languages.

Airport meet-and-greets and hospitality shifts can help you transition from conversational to fluent by allowing you to gain confidence. Applying language outside the classroom is very effective because you don't have time to obsess over flawless grammar. Initially, learning a new language can seem so daunting! Potential fears of sounding silly or making mistakes can affect confidence but, in a setting where information just needs to be communicated efficiently, confidence can be gained and the whole experience becomes much more enjoyable.

Over-the-road tours *in the country* of the language you are learning is by far the best way to jump from conversational to fluent. I found myself incredibly grateful that the handful of Roman coach drivers that I worked with spoke minimal English. It forced me out of my comfort zone because important logistical information needed to be exchanged and understood. I had no time to consider whether what I was saying was grammatically flawless. I was too busy ensuring that important instructions were being communicated: 1) Where do I need the coach driver to pick up the group? 2) At what time will this pick-up occur? 3) How will I communicate this information to coach driver, should the time or location be unknown, or change? Working in Italy and using cellular phones to communicate forced me to learn the language on the fly. On the phone you can't



read lips or facial expressions or see hand gestures. And we all know that understanding Italian is contingent upon understanding hand gestures. I often joke that the quickest way to get a word in with an Italian is to simply hold their hands.

If you aspire to do city tours in a foreign language, then fluency is a must. Only once fluent can you give a proper city tour in that language. Giving a city tour in your adopted language to a motor coach full of native speakers is the ultimate test of fluency. It sounds scary, but it is so rewarding. The first time giving a city tour in a foreign language is nerve wracking but once you get that first tour under your belt, it's much easier to relax and just be yourself – only in a different language.

Nonnative languages come more easily to some than others but, if you set your mind to it and have the liberty to travel a bit, you are off to a great start. Many tour professionals have periods of the year where work is slower. Why not invest that time in acquiring a skill or starting to learn a new language? Even if fluency isn't your goal, having a basic level of knowledge in a foreign language is a valuable skill.

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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](http://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 Winter 2019 issue of *The National Standard* is 5:00 pm, Thursday, January 17, 2019.

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

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## NEW TOURISM APP

by Timothy E. Dillinger

The city of Charleston has taken a digital step into the future by introducing a new self-guided app. The Historic Charleston Foundation has recently embraced the use of this innovative informative app for cellular devices to better present our 350-year story to the next generation of travelers. This app features a 30-stop city map and the duration of the digital presentations is limited to 45 minutes. The app features highlights of specific locations with facts described through audio accounts and photos of each selected historic site.

**Timothy E. Dillinger** is a member of the Charleston Tour Association. To tour with Tim, contact [captaindillinger@yahoo.com](mailto:captaindillinger@yahoo.com).



## FROM THE PRESIDENT



As we move towards the holiday season, it's a good time to look back at 2018 and forward to 2019 and assess the things we are thankful for, our disappointments, and goals for the coming year.

I am thankful for our committed executive board. Our conference calls are lively and productive as we discuss means to strengthen our

organization. We have raised our visibility by participating in conferences including SYTA, NTA, ABA, and USTA Destination Capitol Hill. We distributed tourism related information to our association leaders for distribution to their membership. We have reached out and visited member associations and are *thrilled* to welcome the newly formed association in Los Angeles to our federation.

Our disappointment lies mainly in the lack of communication we receive from our member associations. Excepting a very few, our action items and requests for information go unanswered. We would love to distribute our member associations' brochures at conferences, but very few respond to our requests for these. Our goal is to assist our members. The more we hear from you, the more value we can provide. PLEASE communicate!

2019 will be an exciting year. It will begin with the World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (WFTGA) convention in Tbilisi, Georgia. In addition to our NFTGA delegates, over 20 guides from member associations will attend. We will continue to participate in Industry Partner conferences. We will redo our website to make it more useful. And, in the fall, we will elect a new board. Please consider running for office or joining the nominating committee. The strength of NFTGA is in its members' dedicated participation. We need your knowledge, skills, and commitment to grow and serve our members the best we can.

Wishing you all a Happy Thanksgiving and early wishes for a peaceful and fulfilling 2019!

*Ellen Malasky*  
NFTGA President

## FROM THE EDITOR



Over the last few years, I have spoken and written a lot about the concept of alliance. As much as I believe in anything, I believe that work-mates and colleagues should treat each other as family and stand by each other in times of trouble. To a considerable degree, that is what

I believe associations like NFTGA are for and that it is the direction in which ours and similar organizations should be moving. As Ben Franklin said, "If we do not all hang together, we will most assuredly hang separately."

My belief in this collegial outlook toward our industry is what led me to serve on the board of NFTGA, take on the editorship of this newsletter, and devote six years of my life to presidential, vice presidential, and board member capacities in my local association. How about you? What is your favorite way to "give back to the community"?

Looking at this issue, I realize how generous the contributors have been in their "giving back". Whether sharing immense wisdom in a multilingual market, warm humor in a story of how a guide "rescued her city", extraordinary courage in exposing the adverse conditions that can face some guides, or any other quality that has moved them to share their writing with the rest of us, THANK YOU to everyone who has chosen such generosity with your colleagues. You are each an invaluable ally.

For those of you who are still searching for the best way to contribute, know that you are not alone. This board and this newsletter are here to help you find your voice. And when you do, we have full faith that it will ring out loud and long.

*Matthew Baker*  
Editor-in-Chief

## THE LANGUAGE OF GUIDING *continued from page 1*

Hands down, the best way to introduce a new language to your brain is to go spend time immersed in that language and culture. I studied French for 4 years in high school. It wasn't until I *moved* to France that it clicked. Within 2 months, I was dreaming in French!

To maximize your time spent in immersion, start studying the language while still planning your immersive experience — it will help expedite your progress once you arrive, by setting you up with a basic knowledge of the language in the beginning, which you can then build on.



The Rosetta Stone, the original language key.

If immediate travel is not possible, consider taking a language class at a local community or city college. Another resource worth trying is hiring a native speaker to tutor you in person or online. I initially started learning Italian with a native speaker tutoring me in person. The tutor had a textbook that she recommended which I gladly tracked down. That method was a good start, albeit a bit pricy. The deal-breaker for me was that I had to travel to the tutor. This led me to discover online tutoring! What a life-changing discovery that turned out to be. For \$22 per class (45 minutes) you can find a native speaker to mentor you one on one from the comfort of your home on Skype. With this method if you make a mistake, the tutor can type out the correction instead of having to interrupt you. This allows you to either finish your thought or stop and implement the correction. If you are interested in finding an online native tutor check out Verbal Planet [www.verbalplanet.com](http://www.verbalplanet.com). They even offer the first lesson free of charge.

Becoming fluent in Italian greatly assisted me with getting my job as a tour manager with Adventures by Disney. Now that I am a mother, over the road work is less practical so I've concentrated on reinventing myself in my adopted city of San Diego. I've found that knowing French in San Diego, where so many guides and guests are fluent in Spanish, has been amazing. Having this niche skill has opened so many doors for me. Between visitors from Quebec, France, Belgium, and Switzerland, I get frequent requests for city tours in French. I am one of just a handful of French speaking city guides in San Diego. Americans have a reputation of expecting everyone to speak a little English, even when traveling to other countries. This stereotype is partly what motivated me to learn French in the first place.



Sometimes on my English-speaking city tours I will get French or Italian speakers who will seek me out and ask me to repeat something. Most often it's something logistical and important such as reconfirming what time the group needs to be back at the coach. But the look of relief in their eyes when they realize their American guide speaks their language is an amazing feeling. I encourage you all to go out and earn that feeling for yourselves.

**Jamie Rivaldi** is a member of the San Diego Professional Tour Guide Association. To tour with Jamie, contact [jmrivaldi@gmail.com](mailto:jmrivaldi@gmail.com).

## GUIDING WHILE FEMALE

by Megan Marod

“Your story is wrong,” the gentleman in an old worn out suit said. “Your story is wrong. You give Emily Roebling too much credit for the Brooklyn Bridge. Her husband could still speak. As long as he could speak, he was still in charge.”

“Can you shut up!” the middle-aged male tour leader with white hair shouted at me as I gave my narration

on the deck of a tour boat. “Shut up! Your voice sounds like my wife nagging!” He then turned to a male crew member and asked, “How can you stand listening to her nag all day?”

The man put his arm around me and held me close to his body, his face extremely near mine, I could smell the cough drop he was sucking, as he told me about the documentary he watched about the Empire State Building and wanted to know if I had watched the same one.

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I was standing by the boat holding my tip jar when a good-looking young man told me that if I wanted a tip, I would have to let him kiss my cheek.

“You’re a woman!” the group exclaimed when I approached. “We were expecting a male guide. We didn’t realize there were female tour guides.”

A company sent a tour request specifically looking for a female guide. The request asked for the guide to be attractive, to send a photo, and to be under 35 years old. I was about to celebrate my 37<sup>th</sup> birthday so I had to say no, I was too old.

These are all experiences I have had as a female guide. If you are one too, my guess is you have probably experienced similar if not worse. I have heard stories from colleagues who were told that their tip would be higher if they took their shirt off, being told that instead of a tip that they would receive a kiss, being asked if a dance or strip show is included with the tour, or being handed \$1,000 and a hotel key – when the hotel key was refused the \$1,000 was snatched away as well.

Often, men do not take me seriously or doubt my knowledge on a subject. There are those who do not hesitate to interrupt a story to question my sources. Some tell me about a YouTube video they watched that mysteriously told them the Empire State Building is where the government is housing uranium for the next nuclear war and that I should check it out of I’m going to keep talking about that building. Some criticize my voice or comment on how I “never shut up”. And some touch me superfluously. If I am standing next to a male guide, nine times out of ten, the customer will direct the question to the male guide

and not to me. This phenomenon even includes if the customer is asking where the ladies’ restroom is.

Have you encountered this too?

Of course, being woman has little to do with one’s skill – or lack thereof – as a guide. In my case, guiding skills do have everything to do with:

- Having a New York Sightseeing Guide License.
- Having a degree in history.
- Having over five years of guiding experience.
- Having a vast wealth of knowledge to draw from and I can pull a unique customized tour out of my hat with only a moment’s notice.
- Being a good problem solver, so if the tour hits a glitch, I can handle it with a clear cool head.
- Being a performer, so I know how to take the information I research, package it, and present it in a fun and engaging way.
- Having travelled the world and spent a lot of time in other cultures and relating to others both similar and extremely different from myself.

And, of course, I always show up prepared and on time.

My guiding style is very similar to several of my male colleagues, primarily because they trained me. But they rarely (if ever) get asked to take off their shirt on tour. The odds of my male colleagues being hugged or superfluously touched, questioned about their sources, or criticized for the timbre of their voice is far lower that of the female experiencing the same.

As I still seek a solution to this struggle and learn of more of my colleagues handling these weird situations,

I created a Facebook group called Girl Guides of NYC (which I’d love for all female readers to join no matter where in the world you guide your tours). There, we can specifically and explicitly discuss these issues and share stories. Happily, my male colleagues in the tourism industry have all been more than supportive and understanding. It is amazing to belong to a community where I feel safe, and protected, and heard.

**Megan Marod** is a member of the Guides Assn. of New York City. To tour with Megan, contact [meganmermaid@gmail.com](mailto:meganmermaid@gmail.com).



**Megan Marod guides while female on a boat tour in New York City.**

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# THE CURSE OF BILLY PENN IN THE CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE

by Josh Silver

*(With the happiness to note the death of the curse above and the tour guide who slayed its power!)*

In 1901, as Philadelphia's City Hall was opened, its tower, capped by a 37-foot high sculpture of Pennsylvania founder William Penn, became the city's highest point. While it would also be a poster child for the perceived excesses of Victorian aesthetics, it found a defender in Edmund Bacon – the city's planning director from 1949 to 1970 – who felt that its statue of the founder was a lynchpin for historical continuity and saw to it, through a “gentleman's agreement”, that no tower would rise above the brim of Penn's hat, at a height of 548 feet.

When guide Joe Becton said to me that perhaps “there are no gentlemen here anymore”, he may have been reflecting a big reason for Philadelphia not aiming higher – that of our attachment to the past, noted famously by English observer G. K. Chesterton in 1922 when he observed that here... “it still matters what Penn did 200 years ago or what Franklin did 100 years ago”.

This would all change notably when the City approved “One Liberty Place”, finished at a height of 945 feet in 1987. Whatever champagne was uncorked at that time would later turn sour, as dots were connected, from the last local major sports team to have gone all the way – the Sixers in '83 – to One Liberty – to years of all of our

major-league teams getting close to glory – but no gold rings, and the birth of the Curse as the reason for these losses – of our beloved Billy being dissed.

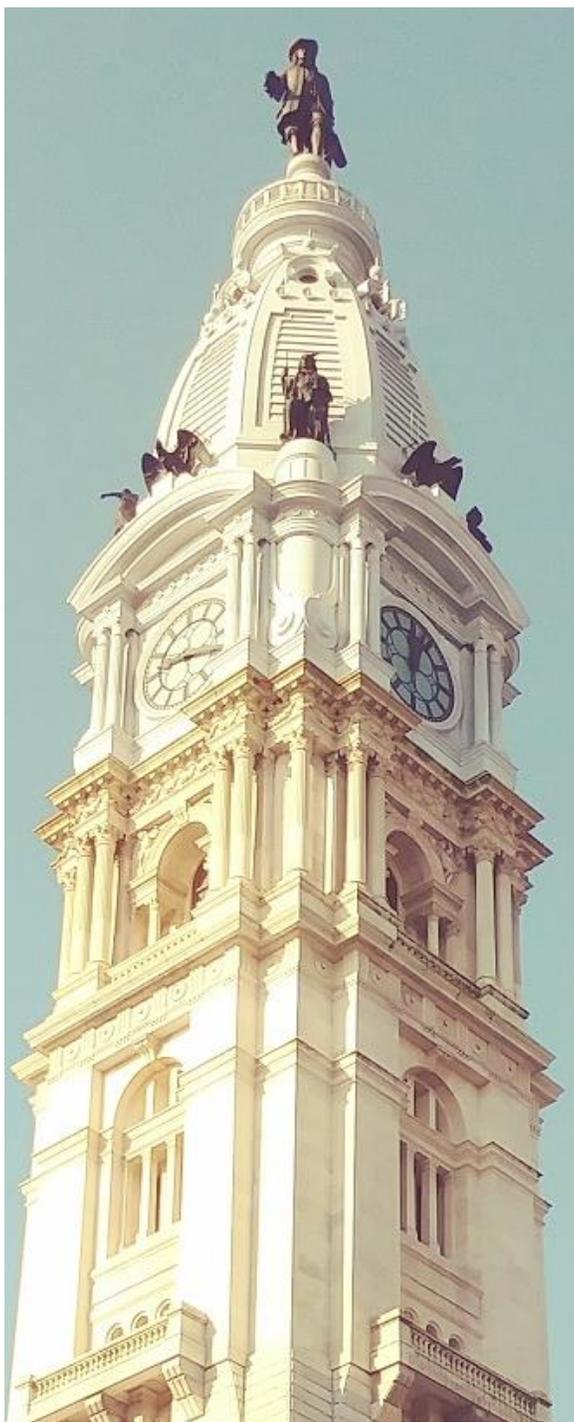
Still, as local guide Jenn Hensell observes, Philadelphians began to wear it as a badge of honor, fitting in with

the notion of a once-mighty industrial and – at the time – more of a down-at-the-heels post-boom place, of underdogs who must eventually triumph, like Rocky Balboa.

From a guide's perspective, the end of this wilderness began in 2007 when Greta Greenberger, then the head of tours at City Hall, gave a 13½-inch “Billy Penn” to Philadelphia's Comcast Corporation, prior to its placement on a top beam inside its 2008 tower and, voila, a few months after the tower debuted, the Phillies won the World Series! In late 2017, Comcast made sure to mount another mini-Penn at the top of a recently-finished second tower, about two months before the first Eagles championship in 58 years.

In the small sample of opinion here, a few colleagues would agree with Sam Heilman, a native Philadelphian and guide who notes that “putting statues of long dead men on top of buildings doesn't affect real world sports outcomes” while immediately adding... “[b]ut it worked!”

Likewise, in a way for John Hopkins, who oversees Ben Franklin and other souls at Christ Church Burial Ground



**The Pinnacle of Philadelphia City Hall**



**Greta  
Greenberger  
with her  
13½-inch  
Billy Penn**

and who keeps tabs on his own magic, including the example of how “in 2005, I put an Eagles flag on Franklin’s grave and they lost to the Patriots. So, this year, I waited until after they won the Super Bowl to put anything on his grave”.

Let’s give the last word to Greta, who retired in 2016 after 25 years as City Hall tour director. She feels that the Curse gave the tour program “lots of exposure” and enjoys being credited for “helping the Phillies to win the World Series”, while adding something that reminds us of how this city first emerged, led by the person I call the “man on top of City Hall”.

She felt that discussions spurred by awareness of the Curse “gave me a chance to speak of Penn’s character and my feelings that [he] would have been supportive and proud of his city, people, and teams” and has concluded that “I always stood firm in my belief that Penn would not put a curse on anything”.

**Josh Silver** is a member of the Association of Philadelphia Tourguides. To tour with Josh, contact [jarge222@gmail.com](mailto:jarge222@gmail.com).

## **Save the Dates for These Important Conferences**

**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**

**January 24-27, 2019  
NAI Joint Workshop: Wild West and Four Corners Region, Phoenix, AZ**

**January 25-29, 2019  
ABA Marketplace, Louisville, KY**

**February 7-10, 2019  
SYTA Summit, Colorado Springs, CO**

**February 17-24, 2019  
IATDG FunFam & Interpretive Certification Training Cruise, Galveston, TX**

## NFTGA AT SYTA

by Ellen Malasky

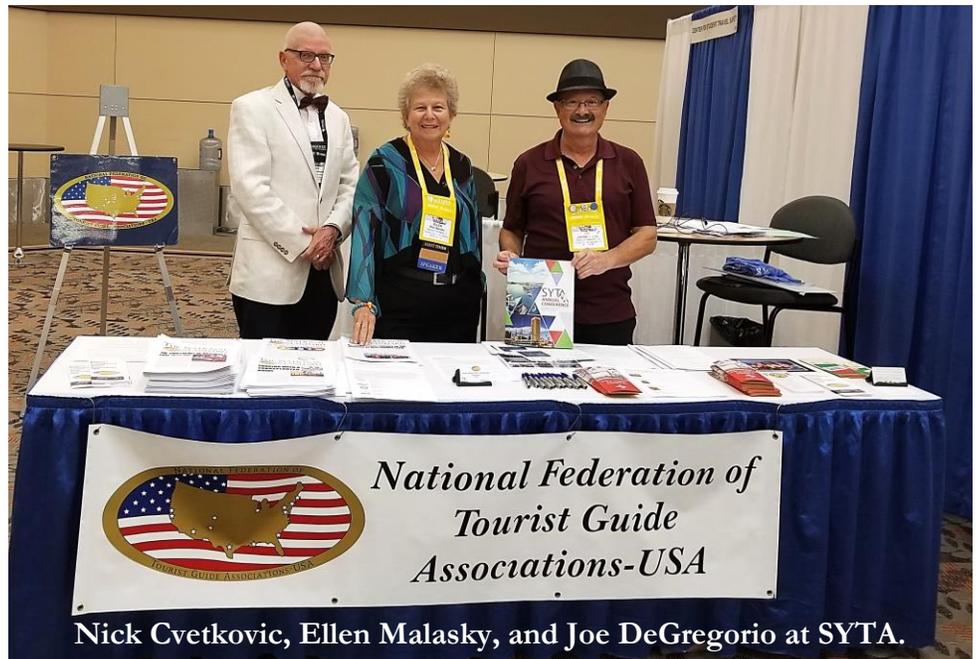
Nick Cvetkovic, Joe DeGregorio, and I represented NFTGA at the August 24 – 27 SYTA conference in Baltimore. We received, thanks to our status as Tourism Industry Partners, complimentary registration and a table at their showcase. The Conference attracted over 1,000 attendees of which over 100 were tour operators. The others were CVBs, DMCs, transportation companies, museums, attractions, etc. Over the course of the 3 days, the providers had 6-minute individual interviews with operators to educate and encourage the operators to use their services, etc. There were also educational sessions. Joan Keddell of ITMI and I presented an educational session titled *Ensuring a Successful Tour*, in which I discussed the importance of using professional guides and talked about NFTGA and our 19 member associations.

Each operator in attendance received an NFTGA brochure in their conference mailbox as well as information sheets and publicity materials from the member associations who provided them when requested. We also talked to those who came to our table and obtained information which we will send to the appropriate member associations.

Here are the most important lessons we learned:

### Information of Critical Importance to Guides and Action Items for NFTGA Associations

The overriding theme of the conference was Safety. With the tragic occurrences over the past few years, safety is top on the minds of those who take tours and/or send their children on tours. Tour operators are likewise concerned and yet I was dismayed that, when talking about safety, rarely is it mentioned that the tour guide/escort/manager is the one who will be responsible for taking action if an incident occurs. It is vital that tour guides and associations recognize the importance of training for emergencies so that we can act if something does happen.



Nick Cvetkovic, Ellen Malasky, and Joe DeGregorio at SYTA.

**Action Item #1:** Active shooter training and CPR training should be part of the education we offer our members. Homeland security offers materials, videos, etc. on active shooter situations: [www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness](http://www.dhs.gov/active-shooter-preparedness). Workshops can be arranged for your location and many are free. Another useful site is [www.ready.gov/active-shooter](http://www.ready.gov/active-shooter). You also might consider offering CPR training and refresher courses. SYTA in conjunction with the Center for Student Travel and Safety is developing guidelines for safety. More information on this project will be forthcoming as they progress.

**Action Item #2:** Operators asked about background checks on members as well as codes of ethics. In areas where guides are licensed, background checks may occur, but licensing is in a limited number of locations. Associations may wish to consider some sort of background check in their application processes. At a minimum, each association should have a code of ethics. If you don't have a code, I suggest you create one and have members confirm annually. NFTGA's code is on our web site.

**Action Item #3:** We should encourage operators, DMCs and CVBs to provide guides, teachers, etc. with informational material with key local emergency list serves, websites, etc. to keep abreast of what is happening in their geographic area and who to contact. I will follow up on this with SYTA and NTA. Also encouraged is for groups to use systems such as What's App to keep

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people informed and connected. There are companies developing communication tools.

We endeavor to have NFTGA participation in more Tourism Industry Partner conferences via booths and speaking opportunities, especially at the annual conferences of SYTA, NTA and ABA. We have reached out to our other Tourism Industry Partners for similar arrangements. NFTGA representatives are either board members or association members from the geographic area closest to the conference site. If there are opportunities in your geographic area for presentations to target groups on the importance of using professional guides, I am happy to provide my presentation as a starter and a pdf of our brochure for duplication and distribution.

Another goal of attending this event and other Tourism Industry Partner conferences is meeting people from CVB's to determine if there are guide associations in their area and if so, might they benefit from joining NFTGA and, if not, can we help them to form one. Joe DeGregorio will follow up with several locations.

Finally, and most importantly, our goal is to learn what is on the minds of tour operators and how we, as guides, can develop our professional skills and understand and help our TO's meet the challenges they face.

**Ellen Malasky** is President of NFTGA and a member of the Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington, DC. To tour with Ellen, contact [ellenguide1@gmail.com](mailto:ellenguide1@gmail.com).

## A NEW ERA FOR CHARLESTON GUIDES

by **Timothy E. Dillinger**

On October 1, all licensed tour guides in Charleston were changed to the status of "Certified Guide". For 30 years, the City of Charleston, South Carolina, has mandated that a testing program designed to ensure quality representations for paying guests was necessary to maintain the quality of experience that has been the foundation of the city's reputation as a world-renowned tourist destination. The city and the major tour operators agree that a mandatory licensing examination process was the most comprehensive way to promote professionalism in the industry. However, the recent ruling by the First District Judge Norton that this practice impeded on the First Amendment rights of three individuals and can no longer continue as before. The ruling has already prompted the tourism commission to make changes to the testing process: the passing grade dropped to 70 points and they have discontinued the oral portion of the exercise altogether. But, according to Judge Norton, more work must be done to comply with the law. The most recent ruling states that, at this time, the city government can no longer require this but have gone to only volunteer compliance pending further judicial review. This action could take several years to come to a conclusion. The City of Charleston has filed a motion for the judge to reconsider his decision and may choose to appeal to the Fourth Circuit Court.

This new tactic of offering the exam to those who volunteer to take it has caused a moderate increase in participants thus far. The city will offer continuing education courses and lectures to better educate would-be and current certified guides' options to further their studies and maintain their viability to charge for their experience and services delivered to the many discerning guests who flock to the "Holy City" every year.

Any individual wishing to be certified must currently volunteer to pass the exam to receive a valid certification to present a tour for hire. A certified guide must renew their certificate every three years by taking four hours of continuing education or retest. Courses are offered by the City or at varying historic venues, such as the Lunchtime Lecture Series offered by the Powder Magazine, for example.

A new photo identification badge will be introduced this month for all certified guides, and that group will include current guides and those who pass the exam. Note that anyone with a city business license, including the plumber, can give a tour. But the above group receives the badge. Any tour provider must first apply for an annual business license. Each company or individual must still comply with the ordinances and regulations that have been in effect.

**Timothy E. Dillinger** is a member of the Charleston Tour Assn. To tour with Tim, contact [captaindillinger@yahoo.com](mailto:captaindillinger@yahoo.com).

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## A VISIT TO THE ARCH (NEW MUSEUM AND GROUNDS) by Joe DeGregorio

In place of a regular meeting members of the PTGASTL are treated each August to a specially arranged tour somewhere in the metropolitan St. Louis area. This year's August 15 offering by Education Committee Chair Joan Huisinga was truly exceptional. The swell of pride the attending guides felt during the VIP tour of the new and expanded Gateway Arch museum and ride up the Arch top was reflected by St. Louis Cardinal Baseball Hall of Famer Ozzie Smith's quote during the museum and renovated Arch grounds grand reopening on July 3, 2018, "This icon represents us and defines us."

The museum, as expected, reflects the growth of St. Louis during the era of its founding in 1764 by the French, to the Louisiana Purchase and beyond. Some were struck by the historical balance that is present as the hardships thrust upon the Native Americans during the Westward expansion is also highlighted. The total renovation cost \$380 million and construction started in August, 2013. During the tour one esteemed association Member Emeritus, Jackie Bergman, provided a unique historical insight when she was overheard remarking to association Secretary Judy Gorin, "I was a young woman in 1939 when they cleared the land for the Arch and was very upset at all those businesses that were torn down, especially since construction wasn't begun until 20 years later due to World War II and other issues."

After the tour, PTGASTL President Joe Vogl led the group to the Becky Thatcher for a pleasant ride including lunch on Ol' Man River complete with historical narration by a local guide. All in all, a great day of touring, fellowship and fun.

**Joe DeGregorio** is a member of the Professional Tour Guides Association of St. Louis and an NFTGA Board Member at Large. To tour with Joe, contact [joe.dehillboy@gmail.com](mailto:joe.dehillboy@gmail.com).



Members of the Professional Tour Guide Association of Metropolitan St. Louis prepare to board the Becky Thatcher.

# OUR HOUSE —

## *The Lockkeeper's House*

by Joe Steinbeck

As tour buses turn south from Constitution Avenue onto 17<sup>th</sup> Street toward the national World War II Memorial, Washington, DC guides often call attention to a small stone structure on the southwest corner. This is the Lockkeeper's House, the oldest building on the National Mall. It is poised to become much more lively.

To the north, across Constitution Avenue, the house faces the main headquarters building of the Organization of American States. Most countries in the western hemisphere belong to this organization.

Across 17<sup>th</sup> Street, looking southeast, towers the iconic Washington Monument. Immediately south of the house are low concrete structures that are elements of a flood control system of levees and removable walls developed by the Army Corps of Engineers to protect the city. Further south is the National World War II Memorial.

Tour guides like to say that the lockkeeper raised many children in the two story, 350 square foot house, though there is scant evidence of this. What is clear is that the lockkeeper collected tolls and kept records in this 1837 house, for this is where the private Chesapeake and Ohio Canal extension met the Washington City Canal.

Opened in 1815, the City Canal was designed to connect the Eastern Branch (now called the Anacostia River) with Tiber Creek and the Potomac River.

The C & O Canal extension was located on what is now 17<sup>th</sup> Street heading north and west to join the main C&O Canal in Georgetown. From there the canal continued for 184 miles along the Potomac River to Cumberland, Maryland. That Canal provided regular transport of goods and commodities such as coal between the Allegheny mountains and Washington before competition from the railroads brought this commerce to an end. From Georgetown to the west, the Chesapeake and Ohio



Interior Exhibit

Canal continues today as a National Historic Park.

Over time the City Canal fell into disuse and was a public health and safety hazard to the city. In 1870 “Boss” Shepherd, then head of Washington’s Department of Public Works, began the process of covering the Tiber Creek portion of the canal. First designated “B” Street, this is today Constitution Avenue, NW.

The Lockkeeper’s house remained and over the years was used for various purposes including a restroom, tool shed, a watchman’s lodge, and temporary holding cell for Park Police.

In October 2017, the house was relocated approximately 50 feet to the south and west of its former location. You can watch a time-lapse video of the relocation here: <https://youtu.be/-PWBGFUiKb4>. This was the first step in a planned restoration and repurposing of the building to become an information and visitors center.

According to the National Park Service, “The site will feature a new visitor-friendly entrance, education displays inside the house, and a surrounding outdoor plaza.”

This project is one of a several now underway that will benefit visitors to Washington, DC when completed. Others include repairs and improvements to the Washington Monument and major improvements to the Lincoln Memorial and enhancements to the nearby Constitution Gardens portion of the National Mall.

The move and restoration are supported by the Foundation for the National Mall and private donations from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Volkswagen Group of America, American Express Company, Clark Charitable Foundation, and Dr. Scholl Foundation, among others.

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Lockkeeper's House

# TECH TALK

## OLD DOGS, NEW TRICKS

by Donna Primas



After many happy decades of touring groups around your city or area, you may arrive at a point when your knees protest the stairs, you lose the desire or the ability to do long walks, or you simply want a change of pace. One way that you can still share your wealth of knowledge with interested audiences is to put together PowerPoint presentations and join the speaker circuit.

Tour guides, in particular, are well equipped for this task as they are used to conducting research and comfortable speaking in front of groups, large or small. Further, there is no shortage of topics that a good tour guide you can talk about: architecture, history, sculptures, fountains, tall buildings, parks and gardens, bridges, trains, famous people, a look at a decade or moment in time, world's fairs, flora and fauna, food, science, technology, etc. Just choose a topic you are passionate about or want to learn more about, and dive in!

One of the best things about a visual presentation is that it is not limited by street access, weather, or the energy and fitness level of the group! A simple history lesson or a virtual highlights tour might be well received by corporate planners, or senior and student groups who want an orientation and have a shortage of time.

PowerPoint is the modern-day equivalent of a "slide presentation." It is part of the Microsoft Office family of programs and there are many videos and step-by-step tutorials available on-line to help you master the software. There is a variety of colorful themed slide backgrounds (mesh, ion, circuit, celestial, slice) to make your presentation stand out, as well as diverse slide formats (title, section header, two content, comparison, quote, blank) If you don't have a Microsoft subscription, google (search for) "free equivalents to PowerPoint" and you will find 10+ similar programs that cost nothing.

For document research, check with a reference librarian to see what resources may be accessible via a city or university portal. By accessing library resources via the internet and signing in with your library card, you might be amazed at the maps, imagery, and articles that you can access free of charge in the comfort of your own home! At the Chicago public library, you can access Sanborn Insurance fire maps dating back to 1894, archives of

current and defunct newspapers from 1849 to the present, a timeline of history that links key events to books in the collection, genealogy information, and more!

Several other internet sources have scanned out-of-print and out-of-copyright books. The Hathi Trust Project [www.hathitrust.org](http://www.hathitrust.org) is one of my favorite resources of this type. It is a partnership of academic and research institutions that provides online access or downloadable books that have been digitized by libraries around the world. Old or rare books that may cost hundreds of dollars to purchase may be viewed online!

If you have a penchant for digital photography (using your phone or a real camera), you may be able to snap photos to illustrate the talking points of your presentation. If not, turn to the internet for photos. Wikipedia, Pinterest, Trip Advisor, Facebook and other social media sources can be explored for images. Check with organizations in your area (history museum, historical or genealogical societies, libraries, universities) that may have collections of photos that can be used for educational presentations. Search for "royalty free images" and you will find that there are more than a dozen sites offering access to thousands of photos, maps, drawings and graphic designs. Just remember to credit the sources for the images you use.

Now that you have a presentation, who can you approach? Libraries are perhaps the best potential source as there are so many, especially when you count those in the suburban areas around large cities. Senior centers—both those run by local municipalities and upscale live-in communities—may hire speakers weekly or monthly as part of "lifetime learning" programs. Historical and genealogical societies hire speakers who can paint vivid pictures of different eras, so the audience can better visualize life in their community or those of their antecedents.

Is all this work worth it? You decide. In the Chicago area, a presentation of 45 minutes to 1.5 hours may earn you \$150 to \$250. Although you might invest 20 to 40 hours developing each presentation, once you have given it, you can update it, tailor it to a new audience, and give it again and again!

**Donna Primas** has worked as a guide in the Chicago area since 1983. She joined the speakers circuit in 2012 and receives rave reviews for her PowerPoint presentations. To tour with Donna, contact [primascopy@aol.com](mailto:primascopy@aol.com).