

THE NATIONAL STANDARD



www.NFTGA.COM

The Newsletter of the National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations

AUTUMN 2019

GEARING UP FOR THE 2020 CONFERENCE

by Robin Hillyer Miles

The National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations will hold its biennial conference from Feb. 5-7, 2020 in Charleston, South Carolina. Registration is open and rates run from \$50 for one day's lectures to \$325 for full registration for NFTGA members, if registered before the **early bird deadline of Dec. 31, 2019**.

For more information and to make reservations, visit www.nftga.com/conference-2020.html.

This national conference will showcase industry lectures, roundtable discussions, mixers, and location outings. The 2020 conference begins with a carriage tour of Charleston's historic district on Wednesday, February 5 at 3pm and ends with day lectures on Friday, February 7. In between, attendees will find all sorts of informative events and classes.

Magnolia Plantation and Gardens (established in 1676 and named "America's Oldest Romantic Gardens") will host a traditional Low-country oyster roast and pig-picking BBQ in their 1840's carriage house in the evening on Wednesday, February 5.

A complimentary certified guide-led stroll through Marion Square will be given on Thursday morning to those staying at the Francis Marion Hotel, the conference hotel.

The conference lectures will be hosted at the Charleston Museum, which was founded in 1773 and is known as "America's First Museum".



Magnolia Gardens

ON A MISSION: AN 800-MILE WALK TO DISCOVER CALIFORNIA'S EL CAMINO REAL

by Maggie Espinosa

"In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, amen," were the priest's final words of his blessing for me before I embarked from the Mission San Diego de Alcalá to walk 800 miles along the El Camino Real, visiting California's 21 missions. I wasn't soul searching. I'm not an endurance athlete. I'm an ordinary 54-year old woman.

Why, then, did I take on such an endeavor? Perhaps the answer would come with the steps. Do I believe in God? Yes. Do I pray? Yup. But, that's not what this was about. I love to set goals and meet them. It's part of

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF TOURIST GUIDE ASSOCIATIONS

888 Seventeenth Street, NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20006
info@nftga.com



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.

Officers of the NFTGA Board

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MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: Joe DeGregorio
NFTGA NEWSLETTER: Matthew Baker
OUTREACH TO INDUSTRY PARTNERS: Ellen Malasky

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CONTENT DISCLAIMER: The statements contained within the articles and columns of this newsletter are the perspectives, viewpoints, and opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the NFTGA Board of Directors.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES: Featured articles must be 1,000 words or fewer. Recurring columns must be 500 words or fewer. Deadline for the Winter 2020 issue of *The National Standard* is 5:00 pm, Thursday, January 16, 2020.

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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USING GUIDES OVERSEAS

by Joe DeGregorio

Planned by one of my sisters, most of my siblings, significant others, and I recently traveled to Sicily to trace our roots and visit some major cities. This package deal set up by a travel agency included step-on tour guides to every city. I am using the term "tour guide" loosely as, out of the four used, only one was a certified professional guide. The other three turned out to be nothing more than English-speaking translators. My Tour Guide girlfriend and I had to coach them on giving tours and after filling in their collective gaps on subject matter knowledge with our Googled information, we hopefully inspired them to be a more informed guide next time or at least turn down a similar gig. Lesson learned? When booking a trip privately that includes tour guide(s), insist that the guide not only speak your native tongue clearly but be either a certified guide or very knowledgeable of the subject matter.

Joe DeGregorio is a member of the Professional Tour Guides Assn. of St. Louis and an NFTGA Board Member at Large. To tour with Joe, contact joe.dehillboy@gmail.com.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



With the leaves finally turning, the current NFTGA Board also is turning. We're looking back on the past two years with the satisfaction of many of the things we have achieved and looking forward to the next Board building an even stronger association. Accomplishing this will depend on both the Board efforts

and the active participation of our association members. It should be an exciting next two years.

Most exciting in the coming months is the biennial NFTGA Conference being held in Charleston, SC on February 5-7, 2020. The Charleston Tour Association has put together an outstanding conference with a mixture of valuable education programs and local activities. This conference gives NFTGA members (and all association members are NFTGA members) the opportunity to meet guides from all around the country and share ideas, leading practices and have fun. See details about the conference in this newsletter. *Please* register as soon as possible to take advantage of the early bird discount and help the conference committee continue their planning.

Just prior to the Conference the Delegates meeting will be held. Each NFTGA association is encouraged to send a delegate to the conference to review and vote on issues impacting NFTGA and its ability to serve the associations. At the meeting there will be the final voting on 2020-2021 Board, review and revision of the NFTGA By-laws, and discussion of issues the associations would like the Board to tackle over the next two years. *Please* encourage your association to send a delegate.

Wishing you all a great Fall and a happy holiday season!

Ellen Malasky
NFTGA President

FROM THE EDITOR



To say that the last two years, as I have held the office of NFTGA Secretary, have been eventful and exhausting would be like saying the Grand Canyon is large and deep — truthful but an understatement of epic proportions. I don't say this to discourage those who are currently running for the board; far from it. I have learned great lessons and made wonderful contacts during my time of service. I had every intention of running again and the only reason I'm not is because of various obligations closer to home that chew up a lot of time and energy. So I applaud and encourage all of our candidates and, once those who win the election take office, I will be here cheering you on.

But don't worry! I'm not going anywhere. My duties as secretary and as newsletter editor are not connected to each other and, as some of you may recall, I was editor for two years before serving on the board and have every intention of continuing for as long as the following administrations wish to keep me.

In the meantime, please keep sending your fabulous articles and columns. I am consistently stunned at the brilliantly eloquent contributions I read from my friends all across the country, often on topics I never imagined I would think about at all, let alone capture my fascination as firmly as they have when you write about them. Like many culture vultures, I'm a naturally greedy fellow — I hunger for more. So bring 'em on!

Matthew Baker
Editor-in-Chief

GEARING UP FOR THE 2020 CONFERENCE *continued from page 1*

Middleton Plantation

Later that day, the educational sessions continue at Middleton Place, the home of a signer of the Declaration of Independence and backdrop location for parts of the filming of the movie *The Patriot*. At Middleton, guests will be treated to lunch, a house and garden tour, and a trip through the 18th century stable yard.



Middleton Plantation Grounds

Old Exchange & Provost Dungeon

The evening ends with a gala in the ballroom at the Old Exchange and Provost Dungeon (circa 1771) where President George Washington was entertained — four times! — during his visit in 1791.

The lectures include:

Ethically Interpreting History
Inclusiveness: How to Make it Happen
Taste of the Town: A Guide for Culinary Tourism
Tourism Marketing: What's Hot, What's Not
The Experience: It's More than a Tour, It's the Experience
The9-1-1: What Should You Do?

For specific questions about the conference, please email CTA President Lee Ann Bain at charlestantourassociation@gmail.com.

We can't wait to see you in Charleston!



Old Exchange & Provost Dungeon

Robin Hillyer Miles is a member of the Charleston Tour Association. To tour with Robin, contact rhillyermiles@gmail.com.

ON A MISSION *continued from page 1*

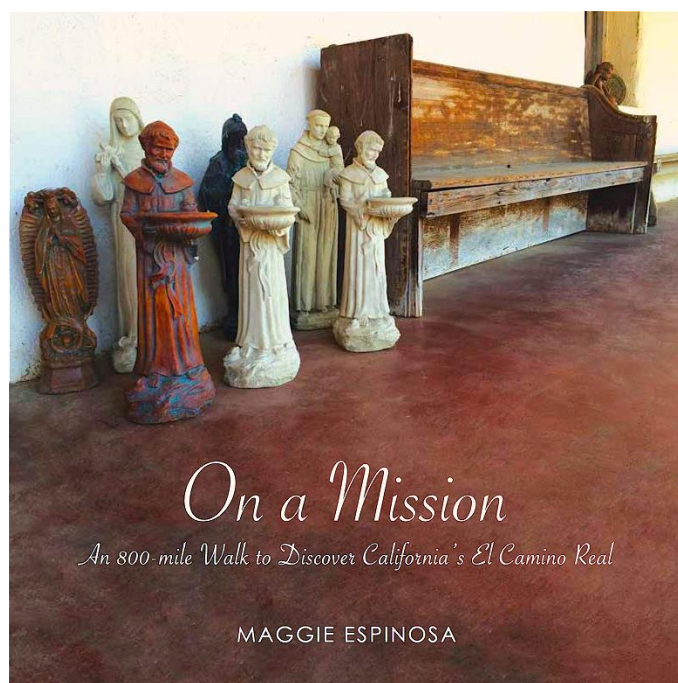
who I am. It springs from my younger years when I didn't complete a few major tasks, which I regret. I didn't know how much this lofty ambition would push me to my limit.

I divided my peregrination into 12 months, taking four days each month to cover approximately 75 miles, with Amtrak as my chauffeur to and fro. Google Maps and *A Hiker's Guide to California's 21 Spanish Missions* were my compass. Before launch, I sent an email inviting friends and family to join me on any segment of the excursion. A surprising number said yes.

My buddy, Tracey Elliott, signed up for the first leg in November, 2013, from San Diego to San Juan Capistrano. After two days and 45 miles of winding through Kearny Mesa, Torrey Pines and Cardiff, we entered Oceanside's Mission San Luis Rey. "You're mission walkers," exclaimed a church volunteer as we ambled into the chapel, laden with our backpacks. Unbeknown to us, we were rock stars in the ecumenical world.

Fueled with false bravado, we continued north to our destination. During the remaining 20-plus-mile days, life stories were regaled, jaw-dropping sunsets witnessed and thousands of laughs shared.

This was the blueprint each month. My fellow pilgrims were from all walks of life, ages, professions and religious



beliefs — a flight attendant, a Franciscan Friar, a medical writer, a pet groomer, an architect — all brought together by California's Royal Road.

Along the way, my companions and I expected sore bodies and pep talks when fatigue commandeered our fervor. What we didn't expect was the kindness of strangers. The California Mission Walkers (CMW), a group of El Camino Real enthusiasts, followed my escapades on Facebook. Having never met any members, I was astonished when affiliates asked to walk with me, and with nothing more than an email to acquaint us, graciously provided guest rooms and meals to my cadre.

A few months into the walk, my father passed away in Florida from a stroke. The following weeks were dedicated to processing the loss, planning his memorial, and flying east to lay him to rest. With a heavy heart, I reluctantly resumed my walk in May. I needed to cover twice as much ground to make up for lost mileage. As I fought off tears, I asked myself what was keeping me going? Sheer will prompted me to put one foot in front of the other. I thought about the time when I phoned Dad to tell him I was walking past a field of our favorite vegetable — artichokes. He had chuckled.

In subsequent months, CMW members, family and friends continued to traverse the King's Highway with me, softening the loss. We geocached through the redwoods, dined overlooking Morro Rock, toured Salinas' John Steinbeck Museum, toddled across the Golden Gate Bridge, and attended Mass at San Carlos

Borromeo de Carmelo Mission, where Junipero Serra, the founder of numerous missions, is buried.

I rounded the last corner to the final mission on Nov. 5 with my husband by my side. Tears streamed from my eyes as a year's worth of emotions surfaced. I'd accomplished a daunting goal — the 11th person to complete this sojourn. I wanted to call my Dad to say "I finished." Perhaps he knew.

I learned so much on this odyssey. Relationships are the heartbeat of life. There is a reserve deep inside everyone when called upon. Humanity is good.

I kept a journal and took lots of photos while I walked. As the journey progressed, my entries became more contemplative. I've compiled everything into a book titled *On A Mission, An 800-mile Walk to Discover California's El Camino Real*. It may be purchased on my website: <http://travelwithmaggie.com/blog/global-personal-shopper/#!/On-a-Mission-An-800-mile-Walk-to-Discover-Californias-El-Camino-Real/p/53258600/category=5330968>.

Maggie Espinosa is a travel journalist and a member of the San Diego Professional Tour Guide Association. To tour with Maggie, contact magstravels@aol.com.



TECH TALK—*Meeting Flights at Airports... Hurry Up and Wait!*

by Donna Primas

For many foreign language guides, the first encounter with a group may be in the international terminal, waiting with a sign outside the secured customs and immigration area, hoping the group will exit via the door they are standing by and see the group sign amid the sea of placards with individual's names and corporate logos.

Other guides may meet their clients in the domestic baggage claim area for their arrival flight.

Still others may “work the airport” when a large group is arriving, and spend the entire day moving from one luggage carousel or terminal to another, with a sign and sometimes a luggage cart that has been found abandoned outdoors. The job may mean receiving individuals or assorted size groups and delivering them to transportation that passes every fifteen or thirty minutes or transportation that has been specifically ordered and needs to be called up when the guests have all their luggage and are ready to depart.

Veteran airport workers know that one of the best ways

to track a single flight (or all the flights to be met) is to use an app. Sure you can Google the two letter airline code and the flight number to find flight data, but the apps make tracking one or many flights much easier. Meeting a single flight, you could use an airline or airport app. But better yet is using a single flight tracking app for all the flights you meet!

My favorite is the free version of **Flight View** (www.flightview.com). (Another flight app, although not as good, is Flight Aware.) If you take the time at the beginning of your shift or the night prior and enter in all the flights on your group manifest, you can easily be informed of flight delays, cancellations, arrival gates, and baggage claims—even when they change—without ever having to make a call or look for an airline information screen in an airport terminal. As an added bonus, this app has ALL the airlines flight data and is refreshed more often making it more accurate and more up-to-date than most single airline terminal screens! *See three screen shots from a recent Boston program below for the appearance of data.*

The image displays three screenshots of the Flight View mobile application interface, showing flight tracking data for September 21, 2019.

Screenshot 1: My Trips
This screen shows a list of flights from Boston, MA. The flights listed are:
- Phoenix to Boston: AA 1569, Sep 21, Past Flight
- Dallas to Boston: AA 1148, Sep 21, Past Flight
- Chicago to Boston: AA 834, Sep 21, Landed
A banner at the bottom says "Need a Hotel for your trip? Book one now!" with a link to Hipmunk.

Screenshot 2: Flight Details (Phoenix to Boston)
This screen shows details for flight AA 1569 from Phoenix to Boston. It includes:
- Actual Takeoff: 9:25 AM, Sep 21
- Estimated Arrival: 4:42 PM, Sep 21
- Updated: 4:38 PM, Sep 21
Below this, it shows details for flight AA 1148 from Dallas to Boston and flight AA 834 from Chicago to Boston.

Screenshot 3: Flight Details (American (AA) 834)
This screen shows details for flight AA 834 from Chicago, IL (O'Hare) to Boston, MA (BOS). It includes:
- Status: Landed
- Departure: Chicago, IL (O'Hare) (ORD)
- Scheduled: 1:07 PM, Sep 21
- Takeoff: 1:41 PM, Sep 21
- Terminal-Gate: T3 - H9
- Current Weather: 48°F / 9°C
- Arrival: Boston, MA (BOS)
- Scheduled: 4:29 PM, Sep 21
- Landed: 4:33 PM, Sep 21
- Terminal-Gate: B - B4
- Baggage: 1
- Current Weather: 59°F / 15°C
- Aircraft's Previous Flight: American (AA) 140

Other airport work helpful hints:

- Wear good walking shoes or athletic shoes with good support. Standing and walking on hard floors all day is tough on your feet.
- Have a clear clip board with a secure clamp to hold your arrival manifest and paperwork and to display your client's logo or the group name. I like to put a clear page protector over my paperwork, to keep it dry and legible, if the weather is wet.
- Minimize the items you will carry in the terminal and make certain your work bag can sit on your shoulder or back or be worn bandolero style across your body to discourage thieves and pick pockets.
- Carry approved photo ID suitable for traveling. Once I was issued a ticket so I could stay with the group until they were on board their flight to Ireland and the plane was "wheels up". I needed my passport to get through security. Another time I was the last to leave the airport for the day and needed to present my ID to pick up a late arriving suitcase on behalf of a traveler in my group.
- Pre-program your phone with the transportation company's dispatch number or contact the driver via text or a call prior to your need. Keep them updated if there are long delays or if the group size changes at the last minute. This ensures quick communication when you want the transport as you may already know the vehicle color and license plate, driver's name, legal pick-up point, etc.
- Take a bottle of water or a refillable container as well as a snack of some kind with you. I like to have an apple, a tasty Belvita breakfast bar (almost as good as a cookie but better for you), or a Kind or Clif bar that are made from natural ingredients, including nuts for protein. A long delay may leave you hungry and thirsty and there are usually few beverage and snack options on the street side of security. One travel director I know swears by the pouches of applesauce or other pureed fruits and juice boxes for an energy boost. Although some airports advertise that airport pricing cannot be higher than pricing in other parts of the city or area

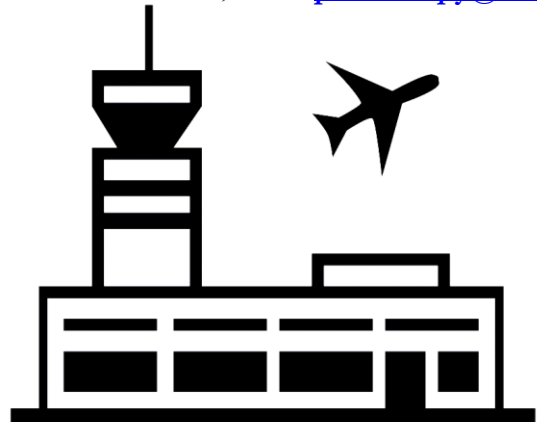
shops, others really gouge travelers by heavily inflating prices in airport terminals—so carrying your beverage and snack means instant gratification and saving money, too.

- If you will really be at the airport all day, investigate having a real meal of take-out food delivered to you and your co-workers. You would be surprised that airport area restaurants with delivery services take it in stride to bring take-out orders to a specific terminal and door. You may even be able to order and pay via an app such as GrubHub or UberEats.
- If you are working away from your home area, check local rules on the airport website or with a local DMC. On a recent Boston program, a colleague discovered that according to local laws, only individuals that have registered with the airport should be holding signs and greeting flights in the public baggage claim area. When in another city, we found that all signage used to greet guests must be no bigger than a sheet of standard sized 8.5" x 11" paper and must be taken to an airport administrative office to be stamped (approved) before it could be displayed by the greeter when meeting guests.

I hope that this article has given you some tips that will help your next arrival day operate seamlessly, no matter the size of the group that is arriving!

Are there other ins and outs you have learned on the job and want to share? Post them on the NFTGA Facebook page for others to know!

Donna Primas is a docent, corporate staff, business owner, lecturer, and member of the Chicago Tour-Guide Professionals Assn. To tour with Donna, contact primascopy@aol.com.



COMMERCIAL USE AUTHORIZATIONS AT THE NATIONAL PARKS

by Norman Desmarais

The motorcoach fee at Minute Man National Historical Park (and at all other national park areas) has been postponed to January 1, 2020. It appears that the American Bus Association is working to get this rule postponed even more, or outright changed.

The National Park Service (NPS) has made several important policy changes to their Commercial Use Authorization (CUA) program over recent weeks:

- They have delayed the implementation of commercial use authorization fees, which consisted of the \$300.00 per park application fee, plus a \$5.00 per passenger management fee.
- The program will no longer go into effect October 1, 2019 but is currently scheduled to be enforced starting on April 1, 2020. • Park entrance fees are slated to switch back from the per-person entrance fees to the old motorcoach-based vehicle entrance fees.
- Operators will no longer need to keep detailed records of how many passengers under 16 years of age participated in their trip, as they are now exempt from both park entrance fees and CUA management fees.
- Parks are now able to secure waivers from the NPS and opt out from the CUA program. Eleven NPS units have been granted waivers to date.

A commercial use authorization allows an individual, group, company, or other for-profit entity to conduct commercial activities and provide specific visitor services within a national park unit. The National Park Service issues CUAs to manage a wide range of commercial visitor services in addition to road-based commercial tours. Depending on the park, this can include guided mountaineering and backpacking, bike tours, kayak trips, photography workshops, scuba diving classes, fishing trips, and much more.

Federal law mandates the NPS issue CUAs only for commercial activities and visitor services that are determined to be an appropriate use of the park; will have minimal impact on park resources and values; and are consistent with the park purpose, management plans, policies, and regulations.

The NPS requires CUAs because it is illegal to conduct business in a park area without a permit, contract, or other written agreement. Additionally, Public Law 105-391 Section 418, passed in 1998, provides NPS the authority to issue CUAs to allow business operations and requires NPS to collect a reasonable fee for CUA administration and management.

A CUA is required if you provide any goods, activities, services, agreements, or other function for members, clients, or the public that take place at least in part on lands managed by the National Park Service; use park resources; and result in compensation, monetary gain, benefit, or profit. CUAs are managed at the park level.

CUA applications and associated information, including requirements for additional documentation, are available through each park's website or CUA office. Early planning helps ensure you have a CUA in-hand before you start commercially operating. For more information about applications and fees, see www.nps.gov/aboutus/commercial-useauthorizations.htm.

As a condition of the CUA, all CUA holders in the NPS are required to complete the annual CUA report (NPS Form 10-660). The form includes questions about visitor use statistics, reportable injury data, and gross receipts earned from operations in the NPS. The information requested and collected by the annual CUA report is Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approved. The annual CUA report is due early in the calendar year for the preceding operating year (e.g., report for 2019 will be due in early 2020). Additionally, some parks require you to submit a monthly CUA report (NPS Form 10-660A) that includes questions only about visitation statistics and reportable injury data.

The National Park Service defines a road-based commercial tour operator as one or more persons traveling by vehicle on an improved roadway on an itinerary that a company or individual has packaged and priced for leisure/recreational purposes. Road-based commercial tours generally provide no other visitor services except those incidental to road-based travel in an NPS unit (on-board interpretation and

information, and incidental stops at visitor centers, restaurants, wayside exhibits, etc.). At the discretion of the park superintendent, however, road-based commercial tour CUAs may cover minor additional services such as guided day hiking.

Transportation-only services such as taxis, shuttles, and chartered motorcoach companies do not meet the definition of road-based commercial tours if those services are not prepackaged. Parks may issue these transportation-only providers a road-based transportation CUA if the park superintendent decides managing the use is necessary for preservation and proper management of park resources and values.

The responsibility for obtaining a road-based commercial tour CUA falls on the company that packages, prices, and operates the tour. A chartered motorcoach company does not need a road-based commercial tour CUA if

the tour company paying for charter service determines the origin, destination, and scheduling of the trip. A charter company advertising tours to national parks, however, meets the definition of road-based commercial tour and must have a road-based commercial tour CUA.

Parks may continue issuing chartered transportation providers a road-based transportation CUA if managing the use is necessary for preservation of park resources and values (e.g., limited or controlled parking availability). When a tour company uses the services of a chartered transportation company with a road-based transportation CUA, the tour company does not need to secure a separate CUA unless the tour group disembarks from the vehicle while within the park.

Norman Desmarais is the newsletter editor for the Greater Boston Tour Guide Association. To tour with Norm, contact NORMD@providence.edu.

OUR HOUSE—*The Marston House* by Keri Belisle

One of San Diego's best-kept homes is located north of Balboa Park. The Marston House was constructed in 1905 for George W. Marston, his wife Anna, their five children, Anna's mother and her nurse. George Marston was a prominent San Diego philanthropist, conservationist, civic leader and department store owner. He is known as the "Father of Balboa Park."

The Craftsman home was designed and built by local architects William Hebbard and Irving Gill and is one of the few large Arts & Crafts residences they designed that remains in near-original condition. It sits on five acres along the northwest side of Balboa Park. It is 8,500 square feet and consists of 4 floors. The brick foundation encloses a finished basement with laundry and furnace rooms. The first floor is brick over frame construction and contains the main living spaces of the house. The second floor is stuccoed hollow tile over frame and includes six bedrooms, four baths, and a sitting room. The attic floor has shingled dormers and consists of two small bedrooms for the maid and cook, a bathroom, a large central room, and a smaller room. An unfinished attic space above the north wing still retains a large drip pan, part of the original solar water heating system.

The completed house and gardens cost \$20,000.

The house became a museum in 1987 after the Marston family gifted it to the City of San Diego for the enjoyment of the public. Tours are given of the gardens and the interior of the house by the Save Our Heritage Organization. While we have quite a few Arts & Crafts style and bungalow homes, this one is in almost perfect condition and is open to the public. I have toured it several times. It is also a popular wedding spot.

Keri Belisle is President of the San Diego Professional Tour Guide Association. To tour with Keri, contact keriwashere@gmail.com.



Marston House today



Marston House in 1905

SAN FRANCISCO TOUR GUIDE ARRESTED FOR ESPIONAGE

by Joe DeGregorio

What is believed to be the first ever arrest of a tour guide for spying in the US occurred in late September as the Justice Department unsealed charges against Xuehua “Edward” Peng. Peng, a US naturalized citizen, was conducting tours with Chinese-speaking tourists in the San Francisco area. Apparently using his role as a tour guide as a cover, Peng would use dead drops in the US to retrieve what he thought was highly classified material stored in a digital card, not knowing he was caught in an FBI sting operation. Peng had traveled to China to pass these digital cards to MSS, the Chinese spy agency. According to David Anderson, US Attorney for the Northern District of California, the case represents a combination of age-old spycraft and modern technology. Len Holmes, former President of the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild, has stated that he is positive Mr. Peng was *not* a member of their Guild as they have only one Mandarin-speaking member and it isn’t Peng.

This case presented an ironic twist for me in that my previous career was tied to preventing and detecting espionage and the protection of classified information. I was kidded by some of my still working peers in Government to wit: “Do we now have to be watching out for you, Joe D.?” and “Are you still working with us, and using your tour guide career as a cover?”

Joe DeGregorio *is a member of the Professional Tour Guides Assn. of St. Louis and an NFTGA Board Member at Large. To tour with Joe, contact joe.dehillboy@gmail.com.*



Save the Dates for These Important Events

November 12-16, 2019
NAI National Conference
Denver, CO

December 8-12, 2019
NTA Travel Exchange
Fort Worth, TX

January 10-14, 2020
ABA Marketplace
Omaha, NE

January 22-26, 2020
SYTA Summit
San Juan, PR

February 5-7, 2020
NFTGA Biennial Conference
Charleston, SC

TRIP ADVISOR (AND OTHER ADVICE) by Adrienne I. Chiron

I recommend that you consider joining *Trip Advisor*. To cover the cost of membership, be sure to add 20% to your tour packages. Also, place the price as the same whether for 1 or 2 passengers. Print that your tours are magic and they see and hear your destination where tour vehicles cannot compare for the value.

Kept me working through the summer.

Know your hotels and concierges in your area. I used to make a presentation folder and they changed so often that I only give it to the sales director. Now I send the price list for the tours and mention that I give a commission – if that fits their policy – to whomever sells the tours.

Adrienne I. Chiron *is Vice President of the Professional Tour Guides Assn. of Florida and owner of Travel Trackers. To tour with Adrienne, contact traveltrackers@aol.com.*

BECOME A PART OF HISTORY

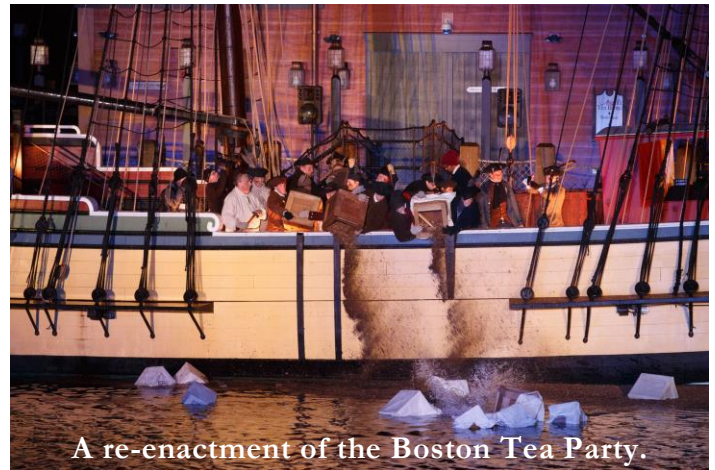
by Norman Desmarais

We guides talk a lot about history but we seldom have an opportunity to become part of it. The Old South Meeting House and the Boston Tea Party Ships and Museum sponsor an annual commemoration of the Boston Tea Party. The event is commemorated on the actual day of the tea party, December 16. This year marks the 246th anniversary of the event.

This is a family-friendly event in which the public can participate. The “Meeting of the Body of the People” begins at 6:30pm at the Old South Meeting House where historical reenactors debate the issues related to the tax on tea. (I have been performing the role of William Cooper, the town clerk, for the past four or five years. Prior to that, I portrayed Benjamin Edes, publisher of the *Boston Gazette*.)

After the scripted portion of the debate, the general public can voice their support or objections to the tax. As the town meeting rages inside the Old South Meeting House, the Town Crier brings news to the streets so the crowds outside can also participate.

When Francis Rotch, owner of the *Dartmouth*, makes a final, unsuccessful plea to the governor for permission to leave the harbor without unloading the tea, the meeting

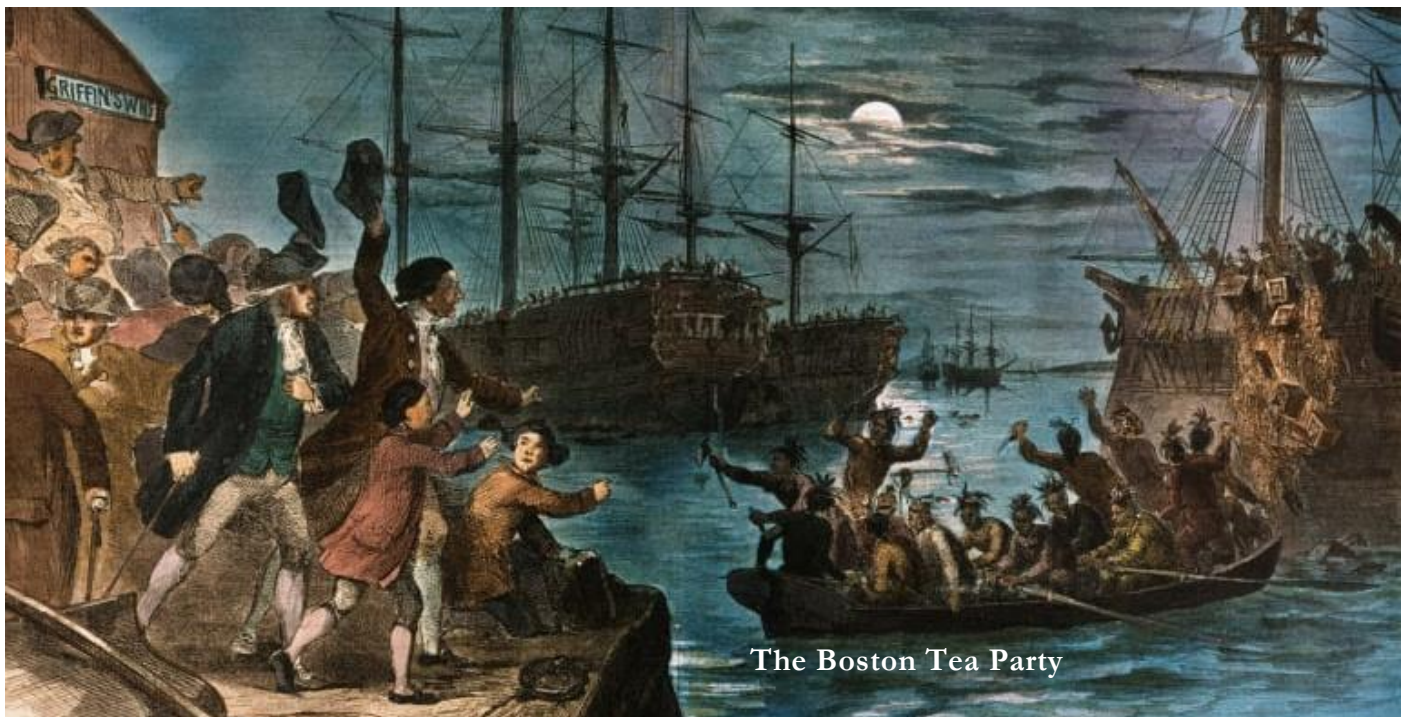


A re-enactment of the Boston Tea Party.

adjourns outside where a fife & drum corps leads the public in a parade through the financial district to the waterfront. The route follows the one the Sons of Liberty trod to Griffin’s Wharf to destroy the tea.

The dumping of the tea begins about 8pm aboard the reconstructed brig *Beaver*. The Sons of Liberty dumped more than 68 tons of tea (342 chests weighing 400 pounds each) in Boston harbor the night of December 16, 1773. However, reenactors only dump about two dozen chests of tea donated by cosponsoring tea companies. All of the tea has exceeded its “sell by” date.

Norman Desmarais is the newsletter editor for the Greater Boston Tour Guide Association. To tour with Norm, contact NORMD@providence.edu.



The Boston Tea Party

SYTA—2019

by Corky Rainey

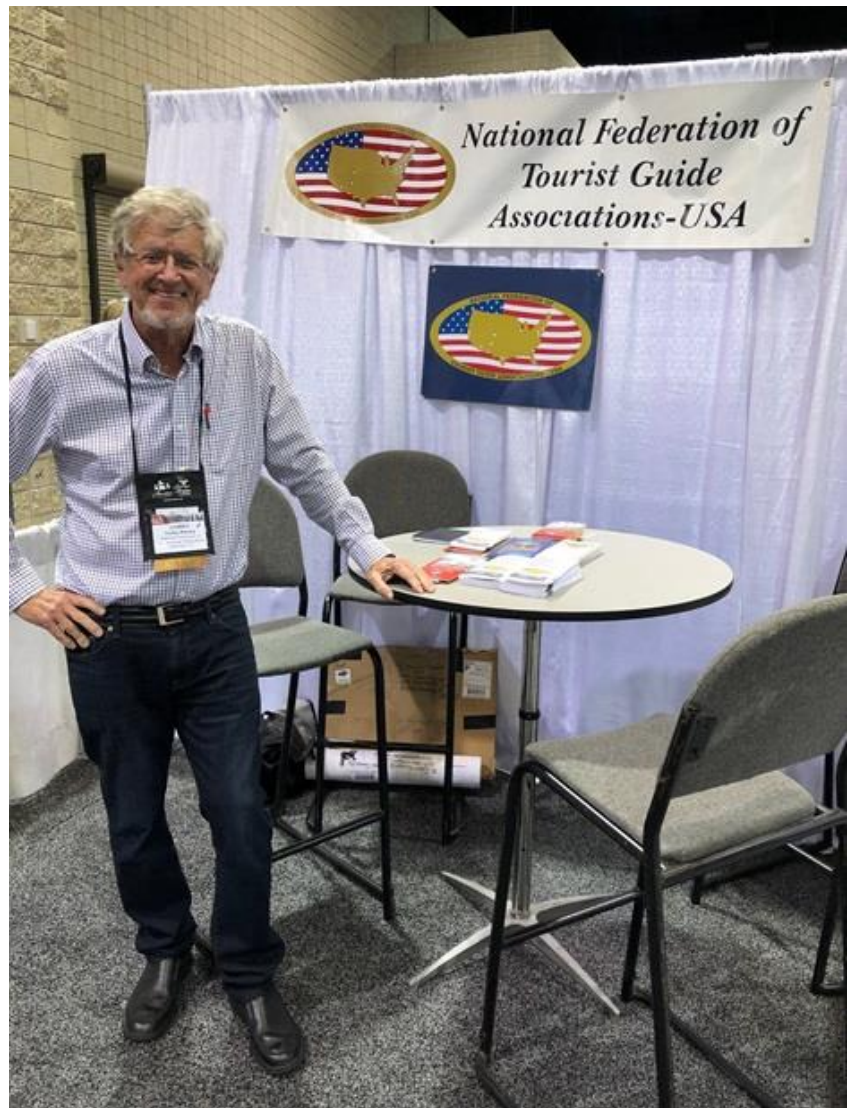
I was pleased to represent the NFTGA at the SYTA annual conference in Birmingham, Alabama, this August as a last-minute substitute for Joseph DeGregorio, NFTGA Board Member-at-Large. Joe had a family emergency, and President Ellen Malasky asked me to attend in Joe's absence.

I was surprised at how many attendees there were at this conference. Over 200 tour operators and 800+ "suppliers". Suppliers are basically destination venues or services hoping to get the tour operators to include their destination(s) included in tour itineraries. Suppliers ranged from very large companies, such as Disney Inc, Broadway Inbound, Cedar Fair, etc. to individual hotels and travel logistics services. While many in this very broad spectrum of providers had displays and booths, others were simply attendees attempting to meet as many tour operators as possible.

The conference was held primarily at the Birmingham convention center. SYTA blocked time during the day and arranged for 5-minute interviews between tour operators and suppliers. NFTGA, along with a few other associations (National Tour Association, American Bus Association, International Association of Tour Directors and Guides) were not included in these one-on-one meetings, but there were ample opportunities to network with operators and suppliers at the various lunch/dinner/entertainment events during the conference. Our NFTGA pamphlet was distributed to all of the TO's and many of the suppliers. My pitch to the TO's – many of whom I met personally – was that professional tour guides should be the preferred source of the guiding experience for tour groups in cities that have a tour guild. I pointed out that NFTGA guilds are located across the US and at many of the most desired locations for tour destinations. Every single TO I met was impressed with what the NFTGA members offer and gave every indication they intended to contact guides via the listings in our pamphlet.

As mentioned, I was surprised at the number of attendees at this convention. I was even more surprised to learn that the ABA, NTA, and IATDG conventions are at least twice as large. Tourism is big business! I would encourage NFTGA participation at each of these conventions to spread the word to hire professional tour guides whenever possible. The 2020 SYTA convention will be in Winnipeg, Canada.

Corky Rainey is 1st Vice President of the Guild of Professional Tour Guides of Washington DC. To tour with Corky, contact corky.mailers2@me.com.



Corky Rainey represents NFTGA at SYTA.