

THE NATIONAL STANDARD



www.NFTGA.COM

The Newsletter of the National Federation of Tourist Guide Associations

WINTER 2020

7 THINGS A TOUR DIRECTOR MUST CARRY ON A STUDENT TOUR

by Rhonda Briel

1. Band-Aids, Safety Pins, Tissues, Cough Drops, Water

You always need to be prepared for cuts, nose bleeds, and torn clothes. The rest is for you, cough drops when you've been talking a lot and of course always water. Hydrate in hot and cold weather!

2. Highlighters & Pencils for the itinerary

The student company I work for gives us a detailed itinerary. I always highlight times when I'm expected and dismissed, appointments, mealtimes, and when I'm handling money for the group. I use different colors for each. I only use a pencil to make notes in case something changes. Also, ahead of time, I usually will pencil in departure times from venues or specific notes like "no backpacks".

3. Notes & Paper Maps

When I was new, working in Washington, DC, I always carried notes; tiny little 4 x 6 index cards that I could glance at when leading the group somewhere. They never saw my notes because they were concise and bullet-pointed, and I could slip them into my purse or pocket quickly. Most students don't want a long dissertation about the architecture of the Capitol or Lincoln's



The basics for a TD's checklist?

strategy during the war. Most commentary for student groups should be kept to around five minutes. Questions or if it's a particularly compelling subject like Arlington National Cemetery will require more time.

Also, you need a few stories along the way. Pick a place and find a story. Stories are better than facts. I keep all my notes and stories on my devices now and still review them at the beginning of the season. If I have a new driver, I will lend him a paper map to get a sense of the entire town. I also pick up maps of an area from the hotel or park rangers and hand them out to the adults and students.

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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 Spring 2020 issue of *The National Standard* is 5:00 pm, Thursday, April 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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TOUR BUS INVOLVED IN FATAL MASSIVE PILE-UP

by Joe DeGregorio

This January, an Ohio Coach bus was part of a deadly crash 30 miles east of Pittsburgh. This was in the early morning hours and involved a multitude of trucks and other vehicles. There were at least five dead and dozens hospitalized. It was not known how many of those injured were passengers on the Ohio Coach bus. Follow-up stories by several media revealed the bus originated from the Chinatown area in New York City, is known as the Chinatown Bus and is owned by Z & D Tour. There were 56 passengers on that bus heading to various destinations in Ohio. A Pennsylvania State Police spokesperson speculated the bus may have been the cause of the pile up as it hit an embankment on a downward slope causing trailing trucks and vehicles to slam into each other.

Joe DeGregorio is a member of the Professional Tour Guides Association of St. Louis and has served for four years as Member-at-Large on the Executive Board of NFTGA. To tour with Joe, contact joe.dehillboy@gmail.com.

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Wow, the beginning of a new decade! The 2010's brought many new guides to our member associations and new associations to the NFTGA-USA family. Within the past few years, we were so pleased to welcome the newly formed Los Angeles Tour Guide Association and to welcome back the

Santa Fe Tour Guides. During the past decade, we held NFTGA-USA conferences in Miami, San Francisco, Denver, Washington, and Philadelphia, and we're so pleased to start off the 2020's in Charleston.

Guides from all around the United States have given their time and energy to serve on the Board and work to make NFTGA as useful as possible for our members. In the past decade, the Tourism Industry Partner program was established. It has allowed us to spread information about the tour guides to the greater travel community and to share their information with our members. Our web site has been revised to include resources to support the professional development of our members. AND, of course, this wonderful, comprehensive newsletter was established to share information and best practices among our members.

All of this was accomplished by volunteers!

As we move in to the 2020's, we will be welcoming a new Board whose members will endeavor to make NFTGA even stronger. Reach out to them with suggestions. Volunteer. Help us to help you and your organization to continue to professionalize the guided tourism industry.

Happy guiding!

Ellen Malasky
NFTGA President

FROM THE EDITOR



What do we care about? What do we consider important? What matters to us? It's a question I've been thinking about a lot lately. Deep down, whatever the answer may be, it affects everything we do as guides, as association members, as volunteers, and as human beings. We can tell

ourselves (and each other) anything we like. But what we do reveals what we truly care about.

I first became a tour guide because of something I cared enormously about: I was a new dad and needed to feed my daughter by doing something I enjoyed enough to not resent her. I joined my local association because of something I cared about: I wanted to learn how to improve the quality of my work and get better-paying gigs. I became active in NFTGA and WFTGA because of something I cared about: I wanted to help foster a sense of professional community and enhance the legitimacy of our industry. I wanted to make a difference. How much of a difference I *have* made may take some time to become clear. But I wanted to make the effort. That mattered to me.

What matters to *you*?

Some become active in organizations like ours because they care about contributing. Some like to be in control. Some want to further their education and some want to share what they've learned by teaching others. Some simply like to have an appealing note on their resume.

There is value in each of these priorities but they all boil down to a simple common thread: We're here because we care.

Matthew Baker
Editor-in-Chief

7 THINGS A TD MUST CARRY ON A STUDENT TOUR *continued from page 1*

4. Show & Tell Items

I use visuals for some sites, for example, when I talk about the FDR's 4 Freedoms, I like to tell the story of Norman Rockwell and how he was inspired to create four paintings depicting the freedoms. I pass those around (they're laminated). I always have paper and pencils to make rubbings at the Vietnam Wall. I carry Tootsie Rolls to hand out at the Korean War Memorial when telling the story of the Frozen Chosen.

5. Audio/Visual Material DVD's for longer trips plus DVD's for sites

I sometimes play something appropriate for a site we're heading to. For example, I've incorporated several of the *Hamilton* songs and I love to play Vietnam War music from the era.

If you travel with a group from one city to another, you may want to have some DVD's to show. A few I carry include both *National Treasure*, *Rudy*, and recently *Hidden Figures*. Also, some places offer intro DVD's for the site which can save time when you get there; Monticello is a great example and you can buy them in the gift store.

6. Lighted Night Stick

If you are anywhere but NYC, you will need some means of identifying yourself at night.

7. Fearlessness, Patience & Sense of Humor

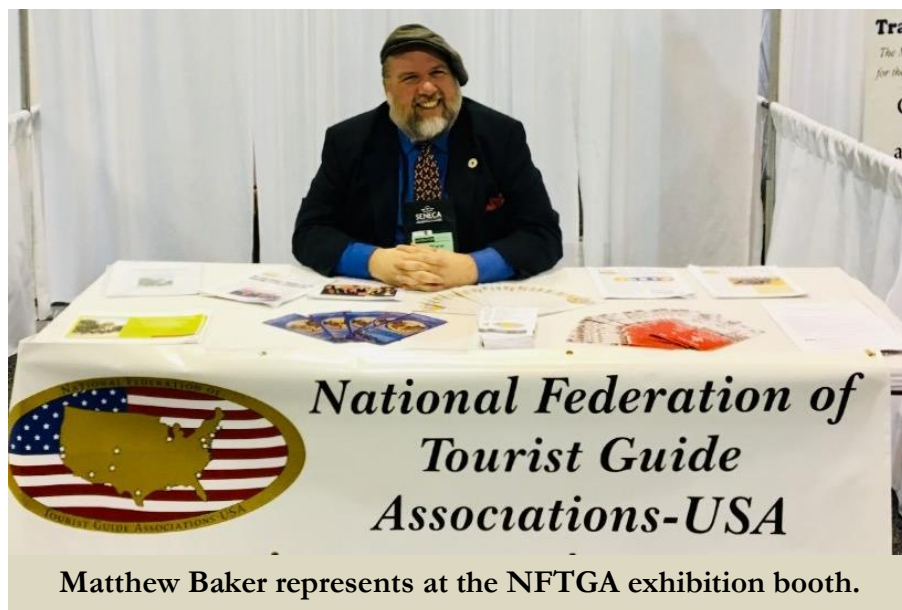
Show no fear ever, even if you don't know what you are doing. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know, but I'll look it up." Don't be afraid to walk down the aisle of the coach and talk to the students and don't be afraid to call them out for being rude, ridiculous, or disrespectful. You will need more patience than ever before whether you are dealing with a security person at the National Archives or a leader who throws down the gauntlet. Have all those "I would like to strangle you" conversations in your head, with a smile on your face. When things go wrong, if you can find any humor in it, you will always be ahead of the game!

Rhonda Briel is a graduate of Class #237 from ITMI, and affiliate member of NFTGA. She has worked for Caravan, WorldStrides, Gerber Tours, Junior Tours, and more. For more info, visit www.countrytraveldiscoveries.com.

ABA MARKETPLACE — 2020 IN OMAHA

by Matthew Baker

The American Bus Association Marketplace was held from January 10 – 14 this year in Omaha, NE. While the bitter winter winds whipped the famous prairie city, the atmosphere of welcome to first-time delegates and relationships formed could not have been warmer. Though over 3,000 people attended this annual convention (some veteran attendees have said it's the largest conference of its kind in the North American travel and tourism



industry), the spirit of family and close professional community intermixed with the business focus every moment.

First-time delegates were known, not as rookies or newbies, but as “stars” and each was given a blue ribbon with a bright silver star to mark their status on their name badges. Because of my function as a representative of NFTGA, an allied association, my name badge was green and said “Tour Operator” on it, though neither I nor the federation really fall under that title in our industry. However, this status bought me the privilege of attending the special Tour Operator Breakfast that was held each morning and getting to hear the speakers who had much to say about the business and its practitioners. This became especially valuable on the last day when the Assistant Deputy Director of Wildlife and Parks for the Dept. of the Interior (in charge of the National Park Service) came to speak about Commercial Use Authorizations. The fact that ABA has the NPS’s ear to a degree that seemingly no other comparable organization does, alone, is enough of a reason to continue nurturing our relationship with them.

While there were many booths promoting companies, organizations, destinations, CVB’s, etc., the primary focus of the marketplace was the “speed dating” in which buyers and sellers arranged 7-minute appointments at which to pitch their services, exchange cards, discuss business plans, and make deals. Much was made of the fact that these relationships are designed to be long-term. Operators who meet tour companies, attractions, or lodging representatives this year aren’t

planning for the current season. They’re planning for next season or even the following one.

One great surprise to me was that, while the mission was very business, business, business, there was also a heightened party atmosphere and a constant flow of alcohol at all times on the convention floor. Some veteran delegates said these promotions served partly as a test — can attendees stay smart, remain moderate, and keep focused in the wake of all this liquor? But many also pointed out that, in an industry that depends so heavily on the personalities of the service providers, the connections made during the dinners and evening parties were every bit as important and fruitful as those made on the business floor. Having learned from those NFTGA reps who attended ABA before me, I already knew this to be true.

While having a booth from which to hand out brochures, newsletters, and other promotional knickknacks from the federation was nice, the networking achieved while simply walking the floor was better. In the future, even if we have no booth at all, attending this event would be very worthwhile. So many operators were interested in my work as a guide. While I shared some of that with them, I always found a way to steer the conversation back to NFTGA and the fact that we are a great source for guides in *any* location, not just my own. But imagine if, instead of just one delegate, each member association of NFTGA were to send a representative to the ABA Marketplace, all promoting our organization and its members. What a force of nature we would be!

Since tourism is our focus, there were — of course — specially organized sightseeing tours. I went on the tour about Prohibition-era Omaha called “Wise Guys and Flappers” and learned some of the fascinating aspects of the Roaring 20’s in a city not traditionally associated with that chapter in our nation’s history. As a New Yorker, I was also very impressed with the amount and quality of Art Deco architecture there. Omaha is a cool, fun, fascinating city and I highly recommend it. Just maybe not in January.

Matthew Baker has served for two years as Secretary on the Executive Board of NFTGA. To tour with Matt, contact baker.tours@yahoo.com.



Karen Achtenhagen (far left) of the San Diego Professional Tour Guide Association takes one of 167 appointments with a vendor.

OUR HOUSE—*Kellum-Noble House* by Vicki Clakley

Houston is a young city. Founded by the Allen Brothers in 1836 in the new Republic of Texas, it was a frontier town named after the hero of San Jacinto and Texas' first president, Sam Houston. The city's oldest remaining residence is the Kellum-Noble house, built in 1847. It stands in the shadow of skyscrapers on the banks of Buffalo Bayou on its original building site. Newly restored and open for tours by The Heritage Society (THS) in Sam Houston Park, the Kellum-Noble House has witnessed Houston's growth from a village to the fourth-largest city in the U.S.

The Heritage Society was founded in 1954 to save the Kellum-Noble house from demolition by the city and has worked diligently towards its preservation ever since. This latest stage of restoration was begun in 2014. There are two more stages to the restoration planned. The Kellum-Noble house is one of ten historic buildings in the park, and the only one on its original building site. The other nine have been moved to the park from various areas and each represents a specific style and time period in Texas.

Nathaniel Kellum was an industrious man who operated the brickyard and lime plant that produced the bricks and plaster to construct his house. Both the Kellums and Nobles had domestic slaves and some undoubtedly worked in the brickyard, thus contributing to the home's construction and its story. Zerviah Noble and her daughter, Catherine, not only lived in the home for decades, but also operated a small school

there teaching young Houstonians to read and write, draw and paint, to embroider and appreciate music.

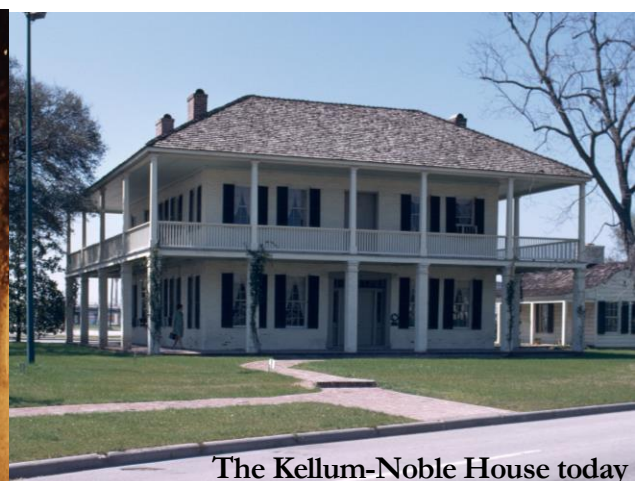
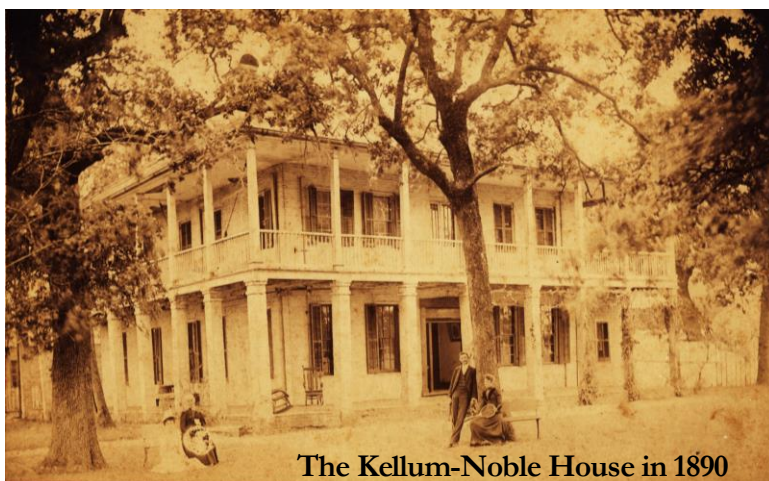
The City of Houston purchased the house in 1899 as part of the property for Houston's first municipal park. (Yes, Houston was 63 years old before it got its first municipal park.) The house served as a residence for the park keeper and for a short time its grounds were the site of Houston's first zoo.

The Heritage Society museum is currently exhibiting items which include original Kellum-Noble bricks, Zerviah's silver pieces, and a "school room" complete with items from the Middle Bayou School which operated in the late 19th century near Clear Lake.

Over the years, THS has thoughtfully done preservation maintenance, continued historical research, and educated the public about Houston through the lens of the Kellums and the Nobles. Late in 2014, THS began its most ambitious restoration project to date with the goal of stabilizing the building's foundation. Here is a link to a video that walks you through the work done so far and details the future plans for the building: <https://youtu.be/3EIR0HN0Jtg>

The furniture on display in The Heritage Society's Museum Gallery represents the Texas pioneer version of the same pieces that would have been in any middle-class Victorian home during the time of the Kellum and Noble families living in the house. The native woods, cow-hide seats, and simplistic German style influences show the distinctness of the Texas-made pieces.

Vicki Clakley is *President of the Professional Tour Guide Association of Houston*. To tour with Vicki, contact vicki_clakley@yahoo.com.



THE BOSTON MOLASSACRE

by Norman Desmarais

Popping sounds, like machine gun fire, punctuated the early afternoon in Boston's North End on January 15, 1919. What residents thought was a terrorist attack was actually rivet failure. A large 50-foot high steel storage tank at the Purity Distilling Company facility, a subsidiary of U.S. Industrial Alcohol Company located at 529 Commercial Street, burst at approximately 12:30pm. The area where Langone Park is located today was soon flooded with 2,300,000 gallons of molasses. A later investigation found that cracks and leaks in the tank were covered up with brown paint to conceal the defects.

The brown wave, 25 feet high at its peak, flowed through the streets at an estimated 35 miles per hour (slow as molasses), sweeping nearby buildings off their foundations and crushing them. Steel panels of the burst tank were driven against the girders of the Boston Elevated Railway (the predecessor to the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority) and tipped a streetcar momentarily off the tracks.

The molasses killed 21 people and several horses and injured 150 others. They were crushed and drowned or struck by the debris that the wave carried. As the weather quickly turned frigid, the brown syrup became

more viscous, making it impossible to escape. Those trapped in the goo found the more they struggled, the deeper they were ensnared, much like quicksand.

The depth of the molasses (2 – 3 ft.) hindered rescue operations. Many of the victims were so glazed over in molasses that they were hard to recognize. Others were swept into Boston Harbor and were found three to four months later.

Several hundred people helped with the clean-up which took weeks in the immediate area and even longer in the rest of Greater Boston and its suburbs. Clean-up crews used saltwater from a fireboat to wash away the molasses and sand to absorb it. The harbor was brown with molasses until summer. Rescue workers, clean-up crews, and sightseers had tracked molasses through the streets and spread it to subway platforms, to the seats inside the trains and streetcars, to pay telephone handsets, into homes, and to many other places. Everything Bostonians touched was sticky.

The event has become known as the Great Molasses Flood, the Great Boston Molasses Flood, and the Boston Molasses Disaster. But locals sometimes refer to it as the Boston "Molassacre".

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



Attempts at rescue after the Great Molasses Flood.

CONFESSIONS OF CURMUDGEONLY TOUR GUIDE by Nick Cvetkovic

Playing off the J.K. Rowling line in the Farmers Insurance ad..." Listen to Nick. he knows a thing or two, because he's seen a thing or two".

I joined the board of my local association in 2012 and became NFTGA Vice President in 2018 after running the Philadelphia conference, so I have been exposed to a lot of different NFTGA member associations and quite a few of their members. The NFTGA private Facebook group with around 800 members is also an ongoing learning experience.

I'd like to share some of my thoughts about our member associations and their members including discussing the different "categories" of both individual guides and associations as well as the reasons guides choose to join their local associations.

Why do people choose to become tour guides?

If asked that question guides tend to fall into one of three different categories:

- I'm doing this because I enjoy it. I have sufficient income/retirement fund or other assets that how much I make as a tour guide is of no real importance.
- I'm very comfortable in my financial situation but have no income/money for extras. Consequently, I use my tour guide income for cruises, trips or other non-essential items I otherwise couldn't afford.
- I count on my tour guide income as part of my basic income stream to meet my monthly expenses.

Guides have different goals/opinions/needs from their membership in local associations depending on which of the three categories they are in. For example those dependent on tour guide income might never have time to come to a meeting. They might only come to meetings in search of work.

There is no judgement on being in any of these categories, but it is challenging for a local association to meet the needs of all three types, especially if the difference is not recognized at some level.

Historically (likely applicable to associations with fewer than, say, 75 members), roughly 10% of the members are not working tour guides. Roughly 25% – 30% never come to any meetings.

Member associations tend to fall into one of the two mission categories although, of course, many blend the two together successfully. How they blend their missions is a function of their understanding of the needs of their own membership: professional tour guides as target, social aspects secondary and social aspects primary goal, addressing professional interests is secondary.

Why do people join an association? From my experience the following are the most common. Not listed in any particular order of importance or priority.

- Because they consider themselves professionals so they join their local professional association.
- To network with fellow guides, sharing knowledge and occasionally opportunities.



The attendance at meetings of the San Francisco Tour Guide Guild and the Dallas/Fort Worth Area Tour Guides Association illustrates the different types of organizations within the NFTGA.

- The financial benefits of joining are greater than the cost of membership — Discounts for local association sponsored events or the conference.
- Professional Liability insurance offered only to members.
- Because they are new to guiding and want to learn more about the work.
- To take advantage of the free or low-cost FAM tours offered to enhance their knowledge.
- To add to their tour guide resume, website, business cards with the NFTGA and/or their local association logo.

If these observations are relevant, what does it all mean for the NFTGA itself?

The organization should be fully cognizant of the diversity of both the member associations and the individual members thereof.

It also reminds the NFTGA of the benefits of size. The organization needs to continue to add associations in areas not yet served as well as helping current associations grow. I look forward to meeting many of our members at the Charleston conference and discussing these and other issues.

Nick Cvetkovic has served for two years as Vice President of NFTGA and is currently running unopposed for Treasurer. To tour with Nick, contact tourguidenick@gmail.com.

A CHANGING WORLD FOR GUIDED TOURING by Adrienne I. Chiron

Transportation is changing since the advent of Uber and Lyft, etc. Many companies are substituting sprinters to accommodate up to 12 with luggage and 14 without. Then we jump directly to minibuses. The newer the better.

A must-have is up-to-date liability insurance (such as that offered by the NFTGA insurance plan) in your hands if you are booking it! Many companies, once out of licensing regulation, call their insurance company and halve the amount. Must have \$1 million minimum.

If you have an activity occurring during bad weather, be thoughtful about your decision to proceed if it involves walking, hiking, skiing, boating, or swimming. Protect yourself as well as the guests.

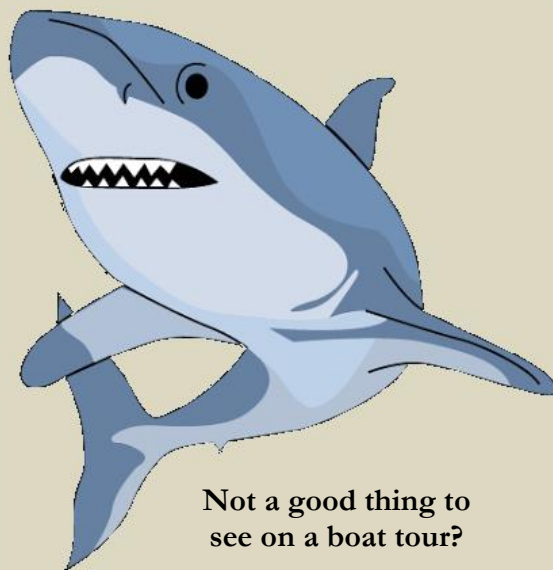
In Florida, in high winds, it is recommended not to swim or go boating. We have also been warned of shark sightings and attacks just like in the movies. You must advise your guests to observe and follow the warnings on the various beaches. It seems these devils are in search of warm water from October through early December as are we.

Fish, birds, and mammals are a perfect way to judge the forthcoming weather. Birds flying south in late August indicates an early winter. Whales have their own schedule of migration. Speak about these fabulous stories to your guests.

I remember discussing our weather patterns to a group at the Fontainebleau Hotel on Miami Beach. The bus was late in arriving and this gave me a chance to charm them before we started the city tour.

GO FORWARD, BE FUNNY, AND BE CREATIVE!! BIGGER TIPS!!!

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



Not a good thing to see on a boat tour?

EULOGY—LEE GELBER

(*THE DEAN OF GUIDES*)

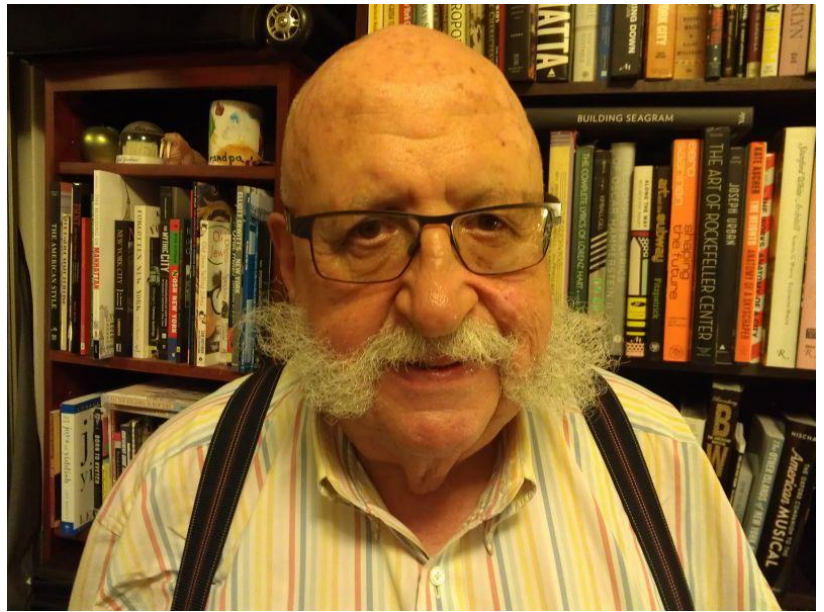
by Matthew Baker

On January 19, the Guides Association of New York City lost one of its brightest lights, legendary tour guide and trainer Lee Gelber, a few weeks shy of his 82nd birthday. His funeral service at Woodlawn Cemetery (resting place of Nellie Bly, Duke Ellington, and Bat Masterson, among others) featured fellow guides reading poetry he loved and had requested.

After a successful career in the toys and games business (he had been a consultant for the cards in the original edition of *Trivial Pursuit*), Lee became a professional guide in 1993. He always said it was the first time he could put his college major – history – and his military occupational specialty – truck dispatching – to regular use. During that time, his devotion to continued education, ethics, accuracy, and professional standards became a legend in the New York City tourism industry. He took the reputation of guides seriously and said “I’m afraid that, if we don’t do something about this profession, guides will get as bad a rap as taxi drivers.”

Dubbed “the Dean of Guides” by the *New York Times*, Lee trained new guides for multiple bus tour companies, organized a special guiding course for NYC & Company, and was one of the founders of the certification class for the Guides Association of New York City. He always insisted that reading, especially newspapers, was the most crucial thing a guide could do. And, indeed, reading was what first inspired his passion for his city, long before he made a living sharing it with others. When Lee was a senior at DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, he was given a copy of E.B. White’s *Here Is New York*. He said this was “somewhat akin to giving Janis Joplin the keys to the Southern Comfort distillery”.

The outpouring of love from fellow guides throughout the city and beyond has borne the theme, “I simply wouldn’t be a guide if I hadn’t met Lee”, “Lee laid the foundation for so much of what our industry is today”, and “Lee was a walking encyclopedia of NYC”. But, while this man who served as the 2010-2011 co-president of GANYC was a teacher, trainer, recruiter,



activist, and advocate for guides, he was first and foremost a guide himself. He reveled in doing what he loved and sharing it with others. He loved clever turns of phrase and applying poetic references to the cityscape before him. And he always declared “I never met a microphone I didn’t like”.

In 2016, the GANYC Apple Awards inaugurated the Guiding Spirit Award, given each year to a guide who has given generously of him/herself to the community, the industry, and the city. Lee was the first recipient. This year, the Apple Awards Committee vote unanimously to rename the award the Lee Gelber Award for Guiding Spirit.

Outside of guiding (though, for him, nothing was ever truly *outside* of guiding), Lee was a great lover of Broadway Theatre, the American Songbook, and the New York Philharmonic. He was a subscriber to the *Lyrics and Lyricists* series at the 92nd Street Y and a member of the Museum of the City of New York. He was also a political pundit who testified on many issues before the City Council and could discuss local politics with clients and travelers from anywhere in the world.

Lee is survived by a sister, one son, one daughter, two grandchildren, and a massive family of hundreds of guides whom he has mentored, trained, and worked alongside.

Matthew Baker is a past president of the Guides Assn. of New York City and serves as chair of the GANYC Apple Awards Committee. To tour with Matt, contact baker.tours@yahoo.com.

ARE GUIDES FREELANCE?—A NEW CALIFORNIA LAW by Keri Belisle

The new AB-5 law in California was signed into law by Gov. Gavin Newsom in September and went into effect January 1. This new California “gig worker bill” could require companies using independent contractors to reclassify them as employees.

The law is based on a California Supreme Court decision from last year known as *Dynamex* that requires companies to use an “ABC test” to classify their workers. Under this test, a worker is presumed to be an employee—and the burden to demonstrate their independent contractor status is placed squarely on the shoulders of the hiring company. To do this successfully a company must demonstrate (the emphasis is on “demonstrate” as scrupulous documentation is critical) that the independent contractor satisfies all 3 criteria of the test (1 or 2 doesn’t cut it):

- A) they are free from the company’s control.
- B) they do work that’s not key to the company’s business.
- C) they maintain their own independent business in the same industry.

Lawmakers look at several factors in considering how much control a company has over its workforce, including whether workers wear uniforms, have a set schedule, make set wages, attend company trainings and use company equipment.

While Uber and Lyft drivers have been some of the most vocal advocates of AB-5, the law actually applies to all industries that use independent contractors. Some types of professions may be exempt from the law based on licensing and how workers negotiate their pay rates (they work directly with customers and set their own

prices). These exempt occupations include, among others, licensed insurance agents, certain licensed health care professionals, registered securities broker-dealers or investment advisers, direct sales salespersons, real estate licensees, commercial fishermen, hair-stylists, construction workers, and “service providers”.

Lawsuits challenging AB-5 have been filed by the California Trucking Association, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, the National Press Photographers Association, Uber, and Postmates.

To read the law entirely, go to https://leginfo.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=201920200AB5.

And here is a good breakdown: <https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/ab5-is-now-law-in-california-now-what-86489/>

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

Save the Dates for These Important Events

March 2, 2020

GANYC Apple Awards, New York, NY

March 18-21, 2020

NTA Contact, Anchorage, AL

April 1-2, 2020

Destination Capitol Hill, Washington, DC

April 13-22, 2020

IATDG Tour Training Trifecta, Vancouver, BC

April 27-30, 2020

NAI InterpTech, Asilomar State Park, CA

May 13-15, 2020

Tourism Cares for North Lake Tahoe, Squaw Valley, CA

May 20-24, 2020

NAI International Conference, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

August 14-18, 2020

SYTA Annual Conference, Winnipeg, MB

September 14-17, 2020

American Indian Tourism Conference, Fort McDowell, AZ

TWO NEW MAJOR ATTRACTIONS OPEN IN ST. LOUIS by Christen Martin

A 200-foot, spectacularly lit, high observation ferris wheel called the *St. Louis Wheel* opened in the fall of 2019 to the delight of locals and visitors alike. It boasts 42 climate-controlled gondolas that seat up to six adults each. Located conveniently at historic Union Station in downtown St. Louis, the wheel is open every day of the year. The fifteen-minute ride will bring back fond memories for local old-timers and offer a stunning panoramic view of the city for visitors. Factoid: there have already been a half a dozen marriage proposals at the wheel with surely many more to come.

Opening on Christmas Day, 2019, St. Louis's newest attraction was sold out for the first two weeks of its operation. Boasting over 13,000 aquatic animals living in a million gallons of water, the St. Louis Aquarium is taking its rightful place among the many attractions the city offers. So far the aquarium offers an introductory virtual train ride with actor John Goodman (a St. Louis native) providing the narrative. It then provides the visitor three major areas to explore: Changing Rivers (which provides a history of the local freshwater



rivers and the aquatic life that inhabit them), Shark Canyon (exhibiting the many of the numerous varieties of this species), and The Deep (which explores in a deep sea setting life among the coral reefs in all its majesty). Several other galleries portray local and ocean life and ways to preserve its continuance. For the “wow” factor some of the above exhibits are displayed in a tubular encased area that allows for panoramic viewing.

Christen is tour manager at A & R Block Travel and a member of the Professional Tour Guides Association of St. Louis. To tour with Christen, contact christenmartin2015@gmail.com.



St. Louis tour guide, Joe DeGregorio, brings his grandson to the new St. Louis Aquarium.

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