

Winter 2010

Message from the President

Happy New Year! I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday. As the winter winds begin to blow, and you dream of warm weather, we must remember to keep our focus. State Tourism funding faces hurdles. It is extremely important that you write your delegates and Governor to remind them of what tourism means to your business. Advertising works. Take the story of the CEO of Wrigley's chewing gum who was once traveling with his young accountant by train. The accountant proposed cutting marketing funds as a way to save money. The CEO told the accountant that cutting marketing would be like removing the engine from the train. The train would stop.

As you prepare your marketing for 2010, and look for ways to save money, please keep OCHMRA in your budget. We have made great strides in connecting the tourism dots between the private and public sector. Over the last couple of months, we have been meeting regularly with the ad agency and tourism department to help define the marketing direction. I encourage you to contact our office with any ideas or opinions you'd like to share. Our goal is to best represent our members....we can only do that through constant communication.

Be sure to Mark Your Calendars for our most important event....the **36th Annual OCHMRA Spring Trade Expo** on March 7 & 8. This is our largest funding source and allows our association to operate. So please talk it up to all your vendors, who are potential exhibitors, and promote it within your business. And don't forget to utilize the free VIP Pre-Registration at www.oceancitytradeexpo.com.



John Lewis, OCHMRA President
Talbot Inn/M.R. Ducks

-Page 1-

RUTH WATERS

HSMP Lifetime Achievement Award

Ruth Waters was recently awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Hospitality Sales & Marketing Partnership. Read on for HSMP President Veronica Donaldson's presentation recognizing Ruth's many accomplishments and showing why she was so deserving of this award.

As the Director of Group Sales for the Harrison Group, Ruth's goal is to bring bus tours, student groups and convention goers to the Ocean City area. Her enthusiasm for tourism and her love for the beautiful beachfront city far surpasses the goals set forth by her job. Instead, Ruth loves her community passionately, and promotes what Ocean City has to offer.



She is proud to have played a leading role in the establishment of Ocean City's first Air Show and won the Industry Partner Award by the Maryland Tourism Council for the Ocean City Air Show in 2008. She was also instrumental in helping to organize Harbor Day at the Docks - a celebration of Ocean City's Maritime Heritage.

Ruth currently serves as the Vice President for the Greater Ocean City Chamber of Commerce and will be President the following year. She is a former President of the Hospitality Sales Marketing Partnership, was awarded Worcester County Tourism person of the year 2000, Tourism Person of the Year by Maryland Tourism in 2004, and a 7 year board member of the Maryland Tourism Council. Ruth is a committed community organizer, and a dedicated member of the business community. She has served on the board of the Lower Shore American Red Cross and Treasurer of the Maryland Tourism council.

Feeling strongly that the community members should give back is a driving force behind Ruth's commitment. She raised

\$20,000 to benefit Coastal Hospice and was crowned the 2004 Mardi Gras Queen.

When she isn't volunteering or campaigning on Ocean City's behalf, she enjoys traveling with her husband Joe and sailing the Chesapeake Bay. No matter what, Ruth Waters may just be Ocean City's biggest fan.



AYRES CREEK READY FOR TAKE-OFF

Thank you to the Ocean City Council, Maryland Coastal Bays and Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experiences (DLITE) for making the kayak launch at Ayres Creek a reality. Thanks to your efforts, this new launch will provide enhanced regional tourism and recreation opportunities.

Welcome new members

Active

Sleep Inn & Suites

Allied

Bennet Communications

Betteraskbrad.com

Culiquip, LLC

Manoly Furniture Service, Inc.

Martin Fish Co.

MGH Advertising

Push Media Systems, LLC

Real Property Maintenance

Success Performance Solutions

Tri State Electric Supply

United Work and Travel

*Upcoming
Dinner Meetings*

JANUARY 21

Princess Royale

FEBRUARY 18

Embers

APRIL 16

*Harrison's Harborwatch
Installation of Officers*

Lodging, Dining & Attractions...

Register online to attend!

If your business is not in these categories, call us to exhibit. **Booths starting as low as \$485**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

HANG TEN IN 2010

at the OCHMRA
36th annual spring trade expo



MARCH 7 & 8, 2010 • CONVENTION CENTER • OCEAN CITY, MD
WWW.OCEANCITYTRADEEXPO.COM • 800.626.2326 X 2



open to the trade only

no one under 21 admitted



REST EASY:

TRENDS TO WATCH in the lodging industry



1 THE DISCOVERY CHANNEL – Guests are in search of experience vacations that allow them to get involved. Wise hotels bring the true taste to the table, or the farm. Farm stays, winery bootcamp programs, voluntourism, and cooking classes. Escape to an alternate reality.

2 THE LOYAL TREATMENT – Guest loyalty programs give more out, more often, in efforts to boost business and keep a strong relationship. Statistics: Loyalty is up 19% in a tough economy (Hospitality Technology)

3 I HEART ART – Say it with flowers and you'll have to say it again and again. Art speaks volumes and doesn't have to be replaced every week. It saves money, it can be a source of community involvement and it looks good. Art is smart.

4 ONE SIZE DOES NOT FIT ALL – Small and quirky hotels offer a unique experience; often at a more budget friendly price. Lose the traditional hotel accoutrements and replace with an alternative vibe. Airstream trailers, unusual property conversions, small but funky is the rule.

5 OUTSIDE THE BOX - Open air or outdoor lobbies, independently situated bungalows or guest units set amongst landscaped areas. Outdoor massages and exercise programs. Urban adaptations feature mini-rooftop gardens. It's the great, great outdoors.

6 THE NEW "F" WORDS – Form. Function. Flair. Hotel guests demand fully functional work and relaxation spaces; from practical desks, focused lighting, adequate bathroom counter space, plenty of plugs and the latest tech equipment. Don't let design be a detriment.

7 LET'S GET REALLY PERSONAL – Show the love and appreciation with a completely personalized experience. Customization goes to the next level to create the at-home feeling. Design at every touch-point is being personalized.

Source: The 2010 Trend Watch List developed by Andrew Freeman & Company. www.afandco.com.

Did you know?

Service dogs (seeing-eye dogs, signal dogs, etc.) **must be accepted** at all properties regardless of your property's policy on pets.

ONLINE TRAVEL COMPANIES PUSHING LEGISLATION TO AVOID ALL TAXES

Online travel companies such as Travelocity, Expedia, Orbitz, hotels.com, and others are promoting federal legislation called the "**Internet Travel Tax Fairness Act**." Many of these companies are the subject of dozens of lawsuits throughout the country which allege the online travel companies are not remitting the entire amount of room taxes due to various tax jurisdictions.

At issue in those lawsuits is the difference between the tax that would be due on the posted room rate (which hotels remit if booked directly through them) and the tax calculated on the "wholesale rate" (the contract rate with hotels) which is the amount the on-line travel companies currently remit. In response to those lawsuits, the online companies are promoting legislation in Congress which would prohibit the imposition of room taxes on transactions performed through those on-line companies. These companies claim that they are only attempting to prevent thousands of different tax jurisdictions tax their "service fee" and limit the ability to tax that portion of the transaction to states.

However, the draft legislation that has been obtained by the American Hotel & Lodging Association (AH&LA) and others would in fact go farther than preventing the tax on their "service fees." The proposed legislative language has been reviewed by several attorneys who found the proposed legislation would prohibit room taxes from being applied to the ENTIRE amount of a transaction performed through an on-line company by ANY tax jurisdiction, including states. **In addition, the legislation would establish this tax preference for these on-line travel companies only and prohibit hotels and hotel companies from obtaining this tax preference through their own Internet booking sites.**

The legislation is a direct threat to the lodging industry. If online travel companies are completely exempted from all room taxes, then cities, counties, and other tax jurisdictions will lose a major source of revenue that is currently generated through room taxes levied on their on-line transactions. It is highly likely that the tax jurisdictions will then look to hotels to make up for that loss. That would represent a massive tax increase on hotels - potentially by taxing the hotels for their entire posted rate of a room sold to an on-line travel company and not just on the contracted rate.

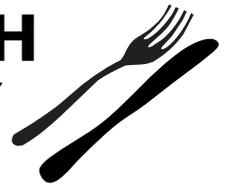
In addition, while the legislation mandates a room tax-free transaction benefit to the online travel companies, **it specifically prevents hotels and hotel companies from obtaining that tax preference for their own room booking websites.** Thus, the bill would place hotels at a competitive disadvantage in marketing their own rooms.

The legislation is currently in draft form and has not been introduced. Senators John Ensign (R-NV) and Ron Wyden (D-OR) are the primary supporters in the Senate. By reacting now, the industry might be able to prevent legislation from being introduced, as we did when the online travel companies considered adding their language to the Travel Promotion Act earlier this year.

The American Hotel & Lodging Association, and its partner state associations, will be working tirelessly to prevent this legislation from 1) being introduced and 2) being passed if introduced. Please send Congress your comments! Visit www.house.gov or www.senate.gov for contact information. Send an email summarizing your conversations to tom@schospitality.org.

THE DISH:

TRENDS TO WATCH in the restaurant industry



- 1 COMING TO AMERICA** – International influences are ingrained. Sriracha (rooster sauce) is the new salsa, which replaced the old ketchup. Vietnamese Banh Mi is the new Ham & Swiss; and Middle Eastern spices and spreads go mainstream as pizza makes way for pide.
- 2 THIS IS A STICK UP** – Small foods on a stick. Skewers, satay, and yakitori; no ifs, ands or kebabs about it.
- 3 USE YOUR NOODLE** – Asian noodles including ramen, soba and pho; from basic broths to high-charged broths with barbecued meats and all sorts of additions.
- 4 SANDWICH SMORGASBORD** – Enjoy a globally inspired buffet of sandwich style options including Scandinavian open faced, Indian Kati rolls, PLTs with pancetta or pork belly, international grilled cheeses and tricked out Mexican tortas bursting at the seams. There's a reason why delicious begins with Deli.
- 5 LOVE SHACK BABY** – Seafood shacks go upscale and mainstream, even in inland areas. Old favorites like oysters, fried clams, fish 'n chips, lobster rolls, crab cakes and clam chowder, as well as fish tacos, clam bakes, lobster boils and all encompassing fish fries. We're hooked.
- 6 SCHOOL OF FISH** – Pristine local organic produce is no longer enough, chefs and guests are casting their nets beyond small, local, sustainable and organic farming to demand sustainable seafood certified by the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood watch and other eco-conscious organizations. So long snapper; make way for mackerel.
- 7 DINNER THEATRE** – Interactive entrees, apps and desserts create an experience not just a dish. From simple tableside preparations, mix it yourself tartar, sauces added at the table, build your own sundaes and ingredients that pop in your mouth; dinner is the show. We'll all work for food.
- 8 ONE PLATE WONDERS** – The carte du jour is combined for speed, efficiency, cost-savings and fun. It's a completely fresh take on the blue plate special.
- 9 SUIT-YOUR-SIZE** – One size doesn't always fit all. Entrees available in small and large sizes lets guests tailor the experience to size. Call it the shrinking waste-line.
- 10 DOWNSIZING** – Small is now smaller. With smaller budgets and more flexible menus we'll see the equivalent of cocktail hors d'oeuvres; something to nibble with your drink before (or in lieu of) a full meal. Mini tacos, snack sized empanadas, finger sandwiches, sliders, and riblets. Equally approachable for the waistline and wallet these are the new essential handheld devices.
- 11 PAINT MY PLATE** – Restaurants and art galleries merge as restaurants with art galleries attached open and art galleries bring in chefs and food for artistic food-focused events.
- 12 GARDEN TAP** – Sausages and suds under the open sky. Beer gardens with good grub are spreading like Teutonic plague.
- 13 EAT STREET** – It's the food truck tweet-up, a mash-up of narrowly focused food purveyors clustered together and sharing a communal seating area. Consider it the new block party.
- 14 IF YOU'RE HAPPY AND YOU KNOW IT...** – Extend happy hours; start early, go late and offer a second late night shift. How happy can you get?

Source: The 2010 Trend Watch List developed by Andrew Freeman & Company. www.afandco.com.

Scam Alert

Several restaurants have recently received emails mentioning a future booking using advance payment. Many of these emails originate from outside of the United States. If you receive one of these emails, it can be helpful to pass it along to a group at the FBI that specializes in these types of scams. For more information, visit their website at www.IC3.gov.

Maryland Food Bank

At the Maryland Food Bank we solicit food donations from manufacturers, growers, retailers, wholesalers and individuals. Food is distributed to the hungry through our network of more than 900 soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters and other community food providers across the state.

We are currently developing a Community Kitchen where donated food will be prepared,

quick-frozen, and packaged for distribution to our network of food providers. The program will be managed by a professional chef and trainees, who will be educated in nutrition and proper food handling, so they can find jobs in the food service field later.

To find out how you can get involved, contact Butch Langenfelder at 410.926.7886 or langenfelder@mdfoodbank.org



Welcome to **Rick Hamilton**, new director for the **OC Convention Center**. Kudos to **Paul Kahn** on being named the General Manager of the **Tidelands Caribbean Hotel**.

Congratulations to **Dan & Laura Bren**, of **Atlantic, Smith, Cropper & Deeley Insurance** on the birth of their son, Gavin Mackenzie Bren who joined the family on December 1st.

Welcome to **Wayne Ensor**, who recently joined the staff of **Bennett/Taylor**



Termite & Pest Control.

Congratulations to **Jennifer Sponseller Webster** of *Maryland Life Magazine* on the birth of her son, Thomas Clarkson Hunter Webster, II (shown left) born on October 29th and weighing 8 lbs. 1 oz.

Congratulations to **Buddy Trala** of **Sunset Grille** on his recent appointment to the **Restaurant Association of Maryland's Board of Directors**.

Congratulations to **David Swift** of the **OC Convention Center** on the birth of his first grandson, Alex.

Welcome to **Colleen Rutzler** who recently joined the staff of **The Harrison Group** as their new sales assistant.



2010 BEACH BLANKET BLOOD DRIVE

Ocean City, MD - Blood Bank of Delmarva is returning to the Ocean City Convention Center (40th Street and Coastal Highway) on Tuesday, January 19 from 10am - 6pm and on Wednesday, January 20 from 9am - 5pm for the 12th Annual Beach Blanket Blood Drive. The drive was established in 1999 to promote blood donation in the winter, a time when blood supplies can dip as donors are kept away by colds and flu, bad weather and vacations.

The Blood Bank is aiming for 700 registered blood donors at the 2-day event, which would break the all-time high of 655 donors set at the 2009 event. Donors will receive a free t-shirt and the great feeling of having helped up to three hospital patients with a portion of their blood. The canteen will feature cookies, candy, donuts and snacks provided by Ocean City restaurants.

To make an appointment to give blood at this drive, call 410-749-4161 or 1-888 8-BLOOD-8. Walk-ins will be taken as time allows. www.delmarvablood.org

JEFFREY P. MARX MEMORIAL FUND

Two grants have been distributed to nonprofit organizations from the Jeffrey P. Marx Memorial Fund founded at the Community Foundation of the Eastern Shore. Because of Jeff's love of animals the Marx Memorial Fund has granted \$3,335 to Golden Retriever Rescue Education and Training, (GRREAT), and \$6,330 to the Worcester County Humane Society (WCHS).



Pictured (l to r) are: Jessie Robinson, GRREAT Adoption Coordinator; family members and friends of the late Jeff Marx: Janine Keay, Jean Marx, Milly Marx, Jack Perry, Jessica Marx, Kelly Marx, JoAnne Hunsicker; and Kenielle Davies, WCHS Director.



Oceanfront property owners are responsible for litter removal in the "pathway" or general walking area between their property and the beach. Ocean City Public Works takes care of cleanup on the actual beach but rarely cleans the pathways unless a complaint has been filed.

5 Ways To Make Your Employees BETTER

1. Show the employee exactly how you want the job done.
2. Encourage them to work on their people skills.
3. Don't be afraid to compliment good work.
4. Don't completely knock down bad work.
5. Show trust.



THE TRUTH ABOUT INTEGRITY TESTS

IRA WOLFE • SUCCESS PERFORMANCE SOLUTIONS

Despite research demonstrating pre-employment test validity, the hospitality industry has been slow to adopt them. Part of the reason has been a lack of documentation that they provide anything more than a feel-good effect with little ROI. But several recent reports released from The Center for Hospitality Research at Cornell University might prompt hoteliers and restaurateurs to re-think their reluctance. The results not only show that integrity tests can work but that they can differentiate between the candidates who will have positive work attitudes and those potential employees who bring along some baggage, commonly referred to as counterproductive work behaviors (CWB). Specifically, CWBs include theft, substance abuse, absenteeism, tardiness, and violence. By predicting the likelihood of an employee behaving badly, these integrity and personality tests can have substantial positive financial implications for businesses.

For example, of 29,043 applicants who participated in one study, 31 percent were classified as “high risk.” Not only did 1,881 employees admit to stealing from their employers, they admitted how much they had stolen. The amounts reported were not negligible: 698 (37%) employees reported stealing up to \$25; 275 (15%) reported stealing between \$25 and \$500, and 908 (48%) reported stealing over \$500! Employees also responded positively to questions regarding whether they had shoplifted in the past year, would help a friend steal, would steal if they had low pay, or would fake time cards if those were never checked. In addition to questions about theft, applicants admitted on the test that they used illegal drugs. The most common admissions were for cocaine (1,507), hashish (1,100), and hallucinogens (1,050). Additionally, 1,338 employees admitted regular drug use at work, 1,955 admitted drinking at work, and nearly 2,000 employees admitted that they would fail a urinalysis.

Workers’ compensation fraud is also a growing concern. By screening out dishonest employees, an integrity test can cut the average cost per workers’ compensation claim by nearly 37%. In all, the studies demonstrate that many job applicants openly admit to theft and drug use when completing an integrity test, and as a consequence a validated integrity test can screen out nearly one-third of applicants.

For more information about integrity or pre-employment tests and/or a copy of the studies, contact *Ira S Wolfe* at 410-941-2345 or iwolfe@super-solutions.com



ShoreCAN
Volunteer Center

The ShoreCAN Volunteer Center makes it easy for individuals, families and groups to volunteer. We assist volunteers by helping you find volunteer opportunities that utilize your knowledge, skills and positive energy. Whether it's a one-time project or an ongoing service opportunity, we can help you to help others. Whether you're 10 or 100, the opportunities are endless!

With our database, we can help connect you with an organization near your home, a cause that's important to you, or an opportunity that matches your skills or interest. To learn more about getting involved, visit www.shorecan.org, email shorecan@cfes.org or call 410.742.9911



Calling All Seafood Chefs
(11-17 years of age)

**Help Us Celebrate
Maryland Rockfish**

East Coast Junior Watermen's Program
January 30, 2010

Ocean City Convention Center • Ocean City, MD
Starts at 10:30 am, Winners announced at 2:15 pm
Sponsored by: University of Delaware Sea Grant Program,
University of Maryland Sea Grant Extension Program,
Maryland Seafood Marketing Program

For an application, visit www.marylandseafood.org

Staff

Susan L. Jones, Executive Director

Amy S. Tingle, Event Manager

Jayne Sawyer, Sandy Patrick; Part-time Tourism Coordinators

PO Box 340 • Ocean City, MD 21843-0340

410.289.6733 • 800.OC.OCEAN • 410.289.5645 fax

www.ocvisitor.com • www.oceancitytradeexpo.com • www.oceancityrestaurantweek.com

inquire@ocvisitor.com

