

## Message from the President

Okay everyone, it's safe to exhale. We made it through the summer season unscathed by named storms and by most accounts it was an extremely prosperous one. Take some time to regroup and recharge while joining me in welcoming an energetic group of tourism-related leaders to our town. Let's capitalize on the positive momentum created by this 2012 season and parlay it into big things to come this fall and beyond.

In case you blinked and missed it, Ocean City has a new city manager, a newly appointed director of tourism, a new convention center director and a new convention center sales manager (all in the last 6 months)! The HMRA is looking forward to establishing new, and building on existing, productive working relationships with David Recor, Donna Abbott, Larry Noccolino and Joanne Hunsicker, respectively. Congratulations on your new positions!

Being a food-centric guy, I would be remiss if I did not remind everyone to embrace Ocean City Restaurant Week(s) October 14-28. Restaurateurs should be planning creative and exciting menus now and hungry diners should be eagerly circling those dates on their calendars. State sponsored *From the Bay For the Bay* is another restaurant promotion that supports a worthy cause and I encourage everyone to visit [www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/fromthebay/](http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries/fromthebay/) for more information on how to participate either as a restaurant or diner (October 6-13). Harbor Day at the Docks has become such a successful event that it barely warrants a reminder, but I'm doing it anyway. See you there on October 6th!

With all of that (and much more) to look forward to, it seems silly to characterize this time of year as "the off-season," but try to find some time for yourself while embracing what should be a prosperous and productive fall.

Best Wishes for a great fall,  
Travis Wright  
Shark on the Harbor  
2012-2013 President

## Inside Ocean City

Our inaugural issue of *Inside Ocean City, the Official Concierge of the OCHMRA*, was a resounding success. The in-room coffee table book was so popular with guests, that many went home in their suitcases!

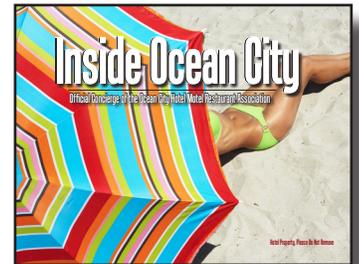
We would like to take this opportunity to thank Sandy & Farin Phillips and Kyle Hughes for the countless hours they put forth to make the end product beautiful.

Next year, we are considering having hotels and motels sell them from their front desk in hopes the guests would realize they are not to be taken out of rooms as souvenirs. If you'd be willing to do that, please let us know.

To date, we have commitments for 2013 in-room placement in 8,000 rooms; making it a great spot to advertise your restaurant or attraction (no other lodging is advertised as it is an in-room publication). If you do not have books in your rooms, but would like to in 2013, please contact our office.

If you'd like to place an ad, contact Sandy at 410-726-7334. Again, thank you to everyone for putting our book in your rooms and for purchasing ads!

Fall 2012



**HARBOR DAY** *at the docks*  
a Waterfront Heritage Festival

**Oct. 6th**  
**10am-5pm**

*\*Rain Date:*  
**October 7th**

OCHARBORDAY.COM

# Welcome new members

## ACTIVE

**28th St. Pit-n-Pub**  
2706 Philadelphia Ave.  
(410) 289-2020  
www.pitandpub.com

**BLU Crabhouse & Raw Bar**  
2305 Philadelphia Ave  
(410) 289-3322  
www.blucrabhouse.com

**de Lazy Lizard Bar & Grill**  
302 N. First St  
410-289-1122  
www.delazylizard.com

**Grotto Pizza**  
12407 Coastal Hwy.  
(410) 250-1234  
www.grottopizza.com

**Hampton Inn Hotel & Suites**  
4301 Coastal Hwy  
410-524-6263  
www.hamptoninn3.hilton.com

**The Pour House**  
501 S. Baltimore Ave.  
(410) 289-7687  
www.thepourhouseoc.com

**Rice House Bistro**  
9921 Stephen Decatur Hwy.  
West OC  
(410) 213-8388  
www.ricehousebistro.com

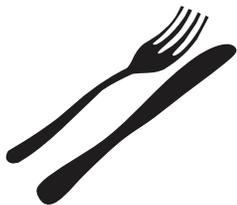
## ALLIED

**All States Construction Co. Inc.**  
**Flowers By the Sea**  
**Malibu's Surf Shop**  
**Myers Tool Rental &  
Parties Your Way**  
**Ocean Resorts Golf Club**

**Odyssea Watersports**  
**Paradise Watersports**  
**Salisbury Zoo**  
**Smith Island Cruises**  
**South Moon Under**  
**Troon Golf**

## SAVE THE DATES!

for OCHMRA's upcoming Dinner Meetings



\*NOVEMBER 8TH  
DECEMBER 20TH  
JANUARY 17TH  
FEBRUARY 21ST  
APRIL 18TH

\*Please note earlier date for November.



**SILVER  
SIZZLES  
Revue**

**Coming to the  
OC Convention Center  
November 8-11, 2012**

# Ocean City Restaurant Week is Back! OCTOBER 14-28

*Fall is just around the corner and that means it's time for Ocean City Restaurant Week!*

Because the Association has a wide variety of restaurant members, Restaurant Week now includes four price points, as opposed to only two. The price points are \$10, \$20, \$30 and \$40 which allow more restaurant members the opportunity to participate. If your restaurant would like to be a part of restaurant week, please fill out the sign-up form included in this mailing or call us at 410.289.6733.



## 5 Ways You Are Turning Your Customers Away

*By: Janine Popick, CEO and founder of VerticalResponse*

### 1 Employee Chatter

How many times have you walked into a store and you hear employees talking to each other about their shifts, the fact that they hate working today, or how they can't wait to get off work to go clubbing tonight? It happens more often than you think and it might be happening right within your walls. Your customers want a pleasant and positive experience with your business, whether they're on the phone with your sales team or in your store or office. Let your employees know how important it is for them to focus on the customers and save the idle chit-chat for when customers aren't around.

### 2 Phone Tree Hell

Have you ever called your own business phone number to see what the customer experience is like? I do it all the time. If your phone tree has lots of branches and your customers or prospects can't get someone to talk to in a quick and easy fashion, you could have lost them forever. Don't greet your customers on the phone with the "Please listen to the following as our menu has changed" message. That takes a solid five seconds that a customer could be in touch with you faster. Also, assess what most of the calls coming in are concerning. If they're usually about a specific topic, then that should be the "Press one for ..." option. If you're selling out of a specific product or you have an issue that your customers might be experiencing, you can set that to be the first thing callers hear. Don't be afraid to change your phone tree.

### 3 Mobile Mania

Have you ever had to wait for someone to get off his/her mobile device before helping you? Think of a customer coming into your business and experiencing the same. It's maddening. I've literally been at a restaurant and waited for 10 minutes before I was asked if I wanted a menu simply because the wait staff was updating Facebook. And it doesn't only happen at retail locations; it happens in the office environment, too.

At my small business marketing company, our employees used to always have their laptops on or type away on their mobile devices during meetings. It was terrible and had to be curbed; no matter how good you are at multi-tasking, you're going to miss something important if you're typing away. It shows a lack of respect for your customers or co-workers and it says to them that whatever's happening on your phone or laptop is more important than everyone else's time. And time is money. Make sure your employees put customers first, before texting and Facebook, and if they want to do those things, then it should be during their breaks.

### 4 Inconsistencies

If you're a customer and you like to frequent a particular business, you expect a certain level of performance that you've grown accustomed to, whether it be a website that works properly or the quality of a meal at a restaurant. If you think you have the best pizza in New York, it better be the best pizza every single time you serve it. If your customer service is outstanding, all of your customers need to experience that outstanding service each and every time. Remember that your repeat customers are telling your new prospects about their experience, so make sure it's always the same stellar experience.

### 5 Welcome! (Or Not?)

Have you ever walked into an office building and had no one pay attention to you? Or ever shopped at a store and no one asked if you needed help? My husband walked into a local store, shopped for an item for about 10 minutes and none of the four employees (who weren't busy) asked if he needed help. He then brought his purchase to the counter and gave the check-out person his credit card. The entire transaction happened without a word. Really? The Gap makes it someone's job to welcome people into the store. Restaurants have hosts that greet you and get you seated. Offices should have some way of knowing when a visitor has arrived. Make sure you and your people are smiling and welcoming newcomers into your place of business; you never know who they might be.



# TRENDS TO WATCH in the lodging industry



## DIRECT HOTEL BOOKING STRATEGY: *How to Convert Callers Who Shop Online*

*Excerpted from: Hotelmarketing.com | by Doug Kennedy, President, Kennedy Training Network*

### Here are some training tips for your next front desk or reservations meeting:

- 1. Make Sure Everyone Understands The Importance of Channel Conversion.** Most frontline staff are shocked to find out the commissions and fees their hotel pays for reservations booked through OTA's and other online channels.
- 2. Update The Team on Any Exclusive Offers That Should Not Be Matched** Some hotels have successfully worked out exclusive rate offers with certain OTA partnerships; in some of these agreements the hotel representatives are not supposed to match the exclusive online rate offer. So this article is not to suggest that hotels should by any means try to work around special agreements for exclusive offerings. OTA's can be excellent marketing alliance partners when the relationship is managed correctly.
- 3. Keep Frontline Staff Updated On What's Available Online** Make sure that your frontline team has access to the rates the callers are seeing online, so that they can verify the rate the caller claims to be seeing is an actual rate being offered. Provide them with web access if possible or otherwise provide another means of updating them on the rates being offered.
- 4. Help The Team Understand Why Some Guests Prefer To Book Directly** More than once I've been told by seatmates about how they first check for the best deals on their favorite OTA, but then they routinely place a call directly to the hotel's local number to see

if they will match the rate. It is important to remind the team of the many reasons someone might call directly such as: Make sure the rate posted online is the lowest available; Easier guarantee and payment, versus full pre-payment at the OTA; Fewer restrictions on changes/cancellation; Had a problem with a third party reservation in the past; Booking through an OTA, may mean booking a less desirable room option, such as restricted views, noisy locations, and generally a lower-tier accommodation.

- 5. Understand Why We Should Not Let The Caller Go Back Online, Period!** Aside from the distribution costs of OTA's, once the call ends and they go back online, we cannot control which website they will visit next or which hotel option they will click on. Instead we should train our staff to say something to the effect of: "If you'd like Mr. Perez I can take care of this personally for you right now..."

As a member of the management team at your lodging operation, you can help your frontline associates recognize the opportunities and to use these channel conversion techniques. When you stop to add-up the potential cost savings by reducing OTA commissions and fees when the guests call directly, plus the additional revenue lost from callers who went back online but clicked on a competitor, the potential ROI on some investment in training in this area is significant.

## 32nd Annual Maryland Tourism and Travel Summit (MTTS) NOVEMBER 14-16, 2012

We know you receive many requests for Silent Auctions but...  
THIS ONE IS DIFFERENT...IT BENEFITS OUR INDUSTRY!



This year's conference will be held at the Hyatt Regency Chesapeake. Due to this exceptional venue and an excellent lineup of keynote speakers, the attendance at the summit is expected to be high. This auction is a prime opportunity and an inexpensive way to help spread the good news of tourism to the summit attendees and MTC membership about what you have to sell or share and tell people about it.

Now, get creative, help the industry you love and make your item stand out. If you would like to donate, please contact Susan at [susanjones@ocvisitor.com](mailto:susanjones@ocvisitor.com) or 410.289.6733.



## Hospitality Highlights

### Wedding & Baby News...

Congratulations to **Eileen Abeel (Original Greene Turtle) & Danny Taglienti** on their June nuptials.

Welcome to the world Alexander "Zander" Anthony, born to **Kia Watson of Ocean 98.1 WOCM**.

Congratulations to **Chris & Michelle Trimper (Trimper's Rides)** on the arrival of their first-born, **Madison Lily**.

Best wishes to **Dr. Bill Allen (Fenwick Dental Associates)** and his new bride, **Shelby**.

Congratulations to **Chris Wall (Harborside Bar & Grill)** & his wife **Murray** on the arrival of their new baby girl, **Mary Catherine**.

Congratulations to the newlyweds, **Kim Lutch (Becker Morgan)** & **Brad Gillis (Sperry Van Ness)** on their summer wedding.

### On the move...

Congratulations to **Worcester Technical High School** on landing two of our area's hospitality stars! **Caitlin Evans (formerly Courtyard by Marriott)** and **Phillip Cropper (formerly of Fager's)** have accepted teaching positions in the Culinary Arts & hospitality program.

Welcome back to **Babbi Slack**, joining the staff of **The Haven Hotel** as their GM.

A fond farewell to **Nancy Berghauer (formerly of the Clarion Fontainebleau)** who left to take a position out of the area. Congratulations to **Linda Watson**, who takes over her Human Resources position at the **Clarion**.

Welcome to **Fay Marshall**, who joins the sales team at **The Grand Hotel & Spa** and to **Helen Arthur**, who is their new Director of Sales.

Congratulations to **Paul Suplee**, who takes over the position of Assistant Professor of Culinary Arts at **Wor-Wic Community College**.

Welcome to **Larry Noccolino**, director of the **Ocean City Convention Center** and to **JoAnne Hunsicker**, new Sales Manager.

Welcome to **David Recor**, the new City Manager for the **Town of Ocean City** and congratulations to **Donna Abbott**, who was promoted to Tourism Director.

Congratulations to **Lisa Cella**, new Sales Assistant at the **Clarion Fontainebleau**.

### Business News...

Congratulations to **Shenanigan's Pub** for being named a **Maryland Green Travel Partner**.

Kudos to the **Harman Family (Fish Tales/Bahia Marina)**. Their ladies-only tournament, **The Poor Girls Open**, raised \$62,500 dollars for the **American Cancer Society**.

Congratulations to **Frontiertown Campground**, winner of the first-ever, **Best of the Best Parks in America for 2012**. Their sister property, **Fort Whaley** also scored in the top 10.

Kudos to the **Worcester County Economic Development** office on their new website, [chooseworcester.org](http://chooseworcester.org)

### Thank you...

Thank you to **Castle in the Sand, DaVinci's By the Sea, Papa John's Pizza, and Chick-Fil-A** for all your generosity to the **Surfer's Healing** event. Surfer's Healing pairs professional surfers with autistic children to take them surfing. It is a wonderful cause and would not be possible without our wonderful local businesses.



## RAISE A GLASS TO TOAST OUR COAST...

Thanks to a partnership between OCHMRA, Worcester County Tourism and D3 Corp, **Toast Our Coast: Delmarva's Wine & Ale Trail**, became a reality. The website, [www.toastourcoast.com](http://www.toastourcoast.com) is a comprehensive listing of wineries and breweries in the Delmarva area.



# TRENDS TO WATCH in the restaurant industry



## FROM THE BAY, FOR THE BAY... A CELEBRATION OF MARYLAND SEAFOOD

The *From the Bay, For the Bay Dine Out* is an event that is easy for restaurants to participate in, helps the local watermen, and helps the environment all at the same time. During this promotion, October 6th until the 13th, participating restaurants will feature at least one Maryland seafood dish. You may run whichever items work best for your restaurant, whether that be crab cakes or a po' boy sandwich. For each dish that is sold restaurants will donate \$1 to the Oyster Recovery Partnership (ORP). ORP is a non-profit that works to restore the native oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay. Last year nearly 200 restaurants



**October  
6 - 13, 2012**

came together and raised over \$25,000, which allowed us to put over 3 million baby oysters into the water. **The top 3 grossing restaurants will win a day on the bay for up to six members of their staff as a thank you for your hard work.** Menu cards, window clings, staff training, and other promotional assistance will be provided to help make this year's dine out an even bigger success!

For more information or to sign up, please contact Steve Vilnit at (svilnit@dnr.state.md.us).

### IS YOUR MARYLAND CRAB CAKE 'TRUE BLUE'?

Only a small number of restaurants in Maryland reliably make their crab cakes from local crabmeat and the state does not require restaurants to identify the specific source of the meat. It's time to stand behind our crab cakes and crab meat and proudly support this local luxury. True Blue, a new labeling and promotion initiative from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR), is going to be your way to find out which restaurants are serving this local delicacy.

"Customers can look at a menu and know right away that they're getting what they think they're getting," said Steve Vilnit, Director of Fisheries Marketing for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. For years it has been an open secret that many "Maryland crab cakes" may be made Maryland-style, but not necessarily with Maryland, or even American, crabmeat.

The 'True Blue' certification program allows restaurants serving Department-verified Maryland blue crab product to use a special logo in marketing or advertising the product. Once a restaurant is signed up they will receive a 'True Blue' logo to signify to their patrons that they are True



Blue Certified! The DNR isn't stopping there; they plan on helping to promote the restaurant's participation through a new 'True Blue' website, a mobile phone app, their social media and the marylandseafood.org website that gets nearly 100,000 visits a month! How can you sign up? Contact Steve Vilnit with

the Maryland DNR.

Support Local! If you are a restaurant, retail store, caterer, or other foodservice establishment that is interested in joining the True Blue program please contact Steve Vilnit at svilnit@dnr.state.md.us.

### ACF Delmarva Chefs and Cooks Association Culinary Competition

**November 10th and 11th**

Dorchester Career and Technology Center

2465 Cambridge Bypass

Cambridge, Maryland 21613

Lead Judge: Michael Morgan, CEC, AAC

Show Chair: Charlene Zinnel, CCE

For more information, or an application, contact the show chair at czinnelcsc@yahoo.com



## CONDOLENCES

**Our sincere condolences to the following families on their loss...**

**THE FAMILY OF GERTIE APPLE**, long-time employee of the Visitor's Center at the Convention

**THE FAMILY OF CHRISTINE BROUS** (Flamingo Motel) on the loss of her father.

**THE THE FAMILY OF MICHAEL "BUBZ" CLEARY** (OC Golf Getaway)

**THE FAMILY OF BETSY FAUNTLEROY** (Harrison Group Hotels) on the loss of her father, Roger Cohill.

**MADALAINE & HARRY HOW** (MAD Engineering) on the loss of her mother.

**THE FAMILY OF DAN LEMAY** (Harrison Group Hotels) on the loss of his father, Robert LeMay.

**CRAIG & SUZAN MCELROY** (The Steritech Group & Gregory & Associates) on the loss of Craig's mother, Charlon McElroy

**BRIAN MUSHRUSH** (Phillips Seafood Restaurants), **JEFF MUSHRUSH** (BJ's on the Water) & **FAMILY** on the loss of their mother, Olive.

**THE FAMILY DAVID NOWACK** (Beach Plaza Hotel)

**SARA POSKUS** (Centerplate) on the loss of her daughter, Denise.

**BRENDA POST & FAMILY** on the loss of husband, **Buddy** (OC Motels/Purnell Properties).

**FAMILY OF MICHAEL ROOT** (most recently employed with Sapia Hospitality)

**THE FAMILY OF SUSIE SHOCKLEY** (Shenanigan's Pub/Shoreham Hotel) on the loss of her father.

**BRAD & REBECCA TAYLOR** (Captain's Table) & **FAMILY** on the loss of her father, G. Warren "Moose" Mix.

**BUDDY & CHRISTY TRALA** (Sunset Grille) & **FAMILY** on the loss of his mother.

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: The following went into effect on July 1, 2012

### **SB755/HB228 - Consuming Wine not Bought on Premises - Restaurants, Clubs, and Hotels**

The Acts create a new taxable service and allows a restaurant, club, or hotel with a Class B or Class C alcoholic beverage license to apply for a special permit to establish a "corkage" fee, which is subject to Maryland sales and use tax, at the 6% sales and use tax rate. The Acts allow an individual in a certain restaurant, club, or hotel to consume wine not purchased from or provided by the restaurant or facility if the wine is consumed with a meal, the individual receives the approval of the license holder, the wine is not available for sale on the license holder's wine list, and the license holder obtains a specified permit from the local licensing board. The license holder is allowed to charge a "corkage" fee for the privilege of consuming the wine, on which Maryland sales and use tax must be charged.

### **SB852/HB918 - Sales and Use Tax - Alcoholic Beverages - Calculation of Tax**

The bills modify the states sales and use tax rate applicable to charges for labor, materials, or property used in connection with the sale of an alcoholic beverage so that the general 6% sales tax rate applies to these items, rather than the 9% rate that applies to the sale of an alcoholic beverage. The bills specify that the sales tax rate of 6% applies to a mandatory gratuity charge or service charge in the nature of a tip for serving food or any type of beverage to a group containing more than 10 individuals.

### **New Alcohol Permits Allowing Sales of Alcohol at the 9% Rate**

A number of new alcohol permits were created by legislation in the 2012 session. Sales of alcohol under these new permits are subject to the 9% sales and use tax rate.

## MARYLAND OFFICE OF TOURISM - GREEN TRAVEL PROGRAM

The NEW Maryland Green Travel (MGT) application is LIVE! We finally launched it in May. The application has been completely redesigned to be EASY-TO-USE, comprehensive, all-inclusive and ONE application for all three tourism sectors – Accommodations, Attractions and Restaurants. The application should take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

It's easy to sign up. Simply visit the Maryland Green Travel web site – [www.VisitMaryland.org/green](http://www.VisitMaryland.org/green) - and click on "Certify Your Business"

### Benefits of the Maryland Green Travel program are:

- Lower Costs and Increased Profits
- Increased patronage from the eco-traveler
- Greater Sustainability
- Helps preserve Maryland's natural resources
- Pride in protecting environment

### Marketing and Promotional pluses of the program:

- Promotion to consumers on VisitMaryland.org website via MGT Partner logo
- "Green" profile on Visit Maryland website (linked to Partner logo)
- MGT Partner designation in Destination Maryland
- Recognition with AAA ECO-Program (and potentially others)
- Promotion through MD Tourism channels – e-newsletters, press, etc
- Promotion through MD Tourism SOCIAL MEDIA – Twitter, Four Square, Pinterest, Facebook, etc
- Use of MD Green Travel Partner logo (linked to your green profile) on website and marketing pieces
- Ability to sell green packages
- Listing on Maryland Green Registry (linked to your green profile)
- MGT Partner decal to display on site and a MGT Partner certificate (suitable for framing)

*Kudos to the following members who are already part of the program!*

Atlantic Oceanfront Inn  
Bahia Marina  
Shenanigan's Irish Pub

For more information on the program and a complete listing of our current MGT Partners, visit our website at [www.VisitMaryland.org/green](http://www.VisitMaryland.org/green).

*Remove failure as an option and your chances for success become infinitely better."*

*--Joan Lunden,  
American journalist, author and television host*

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#### Staff

Susan L. Jones, Executive Director

Amy S. Tingle, Event Manager

Jayne Sawyer, Kendra Paulman; 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](http://www.ocvisitor.com) • [www.oceancitytradeexpo.com](http://www.oceancitytradeexpo.com) • [www.oceancityrestaurantweek.com](http://www.oceancityrestaurantweek.com)

[inquire@ocvisitor.com](mailto:inquire@ocvisitor.com)