



Hospitality Hotline

**Connecting the industry through
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships**

News from...

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
(board is on hiatus until September)

FOND FAREWELL TO AMY TINGLE:

It is with great sadness that I announce Amy will be leaving HMRA as she has accepted a position to good to pass up! She'll be the Assistant Development Director at Worcester Preparatory School. Her new position will afford her the opportunity to be at her children's school, off all of their holidays and off the entire month of July.

She leaves shoes that are hard to fill as she has been a true asset to HMRA. As one hotelier put it, "Amy is the yin to my yang." Don't worry; you'll still see her at dinner meetings as her husband's guest!

Join me at FishTales on August 1st at 4:30 for happy hour if you'd like to stop by and wish her well! (cash bar, we are non-profit after all)

HARBOR DAY AT THE DOCKS:

HARBOR DAY at the docks has been an outstanding heritage event for the past five years. To keep it growing and appealing to all in attendance, it is being expanded into a full weekend waterfront heritage and seafood festival and will be held September 6-7, 2014. Additionally, the event will now be led by Martin Fish Company. Unfortunately, due to the reality that as a non-profit Association, we must focus and find avenues to generate revenue, our Association will no longer play an organizing role.

TRAFFIC DELAYS:

For up to date traffic information including back-ups, accidents, and road closures, [click here](#).

OCHMRA NEW OFFICES OPEN FOR BUSINESS

We are pleased to announce that we are completely settled into our new offices on 57th Street. Operationally, we remain the same. Our , P.O. Box, phone numbers and fax line also remain the same. The only thing that has changed is our physical address, which is now:

**5700 Coastal Hwy. Suite 302
Ocean City, MD 21842**

A special thank you to the following:

Trimper's Rides (moving truck)
Fish Tales/Bahia Marina (painting services)
Holiday Inn 67th Street (2 tables)
Hilton Suites (4 reception chairs)
Casey Peters (Keurig Coffee Maker)

Please feel free to stop in and visit our new "digs". We will have an official ribbon cutting at the end of the season. Date TBA.



Be sure to checkout the **Sunset Park Party Night**, Thursday, **August 22nd** featuring Rob Fahey & the Pieces. **OCHMRA** is the sponsor for the evening.



Get to know the smiling faces of your best guests – AAA members!

- We have 54 million members with over 25 million members living within one day's drive of Ocean City.
- 61% of members specifically request our travel information.
- Our members receive their travel information from AAA Mobile, AAA.com and the printed DC & Maryland TourBook.

Matt Lyle, AAA Account Manager
703-790-6047 • mlyle@national.aaa.com





Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships



BOARD MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *Bob Torrey*

Celebrating their 50th year in business, Happy Jack Pancake House was originally owned by Dick Smith who turned an old post office into a small restaurant. After operating Happy Jacks downtown location for a decade, OCHMRA 2nd Vice President, Bob Torrey decided he wanted a larger restaurant and opened his present day location on 26th Street. For the last 30 years, Bob has owned and operated the restaurant famous for their wide variety of breakfast items. Many of those original employees moved with the business and still work there today. "It's like a family", says Bob, "I've watched a lot of kids grow up here and we've had a lot of fun. It's a great journey." Bob, and wife, Donna have four children and are expecting two grandchildren in the fall.



THE DISH: *Restaurant industry trends*

7 LOW-COST WAYS TO MANAGE SOCIAL MEDIA *By: John Moore | Moore Social Media*

Social media management provides a number of singular challenges to the restaurant owner, not the least of which is trying to stay on top of multiple platforms. Trying to marshal your marketing resources in an effective, and fiscally practical, manner can appear nearly impossible. There are, however, a few quick ways to improve your efforts at little or no cost.

1. Use photos. Everyone knows (or should know by now) that whenever tweeting or posting an update about the menu, wine, or even a new cocktail, it should always be accompanied by a picture. Invest in an inexpensive point-and-shoot camera, just make sure it has a macro setting. Shoot at the highest resolution from at least 18 inches away – any closer and the autofocus is going to be useless. Make sure to give your food the online representation it deserves—it's worth the effort.

2. Set goals. Take some time, and write down exactly what your goals are. The secret here is not to make it the number of fans you have on any platform. To keep it simple you can pick a target for the number of people who "share" a Facebook post, or how many re-tweets you get. If you want to dive into the process a little deeper you can check out the "Insights" feature on your Facebook page and see which posts get the most viral response. Track your efforts over time and see what works best for you.

3. Involve the staff. Your staff is also invested in the success of your restaurant, and they are also almost certainly active on social media. Ask them to interact with posts online, share Facebook updates or retweet Twitter posts. Instagram can be a great platform for creativity and viral content propagation. You can provide simple incentives for the most inspired efforts. It's all about commu-

nication and engagement, and you have an internal network built into your restaurant that's primed to help get the message out.

4. Mix it up. Don't make every post a blatant "Eat Here Now" message. Post a favorite recipe from your chef, an insider's tip from your bartender or maybe a link to an article about your favorite food purveyor. The best networks are engaging and interactive. When in doubt, ask a question: "What's your favorite dessert?", "What wine would you pair with this?"

5. Respond in real time. Reward diners who tweet positive comments while they're in the restaurant. Sending a dessert to a table that just tweeted a compliment to the chef can be hugely effective in inspiring interaction on all platforms—and it will increase the viral reach of your restaurant exponentially.

6. Provide a clear call to action. Each Facebook update, Tweet and Instagram post should include a link for people to act on. Whether it's a link to your menu or reservation pages, always provide your followers something to interact with and explore.

7. Try video. Whether it's a two-minute YouTube video, a six-second Vine short or one of the just rolled out Instagram 15-second features, video is the king of online content. It is also more accessible than ever. Virtually every device now features foolproof HD video capabilities. And in the case of Instagram, you've got 15 seconds in which you can use stop motion to display anything from how dishes are prepared and plated to a short on constructing one of your desserts.



Hospitality Hotline

Connecting the industry through
Advocacy, Education and Partnerships



Congratulations to **Dr. Geoff Robbins (Atlantic Dental)** on his retirement.

Congratulations to **Kathy Enste** who joins www.ocgolfing.com, booking golf packages for the **Clarion and Marigot**

Beach Condos.

Best wishes to the newlyweds, **Adam Yuhas (MAD Engineering)** and wife, Maggie.

Welcome to **Brian Romain**, new General Manager of the **Grand Hotel & Spa**.

Congratulations to **Phil Houck (Bull on the Beach)** who recently purchased the **Judith M** (it will continue to be docked at **Bahia Marina**).

Welcome back to **Carmen Mayo**, who joins the staff of **New Lighting Solutions**.

Condolences

Our sincere condolences to:
Annemarie Dickerson & family (Francis Scott Key) on the loss of her stepfather, Louie.

Dawne Pappas & family (Blue Ox, Greene Turtle) on the loss of her mother.



REST EASY: Lodging industry trends

HOTEL FRONT OFFICE STAFF STILL NEED TRAINING ON LOCAL AREA INFORMATION By: Doug Kennedy

Although it has been many years, I still recall well my first days working in a hotel at the Lexington (Kentucky) Marriott at Griffin Gate. Although I had grown up in Lexington and thought I knew it well, the excellent mentors I had for managers made sure that all of us front office employees were very well prepared for commonly asked questions about transportation, directions, shopping, attractions, and area restaurants.

Having grown up in a middle class family I had been out to dinner many times in Lexington, but had it not been for the training I received, I would have sent my guests to my own personal favorite restaurants. Thankfully my managers knew that our guests' usually desired more unique culinary experiences and trained me on the local area fine dining options which I had never experienced, but that out of town guests were more likely to be looking for. As a result I was able to direct our guests to restaurants they wanted, ranging from fine dining at the Carriage House to local favorites such as the Columbia Steak House or Hall's on the River.

It was everyone on the team's job to be experts at giving directions along with our recommendations. We also knew the hours of operations at all the local

attractions. We all kept up-to-date on local area events by reading the Daily Log Book – and most importantly, initializing it to document that we had read it. So we were always prepared to give our guests the local insider's tips they so desperately needed back then.

Now as a frequent traveler I find myself on the other side of the front desk, asking the same types of questions my own guests asked me back then. However, too many of today's hotel front office staff are not benefiting from the same type of training I received, and as a result, they find themselves unprepared to answer guests' most basic questions.

Personally, I think the problem starts with many of today's entry level managers who do not make this type of training a priority. Smart hotel managers know that increasingly, it is personalized, authentic and helpful guest service that makes the difference, especially in this era when so many amenities, décor, and hotel features are the same across all major brands. Smart hoteliers know that despite all the technology, it is the people that make the difference. I always say guest satisfaction is 10% about the guest room itself, and 90% about everything else.

Here are some training tips to make sure that your hotel sales and front desk associates are prepared to assist guests with local insider's information:

- Help them understand that although we charge guests for the room, what guests "buy" is an overall experience of your hotel and also your destination.
- Make sure "know your product" training is part of the onboarding of all new staff, even before they are trained on the computer and technology systems.
- Conduct trivia contests regarding local area attractions and points of interest.
- Challenge staff unexpectedly to answer basic questions correctly in exchange for a small cash reward or fun prize. Make it fun with themes such "5\$ For five correct answers" or "Five answers for a free lunch."
- Regularly distribute a local area update such as a weekly email newsletter.
- Have local area businesses and attractions send representatives to speak at staff meetings.
- Simply quiz your employees regularly in the work place to challenge their preparedness in a fun way.