

**Town of Provincetown
Visitor Services Board
Meeting Minutes from June 26th, 2017, 4:00
pm
Town Hall, Judge Welsh Room
260 Commercial Street
Provincetown, MA 02657**



Members present: Rick Murray - Chair, Lesley Marchessault – Vice Chair, Dan Vanwaus, Rick Murray, Bob Sanborn, Regina Cassidy, Hersh Schwartz, Marian Peck.

Members absent: none.

Meeting was called to order at 4:05 pm by Lesley Marchessault.

Staff: Anthony Fuccillo, Radu Luca.

Others: Nadine Licostie – Red Thread, Lynette Molnar – Provincetown for Women

Agenda:

1. Public Statements – Five Minutes Maximum. Board members are not obligated to respond to public statements.
2. Towleroad advertising campaign proposal and review of past campaigns. Discussion dependent. Motions may be made. Votes may be taken. (Requested by Rick Murray)

Please see director's report below.

3. Discussion of joint public meeting with the Board of Selectmen. Discussion dependent. Motions may be made. Votes may be taken. (Requested by Rick Murray)

BS and RM voiced their confusion as to why they weren't placed on the June 26 BOS agenda for reappointment.

4. **Tourism Director Report**

A. Approval of media placements, brochures and trade shows-- Tourism Director recommends media placements, brochures and other collateral to promote and market Provincetown as a tourism destination, or town representation in trade shows.

- **Towleroad:** Following are the 2016 campaign results provided by Michael Goff of Towleroad – Ask Tell Media Group

A. Media Performance:

Same investment by Provincetown Tourism (\$5,000 allocated)

Same 70%+ discounted CPM rate last three years. \$6 CPM is the regular rate.

(Discounted as part of integrated deal.)

3,682 clicks to the Provincetown site through 2016 program.

169% over 2015 (2,176 clicks)

258% over 2014 (1,426 clicks)

Average Cost Per Visit/Click in 2016 was **\$1.36**

59% of the cost per visit in 2015 (\$2.29)

39% of the cost per visit in 2014 (\$3.51)

Why?

1. Learning what works over previous years
2. working with your new creatives
3. Increased optimizations and new ad positions

B. Ptown Hacks Guide Book Performance:

Same investment by Provincetown Tourism (\$5,000 allocated)

Print copies flew off the racks. Zero waste.

3X+ Online "flip-book" distribution over the previous year. (3,000 reads)

3X Online Downloads (1,270 downloads)

5X as many outlets.

Total distributed 9,300 (151% over last year)

C. Promoted/Advertorial Posts with social media support

\$5,000 (first time ever discounting. Standard pricing with social media \$9-12,000)

Booked and ran the other two successful advertorials for Holly Folly and First Light.

At the link, find discussion of the Non-scientific **survey of our users**, along with relevant pages from the recently released CMI Gay Travel study.

Looking forward to spending time tomorrow. For the same campaign, we can offer the same rates for the 4th year in a row for the same minimum investment -- though as shown above for significantly increased results. We cannot honor pieces of the program at same rates. So if there is some issue with participating in Ptown Hacks we should discuss, and either answer those concerns or we can work with you to reprice what does work for you.

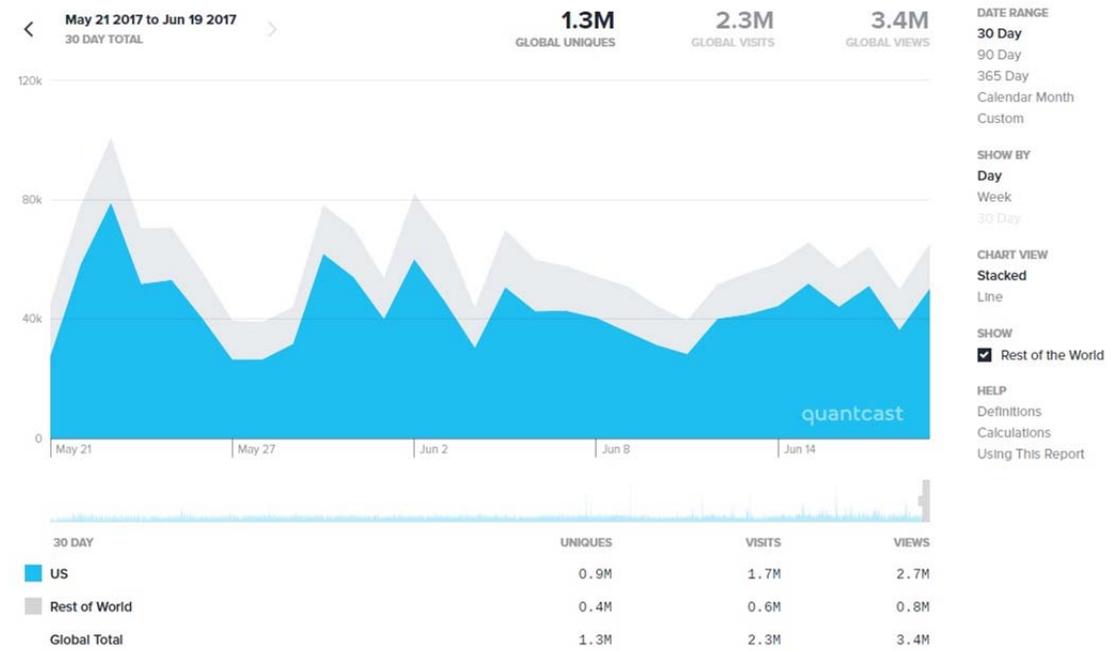
On Agenda for Tuesday:

1. **Other placements/Other Media 3rd party data** -- how they compare in terms of efficacy and cost. (Attaching some reference on Edge and Next which have been mentioned. If you would like me to pull info on any others, let me know.)
2. **Media placement and special programs.** We have our broader network of sites, some proprietary other deals, and the experience to implement retargeting, audience extension and follow through for a lot more of the Provincetown tourism investment.
3. We would love to do the **survey** for real incorporating the learning from this little experiment and working with the Tourism office.
4. We have been developing a text bot type service to use over sms and facebook messenger
5. We are developing an **8-page version of the Ptown Hacks book to distribute outside of Provincetown** to feeder markets and would like to have Tourism also involved. Distributed in establishments and at events in major feeder cities.
6. Discussion of how to work with **other destinations and other national sponsors** that we will be working with in town in the coming years and how we might collaborate.

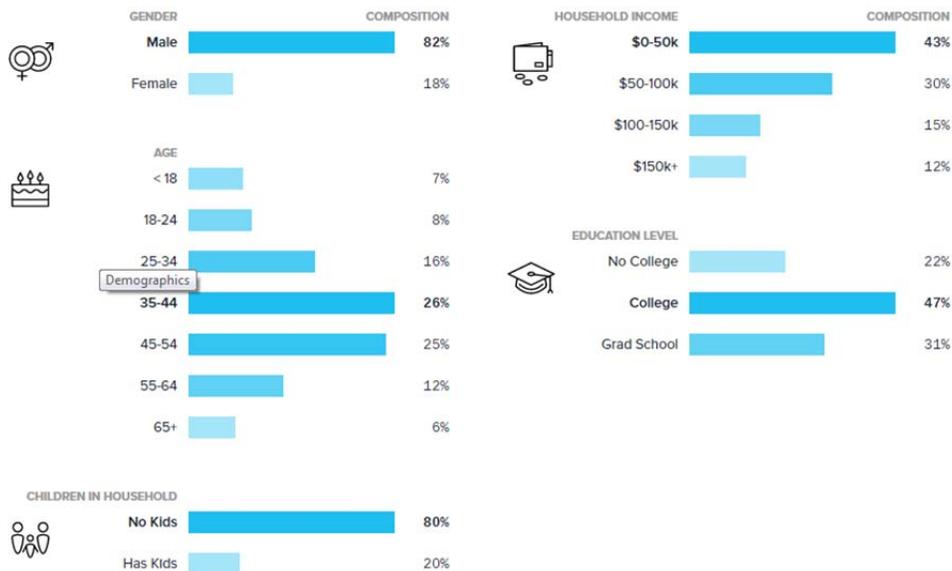
- **Towleroad:** Current Traffic Report and Demographics pulled from Quantcast on the next page

Traffic

Uniques Visits Views



Demographics



B. V

SB
Administ

ration

➤ **Ragnar Relay:** About:

The founders

The idea to run an overnight 24+ hour running relay across the mountains of Utah was a lifelong dream of Steve Hill. The dream became a reality in 2004 when Steve, his son Dan and Dan's college roommate, Tanner Bell, organized the first Wasatch Back Relay, spanning 188 miles from Logan to Park City, UT. Starting small, the Ragnar Relay Series has grown from a single relay in Utah to the largest overnight relay series in the nation. Some call it a movement. We call it Ragnar.

What's in a name?

Ragnar was a king and hero of early 9th century Scandinavia. He was a conqueror, a wild man, a leader, fearless and free-spirited*.

In much the same way, today's Ragnarians fulfill their freedom to roam, to explore, to lead, – a free-spirited desire to get out there and experience an outdoor adventure with friends. They traverse beautiful scenery, conquer challenges, and celebrate as a team. They outfit themselves in crazy costumes, deck out their vans and tents and walk away with kick-ass medals, bragging rights and unforgettable stories of this epic adventure!

Who are we? People that seek adventure, love fitness and the outdoors, give moral support to each other at 3 AM, enjoy camaraderie, don't stop for bad weather, accomplish the amazing – together, aren't afraid to wear crazy costumes, cheer others on, and ring cowbells to celebrate victories – small and large.

We love spreading the Ragnar lifestyle to the world and seeing others to join the Ragnar Nation to run, volunteer, partner and cheer!

- The person at Ragnar responsible for the Cape Cod Relay Race is Michael Dionne
- We spoke to him and he informed us they are investigating their options to have the race finish elsewhere
- Michael said there are specific reasons why they would like to move the race
 1. They are looking for a location that will allow them to produce the event with value to them
 2. Currently the expenses of doing it in Provincetown are too high
 3. The runners have to run two miles on Route 6 and they would prefer a finish line not on a highway
 4. They have difficulty finding volunteer groups in Provincetown
 5. They are interested in working with the parking lot at 132 Bradford Street rather than the PMPM parking lot and grounds
 6. I spoke with Steve Riley and introduced Michal Dionne to him

C. Marketing & Advertising Insights:

➤ Interesting article with additional links about LGBTQ travelers:

OPINION ARTICLE 16 June 2017

The Gay Travel Paradox

By Andrew Cohan, Managing Director at Horwath HTL - Miami

A year or two after I graduated from college, I took a short vacation and went to Provincetown, Massachusetts, which I had heard was a gay destination (I was a late bloomer). On the first day there, I was riding my bicycle down Commercial Street when a guy on the sidewalk whistled at me and yelled out "Sexy legs!" At that moment, two things happened: First, I almost tumbled head over wheels into the car driving ahead of me; and, second, I knew the freedom and pleasure every straight high school kid who ever sat on a park bench in the afternoon sun kissing the boy or girl they were going steady with had felt. That feeling of "I don't care who's looking, this is a rite of spring, and if it bothers you, too bad" was available to me for the first time. Powerful stuff for a closeted young man who was fraternity president just a few years earlier. It was my first gay destination and in the early 1980s, I had found a comfort level, freedom and a sense of community I had never experienced.

As an analyst and observer of the hospitality industry, I often save articles and file them in folders in a library on my laptop. There are several items in my *LGBT Travel* folder that fit this article, and as it is now Gay Pride Month, they keep coming. Two of these articles stand out. First is a New York Times article from May 30, 2014 titled *Finding Comfort and Safety as a Gay Traveler*. The other is from the Advocate Magazine's website dated Nov. 29, 2016, titled *Have We Outgrown Gay Hotels?* The New York Times article addresses the frustration of encountering homophobia while traveling, especially from employees of the hotels and restaurants we are patronizing. The article offered



practical tips about how LGBT couples and individuals can have a greater chance of enjoying their vacation travels by doing some research. The author rightfully points out the varying perspectives held by the target audience: "Some people simply won't go to places that are known to be homophobic. Others feel that they deserve to go wherever they want, and perhaps even feel empowered by refusing to stay away."



SIMILAR STORIES

- New, bigger and more colourful: LGBT tourism at ITB Berlin
- Marriott International Scores 100% Perfect Score on 2017 Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index
- IHG Recognized as a Best Place to Work for LGBT Equality
- Wyndham Worldwide Achieves Perfect Score on Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index for Sixth Time

The more recent Advocate article was prompted by the sale of Maui's only "gay" hotel, which was converted to an adults-only hotel but not strictly LGBT. As the article states, "No one could decide if the closing of Maui's only gay-specific hotel meant that the island was becoming less of a destination for queer travelers or if LGBT people had so successfully integrated into life on the island that queer spaces were no longer necessary. The hotel's general manager added: "It seems LGBT couples are feeling more comfortable staying at mainstream resorts, adding that the Sunseeker Hotel's longtime gay guests began to drift to other hotels when they returned to Maui. Recently, progressive heterosexual guests supplemented some of that lost revenue, but not enough to maintain that business model."

And this is the gay travel paradox: As acceptance and comfort levels (which can still vary greatly with geography) grow between LGBT travelers and the communities they visit, is there a need, a desire, and a feasible business

plan for LGBT-targeted and gay- or lesbian-exclusive hotels and destinations? Further, are the responses to this question generation-dependent? Have LGBT Millennials had a sufficiently different life experience than LGBT Baby Boomers such that the Boat Slip's afternoon Tea Dance, a Provincetown institution, will one day go the way of the Ringling Brothers' circus?

I conducted some non-scientific research during the recent Memorial Day weekend. On the Sunday afternoon of that weekend, I decided to go to the pool deck at my condominium building. The complex has 350 units and perhaps 50 to 75 units represent GLBT households. In the pool were about 15 young gay men in their 20s breaking all the rules: drinking in the pool, playing loud music, and generally acting like any group of 25-year-olds. I spoke with a few of them about this article, gave them a sense of the world I grew up in, and asked if they would share their thoughts about gay vs. mainstream travel habits. I was somewhat surprised to learn how well-traveled they were for such young men. They gave me examples of their experiences in Mexico, Singapore, Thailand, Europe and Argentina. They noted some "common sense" attitudes about gay hotels and gay-friendly destinations:

1. There is safety in numbers. When eight or ten friends are travelling together, they don't really consider the destination's gay-friendliness. Just as they "took over" the condominium swimming pool that afternoon, they feel comfortable to be themselves in a group at most hotels or restaurants.
2. When travelling to destinations that are not particularly gay-friendly, they will look for a gay-friendly hotel, especially to find out the "lay of the land" in terms of where to go and what to avoid.
3. When travelling to a popular gay-friendly destination, they will stay at a hotel that offers preferential access. For example, one couple planned to stay at a hotel in Mykonos this summer that also has a nightclub with a drag show, for which hotel guests receive complimentary admission nightly.
4. They noted that while cruises are not their preferred vacation option, they would be most interested in taking a gay cruise with RSVP Gay Cruises or Atlantis Events, two of the leading companies that sell out entire cruise ships for the week to the gay male market (Olivia Cruises does the same for lesbian cruise fans). Such environments, they felt, would be more customized to their style of relaxation and entertainment.

As mainstream hospitality providers increasingly target the GLBT market, Tambourine.com noted in a June 2, 2017, post that having an LGBT-friendly reputation is one of the top three factors gay or lesbian travelers consider when choosing a hotel. In a recent blog post of *One Mile at A Time*, the gay blogger, Lucky, points out a gay

traveler's pet peeve: That so many hotels default by assumption that the person you're traveling with must be your wife/husband of the opposite sex. Below a photo of a welcome note addressed to Mr. and Mrs. Schlapping, he writes the following.

"More so than ever before, people travel with all kinds of companions. There are married same sex couples, people traveling with friends, people traveling with a boyfriend or girlfriend, etc. Unless you know who the second guest is, hotels shouldn't try to guess, in my opinion. Either address the welcome letter just to the primary guest, or address the primary guest by name and add an "& Guest." C'mon hotels, is it that hard?"

It appears that we may have reached a "tipping point" in many destinations where the demand for "gay-only" accommodations is not sufficient to support such businesses, especially from younger LGBT travelers. However, if we look at the L, G, B, and T separately, we can find different needs. A Boston Globe article from April 26 of this year examines the particular needs of the transgender community today, which resemble my generation's experiences in the 1970s and 1980s.

"Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender young adults are significantly more likely than their heterosexual and cisgender peers to harbor suicidal thoughts and behaviors, and to attempt suicide, often related to bullying. So this summer, Mitchell expects to find himself in Provincetown, of all places. He and a handful of other young adults are coming from Southern states to Ptown, long an LGBT mecca, to experience something they haven't before: a welcoming work and social environment."

Yet economics and social change are threatening the future of this and other "gay" destinations. From June 2017's *Vice Magazine*:

"Now it's all changed. Like so many resort towns that were once refuges for outcasts, artists, and queers, Provincetown is expensive. It's too expensive for the young people; practically the only ones left on the beach are old folks like me, or lesbian and gay families with their kids, who started to appear somewhere in the late 1990s, putting a lid on the lasciviousness. No longer do the Smith College girls get jobs as servers for the summer, sharing a run-down house for Memorial Day (known as "baby dyke weekend"), roiled with romance and breakup drama. Now, the shops are staffed by Eastern Europeans here on J-1 visas—living God knows where—while the Smith girls take internships in career-track positions since, after all, they can flirt respectably anywhere now."

The author, E. J. Graff, jokes about a "negative" side effect of social progress:

Today straight people don't mind coming down here, not just to gawk, but to vacation. Our beach has been invaded by oblivious tourists who seem not even to notice that we're there, who spread out vast towels on our (traditionally lesbian) beach with their equally clueless kids, trailing those Styrofoam-like beach noodles and blow-up toys, unafraid, ignoring us as if we were normal. ... It's the price of acceptance."

We may have lost our haven, but now, everywhere else, it's OK to be gay. Maybe that's a decent trade.

As with many social changes, impacts and consequences are not limited to one industry or sector. This month, when most Gay Pride celebrations take place around the world, "old time" activists are lamenting the "corporatization" of the events. Thirty years ago, raising funds and organizing activities for GLBT awareness on any large scale were seedlings of ideas that grew on the coattails of feminism in the work place and race-based civil rights progress. The current friction and growing pains are well detailed in the 220 comments provoked by a June 8, 2017 article in the Washington Post by Justin William Moyer titled, *Activists Say Capital Pride Overtaken by Corporations and Rich Gay Men*. While such problems and paradoxes were unimaginable just a generation ago, many sectors of the economy, as well as individual business entities can be best prepared to capitalize on these changing trends by understanding their sources and more accurately forecasting their future direction.

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Contact

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COMMENTS ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Andrew Cohan

Andrew Cohan, MAI, is the Managing Director for Horwath HTL primarily serving Florida and the Caribbean Basin, based in Miami. A seasoned hospitality professional with extensive real estate, marketing and account management skills in North and Latin America, Andrew has consulted for leading branded management companies such as Canyon Ranch, Six Senses, Montage, Solage and Bulgari.

AUTHOR

5. Board member statements:

RC – none

MP – none

HS – her term is up, but is allowed to stay on the board until the BOS appoint a different person.

BS - none

LM – none

DV – none

6. Approval of Minutes. Discussion dependent. Motions may be made. Votes may be taken.

Move to approve the minutes from 6.12.17.

Motion: BS Second: RC 7-0-0

Motion to adjourn.

Motion: BS Second: RC 7-0-0

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Radu Luca