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Four distinct states, one fantastic chapter!

October 20, 2009

Chris Russo, ASTA President and Chair

Welcome home from **THETRADESHOW**! What a great show it was this year, with more new opportunities and ways to grow our business than before. Arnie Weissmann of Travel Weekly noticed – have you seen his latest article about ASTA and what great improvements are being made?

"ASTA is doing more for its members than at any time I can remember. Its lobbying efforts are finding a toehold in Congress. Its education programs are engaging and relevant. [ASTA President Chris Russo's speech at the annual meeting] as well as those of Bill Maloney, CEO, and Paul Ruden, senior vice president of legal and industry affairs, represented more activity and impact in the past 12 months than in any other one-year period I can recall in the last 20 years." - [Travel Weekly Sept. 21, 2009](#)

George Dooley of Travel Agent Magazine agreed that ASTA is becoming a driving force in the industry. "ASTA Deserves Strong Support From Agency Community. Travel agents need ASTA to provide forceful representation in Washington, D.C. and to defend travel agents from punitive regulation and taxation. From SBA business loans to IRS defining what is or is not an independent contractor the industry needs the ability to know what is happening and to be able to muster the expertise and legislative skills essential to survival." - [Travel Agent Central Sept. 9, 2009](#)

I couldn't have said it better myself. Thanks to ASTA, attendees listened to paneled discussions, met new suppliers and went to workshops on everything from how to get responses to e-mails to being more green. Check out [this slideshow](#) of **THESHOWFLOOR** by attendee Frances Kiradjian, to see what great opportunities **THETRADESHOW** offered this year. If you missed the ASTA annual meeting at **THETRADESHOW**, check out the [speech archive](#) to see ASTA President Chris Russo and ASTA's CEO, Bill Maloney, CTC, had to say. I can't wait for **THETRADESHOW** next year in Orlando, Sept. 12-14!

While we wait for that, we can look forward to the fifth annual [International Destination Expo](#) in Istanbul, April 19-22, 2010. Turkey is a paradise of sun, sea, mountains and lakes. From history buffs and shoppers to nightlife lovers and beach seekers, Turkey has so much to offer even the most seasoned travelers will be dazzled in this historical and cultural mecca, which features an interesting blend of eastern and western traditions. With all of the rich history and culture to absorb, IDE 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey will be a nonstop learning experience. We will get four days of concentrated destination specific education to enable us to become a Turkey destination specialist. We will network with local companies that offer dream itineraries. ASTA and Key Tours or Y'Alla Tours are also

offering free sightseeing when you register! This is a deal that's too good to pass up. [Register today](#), receive four nights of complimentary hotel stay (a \$1,500 value)! Act fast and register now to take advantage of this opportunity and expand your knowledge to grow your business!

Happy selling and I look forward to seeing you at IDE in Istanbul!

Fran Lindsey, Chapter President

The TRADE Show in Las Vegas, last month, was a great experience. There was lots of worthwhile education and the trade show itself was excellent. It is great to get together with agents and suppliers in such a venue every year.

The Southwest Chapter was pleased to welcome over 40 people to our Chapter Cocktail party at Brio Tuscan Grill at Town Square. We were happy to see so many familiar faces. Afterward we walked over to the opening event, complete with Elvis impersonator, good food, drink, and a super band, in the balmy Las Vegas evening.

Not to be missed was the Annual ASTA meeting with encouraging words from Chris Russo and an informative presentation by Bill Maloney. The highlight of the meeting however, was Paul Ruden's amusing "state of ASTA" message.

I, personally, always look forward to the Puerto Rico breakfast. It is one of the highlights of the show, as far as I am concerned. Good food, nice people and great information!

I was pleased to be the guest of Nexion, Inc. at the 6th ASTA Advocacy Dinner. The reception and dinner were excellent and I am very proud to be a part of a political action committee that makes such a huge difference to the travel agency community.

Everyone who attended was offered a ticket to a Las Vegas show. I saw "Phantom" and it was magnificent! I had seen it in London and New York, but this was Las Vegas! 'Vegas, is just 'Vegas (Baby!)...a unique, over the top, place!

Finally, Tourism Cares recently announced the recipients of the 2009 ASTA Scholarships. I am proud to announce that two \$1500 George Reinke scholarships, a Southwest Chapter scholarship, were given to Allison Brown, a student at Monroe Community College and Donna Paulsen, a graduate of the International Tour Management Institute. Please visit www.tourismcares.org for more information on scholarships, and their various activities including volunteer restoration events.

Robbi Hamida, Chapter Vice President

Survey Says!

Are you out there? If so, we want to hear from you. It makes sense for us every once in a while to get your opinions on what direction the chapter should head in.

By end of this month, you will get a survey from the chapter and it shouldn't take more than 3-5 minutes of your

time. I hope you will take the time to make your voice heard and help make our chapter the most beneficial in the nation.

The survey will want to know: how should we proceed with chapter events and meetings? What communications do you find the most valuable? Do you visit the chapter website www.astasw.org? Do you know your chapter board?

As always your board appreciates your time and we look forward to your answers.

Cheers!

Melinda Kelly, Chapter Secretary

I was reading Travel Weekly recently (the September 21st issue, to be exact) and was surprised and pleased to see Arnie Weissmann's very positive editorial "ASTA on a roll, ARTA rolls over". I recommend it to all ASTA members who have ever wondered "what has ASTA done for me lately?" The basic thrust is that despite no more World Congresses in exotic lands, despite staffing cuts, budget cuts and all the rest, ASTA is "doing more for its members than at any time I can remember". He cites Chris Russo's efforts as well as those of other senior staff members. He points to ASTA's website as a great resource and to the twenty instructional webinars produced over the past year. He made me feel proud to be a part of ASTA in these tough times.

So I urge all members to make use of the resources at our fingertips--check out the website, read the SmartBrief, try out a webinar. Become a more active ASTA member and be part of the solution!

Yolanda Meador, Chapter Treasurer

Turkey - A Getaway to Paradise!

This year's International Destination Expo (IDE) truly embraces the Veni, Vidi, Vici (I came, I saw, I conquered) notion, stated by Julius Caesar when he defeated Pharnaces II of Pontus, a formidable kingdom in the Black Sea region of Turkey, which is the current city of Istanbul. Attending IDE 2010 provides you the opportunity to come, see and conquer the destination that everyone will be talking about in 2010.

What is now called Asian Istanbul was probably inhabited by people as early as 3000 BC. Eventually, in the 7th century, Greek colonists led by King Byzas established the colony of Byzantium, the Greek name for a city on the Bosphorus. Byzas chose the spot after consulting an oracle of Delphi who told him to settle across from the "land of the blind ones." Indeed, Byzas concluded, earlier settlers must have been deprived of their sight to have overlooked this superb location at the mouth of the Bosphorus strait. This proved an auspicious decision by Byzas, as history has shown Istanbul's location important far beyond what these early Greek settlers might possibly have conceived. Byzas gave his name to the city: Byzantium.

When the Republic of Turkey was born in 1923 after the War of Independence, Kemal Ataturk moved the capital to the city of Ankara. But Istanbul has continued to expand dramatically; today its population is approximately 13 million and increases at an estimated 700,000 immigrants per year. Industry has expanded even as tourism has

grown. It continues to be a city that creates its own history at the intersection where both Continents meet

Turkey is a paradise of sun, sea, mountains and lakes. From history buffs and shoppers to nightlife lovers and beach seekers, Turkey has so much to offer even the most seasoned travelers will be dazzled in this historical and cultural mecca, which features an interesting blend of eastern and western traditions.

With all of the rich history and culture to absorb, IDE 2010 in Istanbul, Turkey will be a nonstop learning experience.

Join us at IDE 2010 - Turkey Welcomes You!

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Save the Dates!

THE TRADESHOW

Travel Retailing And Destination Expo

Orlando, Florida

September 12-14, 2010



TURKEY

Istanbul
April 19-22, 2010

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