



May 2015

ASTA Mid America Chapter



CHAPTER OF THE YEAR 2014

Dear «First Name»,

I ended the April newsletter with a mention of the special plans that ASTA MidAmerica has for our members at the [2015 Global Convention](#). I hope that you were able to take advantage of the "Early Bird" rates. If not, you can still use the discount code "MIDAMERICA" to receive a \$25.00 reduction on the convention registration. We all know that Washington DC is full of historic sites, but as I celebrated Memorial Day, I was reminded of the many beautiful and moving monuments that pay tribute to the veterans who served our country defending our freedom. Still it is the "in the moment" convention program that really makes a trip to our Nation's Capitol a "must do" event in 2015.

Top Industry leaders will provide their insights on Consortiums, which is one of the fastest growing segments of our industry. ASTA's progress integrating travel professionals from around the world will be on display. In addition to the International summit on the opening day, there will be special parties held at a number of our member countries Embassies. Fresh perspectives from some well known industry and non industry figures will be entertaining as well as interesting. Tours of our Capitol Building will be available to attendees. "Early Bird" registrants were entered into a drawing to participate in a special White House tour.

As we move toward an election year in 2016, what time could be better to experience the city which is at the center of our political process? Also, a good time to refresh our knowledge of a place many of our clients will be traveling to in the year to come.

Speaking of clients, I want to call you attention to ASTA's consumer website, www.travelsense.org. This website is owned and operated by ASTA. It offers travelers practical tips and ideas to make their travels go smoothly and an easy way to contact an ASTA travel professional for help. Online trip quotes are also available on this site. I recommend that you take a look at this ASTA resource.

I would enjoy meeting you in person during the convention. 8/29 - 9/1, as we enjoy the best our industry has to offer a professional like yourself.

Calendar of Events

Chapter Events:

Recommended Webinars are now listed on the website and below at the bottom.

Upcoming National Events:

[ASTA Premium Business Summit | June 8-9, 2015 | Chicago](#)

[ASTA Global Convention | Aug 29 - Sept 1, 2015 | Washington DC](#)

[ASTA Business Travel Exchange](#)

Best Regards,

Claudia

Claudia Darling
Chapter President

Board Members:

Dan Lanser, 1st Vice President
Barbara Mazzola, 2nd Vice President
Ann Waters, Treasurer
Pam Faust, Secretary



ASTA Global Convention
Washington D.C. Aug 29 - Sept 1

May 2015

News from Headquarters

With AAA predicting this could be the busiest Memorial Day weekend for travel in the past 10 years, you are no doubt extremely busy helping your clients. AAA expects at least 37 million Americans will travel for the holiday. And Independence Day and summer vacation travel is just around the corner. So let's get right to the news.

2015 National Director Elections Approaching

Five National At-Large Directors will be elected in the ASTA 2015 Elections. Qualified members interested in becoming national director candidates must send a letter of intent to ASTA Election Services between June 10 and June 19. Letters of intent can be sent to elections@asta.org. Following receipt of the letter of intent, candidates will receive a detailed information packet.

Balloting will be conducted online. Voters will receive their voting instructions by email by July 20. Polls close Wednesday, August 5, 2015. For more information, visit ASTA.org.

Announcing 2015 Chapter Elections

The following chapters will be holding elections this year: Carolinas, Central & North Florida, Central Atlantic, Delaware Valley, Great Lakes, Hawaii, Long Island, Mid America, North California, New England, New York City, Orange County and San Diego. Interested candidates should submit a letter of intent to elections@asta.org. For more information regarding chapter elections, visit ASTA.org.

Announcing 2015 International Chapter Elections

Information regarding international chapters holding elections this year can be found on ASTA.org. International Travel Agencies members from the chapters holding elections who are interested in serving as a chapter officer should submit their letter of intent between June 10 and June 19 to elections@asta.org. Eligible candidates are the official representative or associate of an International Company member or the official representative of an International Premium Company member. All terms run for two years. Official duties will be assumed at the end of ASTA's Global Convention in August and run until August 2017.

ASTA Agents Get Positive Media Attention Round the World!

News stories of the need to use an ASTA travel professional, based on our [May 6 press release](#) about the 20 strangest questions asked of our members in the past year, are circling the globe. These include publications such as the [Daily Mail](#) in the U.K., which has a circulation of 1.7 million readers. That one story, as of May 19, has been shared on social media by 308 people, and commented on by 86 readers. Any day we can get the general public to engage in a conversation about ASTA agents is a good day. Other news outlets include [Fox News](#), and this [online news site](#) in New Zealand that explains the ranks of travel agents continue to grow in the U.S., partly due to the “difficult requests travel agencies must tackle on a daily basis.” Please like and share these stories on your social media. And thank you ASTA members every time you answer a poll from our Research Department. The time you take to do that is time well spent.

A Little Inside Scoop on ASTA Global Convention

ASTA staff has numerous irons in the fire to make [AGC 2015](#) a phenomenal success. And that means doubling the number of agents coming this year, and reaching our goal of 1,000 total attendees. The exhibitors are onboard, destinations lined up and booths are selling. Agent attendees alone are at about 225—only about 1/3 of the way toward the attendee goal. So, how to entice you to come to Washington Aug. 29-Sept. 1?

We are working with sponsor Destination DC on numerous “extras.” They are securing tickets (currently looking to be about \$20-\$40 per person) for anyone who would like to attend a Washington Nationals baseball game on Friday evening, Aug. 28. That same evening, we have reserved 20 seats—the most we can reserve—for anyone wanting to experience [“Evening Parade”](#) at the oldest post of the U.S. Marine Corps—the 8th & I St. Barracks. We’ll be announcing on the ASTA Facebook page and on Twitter (@ASTAagents) with the hashtag #ASTAAGC next week that the first 20 people to call us will get the seats. So, watch social media for the call-in number. We’re also looking at some target markets for you to sell, such as learning what the city has to offer the lucrative niche market, travel for the gay and lesbian community. The Advocate named DC the “Gayest City” in America in 2014. Washington was also named the “Fittest City” and the “Most Walkable” city in America last year. This is one multi-niche travel city.

ABC Global Services Offers \$100 Credit to AGC Attendees

ABC Global Services came to us to ask how to support the Global Convention this year, and it was decided they would run a promotion to provide a credit of \$100 toward the AGC registration fee (\$299 for ASTA member agents and \$399 for non-members) for the first 100 qualifying new and existing ABC clients.

Qualifying agencies will receive a promo code from ABC Global for one individual from their agency to register for the conference at a \$100 discount. Any new agency signing up for the ABC Premier Hotel Program before the convention, automatically qualifies for the registration credit. Additionally, existing ABC clients qualify for the \$100 credit if they have booked at least 100 hotel room nights on the ABC rate code since the beginning of the year. The credit only applies to new ASTA convention registrations, effective May 18, 2015. Qualifying agents can request their promo code directly from ABC Global (info@ABCGlobalServices.com) and can register with the code at astaglobalconvention.org to receive the \$100 discount.

Government and Industry Affairs Staff Churning Out the Alerts for You

What a couple of weeks it has been for the Government Affairs and Industry Affairs staff. Here’s a brief rundown of Alerts and News you need to know, in case you missed them the first time:

- [DOT Updates Mistaken Fares Policy](#)
- [New Rules for Traveling to South Africa with Children](#)
- [Tom Harper River Journeys Closes its Doors](#)
- [Last Chance to urge Governor Hogan to Veto SB190](#)

Paul Ruden to Retire, ASTA in Search of New General Counsel

Paul Ruden, ASTA EVP of Legal and Industry Affairs, who for 25 years has dedicated his life to providing ASTA with expert legal advice and rock-solid counsel, is retiring soon. Ruden has decided to leave his permanent job on Sept. 30, but will make himself available as a consultant going forward. Travel Weekly’s Kate Rice wrote [A look at Paul Ruden’s lasting mark on ASTA](#), travel industry. ASTA is currently in search of a new general counsel.

Gloria Bohan Named Godmother to Windstar Cruises’ Star Legend

What a testament to the work travel agents are doing—Windstar Cruises did not choose a celebrity du

jour to be godmother of its latest ship, as is often the case with cruise lines, but instead named Gloria Bohan, president and CEO of Omega World Travel, Godmother of the Star Legend. Bohan will christen the Star Legend on May 25 in Rome before sailing on its maiden voyage to attend the Lifestyles of the Glitterati private event in Monaco.

ASTA Confirms Rep. Shimkus Will Speak at Premium Summit

ASTA Premium Members will hear from Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL), who sits on a critical congressional panel overseeing the travel industry, June 8-9 at the ASTA Premium Business Summit in Chicago. This event is focused on being an "agent of change" and using technology to manage your business. Any Premium Member who is not yet signed up should [Register NOW](#) for this event. Questions on becoming a Premium Member? Call Chelas Poirier at ASTA: 703.739.8716, cpoirier@asta.org.

Your ASTA Staff Liaison is Kelly Bigel

You now have a direct line to ASTA through Kelly Bigel who was hired as Manager of Chapter Services & Development last month. Kelly comes from The Ritz-Carlton, with years in the Hospitality industry. She is here to help the domestic and international chapters, and the Young Professional Society. You can reach out to Kelly at kbigel@ASTA.org.

Upcoming Webinars from ASTA Headquarters

[Scenic Cruises – New Branding, Same 5 Star Luxury River Cruises](#) | May 21, 2015 | 2pm ET

[Webinar - Understanding U.S. Travelers through Pyschographics](#) | June 23, 2015 | 2pm ET

Recent ASTA Member Alerts & Press Releases

[Last chance to urge Govenor Hogan to veto SB190](#) | May 6, 2015

[Tom Harper River Journeys Appears to Have Closed](#) | May 15, 2015

[New Rules for Traveling to South Africa with Children Go Into Effect June 1](#) | May 18, 2015

[DOT Updates Mistaken Fares Policy](#) | May 19, 2015

The global advocates for travel. Go with the pros.

To decline all e-mails from this chapter, [click here](#).