

## PA Dutch CVB

### MEETING MINUTES

#### GROUP TOUR & TRAVEL SALES MEETING

Tuesday, September 6, 2011 • PA Dutch CVB Theatre

**Present:** Chet Joines (Best Western Eden Resort), Larry Denney (QVC Studio Tour), Carissa Dommel (Country Inn of Lancaster), Trudy Carrington (Hawthorn Inn/La Quinta Inn), Brenda Keller (Hampton Inn Lancaster), Jacyn Thompson (Lancaster Marriott), Luke Kracke (Hershey Destination Services), Emi Nissley (Willow Valley/Doubletree), Monique Szczyrbak (Hawthorn Inn/La Quinta Inn), Shawneen Scharmer (Bird-in-Hand Corp), Alisha Landis (Adventure Sports in Hershey), Heidi Brennan (National Christmas Center), Vickie Hossler (Fairfield Inn), Shane Ackermann (The Amish Village), Peggy Nana-Sinkam (Amish Farm & House), Joyce Perkinson (Landis Valley Village & Farm Museum), Cathy Strite (All-in-One Tours), Dawn Dowling (Brandywine River Museum), Jennifer Arrigo (Herr's Snack Factory Tour), Susan Adams (Intercourse Canning Co), Connie Comrey (Hershey's Chocolate World), Sandy Wenner (Dutch Apple Dinner Theatre), Kathy Danz (Lancaster Host), Sherry Wertz (Hershey Farm), Jennifer Buchter (Miller's/Plain & Fancy/AmishView Inn), Bill Luckenbaugh (Sight & Sound Theatres), Mike Resch (Strasburg Rail Road), Marie Breneman (Mennonite Info Center), Sherri Patko (Amish Experience), Audrey Bialas (PA Dutch CVB), Susan Kimball (PA Dutch CVB), **Total in Attendance: 31**

#### **Next Group Member Meeting: Date and time TBA**

If you have any questions for PA Dutch CVB staff, please visit the [Meet the Team](#) page on the members' microsite for complete staff contact information.

The meeting convened at 10:07 a.m.

**A. Welcome and Introductions:** Member introductions were made and first-time attendees were recognized.

#### **B. Member Spotlight – The Bird-in-Hand Stage**

- i. Shawneen Scharmer shared some information on *The Confession*, a musical that is being performed on the Bird-in-Hand Stage – an area in the lower level of the Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant. This new musical is based on three books by bestselling author, Beverly Lewis. The show originated in Shipshewana, Indiana in 2010.

Performances will be offered September 16 – December 2, 2011 and again in the fall of 2012. Tickets are available for the show only, or packaged with a meal and/or lodging at a Bird-in-Hand property. An industry premiere performance will be held September 13. Since seating for this performance was very limited, any member of the group tour membership community who did not receive an invitation should contact [Shawneen](#), and she will make arrangements for you to see a performance as soon as possible.

### C. PA Dutch CVB Business

- i. International Panel Discussion: To be held Thursday, September 15 at the [Cork Factory Hotel](#) from 9-11 am. This free seminar will feature the following panelists:
- Julie Heizer, deputy director, Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, U.S. Department of Commerce
  - Nick Calderazzo, president, Twin Travel Concepts, an international receptive operator based in New York
  - Paul Mason, global sales director, Wyndham Worldwide Hotels
  - Todd Kohr, marketing manager, Hershey®'s Chocolate World™
    - An overview of international tourism from a national perspective – market trends and forecast
    - What are international receptive operators, and how do you work with them?
    - Working with receptive operators from a lodging perspective – building those relationships, do's and don'ts and success stories.
    - Now you're getting international guests – how do you make them feel welcome and keep them coming back?
    - Time for Q & A

A few spots were still available at the time of the meeting. Anyone interested in attending should [email Audrey](#) ASAP.

- ii. IMG Wrap up & Video: Audrey and Susan received lots of positive comments from operators and suppliers following the International Motorcoach Group's meeting, August 9-12. The events all went very well. A photo/video montage was sent to all attendees following the conference, and Susan showed the video during this meeting. [View the video.](#)
- iii. SYTA Silver Lining Tour: Audrey attended the SYTA convention, August 19-23. While there, the SYTA Youth Foundation (SYF) presented a recap of the Silver Lining Tour. Each year, the SYF awards a multi-day tour to a group of underprivileged students from the SYTA Convention host city. This year's recipients were from New York City and enjoyed a tour including Philadelphia, Lancaster, Gettysburg, and Hershey Park in July. The group participated in Amish Camp during their time in Lancaster. Several of the students spoke during the SYTA convention and shared their experiences. One young man said his favorite part of the whole tour was Amish Camp! SYTA released a video of the entire tour. [View video.](#)
1. A new tour planning website was announced at SYTA. [www.itoursmart.com](http://www.itoursmart.com) is a searchable directory for operators, CVBs, and suppliers. It looks similar to Group Connect's concept.
- iv. Chinese FAM, October 18-19: We have another opportunity to host Chinese planners, and Audrey is in the process of setting up activities now. Group will be in the state of PA for approximately a week, in Lancaster for one day/night.
- v. Pre-ABA FAM-around: Prior to the ABA Marketplace in January 2012, Audrey proposed a day long FAM for member delegates attending the Marketplace to visit each others' properties to familiarize themselves with the specific products being promoted at ABA. She also mentioned

holding a mini-marketplace or get-together later in the day so members could talk about what they learned. There was very positive interest by a show of hands from the group.

#### **D. Trends and Member Updates**

- All-in-One Tours: Cathy said they started offering their “Evening with the Amish” select Thursday evenings with individual travelers, and the program ended very well. They plan to do this again in 2012. They also introduced a “Church Picnic and Hymn Sing” as a new experience, and this will be marketed to the church and African American markets. They promoted this with Sight & Sound Theatres® during a recent sales mission to North Carolina. Also worked with Landis Valley Village & Farm Museum and ABA on the front cover of the newest *Destinations* magazine. Landis Valley is on the cover, and the issue also includes an article about All-in-One Tours’ Civil War division.
- Hershey farm: The annual Whoopie Pie Festival is Saturday, September 17, from 11-4. More entertainment is planned for the stage this year, and they plan to make the largest whoopie pie; trying to get the Guinness Book of World Records to come and measure it.
- Bird-in-Hand Family Inn: Shawneen said the Run, Ride & Soar event is this weekend and includes a 5K race, hot air balloon festival and bike race.
- Clarion Inn at Historic Strasburg: Jody said the Salem Singers, a men’s Gospel chorus will be staying at the hotel and doing shows locally from September 10-18.
- Sight & Sound Theatres®: Bill said *Jonah* ticket sales are looking good. They’ve sold more than 100,000 tickets so far.

Mike Resch mentioned an article in the *Sunday News* having to do with the Convention Center and the possibility that the portion of the hotel tax currently going to the CVB could be diverted to the Convention Center Authority. Shane Ackermann, a current CVB board member, explained that the hotel tax law was originally written in this manner. The board has been planning for this possibility for some time. Audrey invited any members with questions to contact CVB President & CEO [Chris Barrett](#).

The meeting concluded at 10:35 a.m.