



Junior Ranger Abby enjoys a previous solar eclipse through eclipse glasses at New Jersey's Paterson Great Falls National Historical Park. A total solar eclipse is set to cross North America on April 8. Photo by George Garbeck, Graphics Coordinator Department of Communications, Paterson Public Schools, NPS

## Destinations Prepare for Influx of Visitors Seeking Total Solar Eclipse

By Jonathan Trager

April 8, 2024, marks the date of a very rare astronomical phenomenon: A total solar eclipse. Those in cities that lie within the "path of totality"—a stretch of 115 miles across North America—will be able to experience total coverage as the sun and moon are in perfect alignment.

The remarkable event has generated a groundswell of activity as those destinations geared up for the arrival of throngs of umbraphiles (eclipse chasers).

According to a Longwoods International survey of American travelers about a month before the event, 14% of them planned to travel at least 50 miles from home to view the solar eclipse. Of those travelers, 20% would spend three to five nights away from home, 43% would spend one or two nights away on their eclipse trip, and 27% would travel and return home on the same day.

"For those destinations which will experience a total solar eclipse, they should expect a significant boost in visitation around the eclipse," said

Amir Eylon, President & CEO of Longwoods International. "The fact that the eclipse will occur on a Monday afternoon means that this event likely will provide the equivalent of a bonus holiday weekend for destinations along the total solar eclipse path."

One such destination is Cleveland, home to the NASA Glenn Research Center, which in conjunction with the Great Lakes Science Center was set to host the Total Eclipse Festival with NASA covering the event on live television. Numerous watch parties, including one co-hosted by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and the University Circle community, had been planned.

Destination Cleveland served as a hub for all the activity, said David Gilbert, President & CEO of Destination Cleveland.

"We've been a central convener for all the people doing activities related to the eclipse," Gilbert said. "What we decided early on was we didn't want to run events ourselves but play a role in making Cleveland a national media epicenter for the hosting of the eclipse."

Coincidentally, Cleveland was hosting the NCAA women's Final Four the weekend before the eclipse, giving the city an great opportunity to appeal to the 25,000 people in town for the tournament to stay another day. NASA also created a tie-in to the event by bringing in female astronauts, Gilbert said.

"This is something mother nature gifted to us that we didn't have to compete for," said Gilbert. "Millions of people around the world travel to these whenever they're around. We're very fortunate to be in the path of totality."

The largest city in the path of totality is Dallas, Texas. The Dallas Cotton Bowl Stadium was ready to host a free eclipse event called "Sun, Moon, and You" featuring special guest Neil deGrasse Tyson among many others.

Craig Davis, President & CEO of Visit Dallas, said the organization prepared for the event by creating a dedicated landing page on its website and promoting it on social media. Hotel rooms were sold out leading up to the event, he noted.

"We've been talking about this for

a couple of years; now it's becoming very real and we're preparing the city to prepare for the onslaught of additional visitors," said Davis.

*Please turn to page 8*

### Inside

Page 3  
Destinations International Foundation Announces 2024 30 Under 30 Class

Page 5  
Maryland Pilots Association Plays Key Role in Response to Baltimore Bridge Collapse

Page 8  
How President and CEO Tina Wehmeir Helped AMC Institute Grow

Page 9  
Ross Mirmelstein Retiring after 35 Years at National Sheriffs' Association



# “spavention”

When you start your day with an early morning spa treatment that leaves you rejuvenated for a day of captivating convention conversations, your “spavention” is off to a great start.

That’s my Miami.

Discover this experience and more at [MiamiMeetings.com](https://MiamiMeetings.com).



# HOTS

*HOTS Dog-gone Good April Fools... Staypineapple, a national boutique hotel brand, played a paw-sitively adorable April Fools joke when they announced that they were now offering a dog wedding package at Staypineapple hotels nationwide. "Beginning April 1, The Yappily Every After Dog Wedding Package will be available for those looking to plan a ceremony for the special canine couple in their life," the press release read. In full commitment to the bit, the press release included photos of dogs donning robes in hotel beds. The release also shared package details, including a pre-ceremony "dog-tail*



*hour," and a "post-wedding massage session for the bride and groom with complimentary belly rubs" before disclosing to any gullible readers that it was, in fact, all an April Fool's prank.*

*HOTS loves the dogged commitment to the bit.*

✧ ✧ ✧ ✧ ✧

*HOTS Rat Race... Brown rats may be common to find in U.S. East Coast cities now, but that wasn't always the case. European ships also brought black rats over, and it took brown rats "only a matter of decades" to win dominance over the other species, according to a new study from the New York State Integrated Pest Management Program at Cornell University. Researchers had*

*previously black and brown rats had coexisted for almost a century. Now they're adjusting their timeline for the brown rats' victory, which they won by being larger, aggressive and more eager to hang out around humans than their black counterparts, one of the Cornell researchers told the Associated Press. HOTS congratulates the brown rats on their resounding success, to the point that New York City was forced to hire an official Rat Tzar to combat them centuries after their arrival.*

## Destinations International Foundation Announces 2024 30 Under 30 Class

By Jonathan Trager

The Destinations International (DI) Foundation on April 3 announced the members of the 2024 class for its 30 Under 30 program, now in its 14th year.

Each year, 30 individuals under the age of 30 are selected to gain industry networking opportunities and increased thought leadership throughout the year. This year's honorees hail from 30 destinations across four countries and were selected from a pool of 96 applicants.

"The 30 Under 30 program remains critical to our organization's vision and mission," said Don Welsh, President & CEO of DI. "As our industry moves toward recovery, we are especially excited to announce these young professionals as they are the future of the travel and tourism industry."

Ellie Westman Chin, CDME, President & CEO of Destination Madison and Chair of the DI Foundation, noted that the foundation "believe it is important to empower future leaders."

"We are thrilled to see the 30 Under

30 Program enter its 14th year, and we are thankful for the foundation investors who make programs like these possible for our industry through their contributions," said Westman Chin. "We look forward to engaging with this group of emerging leaders through professional development, educational opportunities and networking with industry peers and leaders throughout the year and in the years to come."

The 2024 30 Under 30 class includes the following:

- Alexandria Eady, Content Manager, Richmond Region Tourism
- America Segura, Public Relations Manager, Visit Corpus Christi
- Andrew Lawrence, Assistant Director, Arlington Sports Commission, Arlington CVB
- Brittany Jones, Marketing Project Manager, Discover Durham
- Caitlin Neal, Marketing Director, Gilmer Chamber/Pick Ellijay
- Catherine Streater, Sr. Coordinator, Brand USA
- Cristina Fernandes, Leisure Sales Coordinator, Discover Puerto Rico

- Fallon Tullier, Research and Technology Manager, Visit Baton Rouge
- Hailey Post, Destination Data Manager, Visit Raleigh
- Ian Wallis, Sales & Marketing Manager, Louisiana's Cajun Bayou Tourism
- Jessica VanDeMar, Marketing Manager, Visit Finger Lakes
- Kasmara Freiderich, National Sales Manager, Experience Rochester, MN
- Katie Clarke, People and Culture Coordinator, Destination Vancouver
- Lee Prutsman, Sr. Marketing Manager, Visit KC
- Luke Alexopoulos, Sr. Public Relations Manager, Visit Eau Claire
- Macy Dolton, Content Marketing Specialist, Destination DC
- Maggie Carter, Creative Marketing Manager, Visit Baltimore
- Martin Garneau, Sr. Manager, Systems Architecture and Application Development, Banff & Lake Louise Tourism
- Mary Coryell, Manager, Partner Relations, Discover Lehigh Valley

Please turn to page 5

## ASAE's MMC + Tech Conference 2024 Coming to Washington, D.C.

By Todd McElwee

ASAE is inviting association professionals to its 2024 Marketing, Membership, Communications + Tech Conference at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center in Washington, D.C.

The association said the event, taking place on May 30–31, has all of the expert-led, actionable learning association professionals need to take their marketing, membership and communications strategies to new heights, plus an added focus on the indispensable role of technology in association management.

"ASAE's MMC + Tech Conference 2024 is the new evolution of Tech

Conference and MMC Conference—what we consider the ultimate fusion of actionable learning our community needs in today's world," said Michelle Mason, FASAE, CAE, President & CEO, ASAE. "At MMC + Tech, we're excited to help association professionals learn practical tips and best practices to enhance marcomm and membership recruitment and retention strategies, as well as insights on leveraging technology to drive organizational growth and success."

Keynote speakers include William Arruda, an authority on using the power of branding and social media to succeed in business, and Crystal Washington, CSP, a technology strategist and certified futurist who helps companies such as Google, Microsoft

and GE leverage technology to increase profits and productivity.

MMC + Tech also includes a networking lunch with exhibitors on both days to help association professionals connect with solution providers.

ASAE will celebrate the 2024 Gold Circle Award winners, which recognize the creativity, execution and success of outstanding marketing, membership and communications campaigns, during the conference. The 2024 Overall Excellence Award Winner from 126 Gold Circle applications will be unveiled. ASAE's Gold Circle Awards are sponsored by ASAE Business Solutions.

Learn more information at [asaecenter.org](http://asaecenter.org).

WEEKLY NEWS OF ASSOCIATIONS, CVB AND HOTELS

# USAE

PUBLISHER & EXECUTIVE EDITOR 1982 – 2021  
Anne Daly Heller

---

PUBLISHER, USAE, INC.  
Ross E. Heller  
rossr@usaenews.com

COO  
James Heller  
james@usaenews.com

MANAGING EDITOR  
Jonathan Trager  
jon@usaenews.com

ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER AND ASSOCIATION EDITOR  
Todd McElwee  
todd@usaenews.com

ASSOCIATIONS/SOCIAL MEDIA EDITOR  
Julia Stumbaugh  
julia@usaenews.com

HOTEL EDITOR  
Jordan Bradley  
jordan@usaenews.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
Diane Nichols  
dkn@usaenews.com

GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
Danielle Erbe

MARKETING & CIRCULATION DIRECTOR  
Christy Pumphrey  
christy@usaenews.com

To ensure publication, all Letters to the Editor must include a telephone number and mailing address in order to verify authenticity.  
Complete copies of USAE are available for all paid subscribers online. Log onto <https://usaenews.com> and locate the log-in and password boxes. Specific log-in and password information is provided to subscribers via e-mail.  
To receive another copy, please contact the paper's circulation department at [christy@usaenews.com](mailto:christy@usaenews.com).

---

USAE is published weekly except the week of Christmas Day by USAE, Inc. Subscription rate is \$175/year, add \$65 in Canada and Mexico. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to USAE, PO Box 15009, Chevy Chase, MD 20825.

usaenews.com  
USAE, Inc.  
PO Box 15009, Chevy Chase, MD 20825  
703.898.3528 • ©2023 by USAE, Inc.

# NEWS

## Fred Dixon Named President & CEO of Brand USA

By **Todd McElwee**

Fred Dixon is trading the Big Apple for the Beltway.

On July 15, the current President & CEO of NYC Tourism + Conventions will take the helm of Brand USA. He succeeds Christopher L. Thompson, who announced his retirement from the nation's DMO, which is located in Washington, D.C., last July.

NYC Tourism + Conventions CMO Nancy Mammana has been named Interim CEO. She has been with NYC Tourism + Conventions since 2018. Dixon will depart June 5.

"I am incredibly honored and excited to serve as the next President and CEO of Brand USA," said Dixon. "The U.S. is one of the world's premiere travel destinations that will only continue to draw and delight visitors from across the globe, and we are well positioned for future growth and success. I want to thank Chris for his many years of leadership and his friendship. I look forward to joining this team and working across the industry to propel us forward."

Dixon joined the bureau in 2005 as vice president, tourism and rose to his current post in 2014. In 2023, New York attracted more than 62 million travelers. The city is preparing to host a slate of world-class events including America250 and 2026 FIFA World Cup. The rights to hold the tournament, which will be the largest

sporting event ever, was the result of a six-year bid process, of which Dixon was instrumental in leading on behalf of New York.

"We are delighted to welcome Fred as Brand USA's next Chief Executive Officer," said Todd Davidson, Brand USA Board Chair and CEO of Travel Oregon. "Fred brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from across the travel and tourism industry and his strategic, visionary and humble leadership proved that he is the right person to take Brand USA and the marketing of the USA's rich and diverse destinations and experiences to even greater heights. Brand USA's ability to drive impact with stakeholders and optimize the travel industry's critical economic contributions to the U.S. economy will prosper under Fred's leadership."

NYC Tourism + Conventions noted in the early months of the pandemic, Dixon organized the Coalition for NYC Hospitality and Tourism Recovery, which brought together industry leaders across all five boroughs to plan a path back. He's Chair of Destinations International, serves on the New York Convention Center Operating Corporation Board, board of IGLTA, the International LGBTQ+ Travel Association, U.S. Travel Association Executive Committee and is an Officer of the Board for the FIFA World Cup 26 New York New Jersey Host Committee.

"This is a bittersweet moment for NYC Tourism + Conventions and the City's tourism industry," said NYC Tourism + Conventions Board Chair and Shubert Organization Executive Vice President Charles Flateman. "For nearly twenty years, Fred Dixon has been synonymous with New York City tourism, the industry's continued success and its impact on New York City. His leadership and expertise created a template for excellence in destination marketing and the team of talented individuals who make the work possible. We are thrilled beyond measure for him in this new role and know that he will always be a champion for NYC."

U.S. Travel Association President & CEO Geoff Freeman said: "Fred Dixon is a world-class destination marketing professional with a keen eye for talent and successful marketing strategies. His 20-plus year experience in New York City and focus on metrics, accountability and achieving ambitious goals are critical attributes as Brand USA writes its next chapter. Fred's deep relationships across the business community and throughout the travel industry position him extraordinarily well to lead Brand USA and build on the strong foundation provided by Chris Thompson. The U.S. Travel Association—and the entire travel industry—congratulates Fred



**Fred Dixon**

on this well-deserved new opportunity and looks forward to partnering with him to steer Brand USA into the future."

Thompson will continue to work with Brand USA through September 30, as an advisor to facilitate the leadership transition.

"I am grateful for my time as the President & CEO of Brand USA, and I know that the future of the company will be in great hands with Fred at the helm along with the dedicated team and the Board," said Thompson. "I will work closely with Fred and our Board of Directors to ensure a seamless transition of responsibilities."

## Federal Bureau of Prisons Lets Contract with American Correctional Association Expire

By **Julia Stumbaugh**

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) on March 31 allowed its contract with the American Correctional Association (ACA), which accredits correctional facilities, to expire.

"After careful consideration, the FBOP has decided to explore other options to ensure continued improvement and innovation in correctional standards for the well-being of adults in custody and the FBOP's workforce," the FBOP said.

The FBOP had awarded a \$2.75 million contract to ACA in 2018 that included one base year and four one-year options to extend the deal, according to the Department of Justice (DOJ).

The DOJ noted that the FBOP, a law enforcement agency in charge of operating federal prisons, is not federally mandated to seek accreditation, although all BOP facilities currently hold ACA accreditation.

Instead of ACA accreditation standards, the FBOP will now follow

standards set by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the internal federal watchdog that provides audits of Congress.

"Moving forward, the FBOP will evaluate internal control options to ensure its facilities continue to meet and exceed the highest standards of correctional excellence," the bureau said.

The FBOP's separation from ACA follows an audit of the 2018 contract published in November by the DOJ's Office of the Inspector General (OIG).

The audit found that ACA's process to reaccredit BOP facilities "relied on the BOP's own internal program review and oversight process and did not follow ACA's standard reaccreditation process that would have provided a comprehensive independent evaluation of the BOP's operations and programs."

When compiling information from BOP's internal reviews, ACA additionally did not include some of the "deficiencies" within FBOP found by

BOP, the OIG said.

This process occurred despite some objections from BOP officials regarding "the objectivity of the BOP program review process," the OIG said.

The OIG concluded that ACA's accreditation process "does not appear to valuably enhance the BOP's operations and programs as currently implemented" and recommended FBOP reevaluate its relationship with the association.

In addition to the FBOP's contract, the ACA has in the past received grant funding from the DOJ, including a \$1 million training grant in 2019.

The ACA did not respond to *USAE* request for comment by press time.

Federal prisons have been the subject of a series of scandals over recent years, including reports of BOP workers accepting bribes to smuggle contraband, not providing necessary medical care for prisoners, and sexually abusing inmates, according to the DOJ, Associated Press and KGO.

FBOP Director Colette Peters, who was sworn into her position in 2022, has promised to improve the bureau. She will now need to do that through internal investigations rather than ACA's reviews.

Stay Connected



twitter.com/usaenews

# NEWS

## Maryland Pilots Association Plays Key Role in Response to Baltimore Bridge Collapse

By Julia Stumbaugh

A state-licensed pilot on the Dali, the container ship that collided with and collapsed the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore, called in an alert to the Association of Maryland Pilots when the ship lost steering power March 26, according to a report from the *Wall Street Journal*.

"I lost all steering," the pilot told an Association of Maryland Pilots dispatcher, who then called Maryland transportation authority and told them to shut down traffic onto the bridge.

"There's a ship heading toward the Key Bridge," the association dispatcher said, according to the *Journal*. "He lost steering. We need to stop all traffic on the Key Bridge."

A bridge official confirmed they had

received the message. The official then warned police officers, who responded in about a minute and a half confirming they had stopped vehicle traffic approaching the bridge from both directions, the Associated Press reported.

Maryland Gov. West Moore later said the blocking of traffic onto the bridge had saved lives.

A voyage data recorder on board the Dali recorded the Maryland pilot giving steering commands, ordering an anchor dropped and calling for tugboats in addition to calling in the mayday, the *Baltimore Sun* reported.

Clay Diamond, Executive Director of the American Pilots Association, said the Maryland pilot had more than a decade of experience, according to the *Washington Post*.

The Association of Maryland Pilots

represents accredited Maryland ship pilots, including those who help foreign trade vessels navigate through the Baltimore port, according to the association's website.

"The thoughts and prayers of all of us at the Association of Maryland Pilots are with the families and friends who lost loved ones as a result of the March 26 tragedy at the Francis Scott Key Bridge," the Association of Maryland Pilots said in a statement.

"Our thanks and deepest appreciation go to all of the first responders for their selfless efforts."

More than 96% of ships coming to Maryland are run by foreign crews, according to the association. Each of these ships are required to have a state-accredited pilot on board when navigating local ports.

"Maryland's pilots are on call around the clock every day of the year no matter what the weather conditions may be," the association website reads.

The Baltimore port is particularly tricky to navigate, according to the

association. Some of the cargo ships entering the Chesapeake Bay reach nearly 48 inches under the water, while some channels leading to Baltimore are only 50 inches deep, the pilots' association said.

Maryland-licensed pilots go through training including hundreds of trips through the Chesapeake Bay and memorizing detailed nautical charts of the channels, according to the pilots' association.

Diamond said the pilot onboard the Dali was accompanied by an apprentice who was still in the middle of this training, according to the *Sun*.

This is not the first time a Maryland pilot has come under media scrutiny in recent years. In January 2023 state-licensed pilot Steven Germac agreed with the Maryland Board of Pilots to surrender his license and never seek another after running a container ship aground in the Chesapeake Bay in March 2022.

The Association of Maryland Pilots did not respond to *USAE* request for comment by press time.

## Destinations International Announces Community Engagement Initiative for 2024 Annual Convention in Tampa

By Gretchen Hall,  
Chief Operating Officer,  
Destinations International

When Destinations International (DI) announced Tampa, Florida, as the location for its 2024 annual convention, the choice sparked discussions among members due to recent Florida laws targeting women, the LGBTQ+ community, and African Americans.

However, DI, the world's leading resource for official destination organizations, convention and visitors' bureaus (CVBs), and tourism boards, reaffirms its commitment to fostering inclusivity and local engagement, choosing collaboration over boycotting.

Don Welsh, President & CEO of DI, underlined the importance of DI's Social Impact Assessment in the site selection process.

"Choosing Tampa was a purposeful act to promote engagement and understanding. Visit Tampa Bay's dedication to inclusivity, reflected in their outstanding Social Impact Assessment scores, was a key factor in our decision. This, combined with the city's welcoming spirit, reassures us that Tampa is the right place to foster dialogue and connection," said Welsh. "However, we recognize the concerns raised by our members and see this as



Gretchen Hall

an opportunity to highlight the importance of showing up, immersing, and positively impacting the communities we visit."

Ellie Westman Chin, CDME, Chair of the DI Foundation, echoed this sentiment: "Through the engagement that DI is planning for the 2024 Annual Convention, we will demonstrate the tangible benefits of investing in social impact and inclusion while meeting in a community. Our goal is to showcase the power of collaboration and the

Please turn to page 10

## 30 Under 30

continued from page 3

- Megan Myers, Digital Media Director, Hocking Hills Tourism Association
- Megane Simone, Bid & Communication Manager, Geneva Tourism & Conventions Foundation
- Millie Stewart, Director of Sales, Visit Ogden
- Nathaniel Sweetman, Sports Marketing Coordinator, Visit Sarasota County
- Orla Moule, Business Events Assistants, Fáilte Ireland
- Samantha Green Ewald, Destination Services Manager, Visit Charlotte/Charlotte Regional Visitor's Authority
- Sheridan Powell, Communications Specialist, Visit Colorado Springs
- Sydney Macapagal, Digital Content Strategist, Visit Galveston
- Sydney Patterson, Marketing Manager, Visit Fort Worth
- Wayne Stewart, Director of Marketing & Communications, Visit Casper
- Wesley Sosa, Graphic Designer and Brand Manager, Visit Stockton

In addition to the 30 Under 30 class, DI is also honoring the first cohort of its young professional leadership development program. The program allows staff members of Pinnacle and Premier partners of DI to join virtual leadership development and network-

ing sessions alongside the 30 Under 30 class throughout the year.

The 2024 young professional leadership development program cohort includes Justin Koroneos, Customer Success Manager, Simpleview; Lauren Fox, Marketing Manager, Miles Partnership; and Jessica Franzen, Associate Media Manager, MMGY Global.

The 30 Under 30 program is supported by founding program partner SearchWide Global and sponsored by Fired Up! Culture and IMEX.

"We are pleased to honor this year's 30 Under 30 class of bright and talented young leaders," said Mike Gamble, President & CEO of SearchWide Global. "Year after year, I am consistently impressed by the caliber of individuals we welcome into this program, representing destinations worldwide. We remain committed to helping our young leaders shape the future of our industry."

The DI Foundation also receives support from the "Anne Daly Heller *USAE* 30 Under 30 Scholars Fund," which provides continuing educational opportunities for participants of each class of 30 Under 30 honorees.

Find more information about the 30 Under 30 Program and the 2024 30 Under 30 class at

[destinationsinternational.org](https://www.destinationsinternational.org).

# NEW EXPERIENCES BEGIN HERE

2025

EAST  
EXPANSION



BROWARD COUNTY  
CONVENTION  
CENTER  
GREATER FORT  
LAUDERDALE

1.2M Sq. Ft. Total Space  
350K Sq. Ft. Exhibit Hall

NOW OPEN

WEST  
BUILDING

2025

OMNI  
FORT LAUDERDALE

801 rooms

2025

6-ACRE  
WATERFRONT  
PLAZA

Nearby Hotels

- Hilton
- Renaissance
- Pier 66 (2024)
- Embassy Suites
- Over 1,500 Walkable Hotel Rooms

# Give your group an unparalleled experience in Greater Fort Lauderdale.



Welcome to Greater Fort Lauderdale, where business seamlessly blends with pleasure. The newly expanded and reimagined Broward County Convention Center now boasts 800,000 square feet of space, including a 350,000-square-foot exhibit hall and Water Taxi access. The center's \$1.3 billion expansion will be complete in 2025 and will include stunning waterfront ballrooms, a six-acre outdoor waterfront plaza and an 801-room Omni headquarters hotel.

Getting here is easy with the Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport conveniently located just minutes away, plus accommodations for conventions offering a blend of comfort, convenience, and style, there's a perfect lodging option for your group nearby.

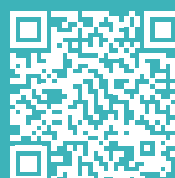


With a robust Convention Center District and 24 miles of golden beaches, you'll find experiences that will surprise and delight your attendees, from enchanting waterside outdoor venues to a cosmopolitan dining and nightlife scene. Unforgettable teambuilding activities also abound to build camaraderie.

Give your attendees an experience they'll be raving about for years to come in Greater Fort Lauderdale.



Margaritaville Hollywood Beach Resort



Learn more by scanning the code or by going online to:

[Visitlauderdale.com/meetings](https://www.visitlauderdale.com/meetings)

## LEADING LADIES

# How President and CEO Tina Wehmeir Helped AMC Institute Grow

By Julia Stumbaugh

Tina Wehmeir, CMP, CAE, spent ages 4 to 17 traveling overseas.

That childhood experience uniquely prepared her to join the world of association management companies (AMCs) and eventually take the role of President and CEO of the AMC Institute (AMCI) in 2012.

"It fit how I had grown up," Wehmeir told *USAE*. "It fit everything that drove my passions...the greater good and all of that, giving back to developing countries, the educational needs, the good work that associations do. These all spoke to how I grew up and what I experienced growing up."

Wehmeir didn't pursue her marketing degree with the goal of pursuing association management, a world she didn't know existed when she graduated college.

Instead, Wehmeir's career began in hospitality, giving her for-profit experience that turned out to be critical to her leadership of AMCI.

From advancing to a sales representative to Director of Sales and Marketing in four years under the leadership of Charlotte St. Martin at Loews Hotels, to working as Executive Director of Global Sales with Walt Disney Parks & Resorts Technology,

Wehmeir learned how to listen and research problems before diving in to course correct.

"When I got to AMCI, the organization was struggling both with profitability and awareness," Wehmeir said. "We weren't in good stead in either one of those. The organization had been around a very long time doing good work, but we just weren't being profitable, not profitable enough to accomplish what we needed for the AMC community. And certainly, we did not have the awareness we needed."

"Using the same business acumen from my previous roles, it allowed me to move the organization forward in both of those areas."

Under Wehmeir's leadership, AMCI's revenue has increased from \$40,000 to \$2 million annually as the organization added \$2.5 million in reserve funding, according to Wehmeir.

The association also increased annual member adoption by 10%, Wehmeir reported.

Wehmeir credits that growth in part to a new approach to strategic partnerships, which reflected what she had learned while on the other side of the industry. These partnerships now represent half of AMCI's annual income, per Wehmeir.

Next AMCI is working on increas-

ing awareness by outsourcing digital marketing efforts in order to show associations how they can benefit by collaborating with AMCI.

Wehmeir recalled one of her team members telling a colleague that she ran AMCI "a bit like a corporation."

"That mindset really allows you to change and morph what you're doing, and streamline it in a better way, so that you're getting the maximum benefits out of whatever organization you're working for, whether it's a corporation or association," Wehmeir said.

While directing this course change and weathering the COVID-19 pandemic, Wehmeir has been active in industry groups including the Events Industry Council, U.S. Travel Association, PCMA, ASAE, Meetings Mean Business Coalition and National Association of Professional Women.

Wehmeir's relationship with these industry organizations began when the late John Graham, former President and CEO of ASAE, helped encourage her to transition from hospitality to nonprofits.

Now they have connected her with other leaders like current ASAE President and CEO Michelle Mason and Events Industry Council CEO Amy



Calvert, who she says helped her grow as a leader in association management.

"Listening, volunteering, and developing a mentor advocate group, I think that is critical in your early career," Wehmeir said. "I learned so much that way, from those three things. I still learn from those exact same things. I never stopped learning that way."

"It makes you more balanced, and it provides a more focused path for your career and goals. I just think learning from others is the greatest asset you can have in both your career and your life."

## AHLA, HAC Uniting on Sustainability Certification for U.S. Hotels

By Jordan Bradley

The American Hotel and Lodging Association (AHLA) announced on April 2 that the association will partner with the Hotel Association of Canada (HAC) to operate a third-party sustainability certification organization, Green Key Global, in the United States.

Green Key Global was established by the HAC in 1994 to evaluate and certify a hotel's environmental sustainability practices in alignment with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

"The AHLA-HAC partnership is a huge step forward for North American hoteliers," said Kevin Carey, AHLA interim-President and CEO. "Green Key Global certification makes it possible for hotels to get important third-party validation for their sustainability efforts while providing potential guests the sustainability information they need to make informed choices."

When a hotel chooses to work with Green Key Global, the organization will provide an assessment and audit in order to gauge the hotel's performance in key sustainability areas, including

energy and water conservation, land use, hazardous and solid waste management, and air quality.

Following the evaluation, Green Key connects a hotel with industry experts and a director of green vendors "who can help properties achieve sustainability goals, and various related discounts," Carey explained.

Greek Key Global's sustainability certification will benefit AHLA member hotels in one of two ways: by giving credibility to a property's sustainability practices already in place, and by offering a plan for improvements to their processes.

"Unlike other programs, Green Key Global is specifically designed to assess hotels' sustainability efforts and is the only environmental certification designed for the hotel and meeting industry," Carey said. "Green Key offers members valuable tools and individual guidance on how to manage and improve their property's environmental performance."

Some of those tools include departmental checklists that identify ways for hotel staff to contribute to the proper-

Please turn to page 10

## Eclipse

continued from page 1

Eclipse events abound at venues such as the AT&T Performing Arts center and the Perot Museum of Nature and Science. The city is hosting a Solar Eclipse Watch Party on April 8 in partnership with the *Dallas Morning News*.

"We're trying to capitalize on it and bring more people into Dallas for something that's an unusual event," said Davis.

Leonard Hoops, President & CEO of Visit Indy, noted that the city experienced a partial eclipse in 2017, but this time it will be blacked out for nearly four minutes.

"We were early adopters that this was going to be a big thing," Hoops said. "Airbnb did a press conference noting Indy is the most booked city within the path of totality."

A turbo-charged eclipse experience awaits observers at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, with NASA experts on hand to answer questions. At least 30,000 tickets have been sold for the viewing party, which is free for those under age 18. The White River State Park in downtown Indy was prepped for The Lunacy! Solar Eclipse Festival,

and many venues and attractions are offering viewing parties, including the Indianapolis Zoo.

"People are very curious about how the zoo animals are going to respond," Hoops said.

Many activities were also planned in Buffalo, New York (see *Final Word* column on page 11). In Erie County, any remaining hotel rooms available prior to the eclipse were going for at or near \$1,000 a night, with some even requiring five-night stays, according to Patrick Kaler, President & CEO of Visit Buffalo Niagara.

Visit Buffalo Niagara engaged in a lot of social media promotion, said Kaler. The organization has also created 5,000 amenity bags or packets for hotels to give away to guests, which included items such as a welcome letter from the county executive, chocolates with a "thank you" note, and a commemorative magnet of the eclipse.

"This is an opportunity that we didn't have to bid on; it just fell into our laps," said Kaler. "This is a great opportunity for us to show off Buffalo and hopefully get repeat visitation from people who will also tell family and friends about Buffalo."



# NEWS

## Ross Mirmelstein Retiring after 35 Years at National Sheriffs' Association

*USAE Subscriber since 1989*

**By Todd McElwee**

More than a generation of sheriffs and law enforcement officials have been brought together by Ross Mirmelstein.

Originally joining the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA) in 1989, Mirmelstein, 75, has retired from the organization. The longtime director of meetings departs as NSA enjoys a dynamic slate of events, as well as with the respect and admiration of his colleagues, peers and association's membership.

"He respected the need and purpose for the Office of Sheriff," Jonathan Thompson, Executive Director and CEO, NSA, told *USAE*. "But he brought a sense calm and patience to every role he played at NSA. In the exposition role he was a constant for the members and our exhibitors and took seriously his responsibility of being their collective voice and advocate."

During a career in which personal connection featured so prominently, it was a friendship that led Mirmelstein

to NSA.

"I graduated from East Tennessee State University in 1971 with a major in history and a minor in criminal justice," he told *USAE*. "After earning a M.A. in Criminal Justice from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, I moved to Chicago where I was one of the founders of the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC). I ran a national Jail Health Care Accreditation Program and put on their meetings. The Sheriff from Ft. Wayne, Indiana, was the National Sheriffs' Association's representative to the NCCHA. He and I became great friends and after he became the Executive Director of NSA in April 1989, he recruited me to join him as NSA's Direc-



Ross Mirmelstein

tor of Meetings... a position that I held until April 2020, when Covid occurred. At that time, I relinquished my role as meetings director, semi-retired and became a Special Advisor to the Association's Executive Director where my main responsibilities were to liaison with the NSA Board of Directors & Past Presidents and to run the NSA's Awards Program. I was still somewhat involved in the association's meetings, but at a very reduced role."

Mirmelstein listed the assistants he mentored over the years, and remains friends with, as well as improving NSA's meetings—especially taking the Annual June Conference from a "hotel show" to a large city-wide conference—as his proudest accomplishments. He noted the biggest change he's experi-

enced in events is the increased use of technology.

Greg Champagne, Sheriff, St. Charles Parish, Louisiana, President, National Sheriffs' Association 2023-24, said: "Ross Mirmelstein has been a fixture at NSA during my entire experience with our great organization. I remember after first getting elected to the board of directors some 20-plus years ago, he was introduced as Guido Mirmelstein. He did not correct that introduction to me and the other three newly elected board members. I actually thought his name was Guido for several weeks. Ross will be missed, and I'm not sure NSA will ever be the same. I wish him a healthy and lengthy retirement. I honor and admire him for his respect for the United States military as a Navy veteran."

Mirmelstein has been active with PCMA, ASAE and Association of Meeting Professionals (AMPs), of which he was chair from 2003–2004. He was presented with NSA's President's Award in 2001.

*Please turn to page 11*

## Boone Tavern Hotel Schools Kentucky College Students in Hospitality

**By Jordan Bradley**

The historic Boone Tavern Hotel on a college campus in Berea, Kentucky, is rich in history and in possession of a pioneering spirit.

Since its inception, the Boone Tavern Hotel has been staffed by students of Berea College, a unique university that doesn't charge its students tuition. Instead, grants and endowments support the tuition costs for the college's 1,400 students, who are then required to work 10 hours per week in one of the school's 35 departments across campus or with local nonprofits.

The Boone Tavern Hotel was built on the school's campus in 1909, when Berea College's then-president, William Frost, and his wife, Nelly, were hosting more than 300 visitors at their home on the college's campus—a feat of hosting at which any homeowner would balk.

By that time in the college's history, the tuition model had been established with the inception of the student labor program in 1859. At the time, said Abby Crowe, the Tavern's Director of Sales, students were only required to work seven hours. Still, that meant the Tavern was constructed by students in Berea's masonry, woodworking and carpentry courses at the time.

"A lot of our furniture was made

by student craftsmen," Crowe said, adding that most of the woodwork and furniture is now considered antique and very unique to the property.

Crowe, who has been at the property for just over a year, has worked for a handful of hotel chains throughout her career, she said. When she first stepped foot in the Boone Tavern Hotel, she thought, "This is a completely unique property. And a lot of it is because of the student labor program."

Currently, the program has 15 students who work in various departments of the hotel, including at the front desk, in the Tavern's kitchen, on the property's banquet team or in maintenance.

Crowe said one of the benefits for her as a staff member is learning from the students' education herself.

"I have a student worker that works for me, and he's a computer person," Crowe said. "He helps me with some of my marketing because he understands [that] better than I do."

For students, the program is an opportunity to practice the skills they learn in class as well as learn some work culture norms that they might not have been exposed to otherwise. The property frequently hosts events, including music nights and conferences, with a capacity to host anywhere from six to 150 people.

"Part of the student labor is really



The Boone Tavern Hotel

reinforcing everything that the program stands for, and that's honoring the dignity and utility of all the work, taking pride in work well done and starting students off for success," Crowe said. "So many times, kids will go through high school and college and never really had a job. They get out [of school] and they don't really know what those expectations are. Berea students are much better prepared for real world work experiences."

Not all of the students who work at the Tavern are hospitality students,

Crowe said, and frequently she has seen students just stay for a semester as a way to try out prospective careers before graduation. Regardless of their major, the skills students learn in the Tavern will be valuable to them.

"Customer service is a dying art," Crowe frequently says to the students she works with. "No matter what field you choose—whether you're going to be a nurse, whether you're going to stay in the hospitality business, even if you're going to be a scientist—having those real, one-on-one interpersonal skills is key."

# NEWS

## Mifepristone Challenged by Anti-Abortion Association Coalition in Supreme Court

By [Julia Stumbaugh](#)

The Supreme Court on March 26 heard arguments for limiting access to the abortion-inducing drug mifepristone in a case led by a coalition of associations with a history of opposing abortion.

The court spent 90 minutes on March 26 listening to oral arguments concerning the cases Food and Drug Administration (FDA) v. Alliance for Hippocratic Medicine (AHM), as well as Danco Laboratories LLC v. AHM.

The AHM is an umbrella group largely comprised of religiously-aligned organizations focused on opposing abortion, including Catholic Medical Association, the Coptic Medical Association of North America, the American College of Pediatricians, the Christian Medical & Dental Associations, and the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists (AAPLOG.)

The AHM is urging the court to overturn U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval of mifepristone, which was initially approved by the agency in 2000.

Mifepristone was used in six of 10 abortions undergone in the United States last year, according to the Associated Press.

The AHM's mission is opposed by the largest physicians' groups in the United States, including the American Medical Association (AMA) and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG).

The far more recently-established AHM was incorporated in Amarillo, Texas, in August 2022, two months after the Supreme Court decided to rule against federal abortion protection in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, according to *The Intercept*. The AHM filed its first lawsuit against

mifepristone three months later.

The AHM then applied for nonprofit status with the IRS in January 2023, according to [Accountable.US](#) and the *New Republic*.

In its case against mifepristone, AHM argues FDA has made it too easy to access a drug that can result in adverse reactions for patients, which could result in doctors performing surgeries that conflict with their beliefs.

After oral arguments, "a majority of justices appeared ready" to dismiss the case due to plaintiffs' perceived lack of standing, or legal right to sue, according to Amy Howe of *SCOTUSblog*.

Several justices focused on the fact that federal law prohibits forcing doctors from participating in abortions against their will, per *SCOTUSblog*.

In addition, several people testifying on AHM's behalf told the court they had no direct experience with

mifepristone complications, according to CNN.

One such testimony came from Dr. Christina Francis, AAPLOG CEO, who told the Supreme Court she had not personally been required to perform emergency surgery on patients suffering complications from mifepristone, but she knew colleagues who had, per CNN.

The AMA and ACOG joined 13 other medical organizations in filing an amicus brief with the Supreme Court the day before oral arguments began.

The organizations argued mifepristone is important for miscarriage management in addition to abortions, that it has undergone two decades of safety studies, and that it has a lower rate of adverse reactions than controversial drugs such as *Viagra*.

According to *SCOTUSblog*, a decision on the case is expected by the summer.

## DI Initiative

*continued from page 5*

profound impact local engagement can have on a community."

In a move to further develop DI's vision, the DI leadership team, several executive board members, and DI's strategic partner at IGLTA (International LGBTQ+ Travel Association) visited Tampa to meet with Mayor Jane Castor, Santiago C. Corrada, President & CEO of Visit Tampa Bay, and others from the Visit Tampa Bay team. These discussions laid the groundwork for an innovative case study aimed at demonstrating effective community engagement and support strategies that can serve as a model for other destination organizations.

"Visit Tampa Bay is a proud member of the Destinations International

community; I am honored to highlight Tampa's enduring commitment to diversity and inclusivity," noted Corrada.

"Our city is a beacon of progress, embodying values of equality and community, which stand as a testament to our distinct approach within the broader destination organization context. Tampa's vibrant spirit and dedication to welcoming all communities reflect our mission to make a positive and lasting impact. Our founding as a multicultural community and our leadership in inclusivity are well known and respected. We stand united

in celebrating and promoting these ideals at every opportunity."

John Tanzella, President & CEO

of IGLTA, who participated in the planning discussions in Tampa, highlighted the significance of the partnership: "Our collaboration with DI for the Tampa convention reflects a shared commitment to inclusivity and the power of travel as a force for good. Tampa's proactive approach to welcoming diverse communities, assessed and verified through DI's Social Impact Assessment, sets

a commendable example for destinations worldwide."

The Tampa case study initiative, born from these discussions, centers on community engagement, support, lasting impact, and local investment, aiming to leave a positive legacy in Tampa and serve as a model for future destination efforts.

"Our vision extends beyond the convention to creating a lasting imprint of inclusivity in Tampa," said Sophia Hyder Hock, DI's Chief Inclusion Officer. "This initiative is an invitation to our industry to join in fostering community engagement and embracing diversity as a strength."

The Tampa case study initiative is structured around four key components designed to maximize the convention's positive impact on the

local community:

**Community Engagement:** Participating in an immersive learning experience in Tampa will empower individuals to directly engage with the local community, fostering deeper connections and facilitating discussions on topics that hold significance within the community.

**Community Support:** In partnership with Legacy Collective, this initiative will support various local charities, emphasizing the importance of direct financial support to foster community development.

**Lasting Impact:** Collaborating with Tourism Cares, DI will introduce a Meaningful Travel Map for Tampa, connecting travel professionals with sustainable, community-led businesses, initiatives, and experiences to explore during the convention.

**Local Investment:** Highlighting DI's commitment to economic empowerment, this component will showcase the collaboration with Visit Tampa Bay to engage local minority-owned businesses during the convention.

Additional information about each of these initiatives will be announced in the months leading up to the event in July.

"Our approach goes beyond the convention. It's about leaving a lasting positive imprint on Tampa and demonstrating the transformative power of inclusivity and community engagement," said Hyder Hock. "We invite our members and the broader travel and tourism industry to join us in this important and meaningful initiative."

**"Visit Tampa Bay is a proud member of the Destinations International community; I am honored to highlight Tampa's enduring commitment to diversity and inclusivity," noted Corrada.**

## Sustainability

*continued from page 8*

ty's sustainability goals, employee engagement toolkits, resources to create and implement sustainability policies, guidance on how to communicate new or evolving policies to vendors, suppliers and clients, and tools to track a property's energy use and carbon footprints.

"This is an important milestone, as we are not only expanding the footprint of the Green Key Global brand, but

also the opportunity for the industry to lead the way towards monumental shift and environmental impact, with a best-in-class program that is affordable, measurable and accessible for all hotels," said Susie Grynol, President and CEO of HAC.



# THE FINAL WORD

## Keeping Our Eye on the Sky

By Patrick Kaler, President & CEO,  
[Visit Buffalo Niagara](#)

Visit Buffalo Niagara and the entire Buffalo metropolitan area have been looking forward to our place in the sun—the nearly four minutes beginning at 3:18 p.m. on April 8, 2024—for years. Our region has the geographic good fortune to be in the path of totality for the eclipse, and we have been planning on making the most of it for some time.

Like many events in the age of social media, the phenomenon of a total eclipse has become much more than an extraordinary astronomical event in recent years. People who have experienced a total eclipse have described the experience as emotional, spiritual, even life changing. As word has spread on the social channels that have come to dominate our lives, the experience of a total eclipse has become a bucket list item for many people. Cities fortunate enough to be in the path of totality can expect packed hotels, rocking restaurants and sold out special events.

As with all things tourism related in Buffalo and Erie County, New York,

Visit Buffalo Niagara is here to help. We are in “all hands on deck” status, with everyone in our organization doing their part to ensure eclipse tourists have the experience of a lifetime. Working with the County of Erie, City of Buffalo, and other regional municipalities, we have helped bring together a variety of agencies who will be responsible for the wellbeing of our guests, ensuring that traffic moves smoothly, emergency staff and vehicles are at the ready should something unforeseen occur, and otherwise overseeing an influx of visitors that is expected to number in the tens of thousands, potentially in the hundreds of thousands.

Visit Buffalo Niagara and our hospitality industry plan to make the most of this unprecedented event in the life of our community. We are guiding our visitors to the most advantageous locations to view the events as well as the places where day-long events with guest speakers, food trucks and music will make the experience something more like a festival. We intend to help create memories for our guests not only of a spectacular day that becomes night for a few minutes, but

also of a city that was and is special in every other way, a city and region that has invested close to a billion dollars in recent years in new tourism experiences, attractions and amenities.

Since the eclipse is on a Monday, we expect many of our visitors to come for the weekend with ample time to sample Buffalo’s legendary comfort food starting with the Buffalo Wing Trail, as well as beef on weck sandwiches, charbroiled foot-long hot dogs, fish fry and sponge candy, among other regional specialties. If you love architecture, Frank Lloyd Wright’s Buffalo is waiting for you. If you are a fan of modern art, the newly expanded and revitalized Buffalo AKG Art Museum is a truly world-class experience. If history is your thing, visit the Theodore Roosevelt Inaugural National Historic Site, one of the few places where a U.S. President took the oath of office outside the Capital. Of course, Niagara Falls is just down the road, a short twenty-minute ride from our downtown hotels. There will be no shortage of fun things to do in the days leading up to the big event.

Visit Buffalo Niagara will be using every tool at our disposal to assist



Patrick Kaler

visitors, answer questions and offer assistance—including getting our mobile visitor center, Seymour Buffalo, out on the streets—when the eclipse hoopla commences. As a visitors bureau, our job is to win friends and influence people, and we will be doing just that—making sure that eclipse tourists become repeat visitors and come back to town even when the sun shining over Buffalo isn’t in the shadow of the moon.

## Destinations Showcase in DC: Local Hotel Outlook for 2024

By Jordan Bradley

As hotels fill with Destinations Showcase attendees, hotels around the nation’s capital continue to work to offer stunning accommodations.

Apple Hospitality REIT announced on March 27 that it had acquired the AC Hotel by Marriott Washington D.C. attached to the Washington D.C. Convention Center for \$116.8 million.

The 234-room hotel originally opened in October 2020 and is nestled in the heart of downtown D.C.

“We are pleased to expand our portfolio with the acquisition of the AC Hotel Washington D.C. Convention Center and are thrilled to establish a

presence in downtown Washington, D.C., a market we have tracked and wanted to have a presence in for some time,” said Nelson Knight, President of Real Estate and Investments at Apple Hospitality.

The Salamander DC is expected to complete its extensive, property-wide reimagining of the former Mandarin Oriental hotel this June. The hotel has been operational throughout the renovation process.

Salamander Resorts purchased the hotel for \$139 million in September 2022, pledging to renovate and redesign the property in the Salamander image. For the 373-room property, that meant a revamping of the Presidential

Suite and the club lounge, the Monument club expected to debut this June; a new restaurant called Dogon helmed by chef Kwame Onwuachi; expansions to the property’s two-story spa, and more, according to the hotel’s website.

The 559-room Capital Hilton announced on March 26 that it had completed the multi-million dollar, 13-month renovation.

“Capital Hilton takes pride in providing our guests with a memorable travel experience backed by the latest innovations and amenities in hospitality,” said Paolo Pedrazzini, General Manager at the Capital Hilton. “These renovations demonstrate our commitment to guest satisfaction and alignment with the standards of this category-leading brand.”

The Capitol Hilton sits within walking distance of The White House and the National Mall, offers two dining options, and is pet-friendly.

The property’s renovations aim to “weave” the original design of the hotel with modern elements steeped in grandeur and glamour.

Independent lifestyle hotel brand, Arlo Hotels is set to open its seventh property in Washington, D.C., this fall, according to the hotel brand’s website.

“We are excited to expand the Arlo Hotels brand into new cities and bring

our community-centered programming to broader audiences,” said Oleg Pavlov, Founder and CEO of Quadrum Global and Arlo Hotels.

The 12-story, 445-room boutique hotel includes the preservation and restoration of D.C.’s longest standing apartment building, the Harrison Apartment building, as part of the project. The Harrison Apartment building was first opened in 1882.

The hotel will preserve the apartment building’s original structure while adding more than 180,000 square feet of contemporary space.

“It is an honor to restore and breathe new life into one of D.C.’s historic properties, which sat vacant for approximately 15 years,” said Oleg Pavlov, Founder and CEO of Quadrum Global, the global real estate development firm behind the Arlo Hotels brand. “We will honor the legacy of this building by making it a welcoming place for the entire D.C. community and creating experiences that capture the destination’s identity.”

Located with a mile of the city’s Union Station and the Walter E. Convention Center, the forthcoming Arlo Washington D.C. will feature a restaurant and bar, a bodega cafe and lounge and an interior courtyard, meeting rooms, a rooftop lounge, and a pool.

## Mirmelstein

*continued from page 9*

“I would like to thank all of the people in the meetings industry that I have dealt with over the years,” he said. “Not only did I learn from them, but also became friends with them.”

As to what’s next, Mirmelstein said: “I am a Battle of Britain historian. I am now on the Board of Directors of the Billy Fiske Foundation (he was the first American to violate our Neutrality Laws in 1940, went to Britain and joined the Royal Air

Force, and subsequently was the first American to be killed in August 1940 during the Battle of Britain). The purpose of the Foundation is two-fold: to honor his memory by putting a statue of him at the American Embassy in London as well as the British Embassy in Washington as well as an educational component. I also collect WWII aviation art (numbered lithographs, signed by the artists as well as pilots).”

Mirmelstein has also been involved with a number of organizations in the fight against Anti-Semitism.

# Houston

From the outside, Houston can look fast and future-focused. Come closer, though, and you'll discover a green destination of 400 parks and an extraordinary welcome and walkability—a city woven from the imagination and aspirations of cultures from every corner of the world. Bring your meeting to Houston and experience it.

**It all comes together in Houston.**

Call 713-853-8949 to connect to our meeting experts.

[VisitHouston.com](http://VisitHouston.com)