

PUBLIC RELATIONS

April 2010

Prepared by:

Mary Haban

Senior Manger, Public Relations

MEDIA VISITS, TRADE SHOWS, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Andrew Collins Visit, *About.com* – April 20-22

He's a high profile travel writer with credentials that could read like the who's who in travel media and after years of trying to lure him here, David Downing finally succeeded at getting him to make the trip. His main outlet is www.About.com which is owned by the *New York Times* and is among the largest and most-visited online content providers in the world, with 60 million visitors per month. His visit will include a photo gallery to the region, which includes coverage of attractions, neighborhoods, restaurants, nightlife, and accommodations. A special note of thanks goes to the Renaissance Vinoy Resort & Golf Club who was kind enough to host him.

Visit Florid New York City Media Receptions – April 26-28

VSCP's Deputy Director David Downing helped lead the media efforts in the New York market as part of the VISIT FLORIDA delegation that traveled to the big apple in late April. David's expertise in the New York media scene combined with his strategic plans for marketing and advertising in this top feeder market, helped make his three day visit even more productive. While there, he participated in several targeted media receptions, including consumer, outdoor/adventure and GBLT. Results of his visit are already apparent, with several editors extremely eager to visit our area.

Coastal Living Photo Shoot – April 27-28

Assisted the photo team from *Coastal Living Magazine* with logistics and location information to complete a photo shoot of the area for an article about beaches and coastal communities... (Specifically, St. Pete Beach and Pass-a-Grille.) This visit comes on the heels of reporter, Jeff Book's visit a few weeks prior to write the actual article on the area. The Don CeSar Beach Resort, Shell Key, Island's End Resort, and many areas in Pass-a-Grille were photographed. The article is forthcoming in a summer issue.

Visit Florida Toronto Media Luncheon & Tour – April 25-30

VSPC's Senior PR Manager, Mary Haban, coordinated and planned a comprehensive media tour in conjunction with the already scheduled VISIT FLORIDA Canada media reception that took place the final week in April. While in the area, Mary called on key trade editors from Travel Industry Today, Travel Hot News, Canadian Travel Press, as well as top consumer editors, freelance writers and television producers. She also participated in a special event held by TMAC (Travel Media Association of Canada.) The week culminated with an all-out media presence at the Boulevard Club in Toronto that involved detailed presentations by each partner, as well as the opportunity to chat one-on-one with media at the scheduled marketplace.

Resulting coverage is already pouring in with a front page photo and mention on several key trades in the Toronto area. To keep our Canadian presence strong, several more events, and missions are in the works at the end of the summer and the beginning of this fall.

Terry Conway Visit – Delaware County Times – April 29-May 3

The Tradewinds Island Resorts and Island's End Resort both played host to this travel writer who came to our area to feature the towns of St. Pete Beach and Pass-a-Grille. The Delaware County Times is a major daily newspaper, located in one of our top feeder markets, just outside of Philly. Resulting coverage from this visit should help provide the traction needed in this ever-important part of the country, thereby, bringing even more visitors to our area. Thanks to our industry partners who helped us make this visit possible.

MEDIA ASSISTANCE PROVIDED:

April 2010 Media Assistance:

April 2 – Provided media assistance to Sarah Latta of *Coastal Living Magazine* about Fort De Soto Park and the Paws Playground for an upcoming feature story.

April 2 – Fielded call from Mike Vansickler of the *St. Pete Times* who wants to speak with someone regarding the Mayor's initiative to promote the destination as one that has many great sporting events. In that same vein, he'd like to know what we as a CVB are doing or/already doing to promote the destination that way.

April 5 – Responded to Ted Jackovics of the *Tampa Tribune* regarding questions about TDC Meeting details.

April 5 – Fielded call from Lloyd Sowers of *FOX 13 News* regarding occupancy and outlook for this year's Spring Break.

April 5 – Assisted Traci LaRosa Suppa, a freelance writer, with information on the Sea Screamer attraction and how to get tickets for a potential ride.

April 5 – Coordinated the use of a bird photo taken by the folks at the Suncoast Seabird Sanctuary for Ms. Julie Hatfield, a freelance travel writer.

April 5 – Helped facilitate an interview between *Bay News 9's* Melissa Eichman and VSPC's Sports Commissioner, Kevin Smith, regarding Melissa at Bay News 9, concerning Al Lang Field and the things coming in to St. Pete.

April 6 – Fielded call from Donovan of the horse show Cavalia regarding asking for our assistance to help promote the show on our social media sites.

April 6 – Correspond with Mary Lou Jansen of *VisitSouth.com* about photos of the Tampa Bay Rays for use on her website for a story.

April 7 – Provided an interview to Judy Stark of the interview *Maddux Business Report* about the Post Card Inn and how it fits into the travel scene.

April 7 – Follow up correspondence with Jacquie Kubin of *Communities at the Washington Times* regarding her recent visit to the area.

April 8 – Responded to a request from **Alina Baumann**, Redakteurin & Reporterin Exclusiv – das Starmagazin, of a German TV station regarding B roll footage of the area.

April 9 – Provided Scott Dame, Director of Sales for C J Publishers, Inc., with information on where he could find demographics about who travels to the area.

April 9 – Fielded call from Annette Thompson of *Southern Living Magazine* regarding the Society of American Travel Writers and the potential to host a future meeting.

April 12 – Provided verification of a photo and where it came from to Nancy McGoff, *The New York Times* Marketing Promotion Coordinator for an upcoming advertorial on the area.

April 13 – Fielded call from Mike Sasso of the *Tampa Tribune* regarding the TDC Meeting, the bed tax and the financing of Tropicana Field.

April 13 – Responded to an inquiry from Chris Robinson Associates Inc., regarding VSPC participating in an upcoming radio broadcast (ad buy).

April 13 – Provided media assistance to Christian Sylt of *Paddock Magazine* (UK) regarding the Honda Grand Prix of St. Petersburg.

April 13 – Provided VSPC's logos to Shelley Conway, Director, Meeting and Event Services for the U.S. Travel Association for the upcoming Pow Wow Show.

April 13 – Assisted Teresa Plowright, of TravelwithKids.com with photos of the beach, Pier 60 and Tarpon Springs as she requested.

April 14 – Provided information to Ted Jackovics of the *Tampa Tribune* regarding the Klages research report that was given at the TDC meeting.

April 14 – Participated in a conference call and online demo with Ian Titcomb of *TravMedia* regarding VSPC's online press room for the International POW WOW event in Orlando.

April 14 – Follow up with Jim Weaver of *New York Trend* to confirm we would not be able to visit the area as planned.

April 15 – Provided links to our image library to Zoe Marmot of Bay Care for use in an upcoming cardiology campaign for Morton Plant, St Anthony's Mease Dunedin and Mease Countryside, basically all our hospitals in Pinellas.

April 15 – Provide Terry Conway of the *Delaware County Times* with information on water activities and restaurants in the area for his upcoming visit.

April 19 – Reviewed *Pow Wow Daily* article (fact-checked) and sent proposed changes back to Greg Staley of the US Travel Association.

April 20 – Fielded request from Dede Gomez of *Golf Digest Brazil* for accommodations and golf for a dozen or so reps from South America.

April 20 – Additional correspondence with freelance travel writer Traci LaRosa Suppa regarding her potential ride on the Sea Screamer.

April 20 – Provided comprehensive location information to Kristen Shelton of *Coastal Living Magazine* for an upcoming photo shoot to the area. This shoot follows a visit by writer Jeff Book who came to write a story on Pass-a-Grille.

April 21 – Fielded call from Ana Connery of *Florida Travel + Life Magazine* regarding her upcoming visit to our area.

April 23 – Continued working with the organizers of the Pow Wow media room to populate our portion of the site with relevant and timely photos and releases.

April 23 – Provided restaurant information to Patricia Letakis, Executive Editor/TASTES Editor, of *Florida Travel + Life Magazine*.

April 26 – Coordinate with the *Coastal Living Magazine* photo team to help organize shoot.

April 27 – Fielded call from Steve Nichols of *FOX 13 News* about the TDC Meeting and about VSPC's reaction to the oil spill. Forwarded oil updates from all international offices to Steve.

April 27 – Responded to an inquiry (advertising) from Barbara Ritter, Reporter with *Ad-Fax Media* -- forwarded this to our advertising department.

April 28 – Provided photos of Fort De Soto Park's Paws Playground to Sarah Latta of *Coastal Living Magazine*.

April 28 – Took call from Scott Finn of *WUSF* regarding the oil spill.

April 28 – Additional correspondence with freelance travel writer Traci LaRosa Suppa to provide her with ideas for water activities and dining options.

April 29 – Forward the oil spill update that was distributed by Pinellas County Communications to Steve Huettel of the *St. Petersburg Times*.

April 30 – Provided an interview to Margaret Cashill, Staff Writer of the *Tampa Bay Business Journal* regarding the oil spill and its potential impact on area tourism.

April 30 – Responded to Jerome Shaw, who does Travel Writing & Photography regarding an inquiry he sent about places to see in do while in the area.

ASSISTING VISIT FLORIDA:

During the month of April the Public Relations Team provided editorial assistance to Visit Florida Offices in Canada, South America, and the domestic office located in Tallahassee. The Public Relations team was also actively involved in several partnerships, including public relations and media relations initiatives, to lure top notch media to the area. We received and respond to, on a regular basis, Quick Lead's and writer inquiries to promote both the destination and the State of Florida as a whole. We also participated on several committee conference calls to keep up to date on the latest news and upcoming events to assist in our strategic planning.

April 5 – Worked with VISIT FLORIDA's PR Coordinator Kelli Robinson on following up on a lead that came from FOX 13 News regarding travel complaints.

April 14 – Provided VISIT FLORIDA's PR Team with VSPC's social media handles to use in the upcoming NYC and Toronto Media Missions.

April 22 – Fielded call from VISIT FLORIDA's Canadian office regarding the upcoming media events scheduled in Toronto for the last week in April.

ASSISTING THE INDUSTRY & THE CVB & OTHER COUNTY DEPARTMENTS:

April 2 – Worked with VSPC's Meetings & Education departments and in conjunction with the organizers of DolphinSmart, to see how we could become involved as a sponsor.

April 5 – Responded to a request from the public relations agency for the Renaissance Vinoy Resort & Golf Club to put their placement of the hotels' Earth Day efforts on our social media sites.

April 6 – Attended the grand opening of Crislip Arcade in downtown St. Pete to shoot video and post on Facebook and VSPC's YouTube channel.

April 6 – Worked with VSPC's Internet Marketing department to provide them with our 30 second boilerplate.

April 7 – Worked with VSPC's Film Commission to assist the Public Relations Director at Tampa General Hospital with details on potential locations for a commercial shoot.

April 9 – Attended Pinellas County Exempt Meeting.

April 9 – Worked with Sarah Mason of the Sports Commission to shoot footage for IronGirl race video.

April 12 – Collaborated with Tim Ganley, owner of Sculptured Bodies, Inc. regarding a travel writer request to schedule a KaYoga session.

April 12 – Responded to an inquiry from an Arizona State University student who was asking for VSPC’s mission statement and marketing plan. We directed her to PinellasCVB.com and VisitSPC.com for this information.

April 12 – Corresponded with Jeni Hatter of the Clearwater Marine Aquarium about releasing rights for photos for inclusion in an upcoming *New York Times* advertorial.

April 13 – Attended a meet and greet luncheon with the new management team in place at the Post Card Inn.

April 20 – Fielded call from Mary Anne Sobocinski of the Seminole High School Marching Band regarding their marching band being selected to play in the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade and asking for our help with sponsorship. Forwarded this call to our Education Hospitality department for follow up.

April 21 – Assist VSPC’s Sports Commission with a quote for a story about the Clearwater Threshers.

April 21 – Attended a Public Relations Society of America Board of Directors Meeting.

April 22 – Attended BACA (Bay Area Concierge Association) event at Opa in Tampa.

April 23 – Assisted Deborah Pauley with Clearwater Beach Restaurant Week by posting the information on our social media sites.

April 26 – Follow up with Kathy White of the Salvador Dali Museum regarding the upcoming post POW WOW fam trip to our area (with South American tour operators & agents.)

April 26 – Inform Jessica Powell of DolphinSmart that VSPC will become an official sponsor of the program.

April 26 – Upload Salvador Dali Museum video from VSPC’s website to YouTube for Hank Hine’s use.

April 28 – Field request from Kelly Prieto of Hayworth Creative asking for two copies of our Visitor Guides.

April 27 – Edit footage from the IronGirl race for VSPC’s Sports Commission to upload to both Facebook and YouTube.

April 28 – Attend county-wide PIO meeting.

April 29 – Collaborate with Travis Claytor at Tampa Bay & Company regarding the Tourism Rally at Tampa International Airport; also work Busch Gardens and the Clearwater Marine Aquarium to get them to participate with the animals. Coordinate our own Ambassadors via VSPC’s Advertising Director.

SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVES:

Throughout the month, the VSPC Public Relations Team continued to monitor and post updates on Facebook, Twitter, PressSuite and YouTube pages to promote the destination to our ever-growing fan base. We are also monitoring news coverage on a daily basis, and forwarding positive coverage to our industry partners via email.

We posted the following press releases on Facebook, PinellasCVB.com, Press Briefs, and FloridasBeachMedia.com: **“Sunscreen Film Festival Sheds Light on Indie Films,” “Free Art Festival Sails into Downtown St. Pete,”** and **“Area Tourism Industry Stands Up for Travel,”** as well as updates on the oil spill situation.

We also continue to train on the new SimpleView system, updating partner and media information, as well as designing a variety of headers. We are also preparing to migrate from Q-Tools to Simpleview for press release distribution.

PRESS RELEASES & E-NEWS & INDUSTRY ALERTS:

April 13 – Press release entitled, **“Sunscreen Film Festival Sheds Light on Indie Films: Screenings, workshops and more to take place in downtown St. Pete, April 14-18,”** was sent to the media and the industry.

April 15 - TDC Meeting Re-cap send to media and the industry.

April 16 – Press release entitled, **“Free Art Festival Sails into Downtown St. Pete: This weekend’s Mainsail Arts Festival to feature 250 artists, live entertainment,”** was sent to the media and the industry.

April 19 – Industry update regarding the volcano eruption in Iceland and its affect on visitors to and from our area was sent to the industry.

April 23 – E-News sent to the industry and media.

April 28 – Industry update regarding the Louisiana Oil Spill was sent to the industry and media.

April 29 – A Save the Date reminder entitled, **“Area Tourism Industry Stands Up for Travel,”** was sent to the industry and media.

April 30 – An industry update regarding the latest on the oil spill and entitled, **“Spill Threatens Panhandle Coastline,”** was sent to both the industry and the media.

UK PR Firm and German Media Activities:

Please refer to separate reports from each office.

Outdoor/Nature PR Activities: April 2010

Bill AuCoin & Associates, Inc.

- PR support in November of 09 has paid off in a generous feature article in the Saturday, April 3 editions of London's Daily Express (circulation 700,000). "My holiday as a Florida cast away" is the headline. Writer Louise Barnett describes her unsuccessful but fun efforts to catch a snook at least 28 inches long, which would be legal to keep and cook, so she could see if snook really is the best tasting fish of all. The article has generous mentions of hotels and restaurants plus color photography of the beach at The Don CeSar and the pool at the Sandpearl Resort. AuCoin worked with Barnett on this story when she visited in November, 2009.
- Bill AuCoin accompanied photographers for Coastal Living magazine (Circ. 600,000) for two days of shooting pictures to accompany an article about barrier island lifestyles on the west coast of Florida. Photo locations included the Don CeSar, (possible cover shot on the beach), Postcard Inn, Island's End Resort, Hurricane Restaurant, The Wharf Restaurant, Undertow restaurant and bar, and Pass-a-Grille's Evander Preston, jeweler/collector.
- Provided PR support for a seagrass and manatee protection initiative by the Pinellas County Environmental Department and Tampa Bay Watch. Efforts included promoting a press event at Fort De Soto Park's boat ramp unveiling a new sign that will be placed at 100 boat ramps in the county and writing a feature -- Manatees and seagrasses...our Earth Day Heartthrobs -- for the Facebook page of the Visit St. Petersburg-Clearwater website.
- Gathered and fact-checked information for writer Pam Selbert for a kayaking feature to appear in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (Sunday circulation 400,000).
- Forwarded a St. Petersburg Times article about the many robins in St. Petersburg to the outdoor writers of ten major newspapers. The Lane DeGregory article described how many thousands of robins congregate in the mangrove thickets of northeast St. Petersburg in February, helping it claim the title of Robin Capital of America.

UPCOMING MEDIA VISITS - TRADE SHOWS - PRESS GROUPS:

- 1 – International Network of Golf Media Event & Conference - Pinehurst, NC – May 8-12
- 2 – National Tourism Week Luncheon & Rally – May 7 & May 11
- 3 – NATJA Conference (North American Travel Journalists Assn.) - Reno, NV – May 12-15
- 4 – International POW WOW – Orlando, Florida - May 15-20
- 5 – Ciara Corcoran, *Irish tour operator with American Holidays* – May 20-21
- 6 – Stephen Fountaine, Associate Publisher - *Canadian Traveller* – May 20-22
- 7 - Tom Dedek of *Tom on Tour* – German Journalist – May 21-25
- 8 – PRSA/SATW Travel & Tourism Conference/Media Event – Aspen, CO – May 25-29
- 9 - Anamary Connery - Florida Travel + Life – May 28-30