

# TeleGRAM

## Great American Hotel Group Newsletter

### Around the Block

Wishing a "Happy Anniversary" to our Great American Hotel Group office and property GMs:

Suzanne Baele - 23 years  
Jon Kozma - 1 year  
Teena Nikias - 1 year

### A Little Bit Wiser

Wishing a "Happy Birthday" to our Great American Hotel Group office and property GMs:

Jerry Ianella - September 14  
Sheri Kresky - September 20  
Ben Gosbee - September 22  
Gabrielle Smith - September 24  
Jim Davis - October 1  
Candy Grimbilas - October 22

### Social Butterflies

GRAM recently opened a Twitter account. While we are newbie tweeters - we'd love you to follow us! @GreatAmerHG.

If you haven't already - "Like" us on Facebook too.

Share any information for posting with Linda.

### A Laugh A Day



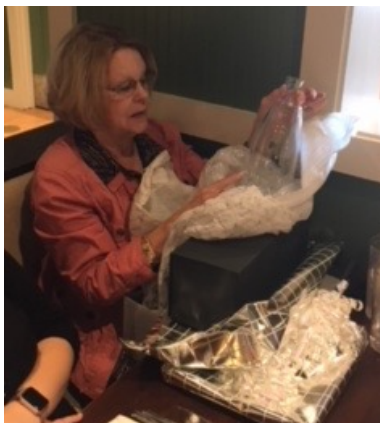
*"The culture [at GRAM] has been informal, without rigid boundaries, titles and directives. No one takes themselves too seriously and when the going gets tough everyone pitches in to do whatever it takes to get the job done. Everyone respects each other and the atmosphere is usually light with a good dose of humor. I have thoroughly enjoyed being with a company that has provided opportunity, challenges and rewards for all these years. The experience of being able to meet and work with such great supportive people is what I'm most grateful for. I will miss each and every one of you." ~ Candy Grimbilas*

## Sweet as Candy! We Are Going To Miss Her! Happy Retirement!

As many of you know, Candy Grimbilas has worked for Great American Hotel Group (aka Ocean Hospitalities, Inc.) for 18 years. Prior to joining Ocean Hospitalities, Candy worked for the Hampton, NH based Omni Hotels corporate headquarters (with Gabrielle and Linda too). Over the course of these 18 years, Candy has been a cornerstone associate and not only kept the corporate office a well-oiled machine, but has changed the landscape of her position and our Company by organizing and cataloging the multitude of corporate documents, resolving tax and insurance issues, and generally keeping us on an even keel as it relates to details.

When asked what she was going to miss about working with GRAM she said, "Most of all I will miss the people I have worked with over the years." She added, "I will miss the challenges the job has presented and the feeling of accomplishment I get when I tackle something difficult - something that can't be corrected or rectified quickly."

*Continued on Page 4....Sweet as Candy!*



*Office staff in Dover treated Candy to lunch and she was presented with a beautiful Waterford vase, plaque and flowers as a thank you for her dedication, loyalty and hard work.*

## Roomer Has It

### GREAT AMERICAN HOTEL GROUP

There's another "new kid in town". Please join the GRAM Team in welcoming Asha Singh as our new Executive Assistant.

Asha come to us with a wealth of education and experience. She attended three colleges (Smith College, University of Sussex in England for a year, Holy Cross), and graduated with a degree in political science and philosophy.

5 "fun facts" about Asha: 1. She is currently training for a half marathon in Angkor Wat this winter. 2. She enjoys film photography and is old school, preferring to do everything analog in her dark room. 3. She has an odd penchant for books on quantum mechanics and the brain. Favorites include the Dancing Wu Li Masters & the Tell Tale Brain. 4. She loves to travel, and Rajasthan remains one of my favorite places. Of course, "being Indian, I am biased!" 5. She enjoys Halloween and



last year she greeted trick-or-treaters as Marie Antoinette, offering cake over candy. (The humor of which was undoubtedly lost on the kids, but she cannot resist a good pun).

One of her proudest accomplishments is from this past summer when she embarked on a three week road trip down south and back up. This picture was specifically taken in the Smoky Mountains.

Welcome to the team Asha!



## I Am Human, I Am A Resource .... Suzanne Baele, Corporate Director of Human Resources

### Mediocre Managers Are All Over In Hospitality

*Excerpted in part from an article written by Arturo Cuenillas - Hotel-Online - 9/17/17*

Mediocre bosses are in all of the industries, not only in hospitality. It's what the majority of research on leadership concludes. When underlings have the opportunity to evaluate their managers, just a small percentage of them are ranked as excellent bosses. This percentage increases a bit more for those managers graded as good. But a great majority of managers are usually evaluated as mediocre or bad from employees.

There is a gap of perception of what employees think of their managers and that of what managers think about themselves; still employees' perception matters a great deal in management because it defines reality. If your associates think you are not a good boss that will finally affect to their level of motivation, creativity, productivity and engagement, and thus the level of service.

No manager wants to be ineffective or evil. However, in spite of the years of experience many managers could be surprised of the results of a 360° upward evaluation (anonymous) from team members. If employees ever had the chance to evaluate their managers in different soft skills such as coaching, communication, listening, integrity, passion, engagement...etc., what do you think they would say about them? The outcome of such evaluation could be disheartening, but it could be also good shock therapy. Suddenly, we are not the best managers we thought. And yet, the best way to confront this evaluation is having the courage to accept the results. What are you going to do to make things right? How are you going to work on your fatal weaknesses?

These are some points that explain why there are more mediocre managers than good or excellent:

- The majority of hospitality organizations only focus on economic results. Customer satisfaction is paramount as well, but at the end what really counts is getting the numbers right (cost, profits, revenues...etc.) as well as maintaining the workflow of the hotel or department. So for this purpose, what matters is the technical, professional competencies and knowledge of managers. Let's call this 'hard skills'. These skills are certainly necessary, the problem is when hotel companies prioritize in this kind of skills but pay lip service to other needed competences related to "soft skills"; and permit dysfunctional behaviors from managers such as unfairness, lack of communication, lack of empathy, lack of integrity, or lack of transparency. In the worse case scenario we have toxic managers spreading their venom to people.
- The selection process is mainly based on technical skills. Hotels and selection consultancy companies, unconsciously or consciously, prioritize in professional experience and knowledge over leadership skills, so the technical part of the future candidate weighs twice more than the human side, necessary for leading people.
- Decisions in promoting "A" employees to management positions are as well decided by the technical expertise side. That brilliant employee was very good at his or her job, had more experience than anyone else, was very knowledgeable...until he or she had to face with the reality of leadership. Individual skills that brought him up aren't good enough now. Becoming a boss is not about you, it's about them; it's not about "I" it's about "We". Unexpectedly, you realize that your title and level of authority is not enough for getting the commitment of all of your people. In order get higher levels of engagement from your team members you need to exert influence.
- Mediocrity breeds mediocrity. If you've learned from a bad manager odds are you'll become a bad manager too. Employees in hospitality organizations watch their bosses in action performing daily activities, and may think leadership is only about having more knowledge and expertise in your field of domain, and that a manager's job is to come up with all of the answers. Much of this learning is casual and informal.
- Managing through fear, will not generate personal commitment or real engagement from your people. What's worse, those managers who use authority as the only source of power won't be able to get the best out of his people.

*Continued on Page 3....Mediocre Managers*

## Hotel Happenings

### SPRINGHILL SUITES QUAKERTOWN

Recently Gail Dehelian completed the classroom portion of Marriott's premiere sales training course Access Edge. She is pictured here with her classmates celebrating their completion of Part 3 of 4 course segments! Great job Gail! Now on to the last segment of training.



### ATLANTIC HOUSE INN

Atlantic House Inn has received an Outstanding Service Award from **gohotels.com**

Awards are presented to selected hotels who consistently achieve high customer review ratings in the following categories: Cleanliness, Facilities, Location, Rooms and Service.

Congratulations to Atlantic House Inn on this achievement of excellence.

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It should be clear at this point that managers have two main responsibilities; one is getting results and getting the job done. But the second, as important as the first one, is to develop their people individually, and thus make them function as a good team. This last goal is about developing your team members through coaching, boosting their talent, and giving them more autonomy to make their own decisions and participate in important issues of the daily job. I would love to see hotel groups evaluating their managers with one KPI such as "number of team members promoted from his or her team, and transferred to other hotels..." Instead of seeing mediocre managers fearing proficient employees and hiding their talent.

*So managers must be good in coaching. And yet, coaching others cannot be done if you don't have enough credibility. How are you going to inspire others if you are not credible to your people? Or, how are you going to make your employees self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses if they don't trust you? Trust and cooperation cannot be imposed because they are sentiments.*

The good news is that good managers aren't born but made. Leadership is a process of constant learning and self-reflection. A bad boss today can be an outstanding leader tomorrow if he or she has the courage to confront his or her weaknesses, and accept his responsibility for self-development.

## Trick or Treat?

1. The tradition of making Jack-O-Lanterns to ward off evil spirits is thousands of years old. Which vegetable were they originally made out of?  
a. Turnips      b. Beets      c. Cabbage      d. Acorn Squash
2. According to superstition, if you stare into a mirror at midnight on Halloween, what will you see?  
a. Your Future      b. Death      c. Tragedy      d. Future Spouse
3. Transylvania is a region in which country?  
a. Russia      b. Turkey      c. Romania      d. Austria
4. Which actor played Dr. Frank-n-Furter in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*?  
a. Tim Curry      b. Tim Conway      c. Tiny Tim      d. Tim Allen
5. Is a pumpkin a fruit or a vegetable?  
a. Fruit      b. Vegetable
6. What is the significance of seeing a spider on Halloween?  
a. Spirit of a loved one watching over whomever saw spider.  
b. Spirit of a loved one cursing whomever saw spider.  
c. Spirit of a loved one haunting whomever saw spider.  
d. No significance.
7. According to superstition, a person born on Halloween has what particular ability?  
a. ESP      b. Third Eye      c. See and Talk to Spirits
8. The heaviest pumpkin ever measured was grown by Norm Craven in 1993. How much did it weigh?  
a. 1,031 lbs.      b. 310 lbs.      c. 666 lbs.      d. 836 lbs.
9. How many people were hanged during the Salem Witch Trials?  
a. 13      b. 19      c. 24      d. 38
10. Who is said to haunt the White House Rose Garden?  
a. Betsy Ross      b. Dolly Madison      c. Rosa Parks      d. Susan B. Anthony

Answers on Page 6



# Sweet as Candy! We Are Going To Miss Her!

## Happy Retirement!

*Continued from Page 1*

Candy noted one of her major accomplishments has been “dealing with 19 storage units full of records, getting them cataloged and organized, then eventually being able to reduce them down to 2 units.” Her strengths have always included patience! At times it would take months before she was able to resolve certain tax problems like an inquiry from the IRS or the Attorney General who might be looking into an old corporation or LLC that suddenly surfaced as still “active” after many years of dormancy. Getting to the bottom of these “mystery tasks” has been her forte. She added, “I realized that without the support, encouragement and cooperation I have received from fellow employees, none of that would have been possible.” Candy has been both an integral part of all of our positions, but also a friend to each of us. With that in mind, I asked each GRAM manager to share a thought about her as she embarks into retirement.

Dave: “The very best - calm, cool and professional.”

Gabrielle: “Candy always remained professional no matter what crisis she was dealing with.”

Linda: “Always a friendly, helpful voice at the end of the phone! I will miss her calm demeanor, her spark of laughter, and her insight and knowledge about all things GRAM!”

Suzanne: “What can I say, Candy has always been the stellar light at the end of the tunnel that always seemed to have an answer, a solution or at least a solid commiserating spirit, just what I needed on many occasions. You will be so missed my friend.”

Jim: “During my 16 years of coming and going with GRAM, I have always found Candy to be a warm and friendly colleague, whom we all have come to depend on. She will truly be missed.”

Rob: “Candy was the anchor that was always there no matter what transition we were going thru, we will miss her dearly!”

### Longevity and stability in our team is our greatest asset!

GRAM is a more than 30 year old hotel management company. Our keystone philosophy and vision has always been that we become a team of people cohesively working together to provide the highest quality of service for our valued guests and clients. Our success is dependent on being able to consistently deliver these services and products the first time, every time. To that end, we strive to hire the brightest, most talented people who will work together in achieving our common goals of being the most responsive company with which you will do business.

We pride ourselves in the longevity and stability of our team. Our continued success comes from hard work, loyalty, dedication and commitment. Each of our senior managers work hard daily to provide consistency to our front line staffs and the fact that we all mesh together as a team makes our management seamless. As new associates join the fold, or are promoted from within the organization, GRAM will always strive for excellence.

Dave Akridge - President - 32 years

Suzanne Baele - Corporate Director of Human Resources - 23 years

Linda Komornik - Corp. Director of Sales & Marketing - 22 years

Gabrielle Smith - Corporate Controller - 20 years

Jim Davis - Regional Director of Operations - 16 years

Rob Greene - Regional Director of Operations - 20 years



**Dave Akridge**  
President



**Gabrielle Smith**  
Controller



**Linda Komornik**  
Director of Sales  
& Marketing



**Suzanne Baele**  
Director of Human  
Resources



**Jim Davis**  
Regional Director  
of Operations



**Rob Greene**  
Regional Director  
of Operations

## Can You Hear Me Now?

I know that you hear what your customers are saying, but are you actually listening to what they say and actually understanding what they want? So many times we are so eager to please, or so eager to answer the question, that we glaze over the true question (sometimes it is an implied question). Listening is a really important skill and sales persons must have this tool in their tool box. All sales people need to practice this every single day.



## 'tis the Season!

We are now officially in the holiday season and facing what many consider “slow” season for hotel occupancies. Unless you are in a major demand generator city (which I don’t think many of you are), then we must be creative in both pricing and driving room nights. Here are a few things you should be doing NOW:

- ♦ Ordering holiday cards and gifts for major clients.
- ♦ Sending out info on your meeting room for parties and social events.
- ♦ Partnering with NY Eve venues for overnight accommodations.
- ♦ Contacting organizations, churches, banquet venues, civic organizations, companies, etc. and letting them know that you would like to house their group rooms for any holiday events/parties.
- ♦ Developing theme opportunities for your brand rewards guests at check-in.
- ♦ Ordering decor for each holiday per your brand standards and local safety guidelines.
- ♦ Developing packages and promotions for each holiday and getting them bookable on both your website and through social media.
- ♦ Work with your social media company on a holiday marketing campaign.
- ♦ Ordering gift cards to be part of baskets, gifts, or for purchase by customers.

Don’t let these holiday seasons get away from you. Poor planning leads to poor performance. Great planning leads to happy guests and great staff morale.

Happy Listening and Jingling!

Linda



## Hospitality is Family.

*By Casey Beranger, Atlantic House Inn* - Working in the hospitality industry, I have learned to rely upon co-workers, managers, and the hospitality company I work for on a daily basis. Most of the time, these are the people you spend the majority of your day/night with. To ensure the best possible experience for our guests, it takes not just team work, but sincerely treating each other with respect, consideration and loyalty – much like family. To me, I consider everyone I work with on all levels as “family”. We need to unite and have each other’s best interest to operate a successful and positive environment. I have had the pleasure of working here at the

Atlantic House Inn for the past two seasons (as well as many other properties she has managed), helping my Mom and mentor, Karen, the GM, in any capacity that is needed. And even though I am her daughter, I know she would still consider me as “family” as she does with everyone she has ever worked with. When she asked me if I wanted to contribute an article for the newsletter, I immediately found inspiration in this picture that was taken outside on a beautiful evening walk. I also want to give a big shout out to the rest of our “Family” here at the Atlantic House Inn – Becca, Diane, Bekka, Gina, Bill, Denise, Paul and Steve, and thank them for working together as a family.

# What's Cooking In The Hotel World?

According to the recent United States Construction Pipeline Trend Report from Lodging Econometrics (LE), the franchise companies with the largest pipelines are; Marriott with 1,288 Projects/166,096 Rooms, Hilton with 1,243 Projects/140,912 Rooms and IHG with 817 Projects/84,676 Rooms. These 3 franchise companies comprise 67% of all projects in the Total Pipeline.



The largest brand for each of these companies are; Marriott's Fairfield Inn with 283 Projects/27,244 Rooms, Hilton's Home2 Suites with 343 Projects/35,845 Rooms and IHG's Holiday Inn Express with 426 Projects/39,393 Rooms.

The companies with the most New Project Announcements into the Pipeline in the first half were; Marriott with 90 Projects/11,085 Rooms, IHG with 73 Projects/7,025 Rooms and Hilton with 59 Projects/6,097 Rooms. These companies represent 62% of all new projects announced.

## Operationally Speaking ...

### Benefits of Properly Maintaining Roof-Mounted Equipment

Roof damage is a major source of property loss each year when buildings are subjected to high winds, wind-driven rain, hail, ice, snow and wildfire. A compromised roof can lead to significant damage to internal fixtures, furniture and equipment.

What's more, rooftop equipment or pieces of the roof itself can take flight during a windstorm, causing damage to the building, nearby vehicles or even neighboring property. Proper attention to all aspects of a roof can make the difference between minimal damage and catastrophic failure during high winds.



To help business owners tackle roof issues, the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (BHS) has produced a series of short papers on the installation, maintenance and repair of commercial roofs.

The focus is on roof-mounted equipment such as HVAC, photovoltaic systems, exhaust fans, and other mechanical units, all of which are common features on many commercial rooftops. Proper maintenance of this equipment leads to long-term savings by prolonging the life of the equipment, lowering utility bills and affording greater protection in a storm.

To read this article in its entirety, go to [AmTrust North America - The Safety Zone newsletter](#).

## HR CORNER

Here are the five golden rules to better interview outcomes:

- Understand what you're looking for
- Curate questions that apply to all candidates
- Take time to de-stress before the interview
- Treat yourself and applicants with kindness
- Share your concerns openly

According to a recent survey conducted by OfficeTeam, on average, employees spend 8 hours per workweek on non-work activities. What does this non-work time look like?

- Personal emails: 30 percent
- Social networks: 28 percent
- Sports sites: 8 percent
- Mobile games: 6 percent
- Online shopping: 5 percent
- Entertainment sites: 3 percent

Trick or Treat Answers:  
1 a 2 d 3 a 4 a 5 a 6 a 7 c 8 d 9 b 10 b