

Minutes
Island County 2% Committee

Date: July 11, 2019

Location: Pickles Deli

There was not a quorum present.

Quorum:

Debra Bell	Comm. Jill Johnson	Pat Powell
Dianne Binder X	Gregg Lanza	Frank Rose
Stephanie Cook X	Joanne Lechner X	Chet Ross X
Christine Cribb	Jessica McCready	Sharon Sappington
Lynda Eccles X	Inge Morascini X	Erica Wasinger
Bruce Allen X	Robyn Myers	OH Vacant

In addition to the above members also in attendance this meeting were Sherrye Wyatt, Whidbey Camano Islands Tourism Coordinator, Jack Penland, ComputerPIX LLC, Scott Rosenkranz, Rosenkranz Productions; Sami Postma, Goosefoot.

GUESTS: Todd Morrow, Island Transit Exec Director

Adoption of the Agenda: Without a quorum, the agenda could not be adopted.

Without a quorum, minutes could not be adopted.

Bills were paid at a special meeting at the end of June.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Management Committee Report:

Scott Rosencranz talked about the planned changes to the map. They're hoping for a window of good weather to take pictures for the cover photo next week. They talked about making the back panel more useful than the partial list of events, and instead another great image and then important details at the bottom. If anyone sees anything wrong on the map, let Scott know. They changed some things around, mainly the legend and the list of Chambers which visually freed up the routes on and off the island.

Cascade Loop Annual Meeting: The Cascade Loop's annual meeting will be in Mukilteo in September 19. More information will come.

Dean Runyan Report: The Island County pie charts were wrong in the earlier draft, so those have been updated. The full Dean Runyan Report for the entire state was provided to everyone at the meeting. Island County is 20th out of 39 counties in terms of visitors. San Juan is 17th. Island County is up 10% on visitor spending; Washington State is up 5%.

Sherrye and Chet had a conversation with Dean Runyan about what it would look like to buy the data for the three cities and towns and two islands. The cost started out at \$9,800, and went up a bit from there. If we contracted for three years starting in 2019, they estimated about \$5,000 a year. They emailed Chet a copy of the contract, which he is reviewing right now, with the hopes of making a recommendation to the committee later. 2014-2019 would be the first report, then 2015-2020, then 2016-2021.

Monthly PR media Report

S H E R R Y E W Y A T T

PORT OF SEATTLE invited Sherrye to join them at their booth at the **WORLD TRAVEL MARKET**, international media and travel trade show in London, England (followed by a special mission to Cologne, Germany) in November 2019. After discussing this opportunity with the Management Committee, it was determined that it may make sense to budget to participate in more out of area trade shows and an overseas trade mission in 2020. Also, Sherrye has registered to participate in the **SEA TAC SPOTLIGHT ADVERTISING PROGRAM** training on July 12, just as a refresher, before submitting our application once more for the upcoming lottery. Our display is currently up at Sea-Tac Airport July - September 2019.

Sherrye continues to participate in her board of directors role with upcoming meetings in July with **WE CREATE WA** and **WASHINGTON FILMWORKS**. In her Island County Film Liaison role for Island County, she is working with five projects this month being filmed on Whidbey and Camano Islands including three different reality shows

which all air on **HGTV (ISLAND LIFE, BEACH HUNTERS and MY LOTTERY DREAM HOUSE)**; one for **CHEVY** on **BUZZFEED**; a still photo shoot for **GMC**; and an independent movie.

THE HOUR AFTER WESTERLY has been selected for its first public screening at the 23rd L.A. Shorts International Film Festival, an official qualifier for the Oscars, it is one of the premier film festivals in the world and an honor to have been selected.

As partners with the **INTERNATIONAL FOOD, WINE AND TRAVEL WRITERS ASSOCIATION (IFWTWA)** conference in Santa Fe, New Mexico in November, we are providing content for a full page ad in the program, copy and our logo for marketing. Their last conference was May 2018 on Whidbey Island.

Updating the **WHIDBEY SCENIC ISLE WAY** plan is incorporated into the ITPO Island County Transportation Comprehensive Plan and Sherrye is discussing next steps and time line with Connie Bowers at the county.

As a member of DMA WEST, we have access to some new data and are sharing with members of the tourism committee a link to the report from Destination Analysis **HOW DMO SOCIAL MEDIA DRIVES TRAVEL DECISIONS**
https://www.dmawest.org/files/5415/5605/0636/DMA_West_DMO_Social_Media_Follower_Profile_Conversion_Study_Executive_Summary_04.22.19_Final.pdf

JACK PENLAND

Photography

- Restaurants
- Oak Harbor 4th of July Parade
- Ebey's Reserve Scenery

Website

Website use in the first half of 2019 is up 12% over 2018.

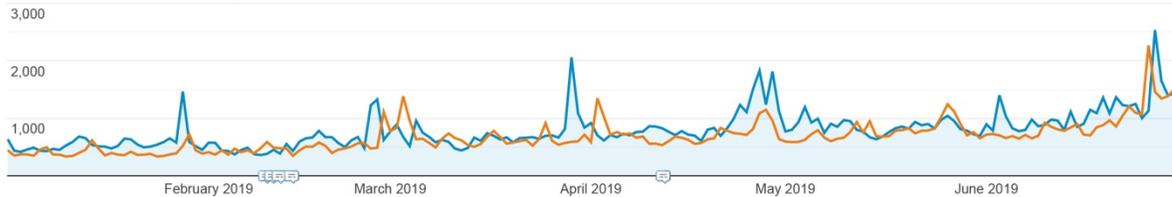
Audience Overview



Jan 1, 2019 - Jun 30, 2019
Compare to: Jan 1, 2018 - Jun 30, 2018

Overview

Jan 1, 2019 - Jun 30, 2019: ● Users
Jan 1, 2018 - Jun 30, 2018: ● Users



Users
12.17%
120,407 vs 107,348



New Users
13.36%
119,207 vs 105,162



Sessions
19.60%
157,804 vs 131,944



Number of Sessions per User
6.63%
1.31 vs 1.23



Pageviews
2.49%
332,997 vs 324,919



Pages / Session
-14.31%
2.11 vs 2.46



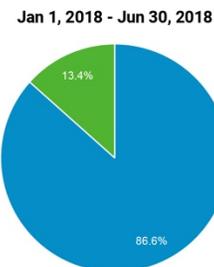
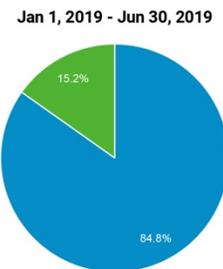
Avg. Session Duration
-4.61%
00:02:10 vs 00:02:17



Bounce Rate
-67.99%
16.06% vs 50.17%



■ New Visitor ■ Returning Visitor



Our audience is strongly female, with 61% of our site's visitors being women. That compares with 59% in the first half of 2018.

The number of international visitors to the website is also interesting. The United Kingdom is up 13%, France up 172%, Japan up 28%. German is down 15% and Canada is down 1%.

Broken down by city, Seattle is up 21%, Portland is up 37%, Tacoma up 32%, and Bellingham up 42%. Other major US cities saw changes, as well.

I've added about two-dozen restaurants to the website in the past month (as of this writing), bringing the total to 30. When done, there should be closer to 60.

The website experienced an issue July 2nd. We were something of a victim of our own success. Google killed our ability to use their maps in our listings because we had exceeded their limit of 25,000 uses for basic service. Michael Bourne was able to add the next layer of security that Google wanted, and service was restored. Using their maps is still free, but with the additional security, we can now continue at a higher level.

DMOs in the Era of Search and Social

In 2017, Expedia estimated that travelers made 141 travel site visits in the 45 days leading up to travel purchase. If that seems high, I recently viewed a webinar that confirmed that estimate, and more. Sojern Travel's webinar described a "persona" (theoretical traveler) as having 451 travel touchpoints in the 5 months before making a purchase. This was a professional trying for the perfect family summer vacation. Both figures confirm the idea that people are doing a lot of research on a lot of websites before making a purchase, and that they're doing it over several months. So, the shoulder-season traveler may be looking at our website in July, a spring traveler viewing the site in November and a summer traveler viewing the website in July. Just something to note as we look at seasonal web content.

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

Project Management

- Developed early strategy for shoulder season and fall travel; working to develop a culinary landing page and related marketing content; considering partnerships with culinary influencers like Tom Douglas Radio, The Seattle Kitchen and Vanilla and Bean, a Whidbey Island based food and vegetarian lifestyle influencer.
- Managed ongoing media outreach for new and pending media visits; pitched angles related to upcoming events, Paine Field access and summer and fall travel.
- Developed itineraries and travel plans for high volume of media visiting in June-July.

Media Visits

- Sheryl Nance-Nash, June 9-12, freelance travel writer for US News & World Report, AFAR, Fodors, several others.
- Stephanie Forrer, June 2-4, Seattle-based food and lifestyle influencer visited the Captain Whidbey Inn; we supported her itinerary to include a variety of Coupeville experiences.

Pending Media Visits

- Daniel Scheffler, July 12-15 - Daniel Scheffler is a freelance writer from New York, contributing to outlets like GQ, The New York Times (including the annual "52 Places to Go" issue) Departures, Conde Nast Traveler, Town & Country and others.
- Q13 Morning News Reporter Ellen Taylor, July 18, will tape two segments on Whidbey Island, including Whidbey Island Fair (live) and Whidbey Island Shakespeare Festival (pre-taped, slated to air in early August).
- Chelsea Lowe, July 28-30, visiting from LAX to feature the ease of Paine Field and flying to Island Time Faster, for industry trade magazine TravelAge West and national pop culture and parenting site Mom.me
- Jean Chen, USA Today GO Magazine, Sept. 2019

Press received *(destination articles and broadcast stories that include Whidbey or Camano as a result of our collective efforts. Reach is defined as circulation for print,*

view/internship for broadcast, follower count for earned social media endorsements and unique monthly views for digital media).

Media Outlet	Summary	Published	Circulation/Unique Visitors per Month
<u>Portland Monthly**</u>	A Trio of Portlanders Are Transforming a 112-Year-Old Whidbey Island Lodge	April 25, 2019	148,346
<u>Eater Seattle**</u>	A Top Seattle Bartender Lends His Cocktail Expertise to Whidbey Island's Historic Inn	May 30, 2019	105,270
<i>Seattle Magazine - Print</i>	9 Iconic Seattle Day Trips	June 1, 2019	58,984
<u>Seattle Magazine - Online</u>	9 Iconic Seattle Day Trips	June 1, 2019	101,718
<u>@stephforrer</u>	Instagram Post: Ribeye Tomahawk Steak	June 4, 2019	25,300
<u>@stephforrer</u>	Instagram Post: Front Street Grill	June 4, 2019	25,300
<u>@stephforrer</u>	Instagram Post: Whidbey Island	June 5, 2019	25,300
<u>Postcards to Seattle - Online</u>	The Best Whidbey Island Wineries and Breweries	June 5, 2019	9,104
<u>@stephforrer</u>	Instagram Post: Breakfast Board	June 8, 2019	25,300
<u>@stephforrer</u>	Instagram Post: Captain Whidbey Inn	June 9, 2019	25,300
<u>Eat, Drink, Travel Y'all</u>	A Photo Diary of the Captain Whidbey, Your Perfect Pacific Northwest Retreat	June 9, 2019	3,690
<u>Seattle Magazine - Online</u>	9 Iconic Seattle Day Trips	June 11, 2019	101,718
<i>1889 - Print</i>	Farm to Table	June/ July 2019	25,305

<u>USA Today - Online*</u>	From state to slate: 50 iconic movies set in each state	March 22, 2019	36,989,744
<u>Condé Nast Traveler**</u>	Where We're Traveling This Summer: Women Who Travel Podcast	June 12, 2019	5,351,474
<u>MSN - Online</u>	The 41 Best Drive- In Movie Theaters in America	June 23, 2019	10,031,198
<u>Seattle Refined</u>	New owners hope to breathe new life into the iconic Captain Whidbey Inn	June 15, 2019	200,000
<u>KOMO News</u>	New owners hope to breathe new life into the iconic Captain Whidbey Inn	June 15, 2019	1,947,978
<u>Travel Channel - Online</u>	50 States of Adventurous State Parks	June 19, 2019	9,434,757
<u>Travel Channel - Online</u>	Seattle's Summer To-Do List	June 21, 2019	9,434,757
<u>1150 AM KKNW - Radio</u>	Lift Your Spirits with Dena Marie Seattle	June 21, 2019	PENDING
<u>Seattle Refined</u>	America's #1 Drive-In Theater is on Whidbey Island (and double features are \$7)	June 23, 2019	200,000
<u>KOMO News</u>	America's #1 Drive-In Theater is on Whidbey Island (and double features are \$7)	June 23, 2019	1,947,978
<u>Seattle Met Daily E- Newsletter</u>	Washington's 21 Best Beaches: Cama Beach	June 23, 2019	28,000
<u>Red Tricycle - Online</u>	75 Things to Do Now: Your Ultimate Summer	June 24, 2019	1,572,434

	Bucket List		
<i>Red Tricycle - E-Newsletter</i>	75 Things to Do Now: Your Ultimate Summer Bucket List	June 24, 2019	39,000
TOTAL			77,857,955

Sherrye participated in **WASHINGTON FILMWORKS** board conference call on March 14. Laura Hilton and Sherrye participated in Film Day in Olympia March 17-18.

Sherrye and Laura provided lists of recommended restaurants, coffee shops and free time activities to a production crew filming on Whidbey in March. **WARM SPRINGS PRODUCTIONS** filmed episodes of Beach Hunters on Camano in March and on Whidbey in April. Sherrye is working with staff who are scouting for locations for a catalog shoot and will be showing the island on April 18-19.

A sweepstakes package, including two night stay at **CAPTAIN WHIDBEY INN** is open right now until May 31. We are offering quarterly sweepstakes to drive traffic to the website. Sweepstakes is now referred to in all digital and print advertising.

Upcoming advertising both print and digital includes **SEATTLE MET, VISIT STANWOOD-CAMANO**, and a free full page ad and feature from **NORTH AMERICAN TRAVEL JOURNALISTS ASSOCIATION (NATJA)**. We are the featured destination chosen by **NATJA** in April online and in their publication. This is an honor and the full page ad and exposure are all free.

Sherrye presented at the March **OAK HARBOR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** luncheon meeting. She is the guest speaker before the **OAK HARBOR ROTARY** (noon) in April. We hosted several writers in March. So far on April 9, Sherrye is meeting with **AMY PENNINGTON** for lunch and joining her as guests at Whidbey Island sustainable floral workshop farewell feast at Roaming Radish.

Legislation regarding **SHORT TERM RENTALS** passed **HOUSE** and is moving through the **SENATE** HB 1798, SHB 1798
<https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?billnumber=1798&year=2019&initiative=False>
 Substitute Bill language <http://lawfilesexternal.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/1798-S.pdf>

The tourism marketing bill that passed last year requires a 2-1 match from the industry. For every dollar released to the **WASHINGTON TOURISM ALLIANCE (WTA)** from

the State Tourism Marketing Account, there must be two dollars spent by the industry either in investment in WTA programs or in activities that could be considered in-kind contributions to marketing our state to tourists.

The proposed state budget has allocated \$3 million dollars for tourism marketing over the 2018-2020 biennium, or \$1.5 million a year. To access this money, the WTA needs to raise **\$3 million a year** in match funding. As a regional **DMO**, there are activities that could be considered an in-kind contribution to marketing Washington to out-of-state visitors, to help meet the match. I am completing a large spreadsheet to identify these activities. Only activities over \$1,000 are eligible.

JACK PENLAND

Email

The April email newsletter was sent out on Friday, March 29 to our 28,366 active subscribers. You should be receiving it. <https://us12.campaign-archive.com/?u=11380ced8373e34392577e79b&id=70b28f46d4&e=047b2192b5> Since this report is being prepared that same day, I don't have analytics for it, but I can tell you about the previous email. The March email was sent out on February 26. It had an open rate of 21.1%. The five most clicked-on items were:

1. The contest (more on this later in the report)
2. The blog post about a movie filmed on Central Whidbey (the main story)
3. Lodging specials (runs every newsletter)
4. Whale Watching Tours
5. Mussel fest

Photos Supplied

We often get requests from publications and tourism groups for photographs. Going forward, I'll try to keep you apprised of who is benefiting from those efforts. Recently, the Washington Tourism Alliance has on two different occasions requested and received images. First, for the Go West Summit, and more recently, we supplied a general round up of attractive scenery for their main library. Also receiving images: InSite Magazine (Orca); Free-lance writer Tamra Bolton for Lifestyle Magazine (Fraser's Hideaway); Free-lance writer Heather Larson for 1889 Magazine (Matzke Park).

Lodging Listings

The main effort this month has been to get our lodgings on board with Simple View (Jackrabbit). I'm having to have multiple conversations with the lodgings and, in one case, seeing them in person. Once they get what's going on, they like it. However, getting their attention is proving to be the hard part.

Off-Season Numbers

As far as island destinations, Whidbey and Camano Islands have been friendly rivals with other island destinations, for years. For the first time in three years, the WCI site drew more winter-season visitors than did the Visit San Juan Islands site. That all changed in mid-March, but the above graph is reason for optimism that more travelers are seeing Whidbey and Camano Islands as a good off-season destination. The above graph comes from Alexa.com, a website owned by Amazon that tracks the relative popularity of websites.

Jets on Whidbey Page Surges When News Breaks

The page concerning jet traffic has been seen 5403 times between when it was launched on May 29, 2018 and March 28. Interestingly, but not surprisingly, since March 11th, when the latest news was announced, there has been a jump in traffic with 1402 visits over that 18-day period (March 11 - 28). During that same period, it has been the 3rd most popular page on the website, right behind the home page (#1) and “Things to Do” (#2) and ahead of “How to Get to Whidbey Island (#4).

Our First Contest of 2019

More than 2500 people entered to win our first online contest in a while. Shelli Maylin of Weiser, Idaho was the winner. Where do the entrants live? The next chart shows the top 20 cities. 271 different cities had two or more entrants. Due to my inability to find an adequate Canadian Postal Code chart, the pie chart shows only U.S. Cities. Additional 137 Canadian entries, make it the second largest group behind Seattle (167 entries).

OSBORNE NORTHWEST PUBLIC RELATIONS

Project Management

- Drafted spring story sheet highlighting Paine Field flights; Captain Whidbey Opening and additional seasonal story angles.
- Coordinated itineraries and logistics for high volume of national media visiting in March and beyond.
- Traveled to March Tourism Committee meeting to present on 2019 planning and quarterly progress.

Media Visits

- Heather Larson, NW Travel, 1889 The Magazine, February 28-March 1
- Jessica Wick, Only in Your State, March 1-3
- Rob Bhatt, AAA Journey (freelance), on assignment for an online Whidbey destination feature; visited twice March 6 and March 19-20 to research with support from Island Tourism
- Lilit Marcus, editor at CNN Travel, March 12-15
- Cara Strickland, 1889 Magazine, Washington Post, Salon, March 20-22

Pending Media Visits

- Amy Pennington, April 9-10 freelance writer for Seattle Times, Seattle Magazine
- Lisa Dawn Drogin, May 18-19, Story of My Dress blogger interested in covering Savor Spring and seasonal travel on Whidbey; we will also receive 4-5 images from her visit for use in our marketing efforts.
- Sheryl Nance-Nash, June 9-12, freelance travel writer for US News & World Report, AFAR, Fodors, several others.
- Daniel Scheffler, July 12-15 - Daniel Scheffler is a freelance writer from New York, contributing to outlets like GQ, The New York Times (including the annual “52 Places to Go” issue) Departures, Conde Nast Traveler, Town & Country and others.
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Only in Washington	Instagram Post featuring Deception Pass	March 1, 2019	18,200
Travel Matters	Feature on Whidbey Camano Islands Tourism	March 1, 2019	1,600
Only in Your State	Fort Casey Inn Featured	March 6, 2019	5,564,981
Lilit Marcus/CNN Travel Editor's Instagram Post	Deception Pass Featured	March 13, 2019	1,418
Lilit Marcus/CNN Travel Editor's Instagram Post	Oak Harbor Featured	March 15, 2019	1,418
Seattle Met	Deception Pass listed a most instagrammable spring destination	March 18, 2019	434,741
Northwest Travel	Penn Cove Mussels Profile	March/April	45,000
Northwest Travel	Camano Island Inn as Editors Pick	March/April	45,000
AAA Journey	Mussel Fest in Datebook	March/April	657,910
Total			6,770,268

Round Table

Clinton: Businesses are opening, things are staying busy.

Langley: Street Dance is on Friday, and the Whidbey Island Fair is next week. If you know anyone who would like to be a participant in the Harvest Festival, contact Inge. They are looking for anyone who would like to teach seminars, display products, or vend. The Community Center is willing to host an art show in the Center. They will also have studio tours for their resident artists. That is the 3rd through the 6th of October. Whidbey Tel is founding sponsor. People have expressed interest, but applications are not yet coming in. Marketing is going out around August 15, so information needs to be in before that.

Freeland: The Bluesberry Festival is coming up on July 22, with 4 bands. It's being put on by the Commons and the blueberry farm. The Freeland Chamber is going to run the beer garden.

Coupeville: The Town is really busy. A number of new shops are opening, and old businesses with new owners. The Arts Festival is in a few weeks, August 10-11. There are about 180 vendors. Following the Festival is the Plein Air paint out at the Art School. There are currently 50 artists from all over the US. Then they move on to the first

Oktoberfest in Coupeville, which they're calling Beer, Bratz and Bulldog. After the Haunting of Coupeville, then it's into the Christmas holiday.

Oak Harbor: They just opened Windjammer Park. They had a very successful July 4. They have a lot of things planned for the remainder of the year.

Bayview: The Street Dances have been very popular this summer. Two of the three have had to be moved into the Bayview Hall, but people are still coming out for them. Bayview had a record-breaking weekend after the 4th. Goosefoot is currently celebrating its 20th anniversary. The Goose Grocer will be celebrating its 10th anniversary September 7th.

Adjournment

Next regular meeting is August 8, China City, Freeland. Time: 11am-1pm.

Meeting recorded by Sami Postma and reviewed for submission by Joanne Lechner, Alternate Secretary