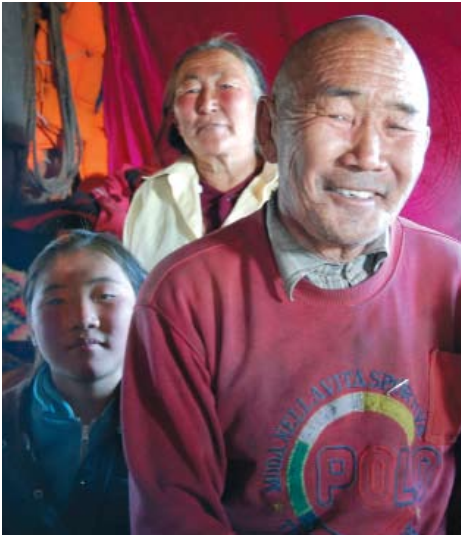


The Value of Educational Travel:



By Jim Sano, President, Geographic Expeditions

We travel to wake up. Life is swift and hazy. We are habitual creatures, following mildly comfortable ruts. As Miguel de Unamuno said, “To fall into a habit is to cease to be.” The great religions (not by mere word-flinging is Buddha called The Awakened One), the poets, the philosophers, the guy at the corner store (if he stops to think of about it), tell us that we live most of our lives in a mist. Travel, like the best friend you’ll ever have, gives you a little slap, Wake up! Wake up! *Be!*

We travel because it’s the highest form of re-creation. That’s a quote from our pal Seamus O’Banion. What on earth did you mean by that, Seamus? I meant that every time we step out of our life’s routine we have the chance to recreate ourselves anew. To decide who we are, what we like, what we can’t stand, what we crave, what brings us joy, what repels and attracts us. We always have this fundamental chance, but we don’t usually grasp it. The good traveler, as opposed to the traveler who’s just getting carted around, learns that this old personality is marvelously flexible, fantastically adaptable, and far more capacious than he or she ever thought. That we always have the power to *choose* who we are, to re-create ourselves as we see fit.

We travel because we’re natural-born sensualists. Sure, we’re smack dab in a miraculously rich sensory

environment without even leaving home. The local franchise coffee dispensary, if we stop fidgeting long enough to let it flow in, is a teeming universe of sense delights. Problem is, we don’t usually notice through the habit-mist. But we *do* notice this incredible, unceasing sense-flood when we travel. Sights, sounds, and probably the least honored (because it’s so seemingly vestigial), smell. Sunrise in the Himalaya. The souks of Istanbul. The sound of wild horses galloping across the plains of Patagonia. Dinner in Tuscany. There is no end to it.

We travel, as Chesterton said, not to set foot on foreign land. [But to] set foot on one’s own country as foreign land. That is, we travel to understand our normal life and land better. To appreciate them more, to mine them for their joy and, yes, their unending exoticism. To look beyond what someone recently called the narcissism of the unspoiled place, which contains within it the dull, life-shunning notion that the very place we live is spoiled somehow. Proust said it, too: “*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes.*” Travel gives us new eyes. It makes the same old brand new.”

We travel because we’re human. One main factor in the upward trend of animal life, Alfred North Whitehead wrote, has been the power of wandering. Most

Making the Human Connection



Photographs by J. Mara DelliPriscoli

of us, whether we know it or not, whether we do it or not, want to find out what's behind that homey hill. As Theo Cruz once said, *"If humans weren't travelers, the Olduvai Gorge would be pretty crowded these days."*

We travel because it's an act of good citizenship, local and global. You know, as a traveler, that when you read a news report about a place you've been, that it

"TRAVEL, LIKE THE
BEST FRIEND YOU'LL
EVER HAVE, GIVES
YOU A LITTLE SLAP,
WAKE UP! WAKE UP!
BE!"

comes alive in an important way. Your letters to the editor have weight, your opinions are more grounded. Your concerns are more tangible. The life of the sweet little boy who grabbed your index finger and led you

around Angkor is no longer an abstraction. And you're no longer an abstraction to him, or to the wealth of people you meet and dally and bargain and share train compartments and jeeps and scenery and meals and pictures of your and their kids with. You don't have horns and a forked tail. They aren't necessarily mad at you just because you have a blue passport. *Travel fosters understanding, and we need understanding now... more than ever.*

We travel because people everywhere are wonderful. Always? Of course not. God knows we know that. But ask the alert traveler, and she will tell you: as a species, humans are worth the effort of getting to know. We send out trip questionnaires to all our clients, and our experience is this: they rave about the scenery and the food and the accommodations (usually) but they have a special place in their hearts for the people. The cab driver in Cairo who grandly, quietly refused payment. That student in Kashgar who took you home to meet the folks. The old fellow you played chess with in Tehran. The ladies in a Yemeni mountain village who fed you dates and gossiped about men and painted your feet in the local style. The rough truck driver who cradled you like a baby when you had food poisoning in Shigatse. The forbidding-looking Pathan man in Peshawar (yes, Peshawar) who suddenly smiled and said, "Welcome to my country, dear sir." Again and again, it's the human encounters we remember, that are balm to our souls. If travel teaches us nothing else, it teaches us that humans are lovely creatures.

And we travel because, as an old zen koan has it, the whole world is medicine. Medicine freely offered, medicine we need and have a right to. Medicine that cures us of alienation and the bondage of self-obsession. Medicine that helps us become whole and vibrant, and allows us to see the whole and vibrant world.

ETC 2011 Emeritus Council



The Emeritus Council meeting held at ETC 2010, Providence, RI.

Karen Anthony

Retired Director of Alumni Travel
UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME ALUMNI ASSOC.

Margaret Carnright

Assistant Director for Education
ASSOCIATION OF YALE ALUMNI

Michael Chang

Instructor
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY SCMP

Diana Lee Crew

Founder and Consultant
REAL WORLD CONNECTIONS

Robert Fure

Director of Special Programs
WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

Maria Gross

Consultant - Travel Sales and Marketing

Amy Kotkin

Director
SMITHSONIAN JOURNEYS

Frank LaFleche

Market Development - Canada
JORDAN TOURISM BOARD

Susan Lethbridge

Director, Business Development
VOYAGES TO ANTIQUITY

James Moses

President and CEO
ROAD SCHOLAR

Todd Nielsen

Travel Director
ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE OF AMERICA
TOURS - EOS

Kerstin Nordin

Marketing North America
ICELAND TRAVEL

Dennis Pinto

Managing Director
MICATO SAFARIS

James Sano

President
GEOGRAPHIC EXPEDITIONS

Carolyn Sheaff

Retired Director of the BEAR TREKS Travel Program
CALIFORNIA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Joseph Small

President
AHI TRAVEL

Alicia Stevens

Director of Global Programs
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Peter Voll

Owner
PETER VOLL ASSOCIATES (PVA)

Scott Williams

Senior Director, Alumni Travel Program
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS ALUMNI ASSOC.



(From left): Williams, Lethbridge, Sano, and Voll pictured at a 2003 Advisory Council Meeting held at the TLC office in Montana.

A Look Back at ETC's Conference Themes

1987-1991 ♦ NonProfits in Travel: Issues, Concerns and Opportunities in Alumni and Museum Study Travel

1992 ♦ NonProfits in Travel: Issues, Concerns and Opportunities in Alumni, Museum, Continuing Education, and Other NonProfit Special Interest and Educational Travel

1993 ♦ Operating NonProfit Travel Programs as a Successful Business: Not-for-profit travel doesn't mean no bottom line!

1995 ♦ Competing in a Maturing Marketplace: Extinction or Distinction in Nonprofit Travel

1996 ♦ Pricing and Marketability of Nonprofit Travel: Aligning Your Programs to a Changing Marketplace

1997 ♦ Breaking the Ice - Moving Beyond Current Marketing & Programming Plateaus in Nonprofit Travel

1998 ♦ Shaping Your Travel Program's Future: Targeting Tomorrow's Travelers Today

1999 ♦ What Do Your Travelers Really Value?

2000 ♦ Educational Travel – Keeping It New!

2001 ♦ Building Global Partnerships: Strengthening Relationships, Advancing Programs

2002 ♦ The Learning Traveler: Exploring, Engaging, Evolving

2003 ♦ Travel On Purpose: New Motives, Missions, Markets

2004 ♦ Success in Tough Times: Marketing Through Adversity

2005 ♦ Getting Your Message Out: Powerful Marketing, Purposeful Programs

2006 ♦ 20th Anniversary: Inspirational Performances

2007 ♦ Bridging for the Future: New & Creative Strategies

2008 ♦ Facilitating Transformational Journeys: New Perspectives

2009 ♦ Engaging Travelers in Challenging Times: Proactive Strategies in a Downturn Economy

2010 ♦ Consider the Possibilities: Charting a New Course for Affinity and Nonprofit Travel



GOT A THEME IN MIND FOR ETC 2012? Send your suggestion to conference@travelearning.com.

ETC's 25-Year Evolution

1986 (December)

- Mara DelliPriscoli incorporates Travel Leisure Consultants (TLC), in Washington, D.C.

1987

- First Nonprofits in Travel Conference (NPTC) convenes in March at the Wyndham Bristol Hotel, Washington, D.C.
- 1.5-day conference with optional pre-conference half day "how to's" workshop and one track of plenary sessions focusing on Insurance, Legal, Postal, Promotion, Best Program Models, Domestic Travel sessions
- The Advisory Committee is formed with 10 professionals

1988

- Conference grows to 2 days and offers affinity breakout sessions, as well as a post-conference half-day optional tour to the Smithsonian
- The opening plenary is titled "Travel in Turbulent Times"

1989

- Conference holds its first official embassy-sponsored venues at the Indonesian Embassy (hosted by NATRABU and Garuda Airlines)
- The first destination briefing is held on the Netherlands (hosted by Netherlands Board of Tourism and KLM Airlines)
- Tour Operators/Vendors are excluded from conference sessions but are invited to a small networking party
- The precursor to the official Jumpstart Seminar is launched as a full day pre-conference program focusing on the nuts and bolts of nonprofit travel
- First Travel Supplier Resource Directory is published
- The Conference receives institutional endorsements over the course of eight years to help it get established. The initial institutional endorsers were: The Denver Museum of Natural History (Diana Lee Crew), Cal Alumni Association (Carolyn Sheaff), The Sierra Club (John DeCock), Witte Museum (Ian McCord), Alumni Association of the University of Michigan (Linda Rains)

1990

- Tour Operators are invited to NPTC for a half day of post-conference sessions in which partnership issues were discussed
- NPTC provides a "Resource Corridor" offering Tour Operators the option of providing, "in writing," information on their companies for Travel Planners
- First ecotourism sessions offered
- First NPTC Educationals announced with the Netherlands Board of Tourism and KLM Airlines and with the Scandinavian Tourism Boards and SAS Airlines
- First Organizational Profiles featured

1991

- TLC office moves to Montana
- Conference grows to 2.5 days
- Conference "Resource Corridor" expands to "Resource Room," where Travel Planners can pick up Tour Operators' brochures
- First-time opportunity for Travel Planners and Tour Operators to schedule one-to-one business meetings
- First advocacy session on Postal Issues and UBIT—"Mobilize for Action"

- The term "Educational Travel" is added to NPTC's focus
- First year NPTC brochure was mailed to both Travel Planners and Tour Operators, Suppliers, and Destinations; Tour Operators enjoyed a full day of Conference programming

1992

- First "Pre-Conference Bulletin" is published for attendees
- Tour Operators enjoy 2 full days of joint conference programming with Travel Planners

1993

- First full day of ecotourism programming is offered
- Conference grows to 4 days. The tagline reads: "The only travel conference which focuses exclusively on nonprofit special interest in educational travel programs, issues, opportunities, and concerns."
- NPTC Coalition Resource Center is launched

1994

- Conference moves from D.C. to the DoubleTree Hotel in Arlington, Va.
- The NET (Network for Educational Travel) is announced offering informational and educational services year-round
- The conference tagline changes to "the World's Only Major Educational Travel Conference, Development, and Training Institute Focused Exclusively on Nonprofit Travel"
- First Conference Resource Directory (CRD) is printed

1995

- The tagline for the conference is changed to "promoting partnerships"
- Two and a half days of joint programming between Travel Planners and Tour Operators/Suppliers
- A pre-conference day is offered on ecotourism: "Re-engineering the Ecotourism Equation"
- NET changes to "Travel Learning Connections" and is described as a "clearinghouse and resource hotline for nonprofit travel planners"
- The first NPTC technology forum is held as a post-conference day. Among the topics covered: software and messaging via e-mail.

1996

- The first year ETC gets an email account (TLC@Ronan.net) and its own website (www.ronan.net/~TLC)
- First year of fully integrated programming between Travel Planners and Tour Operators/Suppliers
- The first Responsible Tourism programming focuses on issues and ethics
- Post-Conference Technology Seminars are offered

1997

- NPTC tagline changes to "Advancing the Field of Educational Travel"
- A Travel-Planner-only listserv is promoted

1998

- The Resource Room of Tour Operators' printed materials grows into a larger exhibit space with tabletop displays (the precursor to the International Bazaar)

1999

- NPTC tagline changes to "For Market Leaders in Lifelong Learning and Travel"
- Programming is organized by tracks for the first time
- NPTC website becomes known as the "Educational Travel Alliance," and its website is www.etcwest.com
- Conference benefits now include being part of the Educational Travel Alliance
- First year online registration is offered
- First time the "BiZ Passport" is published
- NPTC proposes launching a forum dedicated to Environmental, Cultural, Heritage, and Arts Tourism

2000

- Conference moves back to D.C.
- "Educational Travel Roundtable" is launched
- A "Millennium Council" is convened with 50 members of the educational travel community representing Travel Planners, Tour Operators, Suppliers, and Destinations to discuss the initiatives and goals of the community
- Website address changes to www.nptc2000.com

2001

- Travel Leisure Consultants becomes Travel Learning Connections
- Silent Charity Auction debuts as a fundraiser for ETC's Tourism as a Passport to Peace Millennium Project
- The Partnership Marketplace is launched featuring the Partners' Boulevard—described as "a balanced mix of commerce and discovery."
- First Partnership Dinner, "Arabian Nights," marks the start of the Community Dinner tradition, where Suppliers, Operators, and Destinations collaboratively host a conference-wide dinner
- The Responsible Tourism Showcase debuts

2002

- Conference moves to Los Angeles
- Major re-branding of the conference from NPTC to the Educational Travel Conference. Attendees requested a name change that would exemplify the focus of their profession—educational travel—and be inclusive of all conference attendees.
- ETC's tagline becomes "specially designed for providers of educational travel"
- ETC's website is www.educationaltravelconference.com
- First Seminar on Wheels (SOW) is offered

2003

- Conference returns to Washington, D.C.
- First electronic Conference Resource Directory is produced
- First Marketing Institutes convene
- First launch of the community website at www.travelearning.com

2004

- The official International Bazaar debuts
- Emeritus Council is launched at the Executive Advisory Council Mid-Year Planning Meeting held in Montana
- First Voluntourism Forum is offered
- Speed Networking is offered for the first time
- Nancy Arsenault convenes a focus group at the conference and works with the ETC to produce the first definitive piece of industry-

wide research conducted and published for the Educational Travel Community: "Defining Tomorrow's Tourism Products for Learning Travelers" (Research was sponsored by Radisson Seven Seas, TLC, Learning Thru Leisure, and the Canadian Tourism Commission)

2005

- First Destination Jumpstart is offered
- Phase I of ETC's community website is launched signaling a new era for travel planner training. It features one password for access by delegates. (Launch supported by Academic Arrangements Abroad, American Cruise Lines, Canadian Tourism Commission, Costa Rica Educational and Cultural Adventures, International Seminar Design, Israel Government Tourist Office, Japan National Tourist Organizations and the Wales Tourism Board)

2006

- Conference moves to Baltimore, Md.
- First Executive Forum is offered
- First MAC and NACZ all-day forums convene
- Phase II of ETC's website is launched with a digital asset library and resource center (Sponsored by Canadian Tourism Commission, Newfoundland and Labrador Tourism, New Brunswick Tourism and Parks, Travel Alberta, Tourism British Columbia, Via Rail)

2007

- Conference tagline is "the premier event for Educational Travel"
- First Town Hall session offered
- First CEO Roundtable convened
- Passport Game launched in International Bazaar

2008

- Conference tagline is "The Founding Conference for Alumni, Museum, Zoo, and Conservation Travel and Nonprofit Educational Travel"
- The First Responsible Tourism Intensive is held
- First Voluntourism Experience is offered
- ETC Online Focus Groups convenes at conference to launch Phase III of the website; report produced from these on site focus groups sets the priorities for the enhanced website.

2009

- Conference moves to New Orleans
- Phase III of the new Educational Travel Community Website is launched with member dashboards (Sponsored by Asia Now – Japan National Tourist Office, Hong Kong Tourism Board, Tourism Authority of Thailand, Macau Government Tourist Office, Korea Tourism Organization, Singapore Tourism Board, Tourism Malaysia)
- First Virtual Membership, with year-round access to online resources

2010

- Conference moves to Rhode Island
- First run of the DOS Jumpstart: Selling to the U.S. Educational Market
- Business Connect is launched
- The first domestic ETC Educational is offered

Setting Sail 25 Years Ago

The Vision That Propelled the Educational Travel Community

Interview with J. Mara DelliPriscoli by Sherry Schwarz

Like any intrepid explorer, Mara DelliPriscoli has gone the distance to learn the contours of uncharted territory. From a year abroad traversing the ruins of Ancient Greece to a three-year hiatus blue-water sailing from the Caribbean to South America to finding a home on the range in western Montana—to visiting some 50-plus countries in between—she has traveled a long and winding path filled with adventure, risk, adversity, and reward to bring to life and evolve the Educational Travel Conference and mark its place on the modern map.

When asked what spurred her interest in educational travel, she reflects: “It was my freshman study abroad year ...and the experiential focus on learning....arriving at Delphi for the first time at dawn.....reading Herodotus sitting in the Acropolis ...and being ‘transported’ into the living context of the past.”

Having worked in almost every sector of the travel industry, Mara’s advocacy for lifelong learning fortunately directed her to lay the foundation of the Educational Travel Conference. As she authored in a 2007 *Transitions Abroad* article: “My treks to Delphi have remained a compass point for many subsequent solo expeditions, as well as for professional planning of learning travel programs worldwide. Throughout the years I have seen the design of educational



Mara DelliPriscoli pictured in 1988 organizing the second Educational Travel Conference (formerly NonProf-its in Travel Conference) from aboard the s/v Mandorla relying on a first-generation “luggable” computer.

tours continue to evolve as travelers seek more authentic and transformative programs that offer both collaborative educational exchange and the freedom to pursue those spontaneous moments of solo discovery, which uniquely personalize travel. As we move toward new paradigms of what defines the educational travel experience from education that engages the mind to learning connections that engage the soul—*facilitated* lifelong learning through travel will eclipse the traditional model of *managed* group travel.”

That adventurous and spirited passion for travel has never left Mara and characterizes her today,



as she admits to being the “eternal rolling stone.” She’ll hop on a plane, train, or horse anywhere, having traveled in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Azerbaijan, China, Outer Mongolia, northern India, Dubai, and Mexico in only the span of the last 15 months largely for business and forging ETC connections. Fittingly, it was island hopping in the British Virgin Islands when Mara made the commitment to launch TLC into reality—at that time called Travel Learning Consulting.

Her vision of orchestrating a professional development venue for nonprofit travel planners to network, collaborate, and share best practices had long been percolating in her mind. “Having worked too many a trade show from the supplier side, far removed from the educational content of the meeting, I recognized the lack of professional development and training workshops for all involved with nonprofit travel, particularly the travel planners,” says Mara.

She was convinced that “there had to be a better way” to support the growth and diversity of nonprofit travel as well as promote “sustainable” nonprofit and for-profit partnerships.

Having bounced around the concept of Nonprofits in Travel for many a year with colleagues Diana Lee Crew (then directing the Denver Museum of Natural History’s travel program) and Bryan DeLeo (then directing the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s travel program), Mara took the plunge in 1987 and launched—with a six-week lead time only—the first Nonprofits in Travel Conference (NPTC) with a brochure and program in tandem with Diana Lee Crew. Mara remembers the decisions and trade-offs requisite to this bold move noting, “I just knew without hesitation that NPTC was an idea whose time had come. So I ignored every marketing principle about measured lead time in promotions, invested all my limited resources and just went for it!”

At that point in time the Conference was a “test” run—without a long-term business plan running on sheer determination and passion for a vision unfolding. In 1987, after the first NPTC conference, Mara set sail for the Caribbean—



Mara DelliPriscoli in front of the new Library of Alexandria in 2000.

and what she thought would be a temporary hop from Bermuda to the British Virgin Islands. Her “hop” lasted three years. Between thousands of miles sailing and diving, brushes with Venezuelan pirates and uprisings, she focused on enhancing and expanding the Nonprofits in Travel Conference from the s/v *Mandorla*.

In the first eight years, Mara convened the first Advisory Council of which Diana Lee Crew was a founding council member, and received endorsements from leading nonprofit institutions: the Denver Museum of Natural History, California Alumni Association, Witte Museum, the Alumni Association of the University of Michigan Alumni, and the Sierra Club. Since these early days, the ETC has evolved to a six-person core team with more than 20 on-site Conference staff, from a 35-person meeting to an international Conference with an audience of 450-plus attendees from over 40 countries, and an ever-growing member constituency in the online community.

“ETC is an extraordinary profes-

sional development network,” says Diana Lee Crew. “The fact that the group was founded over 25 years ago and has grown from a simple networking and sharing conference for some 30 nonprofit travel programs to the huge network it is today is an accomplishment worth noting.”

Whereas the constituency focus in the first years of the Conference was exclusively on museums, Mara’s vision was to cultivate the cross-fertilization of ideas across all nonprofit sectors diversifying the attendee base to include alumni associations, continuing education programs, conservation groups, and environmental organizations. With a strategic focus on building a strong and viable nonprofit constituency in the first three years, Mara moved forward to include the other half of the nonprofit travel partnership: tour operators, and then expanding to destinations and travel suppliers in the early ’90s. This strategy included expanding a then one-track travel-planner-only educational conference to a vertically rich and multi-layered offering of



The 1998 ETC Executive Advisory Council meeting held at the Riverview B&B, West Dennis, Mass. Pictured from left: Jim Moses, Amy Kotkin, J. Mara DelliPriscoli, Ralph Janis, Joyce Barkley, Jeanne Cobb, and Carolyn Sheaff.

concurrent conference sessions to appeal to all individuals within the educational travel market, including the for-profit constituency. Sponsoring partners contributed greatly to an economically viable expansion of educational programming, social venues, and Conference-related online services.

As the Conference continued to grow in size and scope, the Executive Advisory Council expanded to reflect the growing diversity in Conference attendees. Council members were selected on the basis of their expertise in the field of educational and special-interest affinity and alumni/member travel, as well as the industry sector they represent: travel planner, tour operator, tour supplier, destination. An Emeritus Advisory Council was founded in 2004 by former Advisory Council members wishing to remain active and engaged in the ongoing activities of the ETC.

Pushing the technology curve, Mara launched the first online registration for the ETC in 1999,

and placed on the agenda, as early as 1995, strong online marketing courses and the first all-day Technology Forum, which was “cutting edge but sparsely attended,” adds Mara with a laugh.

Almost from the outset, Mara envisioned the ETC’s activities beyond an annual Conference as a year-round resource and network-

ing forum. As early as 1992, she laid plans for “The Nonprofits in Travel Coalition Resource Room,” which was the precursor for her desire to evolve an online ETC community. The first Networking Database was launched in the late ’90’s and, now, many versions later, it serves as the basis for today’s ETC member website’s search capabilities, which include Organizational Searches, Member Searches, and Destination Reports. It was due to the direct and sustained support of the website’s sponsoring partners that three phases of the current ETC website were able to launch successfully over the past five years. Today the ETC website includes not only its robust search capabilities, but also many tools and resources that Mara has innovated from the personalized “task manager” providing each member with customized reminders and timely information to the recently launched Member Profiles, which are designed to facilitate community-building and networking.

ETC’s website is also an extension of the annual Conference,



ETC’s Executive Advisory Council at the ETC 2011 Planning Meeting hosted by John Hendricks and Experius Academy in Gateway Canyons, CO, April 2010.

insofar as it enables members to now listen to digital recordings of the majority of Conference sessions and to access speaker handouts year-round. This evolution has been particularly gratifying for Mara, who, from the outset, aimed to supply Conference content and collateral that could be accessed 24/7 by virtual members.

Every year since its inception, the Conference has focused not only on the issues, concerns and opportunities in nonprofit travel but also on the broader trends and strategic issues of the travel industry, recruiting top marketing and trends speakers, as well as educational travel industry leaders from within the community and candid discourses with industry partners.

“The Conference has never been cookie cutter,” says Mara. “Each year the ETC delivers on the basic how to’s but also brings to the forefront the ever-evolving challenges of staying relevant and creating program distinctions in affinity and alumni travel. Re-thinking travel programs for a rapidly evolving traveler, moving into the digital age

of marketing and social networking, strengthening partner relationships are all critical to the growth, leadership, and evolution of non-profit travel programs.”

In addition to advancing education and professional development, the ETC has also prided itself on its outreach and advocacy over the years. Mara cites the launch of the ETC “Educationals,” in 1990, as a program of which she is particularly proud. The “Educationals” enable experienced travel planners to share their programming expertise with countries furthering the development of educational travel.

The ETC has also made important strides through presentations on tourism as a passport to peace and with the formation, in 1991, of the Nonprofit UBIT tax coalition. Included in its many “firsts,” the ETC hosted the first Voluntourism Forums and served as the first platform for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to launch co-promotional activities in the U.S. travel industry.

If materializing a vision teaches us anything, humility is among the

first of lessons—and it’s one Mara knows well. Even as the founder and president of the ETC, she is the first to tell you her part of the ETC story is but only one small piece.

“It is witnessing a community evolving and the commitment of colleagues to raise the bar of professionalism in their industry that inspires and renews my commitment to ETC annually,” says Mara.

She adds: “It is the countless core of volunteer colleagues—participants in the Regional Roundtables...colleagues ‘giving back’ by teaching Jumpstart for the past 22 years...veteran ETC members leading the Executive Forum...delegates developing and leading sessions annually at the ETC...valued sponsors helping to deliver a quality educational platform, fun networking venues, and a growing online communications platform...the strategic counseling of the Executive Advisory and Emeritus Council members, and so many others—who have all tirelessly and heartfully contributed to the face of ETC today.” These are the leaders who Mara believes will set the pace for the next 25 years.

As Mara closes her reflection on the eve of the 25th Anniversary Conference, she is already looking toward the horizon for the next need to be served, the next challenge. When asked what’s ahead on the ETC agenda, Mara doesn’t hesitate: “aggregating industry statistics on the affinity and alumni travel market,” she says passionately. “The growth and development of a community with a leading industry voice is critical,” she says. “I expect that the resulting aggregated data will become an essential resource for researching, benchmarking, and advocacy in years to come.”



Mara DelliPriscoli has designed the ETC “Educationals,” like this one in Israel, 2010, in collaboration with foreign government tourist offices to generate new tour ideas for Educational Travel.

Hats Off to ETC for 25 Years of Building



(From left): Sampling dessert with the Israel Ministry of Tourism chef at ETC 2009; Frank LaFleche, Dennis Pinto, and Ray Knapp pictured at the ETC 2003 Executive Advisory Council meeting held at Ray and Mara DelliPriscoli's Mandorla Ranch, in Montana.

Congratulations on the 25th anniversary of the Educational Travel Conference! The Tucson Museum of Art derived many benefits from its ETC membership and association with other nonprofit organizations. Exchanging ideas has been one of the motivating reasons to return to the conference year after year. Mara's inspiration in developing Travel Learning Connections has been an incalculable benefit to all of the members of the Educational Travel Community.

Joyce Barkley

Retired Travel Planner, Tucson Museum of Art

The Educational Travel Community is an extraordinary professional development network. The fact that the ETC was founded over 25 years ago and has grown from a simple networking and sharing conference for some 30 nonprofit travel programs to the huge network it is today is an accomplishment worth noting. Today our world includes all aspects of travel from suppliers to ministry of tourism departments to risk managers to inbound operators and, of course, the nonprofit travel programs themselves. Each year, this conference provides basic information for newcomers, while challenging and encouraging other programs to look at new directions and to craft innovative educational experiences we might never have imagined before. We are not merely visiting countries, but we are helping to define unique worlds. The learning that occurs here also spills over into many other avenues of our personal lives and enriches us all.

Diana Lee Crew

Founder & Consultant, Real World Connections

Having attended the Educational Travel Conference for most of my 17 years as a travel planner, I can honestly say that the Philadelphia Zoo's travel program has grown

and continues to function because of the knowledge I've gained through the outstanding program the ETC offers each year. It is a wonderful way for me to network with fellow Natural History Museum, Aquarium, Conservation Organization, and Zoo (NACZ) planners, as we all share and learn from each other and become friends at the same time. The ETC is the only professional devel-



opment conference where I can find everything I need in one place. I discover what destinations are "hot" and "what's not." I am able to discuss legal issues and risk management situations, find capable tour operators, and learn how to better market my products.

My attendance at the ETC has been critical to the success of the Philadelphia Zoo's travel program and also for AZAD's (Association of Zoo and Aquarium Docents) for whom I plan several trips a year. I am credited with initiating the Zoo's travel partnership program with other institutions, many of whom I have met at ETC, and for starting AZAD's travel program. I couldn't have

the Conference and the Community!



(From left): Jim Friedlander and Roberta Moore enjoy a break at the 2010 Executive Advisory Council Meeting, Gateway Canyons, Colo.; The Mexico Tourism Board and the Yucatan hosted a cultural performance at ETC 2006; Business relationships and friendships begin in the International Bazaar.

accomplished any of this without attending the ETC. Thank you ETC for all that you have done, not only for me, but also for all the other like-minded colleagues in the world.

Roberta “Bert” DeVries

Philadelphia Zoo Travel Planner/Trips and Program Manager and AZAD Travel Planner

I’ve been very privileged to have been associated with the Educational Travel Conference almost from the very beginning, as one of the first foreign tour operators to attend the Conference along with just a handful of others who ventured in the early days to the DoubleTree Hotel.

After attending this Conference for the first time I began to share Mara’s vision of a global community of people who are passionate about promoting affinity and nonprofit educational travel. I have had the opportunity to see it grow and develop into what it is today—a large community spanning the globe of people working for

something they passionately believe in.

The yearly journey to the Conference has always been a place to hear inspirational and informative speakers and to share ideas with like-minded (for the most part) colleagues. I can only hope that the Conference continues to grow and develop in the future as it has in the past.

Good work and congratulations on your first 25 years!

Nick Fritz

Managing Director, Protours, The Netherlands

My position allows me to attend only one conference a year, and I find that the Educational Travel Conference is the most productive way for me to spend my conference time and dollars.

The ETC gives me the best mix of interacting with colleagues holding positions similar to mine in colleges and universities throughout the country, as well as an excellent opportunity to build relationships with tour operators, both from the United States and the destination countries of our tours. Not only do I learn better ways of doing my job, but I also am never starting from scratch when trying to find the right tour operator for one of my alumni adventures. I enjoy meeting with representatives from various countries to garner ideas of how my trips can be improved and learning about new services available to our travelers.

ETC is the only conference that I have ever attended where I am asked for months ahead of time by friends and contacts in the educational travel industry whether or not I am attending the conference. Each year I look forward to seeing my ETC friends again.

Amy Goerwitz

Assoc. Director of Alumni Relations, Carleton College



The hard work and intense collaboration of planning each ETC Conference begins respectively at the annual Executive Advisory Council Meeting (pictured left page, Dubai, 2008) and at the Programming Regional Roundtables held across the U.S. (pictured above, San Francisco, 2009).



(From left): Delegates at ETC 2009 get into the fun of a crepes cooking competition; Attendee speaker and Emeritus Council member Alicia Stevens.

Congratulations on the Educational Travel Conference's 25th year!

I feel that the ETC is the only conference in the world for colleagues to share the cutting edge of educational travel in a friendly and collegial atmosphere. Those of us who have been attending for years look forward eagerly to learning about the issues concerning educational travel and about what everyone else is doing. There could not be a better forum to learn and to share innovative ideas about best practices and achieving best results in the field of educational travel.

The ETC definitely is one of the most enriching professional development experiences I have had in the travel industry.

Maria M. Gross

Consultant - Travel Sales and Marketing

PromPeru has been privileged to participate in the Educational Travel Conference and to assemble with the top influential travel leaders in North America. Through this opportunity, our country has succeeded in hosting several participants for familiarization trips to view the exotic, experiential, and cultural tourism experiences that continue to provide enlightening growth-occasions for visitors.

We look forward to the continued growth of the ETC and the expansion of attendees. We are eager to continue our relationship with the ETC and deepen our connection with the educational travel market by "Opening Doors to Open Minds."

The ETC is one of our most important events, not only to showcase our product but also to increase our knowledge and enrich ourselves.

Elisabeth Hakim

UK & North American Markets Coordinator, PromPeru

I cherish my many years at the Conference (1986-2007). The Educational Travel Conference was crucial to my work in alumni education. It gave me the chance to know virtually everyone in the field and to develop critical relationships with the finest tour operators. I learned so much and it was so much fun. An entire industry owes a tremendous portion of its success over the past 25 years to the Conference in general and, even more, to our beloved Mara, who made it all happen. Kudos to you all and best wishes for the next 25 years!

Ralph Janis

Director Emeritus, Cornell's Adult University

ETC bonds planners, tour operators, suppliers, and destinations into a common pursuit of excellence in educational travel. Over many years, the conference has given all of us both a platform for expressing our various points of view and a venue for discussion. It has been extremely valuable to me personally and for my organization to be part of such an informative, thought-provoking, and lively annual gathering.

Amy Kotkin

Director, Smithsonian Journeys



Mara DelliPriscoli and Ray Knapp in Kenya visiting a local community project.

The Educational Travel Conference has been truly the “Super Bowl conference” of our industry. This annual affinity event has single handedly marked a time to regroup and reconnect with our colleagues and partners to brainstorm and strategize new marketing and programming ideas.

It also has been a remarkable place to reinvigorate our passion and commitment to educational travel.

We all come away from the ETC with a renewed sense of purpose, an extraordinary feat for any one conference!

Karen Kuttner-Capato
Vice President of Affinity & Charter Sales,
Lindblad Expeditions

As goes the real estate mantra “location, location, location,” to me the Educational Travel Conference has been and remains “community, community, community.” A community of kindred minds, where we gather to share common ideas, address common challenges, and set common goals for success for all parties, enjoying the journey together on a win-win stage!

Thanks to Mara for her vision and leadership!

Philip Mathews
Senior Associate, MIR Corporation

On the 25th anniversary, I am honored to have been part of the Educational Travel Conference and Group Travel Community since 1995. My 15-year journey with the Educational Travel Community has been rewarding and provided me with invaluable educational, business, and networking opportunities: first, during my time with the Finnish Tourist Board, and then with my own company

dealing with travel to Scandinavian countries.

Mara, ETC’s group leader during this journey, has always provided inspiration, encouragement, and new sources of learning experiences. I see the ETC moving along into the future, always strong and staying abreast of new developments.

Kerstin E. Nordin
Marketing North America,
Iceland Travel

Travel, especially the kind of mindful travel done by nonprofits, is all about people. For a quarter century now, the Educational Travel Conference has been at the forefront of the thoughtful business of educational travel.

[Mara has never been one] to forget the unique importance of [her] calling—to seek out ways to make travel a means to inform, educate, and enlighten both the traveler and the peoples visited. [Ever since] she visited East Africa, Mara has sponsored three siblings through our AmericaShare School Sponsorship program. There is no question that she has saved lives by her dedication and continuing sponsorship. She has literally put the “education” in educational travel by providing schooling for these fortunate Kenyans, and in so doing has embodied the very mission of her own organization.

Dennis Pinto
Managing Director, Micato Safaris

“The professional benefits I’ve received from this Conference have been extremely rewarding to my institution, travel program, and me with each friendship to be treasured always.” (Written March 30, 1989.) Going forward, may this remain true!

Carolyn Sheaff
Retired Director, Cal Alumni Association

My first memories of the Educational Travel Conference are of people. Each year, old friends and new are highlights. Next is educational content, especially some of the really great and inspirational talks. Third is industry accomplishments—the most notable to me being the real partnerships that have evolved among the various segments of the educational travel pipeline thanks to the Conference.

All in all, my life has been positively impacted both professionally and personally because of the ETC. For this I thank Mara for her vision and conviction, the many hundreds of volunteers who make the Conference so



The ETC Educational to Jordan in 2004.

great, the sponsors who make the Conference possible, and, most of all, the attendees, without whom there would be no Conference.

As we move forward through the next 25 years, if we continue to connect people, provide meaningful educational experiences, and stand ready to advocate on behalf of the industry, we will all be able to grab our canes and celebrate the 50th Anniversary.

Joe Small

President, AHI TRAVEL

After a career working with the National Park Service, I decided to venture into another phase of my life. My close friend, Susan Delgado, who was the Expedition Manager for National Wildlife Federation, suggested I look into attending the Educational Travel Conference. My first attendance was in Washington, D.C., which helped me solidify my decision of developing an environmental education travel company—Environmental Adventure Company. A complete newbie, my eyes and mind were opened to the sheer volume of information available to a novice of education travel. I have no doubt my conference attendance and willingness to ask questions and listen did more for me than stacks of books written on the subject. That was many years, and many conferences, ago. Personally, the value of attending the ETC is beyond measure. I look forward to many more years of interaction with the ETC family.

Michael Sanders

President/Founder, Environmental Adventure Company

The Educational Travel Community is a great organization that spans multiple borders: international, professional, and academic. It has brought me a wealth of information networks, and a sense of belonging to a much larger community. Ten years after being introduced

to the ETC, and in a completely new phase of my career, I still find myself leaning on the networks and knowledge delivered over the years. The contacts have been invaluable to me and became building blocks to my present position. Through the ETC I have introduced a personal hero of mine to the Conference (Wade Davis), met some giants of the tourism world, and had conversations with some of the brightest and best our industry has to offer.

Thanks ETC for 25 years of hard work, professionalism, and leadership!

Peter Swain, MSC

*District Manager, Cypress Hills District,
Government of Alberta, Tourism Parks and
Recreation*

It is very exciting to be part of the 25th Educational Travel Conference. For two decades, I have had the pleasure of watching this conference grow from a small, planners-only Nonprofits in Travel meeting to what is now an Educational Travel Conference attracting organizations from all corners of the world.

This Conference provides a neutral meeting ground for all members of the educational travel community whether they are planners, destinations, operators or suppliers. The opportunity is there to expand your client base as well as your knowledge, and there is no better assembly of like-minded individuals and organizations to be found.

The Conference has been and continues to be the one place where we see an entire group of old friends and meet new ones. We credit it with contributing greatly to our growth and success in our niche travel market.

Attendees always leave with inspiration and an abundance of knowledge gained from speakers as well as their colleagues. The most valuable asset, in my opinion, is the sharing and mentoring that transpires during the sessions. There's notably far more camaraderie than competition present.

The Conference helps expand our awareness of responsible tourism and of how we can be an asset to our environment as educated travelers rather than continuing its destruction.

I see the conference as a valuable tool that I hope can continue and grow over the next 25 years.

Linda Witt

*Director, Sales and Client Relations/Educational Travel,
USI Travel Insurance Services*