

Nobody Asked Me, But... No. 45

Remembering John Curry; Hotel Owners Have The Power; How Lucky Can You Get?; Quote of the Month.

By Stanley Turkel, MHS, ISHC

1. Remembering John Curry

My friend John Curry was an admirable person and a great hotel man. And I say that not just because he called me “Studs” (in recollection of the famous writer and radio personality Studs Terkel). John’s career began at Yosemite National Park where his family’s company Amfac was the successor to the Fred Harvey Company. John later joined the Walt Disney Co. where he directed hotel resort operations for Walt Disney World in Orlando, FL. After relocating to Hilton Head Island, S.C., John helped its incorporation and recognition as a great destination resort. For 35 years, John Curry made a singular and positive impact on the development of Hilton Head Island’s tourism industry. He combined courage and determination with humor, wit and grace.

2. Hotel Owners Have The Power

In the following magazines, many of the largest franchise companies have full page ads soliciting new franchisees. None of them even mention the major issues facing franchisees: guaranteed areas of protection, termination and liquidated damages, encroachment and impact studies, windows of penalty-free exit opportunities, choice of venue, etc.

Hotel Business (Sept. 21-Oct. 6, 2008)

- La Quinta
- Wyndham
- Hilton
- Doubletree
- Westin/Element
- Sheraton
- Cambria Suites
- NYLO
- TownePlace Suites

Lodging Hospitality (September 1, 2008)

- Wyndham
- La Quinta
- Hilton
- TownePlace Suites
- Hyatt
- Doubletree
- Westin
- Westin/Element
- Carlson

Hotels (September 2008)

- Four Points
- Sheraton
- Wyndham
- Carlson
- Hilton

AAHOA Lodging Business (September 2008)

- Hilton
- Wyndham
- Accor
- La Quinta
- Wyndham

Only the advertisements from the following franchise companies talk about these important and essential issues:

- Budget Host
- Vista
- Vantage/Lexington
- Guesthouse & Settle Inn
- Budgetel

Hotel Owners: You may not realize it, but the power to change this situation is in your hands. How? For the next 12 months sign franchise agreements only with those franchise companies who are in fuller compliance with AAHOAs 12 Points of Fair Franchising.

3. How Lucky Can You Get?

For the past thirty years, I have made a good living doing what I love to do. I am one of the most widely-published hotel consultants in the United States. Yet my entry into the hotel business was a random series of unexpected opportunities. My very first job in a hotel was as the Resident Manager of the Americana of New York (now the Sheraton New York Hotel). The general manager was Tom Troy whose forbearance, patience and training helped me to learn the craft of hotel keeping. Tom had trained earlier in the Statler Hotel Company. His stories about the genius of Ellsworth Statler were stored in my memory bank until I started to write my book: “Great American Hoteliers: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry.”

After ten months as second-in-command of this 1840-room convention hotel, I was named the General Manager of the 680-room Drake Hotel on 56th Street and Park Ave. (now a hole in the ground). After two and a half years at the luxurious Drake Hotel, I became the General Manager of the 762-room Summit Hotel at 51st Street and Lexington Avenue (now called the Doubletree Hotel). When the Summit was built in 1969 it was the first new hotel in New York in 30 years and was designed by the famous Florida architect, Morris Lapidus. In a critical comment about its design, a critic said that “it was too far from the beach”.

After three years at the Summit Hotel, I was recruited by the International Telephone & Telegraph Corporation who had recently acquired the Sheraton Corporation of America. After a year as assistant to the ITT Vice President of Consumer Services, I was promoted to Product Line Manager for Worldwide Hotel Services. In the next seven years, I traveled all over the United States, Canada, South America, Europe, the Mideast, Hawaii, the Far Easton ITT/Sheraton business negotiating new hotel developments and reviewing all the domestic and international Sheraton Hotels’ pro-formas, budgets and profit and loss statements.

During those years, the Dunfey Hotel Company in New Hampshire was Sheraton’s largest franchisee. When Dunfey was acquired by the Aetna Life and Casualty, Jack Dunfey asked me to serve as his

consultant. This year-long consulting contract enabled me to establish my own hotel consulting company.

During the past thirty years, I have realized more and more that knowledge of the history of the hotel business is essential for anyone interested in a career in the lodging industry. As Confucius wrote, “Study the past if you would divine the future.” With the rapid technological changes taking place, it is more than ever important to know where we have been in order to predict where we are going.

I am an emeritus member of the Board of Advisors of the New York University Preston Robert Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism, and Sports Management. I consider myself fortunate to have been present at the birth of the NYU “hotel” school back in 1997. On the many occasions that I have lectured at the school and elsewhere, I have been struck by the importance of the history of the American hotel industry.

Please keep on the lookout for the publishing of my new book “Great American Hoteliers: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry.” It will tell the fascinating stories of John McEntee Bowman, Carl Graham Fisher, Henry Morrison Flagler, John Q. Hammons, Frederick Henry Harvey, Ernest Henderson, Conrad Nicholson Hilton, Howard Dearing Johnson, J. Willard Marriott, Kanjibhai Manchhubhai Patel, Henry Bradley Plant, George Mortimer Pullman, A.M. Sonnabend, Ellsworth Milton Statler, Juan Terry Trippe, and Kemmons Wilson.

4. Quote of the Month

“When the well’s dry, we know the worth of water”

Benjamin Franklin

About the Author

Stanley Turkel

Bio: Stanley Turkel, MHS, ISHC operates his hotel consulting office as a sole practitioner specializing in franchising issues, asset management and litigation support services. Turkel's clients are hotel owners and franchisees, investors and lending institutions. Turkel serves on the Board of Advisors and lectures at the NYU Tisch Center for Hospitality, Tourism and Sports Management. He is a member of the prestigious International Society of Hospitality Consultants. His provocative articles on various hotels subjects have been published in the Cornell Quarterly, Lodging Hospitality, and on the Hotel Interactive, Hotel-Online and BlueMauMau websites. Don't hesitate to call:

- If you need help in negotiating your franchise agreement
- If you have a problem with encroachment and impact
- If you need an expert witness in a hotel litigation law suit
- If you need a featured speaker at your company or organization.

Stanley has spoken and written recently on the following subjects:

- Fair Franchising is Not an Oxymoron
- Keeping Score: Which Franchisors Comply Best (and Worst) with AAHOAs 12 Points?
- Franchise Advisory Councils: Powerhouses or Powderpuffs?
- Great American Hoteliers: Pioneers of the Hotel Industry

Call Stanley at 917-628-8549 or email at stanturkel@aol.com.