

Chapel Hill
WITH CARRBORO & HILLSBOROUGH
The Feeling Never Leaves You

Chapel Hill Carrboro Hillsborough

2009 - 2010 | ANNUAL REPORT

2010 - 2011 | STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

CHAPEL HILL / ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

Chapel Hill • Carrboro • Hillsborough
North Carolina

BOARD of COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Bernadette Pelissier, Chair

Steve Yuhasz, Vice Chair

Valerie P. Foushee

Alice M. Gordon

Pam Hemminger

Barry Jacobs

Earl McKee

STAFF

Laurie Paolicelli

Executive Director

Linda Ekeland

Sales Director

Patty Griffin

Communications Director

Tina Fuller

Administrator

Susan Rice

Visitor Services

Katelyn Rosemond

Dale Chodorow (current)

Part-time Visitor Services

BOARD of DIRECTORS 2009 - 2010

Director

Creston Woods
Chair, July 2009–Jan 2010

David Gephart
Chair, May–June 2010

Valerie Foushee

Barry Jacobs

Jim Ward

Bob Ward

Laura Morgan

Rick Strunk

Jim Parker

Lydia Lavelle

Anthony Carey

Mike Gering

Greg Overbeck

Lee Pavao

Dwight Bassett

James Harris

Brad Broadwell

Jim Norton

Representing

Orange County Lodging Association

Alliance for Historic Hillsborough

Board of County Commissioners

Board of County Commissioners

Town of Chapel Hill

Orange County Economic Development Commission

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

North Carolina High School Athletic Association

Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce

Town of Carrboro

Orange County Lodging Association

Town Board of Hillsborough

Chapel Hill/Carrboro Chamber of Commerce

Emeritus

Economic Development Officer, Chapel Hill

Economic Development Director, Carrboro

Economic Development Director, Orange County

Executive Director, Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership

Others who served during part of the fiscal year:

Linda Convisor, University of North Carolina; **Jon Wilner**, Town of Carrboro/Arts Center; and **Frances Dancy**, Town Board of Hillsborough

© Copyright January 2011, Chapel Hill/
Orange County Visitors Bureau



2nd Friday Art Walks draw visitors to downtown Carrboro and Chapel Hill. Photo by Donn Young.



Visitors Center at 501 W. Franklin Street sports new informational flags.

SALES PROMOTIONS

Visitors Bureau developed and participated in numerous sales promotions in 2009-10 including MINT, Empowermint Hot Leads, tradeshows, promotions, advertising in trade journals targeting meeting planners. Promotional materials were produced, including a Meeting Planning Guide, direct mail cards and specialty promotions. The Sales Department serves as a point of contact for Weddings, Reunions, Bar Mitzvahs and other Events; develops proposals; and hosts site inspections. Continued partnership through Fall 2010 with Hyland Group, a Washington, DC-based destination sales firm that focused on Associations' meeting planners, especially with a UNC affiliation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Participated in Meeting Professional International (MPI) Carolina Chapter Educational conferences in Charlotte, Raleigh, and Durham.
- Participated in Association Executives of North Carolina Annual Winter Tradeshaw and attended bi-monthly networking events. Also participated in the annual golf outing.
- Hosted a 2-day sales blitz themed "Set your Meetings on Fire" on the University of North Carolina campus in March 2010. The Blitz was completed with a lunch and industry partner presentations held at The Friday Center. A total of 109 employees and planners took part in the event.
- Participated in Bureaufest hosted by the Hyland Group from Washington DC. Bureaufest invitation list included professional meeting planners from the surrounding DC area.



Visitors Bureau was awarded "Best Food" in show at the AENC Tradeshaw with the theme "Living the Green Life" held in December 2009.



"Set Your Meetings on Fire" UNC Sales Blitz event held at The Friday Center in March 2010.



- Responded to 2,055 requests for meeting and conference and group tour information from groups interested in hosting events in Orange County.
- Provided conference services and visitor information to 201 groups meeting in Orange County.

• Generated 4,003 room nights in Orange County hotels through efforts of Bureau sales department.

- Mailed over 120 letters and emails to the DC and Maryland Association Market promoting Chapel Hill/Orange County.
- Issued over 30 Meeting & Event Guides to the NC State Travel & Tourism Department to represent the Bureau at a Toronto Incentive Workshop and Tradeshow for Meeting Planners.
- Designed and distributed 500 Informational Flyers to all county schools promoting Chapel Hill/Orange County hotels for any sporting events hosted in Orange County.
- Issued E-mail blast to 140 contacts in the Washington DC area as a second follow-up to key planners.
- Designed and produced a welcome information piece for group business.
- Issued updates and additions for the Meeting & Event Guide to 135 planners.

- Attended and sponsored lunch event for Potomac Meeting Planners International, chapter meeting in Washington DC for 170 attendees.
- On-going campaign for Memorial Weekend Bob Gibbons Basketball Tournament.
- Continued partnership with NCHSAA sporting events held in Chapel Hill.
- Conducted quarterly lodging sales roundtables for Orange County accommodations.



• Generated or assisted 45 conference bookings with 9,616 attendees producing an economic impact of \$2,213,373.

• Generated 58 sales leads to local lodging and meeting sites.

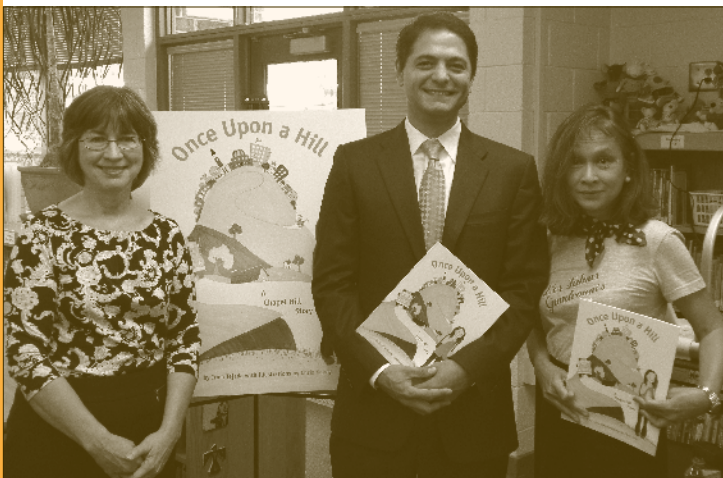
TRAVEL TREND FOR YEAR ENDING JUNE 2010 (% change from 2009)			
Occupancy	ADR	RevPar	Revenue
59.0	\$104.67	\$61.74	\$30,646,360
-3.7%	-6.1%	-9.6%	-9.6%

HIGHLIGHTS from 2009-2010



The Visitors Bureau received accreditation from the Destination Marketing Association International (DMAI) in June 2010 as

part of its Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) after an extensive comparison of the Orange County Visitors Bureau to the highest standards and best practices in destination marketing. To become accredited, a Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) is required to provide evidence of compliance with 54 mandatory standards and 33 voluntary standards including governance, finance, management, human resources, technology, visitor services, group services, sales, communications, membership, brand management, destination development, research/market intelligence, innovation, and stakeholder relationships.



(LtoR) Illustrator Chris Kanoy, Chapel Hill Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt, Author Irma Tejada.



New advertising campaign included a **successful 11-week radio campaign in Charlotte, NC** promoting Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough as the ideal summer getaway beginning in June 2010.

Funding the winter and spring **Ladies' Night Out** campaign in Hillsborough with advertisements in Triad, Triangle and Virginia media encouraging shopping and highlighting holiday and spring events in Hillsborough. LNO was part of an overall Hillsborough Holiday campaign.

Awarded "Best Food" in show at the Annual **Association Executives of North Carolina Tradeshow** held at the Raleigh Convention Center in December 2009. The theme of the show was "**Living the Green Life**" and the Visitors Bureau and Industry Partners created a Farmers Market setting featuring locally grown products of Orange County.

The Visitors Guide, Meeting Planner's Guide and Maps were used by tens of thousands of visitors. Bureau produced a new **rack card** to use in state and regional visitor centers and to serve as an advertising campaign fulfillment piece.

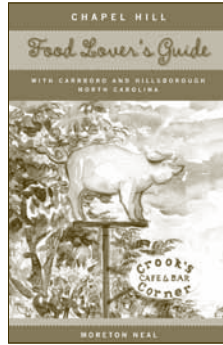
A publishing partnership continued with a local author and illustrator of children's books, and 2010 marked the publishing of a Chapel Hill children's book. This publication completed a trilogy of children's books (Carrboro 2008, Hillsborough 2009) all used by the visitor's bureau to tell the younger generation about Orange County.

National publicity on our destination, tourism promotions and special events focused positive attention on Orange County to the traveling public.





Moreton Neal Food Lover's Guide Book signing.



Trolley on Franklin Street.

Nearly 157,000 visitors were serviced through the walk-in visitors' center, the visitchapelhill.org website and thru visitor information packets sent to those inquiring about the area.

The Visitors Center **commissioned artist Michael Brown** to paint a mural in the parking lot that flows through the entrance of the building.

Visitors Bureau **commissioned writer Moreton Neal** to write *Chapel Hill Food Lover's Guide with Carrboro and Hillsborough, NC* in December 2009.

Visitors Bureau teamed with the 2nd Friday ArtWalk to **provide free trolley service** for visitors and residents in downtown Carrboro and Chapel Hill in the summer of 2010.

Touch Downtown campaign continued to bring together athletics, town economic boosters and tourism resources to encourage Carolina fans and visiting friends of the other team to come early and stay late.

Visitors Bureau hosted a **familiarization tour and symposium** for members of the gay and lesbian travel trade, including

media and tour planners in September 2009. The symposium was held during North Carolina Pride Week with activities scheduled at neighboring Durham, NC, including a Pride Parade and related activities.

Collaboration efforts with the High School Athletic Association provided families with discount restaurant offers and helped spread the word about local hotels.

Hotel developers were assisted with stats, county information, public relations and occupancy history, making their research on the area both quick and easy.

Visitors Bureau coordinated a special 12-page *Orange County's arts scene* **advertising section** in the summer of 2010 for *Our State* magazine.



TRAVEL and TOURISM MARKETING *Highlights*

ON-LINE MARKETING

- Added new “Live Chat” feature to website which allows visitors to log in and ask questions getting an immediate on screen response. New “In the News” section highlighting media features about the destination. Social media programs included Twitter, Facebook, Ning, website blogs, AAA blogs, YouTube videos.



- A direct email campaign targeted UNC summer camp program directors heralding the adventures open all summer long in Orange County.

E-NEWSLETTER AND E-MARKETING

- A monthly e-newsletter is sent to more than 1,650 visitors, travel agents and friends of Orange County tourism.
- Two special e-newsletter campaigns sent in November 2009.

NATIONAL TRAVEL MEDIA AND STORIES PLACED

- Editors, travel media and freelance writers were hosted on a getting-to-know the towns-trip to Orange County so that they could return home and write about the area in national and international newspapers and magazines.

HIGH DEFINITION DIGITAL VIDEO

- Shooting new HD video footage in 2010 to promote Chapel Hill, Carrboro, UNC, Hillsborough for website video pieces and media B-roll.



MERCHANDISING THE BRAND

- New eye-catching graphics appear on T-shirts and polos promoting the uniqueness of Chapel Hill, Carrboro and Hillsborough. Magnets, keychains, caps, and mugs also available.

PUBLICATIONS AND DISTRIBUTION AND FULFILLMENT

- New Food Lover’s Guide, Visitors Guide, Top 10 Things to Do for Summer Campers and Their Families, new Destination Rack Card and Map were printed for tens of thousands of visitors.



SUMMER ADVERTISING PROGRAM

- Targeting Charlotte and western North Carolina visitors, the Visitors Bureau coordinated a Charlotte Radio campaign with WSOC-FM Radio, utilizing live on-air copy reads, radio website registration campaign for prizes and general press releases targeting visitors who want a memorable summer vacation stop.
- “Get 3 towns for the price of 1” heralded the unique features in each town through a continued advertising program.



MEDIA PARTNERSHIP

- The visitor’s bureau continued as events information contributor for an annotated weekly column on “What’s Happening in Orange County” in the Chapel Hill Herald.

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA PARTNERSHIP

- The visitor’s bureau supported through marketing sponsorships: The Literary Festival, CHAT festival, UNC Athletics. Provided marketing materials for North Carolina Botanical Garden new Green education center.

COMMUNICATIONS Highlights



AWARDS WON

The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau received four Destination Marketing Achievement Awards at the eleventh annual Destination

Marketing Association of North Carolina's Annual Meeting & Awards Banquet held June 7, 2010 at Sea Trail Golf Resort at Sunset Beach, NC. The

purpose of the Destination Marketing Achievement Awards is to honor and showcase innovation, best practices, creativity and outstanding efforts/results in destination marketing.

Platinum Awards:

- **2008-2009 Annual Report and Strategic Plan**
"Best Local Constituents Communications"
- Bureau hosted **International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association Familiarization Tour** held in September 2009
"Destination Marketing Initiatives"

Gold Award:

- **March Meeting Madness promotion**
"Best Publications – Niche Marketing"

MEDIA RELATIONS

- Provided reference, background and story ideas to journalists, which resulted in **377** travel, tourism and event stories in local, regional, national and international media. Visitors Bureau was referenced **284** times. Assisted **198** media.
- The destination was featured in numerous **Leisure media** in 2009-10 including *Travel & Leisure* magazine, *Garden & Gun Magazine*, *Southern Living*, *Money Magazine*, *AmericanStyle Magazine*, *GolfScene* magazine, *Flagstick Magazine*, *Ideal Living Magazine*, *Richmond* magazine, *Charlotte Magazine*, *15-501 Magazine*, *AAA Go Magazine*, *Escapees Magazine*, *Passport Magazine*, *Chapel Hill Magazine*, *Carolina Woman* magazine, *New York Post*, *Asheville Citizen-Times*, North



Carolina Weekend (WUNC-TV), WNCN-TV, WRAL-TV, Carolina News Network, CNNMoney.com, Forbes.com, UPI.com, voiceamerica.com and visitsouth.com.

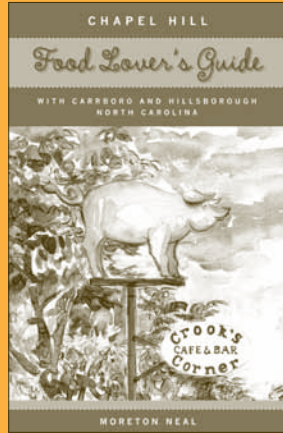
- **Trade Publications** featuring information on Orange County include *ConventionSouth Magazine*, *Small Market Meetings*, *Group Travel Leader*, *Association News*, *USAE*,

TRAVEL WRITERS AND STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS OUTREACH

- Hosted **nine** travel writers with articles in media including *Ohio Magazine*, *Connecticut Magazine*, *Flagstick Magazine*, *GolfScene Magazine* and *Victoria Magazine*.
- Provided pitch sheet on stories on Orange County to Birmingham, AL media mission conducted by the NC Division of Tourism in February 2010.
- Participated in the US Travel Association's **Travel Leadership Summit** in Washington, DC in September 2009, which led to the passage of the Travel Promotion Act aimed at international travelers.
- **National Tourism Week** (May 8-16, 2010) Promotion. Website blog; banner and visitor information in the Visitors Center; booth at the Legislative Building on Tourism Day on May 18. The event coordinated by the NC Travel Industry Association was designed to let elected state officials and visitors to the capital know about the things to do and see throughout NC and importance of tourism on North Carolina's economy.
- Conducted **two hospitality-training programs** (two bus tours) in Orange County with 26 participants in 2009-10.

Innovation Awards:

- **Chapel Hill Food Lover's Guide with Carrboro and Hillsborough, North Carolina** "Destination Stakeholder Relations"
- **2010 Official Visitors Guide** won a *Platinum Hermes Creative Award* from the Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals. Bureau website **www.visitchapelhill.org** won *Gold Hermes Creative Award* for Destination Website category.



Convention Forum magazine, Meeting South, Carolina Field Trip, Carolina Festival News, Retirement Lifestyles magazine, Northstar Travel Media Guide, Travel Journal, Travel Industry Today, Triangle Travelhost, and MPI Carolina Blitz.

Press Distribution:

- **37 press releases** highlighting tourism-related stories sent to media.
- **437 digital images** in response to media requests.
- **PR Newswire Stories** — IGLTA Symposium, Business Climate in Hillsborough, new *Chapel Hill Food Lover's Guide*.



Provided training session for NC Call Center at the NC Women's Correctional Facility in Raleigh in September 2009 for 19 people.

- Worked with photographer to significantly increase our library of images on Chapel Hill, Carrboro, Hillsborough and UNC.

VISITORS STATISTICS

	2009-10	2008-09
Visitor Inquiry Packets Mailed	5,030	5,673
Visitors to Franklin Street Visitors Center	10,700	11,094
Orange County Attractions, Welcome Centers & Guided Tours Attendance	1,768,399	1,764,435
Website Unique Visits	137,981	110,219
E Newsletter Subscribers	1,654	1,567

VISITOR MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

	2009-10	2008-09
Visitor Guides	35,140*	50,950
Visitor Maps	33,000	33,350
Passport to Value Coupon Books	5,000	7,180
General Destination Brochures/Rack Cards	9,000	7,000
Destination Post Cards	2,000	5,000
Meeting and Event Planning Guides	135	114

*In 2009, began printing 40,000 Visitor Guides yearly, down from 50,000



Hospitality Bus Tour participants in October 2009.

FUNDING

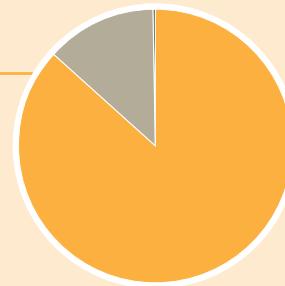
As Orange County’s marketing agency, the Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau is a pro-active, visitor-centered approach to economic and cultural development of the towns of Orange County including Carrboro, Chapel Hill and Hillsborough.

- The Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau is a division of Orange County government. The county government employs staff and funds the tourism strategy as well as the Franklin Street visitors center.
- Orange County, North Carolina collects a 3% occupancy tax from lodging guests, which the Board of Commissioners dedicates to the operation of a countywide visitors bureau. For the 2009-10 fiscal year, this amount totaled \$875,726. No local property taxes are used to fund the visitors’ bureau.
- The Town of Chapel Hill also collects a 3% occupancy tax on guests who stay in local hotels and lodging properties. From these receipts, the town of Chapel Hill granted the visitors bureau \$130,000, or approximately 13%.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES FY 2009 - 2010

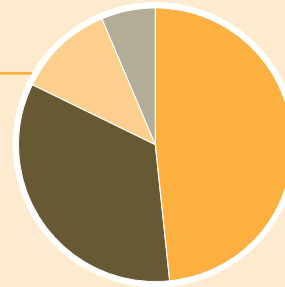
REVENUE

● Occupancy Tax Receipts (3% County)	\$875,726	86%
● Chapel Hill Occupancy Support	\$130,000	13%
● Partnership Reimbursement/ Merchandise Sales/Interest	\$2,461	1%
TOTAL	\$1,008,187	



EXPENDITURES

● Sales & Marketing	\$461,576	48%
● Salaries & Benefits	\$319,749	34%
● Operations/Administration	\$109,213	12%
● Overhead (phone, rent, utilities, etc)	\$59,372	6%
TOTAL	\$949,910	



\$58,277 surplus applied to 2010-11 fiscal year

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- FY 2009-10 funding for the Visitors Bureau includes \$875,726 in Occupancy Tax proceeds, \$130,000 contribution from the Town of Chapel Hill. Occupancy rates are slightly down, due to market conditions.
- In 2010, the department will aim for an aggregate 68% occupancy rate.
- In Orange County, each 1 percent increase in occupancy generates \$900,000 for the local economy.

2011 TOURISM GOALS

- Increase the amount of spending in Orange County by visitors to \$150 million, up from \$134 million in 2009.
- Provide information to 12,000 Orange County visitors serviced through the Visitors Center which is open six days a week.
- Increase number of bookings initiated and assisted by the Visitors Bureau to 60.
- Increase numbers of sales leads distributed to hotels and meeting facilities to 75.
- Increase demand for attraction, welcome center and tour visitations seeing 2 million visitors.
- Increase countywide average daily hotel room rates to \$118.

Chapel Hill/Orange County Visitors Bureau Mission 2010-2011 SUMMARY

- Position Chapel Hill and all of Orange County, North Carolina as a desirable place to visit and a desirable place to host a meeting or conference, with careful consideration to the needs and assets of the Orange County communities.
- Engage in a variety of activities that will result in increased hotel bookings, rental of area meeting facilities, visitations, increased occupancy tax receipts and visitor expenditures.

2011 VISITORS BUREAU STRATEGIC GOALS

- Increase by 15% leads generated for area lodging. Assistance will come with the addition of new sales staff.
- Position the Orange County Arts Commission as a division of the Visitors Bureau with funding coming from the county's occupancy tax. The commission director will continue to oversee the county's arts commission, which includes over \$60,000 in county and state grant dollars to local artists, schools and community projects such as the Poet Laureate program and public art installations. The arts commission advisory board remains intact.
- Enhance website with HD digital footage.
- Enhance visitors center with rotating art exhibits of Orange County artists and adding new features to highlight merchandise and increase merchandise sales.
- Coordinate weekend tour package with North Carolina Pride based in Durham, North Carolina, in conjunction with the 26th annual NC Pride Parade and Festival.



- Continue to work with Tar Heel Athletics targeting Olympic sports fans to stay in Orange County hotels.
- Advertise Orange County seasonally in feeder markets that draw leisure and day trip visitors.
- Coordinate tourism campaign inviting Fort Bragg soldiers to relax and unwind in Orange County during the holiday season.
- New media missions to increase relationships with travel media.
- Create mobile phone app for Orange County Tourism.
- Work with sales consultant to build targeted sales strategy to pinpoint key group markets for the future health of the local hospitality industry.

2010 - 11 MEDIA PLAN

Newspaper — *Fort Bragg Life, Paraglide*

Meeting Publications — Carolina Blitz, AENC Resource Guide, Small Market Meetings

Magazine — *Our State, AAA Go magazine, Carolina Alumni Review, Tar Heel Monthly, Charlotte Magazine*

Online — visitnc.com, google keyword campaign, charlotte.com, charlotte.com newsletter, ADSDAQ.com

Mobile — DiscoveryAnywhere mobile web page, Blackberry app, iphone app

PARTNERSHIPS, ALLIANCES *and* COOP MARKETING

Association Executives of North Carolina
Destination Marketing Association International
Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina
Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International
Meeting Professionals International
Meeting Professionals International, Carolinas
Chapter member
North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association
Triangle Area Hotel Motel Association
Society of American Travel Writers
Public Relations Society of America, Travel & Tourism Section
U.S. Travel Association/North Carolina Travel and Tourism
Division Washington DC Summit

NC Pride
North Carolina High School Athletic Association
Extraordinary Ventures Advisory Board
Chapel Hill Downtown Partnership Board
Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce
Hillsborough/Orange County Chamber of Commerce
FRANK, Franklin Street Arts Collective, *marketing supporter*
DSI Comedy Theater, *marketing partner*
Chapel Hill Spring Garden Publicity
Downtown Merchants of Historic Hillsborough
Hillsborough Candlelight Tour Committee
Hillsborough Hog Day Committee
WUNC-Radio promotion with Food Lover's Guide

CHAPEL HILL / ORANGE COUNTY VISITORS BUREAU

Visitors Center Hours:
Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
Saturday, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
501 West Franklin Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27516

Toll-Free: (888) 968-2060
Phone: (919) 968-2060
Fax: (919) 968-2062
E-mail: info@visitchapelhill.org
Website: www.visitchapelhill.org



Twitter: [orangecountync](https://twitter.com/orangecountync)
Facebook: [Chapel Hill/ Orange County
Friends & Visitors](https://www.facebook.com/ChapelHill/OrangeCountyFriends&Visitors)