

Cindy Passannante, President of C.P. Trips, Inc. and WITIA's new Director of Marketing, Americas, moved early in life from Rockford, Illinois to Southern California where her father was employed in the aerospace industry. Cindy had a happy, middle class childhood in Westchester, near Los Angeles International Airport, went to Saddleback Community College and then University of California at Irvine where she majored in history and anthropology. Both subjects, she says, prepared her for her life in travel.

Her idyllic childhood had one major hiccup. At age 12, Cindy was diagnosed with polio during that era's horrific, frightening pandemic. Cindy spent the summer in hospital and the next six years in physiotherapy. She was lucky – today she walks with only slight weakness in her legs, although from post-polio syndrome she ended up needing a kidney transplant, now in year 10. Despite lots of pills and medical monitoring, nothing has held her back.

In 1964, she met future husband Tony when he moved with college buddies into an apartment across from where Cindy lived with girlfriends. One of her roommates had an eye on Tony but Cindy tempted fate one evening by knocking on the guys' door to inquire if someone there was a pilot. Good news – it was handsome Tony, and that evening they climbed over the fence at Hawthorne Municipal Airport to check out the small aircraft. Luckily they weren't arrested and thrown in jail or this story might have ended differently. Instead Tony took Cindy flying and after that her head was in the clouds. He went on to become a pilot for United Airlines (number 38 in seniority when he retired) and then a corporate pilot. Cindy and Tony have been together for 53 years. They have three successful children (one of whom is also a United captain), nine grandchildren and a lifetime of travel adventures between them.

Cindy held various jobs through her young life and early motherhood. Out of college she worked in travel agencies as sales came easily to her. She worked in an elementary school and owned a daycare center. When Tony transferred with UA to Oregon, Cindy worked as a travel agent and taught tourism in a local community college. In 1979 she took the plunge by starting Travel Systems, an agency with an emphasis on corporate and meeting business as well as a Hawaii wholesale division. Laughably, she thought that owning her own agency would give her plenty of free time to travel with Tony. Ha, ha! That idea was soon dispelled! Five years later, when the opportunity to sell her storefront came up, she seized it. In 1985, she took the bold move to create CP Trips, Inc. as a home-based business, one of the first people in her area to do so. Within two weeks she'd organized the installation of five phone lines, a mainframe and the Apollo booking system. She was off and running. Two years later, everything went online, making it easier. CP Trips would become a host agency with up to 10 independent contractors, some of whom have been with her for years (several are also WITIA members.) Cindy maintains all the agency's necessary licensing, services and support systems for mainly leisure and selected group travel. And finally she has time to travel with Tony!

When Cindy was single, she was not athletic. Cindy + Tony became a different animal: skiers (hence their decision to move to Damascus, Oregon – besides being beautiful, it was only 15 minutes from Portland's airport AND only one-hour from Mount Hood), scuba divers (mainly South Pacific where the water is warm, including years with a vacation home on Hawaii's Big Island) and even zip liners! They are inveterate travelers. Besides Fiji and the Cook Islands, Cindy loves Paris and the rest of Europe, particularly Italy (who doesn't love Italy!), and Africa for its culture and wildlife. "To be honest," says Cindy, "I'll go anywhere." She writes, "My mother used to call me a throw-back to a great aunt who traveled around the world on trains and ships in the 1800s. Her father gave her a 'lap-secretary', a portable writing surface to keep her journal and drawings. I have that secretary with a few of her

drawings. It's awesome, and yes, I love to travel!" That love is reflected in her home, decorated with eclectic artifacts and souvenirs from all over the world.

Once COVID is over, Cindy is planning a small group to Iceland and later with her son Eric and his kids, a Disney Expedition Cruise to the Galapagos. "It helps to have something to look forward to."

Cindy is a WITIA Foundation Member with a long history of bringing people together to learn from each other. She takes pleasure in facilitating opportunities to share ideas and cultures across borders, an attribute that she considers particularly feminine. "When people have the opportunity to travel, they discover that our similarities are greater than our differences. Travel opens them. It leads them to shed misinformation and biases that create stress and that work against a peaceful world." As WITIA's newest Director of Marketing, Americas, Cindy looks forward to connecting with existing members everywhere and to introducing new members from the Americas to the opportunities that WITIA membership bestows.

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