

**Visitor Studies Association
Business Meeting
Saturday, July 21, 2007 - Ottawa
MINUTES**

Call to Order

President Kathleen McLean called the 20th annual Business Meeting to order at 12:22 PM EDT.

Approval of Minutes - Business Meeting 2006

Carey Tisdal moved to accept the minutes of the 2006 Business Meeting; Rita Deedrick seconded; the motion carried.

Announcements

There were no announcements.

Conference Planning Recognition and Invitation to Houston in 2008

Nikki Andersen expressed gratitude for a wonderful conference and great memories made in the beautiful city of Ottawa. She asked the membership to join her in thanking all those who worked to make the conference a reality, including the Conference Committee, the local hosts, those who participated in fundraising, and many others.

Nikki introduced Monica Rhodes, Programs Director for the Houston Museum District Association, who extended an invitation to next year's conference in Houston. The conference will be July 15 – 19, 2008, at the Crowne Plaza, with easy connections to the downtown museum district and other cultural attractions.

Treasurer's Report

Kirsten Ellenbogen introduced herself as the outgoing Treasurer and Beverly Serrell as the incoming Treasurer. Kirsten explained that the next few months will be a period of transition between Treasurers as this is a particularly active time in wrapping up conference finances. Kirsten also explained that VSA operates on a calendar-year budget, and that VSA manages the following four bank accounts:

- Checking account with a current balance of \$105,520
- Contingency account with a current balance just over \$20,000
- Certificate of Deposit for the April Award Fund with a current balance just over \$10,000
- Restricted account for VSA's National Science Foundation (NSF) Professional Development Planning Grant; this account maintains a minimal balance per NSF's request.

Kirsten reported that the Board of Directors approved VSA's 2007 budget with a \$10,000 deficit. However, under the direction of the Resource Development Committee, we raised an unprecedented amount of money for the 2007 conference, which not only covered the extraordinary conference expense, but also covered the expected shortfall. Kirsten thanked everyone for their financial support of VSA.

Association Manager's Report

Randy Roberts reported that the current VSA membership includes 371 individuals and 33 institutions and encouraged all those in attendance who had not yet joined VSA to consider doing so. She reminded us that volunteers are essential to the continuing success of VSA and encouraged members to become active in working on VSA committees, and those already active to consider becoming more active.

Randy gave special thanks to Matt Sikora and Jessica Sickler for their work on the 2007 conference and expressed appreciation for the talent and energy of the local host committee. Randy also acknowledged

Cheryl Kessler for her efforts in organizing the conference workshops and conference evaluation, and Caren Oberg for her work on the conference marketplace.

Randy concluded her remarks with an invitation to contact her at the VSA office with any questions or comments.

Introduction of New Board Members

Cecilia Garibay introduced Board Members incoming as a result of the 2007 election: Karen Knutson, Judith Larsen, Beverly Serrell, Matt Sikora, Martin Storksdieck, and Carey Tisdal.

She also introduced ongoing Board Members: Nikki Andersen, David Anderson, Dorothy Chen-Courtin, Rita Deedrick, Kirsten Ellenbogen, Daryl Fischer, Alan Friedman, Cecilia Garibay, D.D. Hilke, Julie I. Johnson, Jeff Kennedy, Kathleen (Kathy) McLean, Mary Ellen Munley, and Robert (Mac) West.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Executive Committee

Kathy McLean began the committee reports by acknowledging that much of the work of VSA is done in committees and thus the importance of hearing what each committee is doing. Kathy then introduced the Executive Committee (EC) as consisting of the eight VSA officers and the Association Manager. Kathy explained that the EC is charged with oversight and governance and is in effect the management team of VSA. The EC is not directive, but rather it plays a key role in gathering information from committees to ensure that work continues within the guidelines of the organization.

Kathy introduced Secretary Rita Deedrick who explained VSA's use of consent agendas for EC and Board meetings. Rita explained that a consent agenda consolidates routine items into one agenda item so that they may be reviewed and approved efficiently. Rita emphasized that it is each committee and Board Member's responsibility to review consent agenda items before approving a consent agenda, and any item on a consent agenda that comes into question is simply removed from the consent agenda and added to the meeting agenda as a separate item.

Vice President, Organizational Development (Daryl Fischer)

Kathy read a statement from Vice President Daryl Fischer who could not attend the Business Meeting. Daryl said that her role as Vice President of Organizational Development is to maximize the human and financial resources of VSA through the Board Development, Membership, and Resource Development Committees. In its 20th year as an organization, Daryl sees VSA as "mature but vital" and looks forward to her continuing work with VSA.

-- Resource Development Committee (Robert "Mac" West, Chair)

Mac West acknowledged the hard work of the Resource Development Committee, particularly Karen Graham on conference work and Caren Oberg for the marketplace. Mac said that the success of fundraising for the 2007 conference has "raised the bar" for 2008 and asked members to pass along to him names of potential sponsors.

Mac announced that work is beginning on the first annual giving campaign and to expect a solicitation near the end of 2007. The committee is also in the initial planning stage of a planned giving program, which will be a vehicle for more mature members to support VSA on a longer-term basis.

He also announced the formation of a task force that will look at mechanisms to allow VSA to better lead and participate in grants.

-- Board Development Committee (Cecilia Garibay, Chair)

Cecilia Garibay reported that the major committee activity this past year was the election. She stated that developing the slate was a long but rewarding process, culminating with a record high participation in the election. The move to online voting also contributed to a successful election. Cecilia happily reported that the 2007 Board slate was approved unanimously.

New business of the Board Development Committee will be to streamline processes while making sure that VSA's human resources are well filtered throughout the organization. She challenged everyone to take part in shaping the structure of VSA by becoming involved in committee work.

-- Membership Committee (Matt Sikora, Chair)

Matt Sikora reminded us that the Membership Committee was formed just a year ago under Judy Koke's leadership. Working collaboratively with all the other committees, the Membership Committee exists to serve VSA's members. He cited the recent success of the digitization project and the first annual membership breakfast as examples of responses to members' needs, and there is now discussion of forming an online community of practice for VSA members.

Vice President, Professional Development (Julie Johnson)

Julie Johnson clarified that she is in a new Vice President position, and her role is to liaise with the Professional Development Committee, the Conference Committee, and the new task force for VSA's participation in the informal science education resource center (recently renamed CAISE).

-- Professional Development Committee (Mary Ellen Munley, Chair)

Julie spoke on behalf of Mary Ellen Munley who could not attend the Business Meeting. Julie recognized Mary Ellen as Chair and Cheryl Kessler as Vice Chair of the Professional Development Committee and explained that this committee is poised for revitalization and growth.

Julie also explained the difference between the Professional Development *Committee* and the Professional Development *Task Force*. The *committee* is a standing committee of the Board and is responsible for the implementation and ongoing operation of professional development programs. The *task force* is temporary and is charged with recommending a professional development agenda for VSA; the task force is made up of a representative of each VSA standing committee as well as someone from outside of VSA to help bring fresh perspective.

Julie reminded us that committee service is a professional development activity, and she encouraged each member to consider connecting with committee chairs regarding opportunities. Julie emphasized an immediate need for "data driven" volunteers to analyze conference evaluation data.

-- Conference Committee (Nikki Andersen, Chair)

Nikki Andersen remarked that it "takes a village" to implement a successful conference year after year, and the Conference Committee is moving forward to involve more new professionals. Nikki announced the Co Chairs of the 2008 conference program committee, Joe Heimlich from Ohio State University and Anna Hanusa from Winterthur Museum. She also announced that Elisa Israel from the St. Louis Science Center has agreed to lead the local host committee for the 2009 conference in St. Louis.

-- Task Force for Informal Science Education Research Center Grant

Alan Friedman explained that this is a new project with a new name – **CAISE**, or **Center for the Advancement of Informal Science Education**. He further explained that this project is funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), and that the Association for Science and Technology Centers (ASTC) is the fiscal agent with VSA as a partner organization. This is an exciting opportunity for VSA and will bring \$217,000 to VSA over the next five years. VSA's work on this project will include

opportunities for individual VSA members, and VSA is forming a steering committee to select participants; look for details in the coming months.

Friedman concluded by saying that although CAISE is centered on informal *science* education, he believes that CAISE will be helpful for everyone involved in informal education.

Vice President, Outreach (David Anderson)

David Anderson reviewed the work of the Publications Committee by announcing that the Visitor Studies archives and other association resources are now available online. He also acknowledged VSA's "great leap forward" with the launch of the new "Visitor Studies" journal last April, with many thanks to Jan Packer and Roy Ballantyne for their tremendous effort to support and promote the work of VSA as editors of "Visitor Studies." David also thanked Kim Burtnyk for her work on the 2007 conference abstracts.

-- Publications Committee (Martin Storksdieck, Chair)

Martin Storksdieck said that the next charge of the Publications Committee is continued work on the VSA website to better meet member needs, and they will work closely with the Membership and Professional Development Committees to do so. He noted the bi-monthly VSA E-Newsletter as part of a strategy to reach members in different ways and thanked Jenny Heim for doing a fantastic job in putting the VSA E-Newsletter together. He also acknowledged the Marketing and PR Resource Group, lead by Dorothy Chen-Courtin, for their leadership in developing the VSA E-Newsletter and recognized Pino Monaco and Daryl Fischer for their contributions to E-News.

Board Service Recognition

Cecilia Garibay asked the membership to join her in thanking seven Board Members who had just completed their terms and were leaving the Board, acknowledging their dedication and service to VSA: Larry Bell, John Fraser, Lisa Hubbell, Judy Koke, A.T. Stephens, Sue Sturtevant, and Kathy Wagner.

Message from the Outgoing President

Alan Friedman said that he is "thrilled at the state of the organization" and is astonished at the amount of work being done at VSA. He humbly stated that he had little direct involvement in some of the most notable projects during his tenure as President and thanked everyone for their hard work for VSA. He reminded us that he is still serving as Immediate Past President and Board Member for another two years and is looking forward to "duties as assigned." Alan received a heartfelt standing ovation.

Message from the Incoming President

Kathy McLean expressed delight in beginning her presidency with VSA in "great hands," adding "*your* hands" in acknowledgement of the vast involvement of VSA members in the work of the association. Kathy sees VSA in transition looking toward the future while honoring the past. As President, Kathy sees herself as a facilitator in coordinating the work of VSA. Kathy envisions two foci for VSA: One is streamlining the association so we spend more time addressing visions and ideas, and the second is increasing the amount of dialogue between museum "practitioners" and researchers, stating that this work has barely begun. She concluded her remarks reiterating her intention to support the work we all do on behalf of VSA.

ADJOURN

John Fraser moved to adjourn the meeting; Sue Sturtevant seconded; the motion carried. The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,
Rita Deedrick, Secretary