

21st Annual

Visitor Studies Association Conference Program



July 15 - 19, 2008

Houston, Texas

Theory, Practice & Conversations



VSA

Visitor Studies Association

Conference Schedule at a Glance

Monday, July 14

4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Registration Open

Tuesday, July 15

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Pre-Conference Workshops

8:00 – 11:00 a.m. Registration Open

4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Registration Open

Wednesday, July 16

9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Pre-Conference Workshops

8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Registration Open

8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. VSA Board of Trustees Meeting
Bayou Ballroom B

6:00 – 11:00 p.m. **Dinner, Dancing and Dialogue:
A Progressive Dinner in the Houston
Museum District**
Bus departs from the Smith Street
Lobby entrance

Thursday, July 17

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Membership and New Attendees
Coffee Talk**
Bluebonnet Ballroom

9:00 – 11:00 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Group Plenary**
Bluebonnet Ballroom

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Marketplace of Ideas, Products and
Services Poster Session**
Bayou Ballroom

11:00 – 11:30 a.m. **Coffee Break in the Marketplace**

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – One**
*Bayou Ballroom A, Bayou Ballroom B,
Bluebonnet B, Whitehall Room*

3:00 – 3:20 p.m. **Coffee Break**
Bluebonnet Foyer

3:20 – 4:50 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Two**
*Bayou Ballroom A, Bayou Ballroom B,
Bluebonnet B, Whitehall Room*

7:00 – 9:30 p.m. **A Night of Irreverence at The Orange
Show Center for Visionary Art**
Bus departs from the Smith Street
Lobby entrance

Friday, July 18

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. **President's Address and
VSA Business Meeting**
Bluebonnet Ballroom

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. **Featured Presentation: Ford W. Bell,**
President and CEO, American Association
of Museums
Bluebonnet Ballroom

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. **Coffee Break**
Bluebonnet Foyer

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Three**
*Bayou Ballroom A, Bluebonnet A,
Cougar Room, Whitehall Room*

12:30 – 2:00 p.m. **April Award Luncheon**
Bayou Ballroom B

2:15 – 3:15 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Four**
*Bayou Ballroom A, Bluebonnet A,
Bluebonnet B, Whitehall Room*

3:15 – 3:40 p.m. **Coffee Break**
Bluebonnet Foyer

3:40 – 5:00 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Five**
*Bayou Ballroom A, Bluebonnet A,
Bluebonnet B, Cougar Room,
Whitehall Room*

5:30 – 6:30 p.m. **VIP Reception (by invitation only)**
Lawndale Art Center

6:30 – 9:00 p.m. **Taste of Texas at the Houston Center
for Contemporary Craft**
Bus departs from the Smith Street Lobby
entrance

Saturday, July 19

9:00 – 10:00 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Six**
*Bluebonnet A, Bluebonnet B,
Cougar Room, Whitehall Room*

10:00 – 10:30 a.m. **Coffee Break**
Bluebonnet Foyer

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – Seven**
*Bluebonnet A, Bluebonnet B, Cougar
Room, Whitehall Room, Gulf Coast B*

12:10 – 1:30 p.m. **Closing Conversation and Luncheon
(ticket required)**
Bayou Ballroom

Dear Colleagues and Friends:

It would be difficult to think of almost anyone in our profession who does not have an opinion about visitors, evaluation, and research. Many of us do this work because we have passion about what we do, and about the changes our work can bring for visitors' experiences and outcomes. Visitor Studies Association is about this passion and channeling it to affect change by sharing our work with each other and the larger world.

Welcome to Houston and to your VSA conference. This year, more than ever, the conference is about the attendees. Just as in our work we often give voice to the visitor, in our conference this year, we want to give true voice to the visitor studies professionals and the professionals who create the opportunities for visitor experiences. Along with a tremendously exciting array of papers, we're focusing much of the conference on the conversations that draw us together. The conference theme — Theory, Practice, & Conversations — is meant to make truly transparent what we want to achieve in these few precious days together. We want to explore the rigor and depth of the theoretical contributions being made through visitor studies. We hope to gain new and more vital insights into how theory and practice intersect around the visitor experience. We desire to learn about the practical and innovative approaches being used by our colleagues. And more than anything else, we want to spark conversations among old friends, new colleagues, students, academics, all of us across the board.

VSA leadership has been devoting tremendous energy to moving the Association forward through planning, addressing future needs, and building a solid base for growth and maturation. The Conference Planning Committee and Professional Development Committee have been committed to integrating the conference into the larger vision for the Association. Hence, the theme and the call for engagement in ever expanding ways.

Your charge is to engage—in the plenary gatherings where conversations drive the program; in the opportunities for hallway conversation; in the written thoughts of the conversation wall; in the quiet room; and in the program sessions that range from panels, papers, and posters to more intentional conversations in the roundtables, dialogues, and discussions. The old adage that you take from a conference what you put into it will never be truer than it is this year. So engage. Reflect. Think. Challenge. Enjoy. Have fun this week. Learn lots, share lots, and converse more.

Looking forward to talking with you,



Kathleen McLean,
President



Joe E. Heimlich,
Program Co-Chair

Conference Committee

Nikki Andersen, *Chair*

Joe E. Heimlich, *Program Co-Chair*

Elisa Israel, *2009 Local Host Committee Chair*

Cheryl Kessler, *Workshops Chair*

Judith Larsen, *Conference Oversight Committee*

Caren Oberg, *Marketplace Coordinator*

Monica Rhodes, *Local Host Committee Chair*

Jessica Sickler, *Conference Oversight Committee*

Robert "Mac" West, *Resource Development Chair*

Randy C. Roberts, *VSA Association Manager*

Local Host Committee

Chair, Monica Rhodes
Houston Museum District Association

Allison Benjamin, *Space Center Houston*

Stephen Bridges, *The Orange Show*

Julie Farr, *Houston Center for Contemporary Craft*

Leslie Goode, *Houston Museum of Natural Science*

Anna Hawley, *The Health Museum*

Brian Hall, *Houston Zoo*

Ann Kasman, *Museum of Printing History*

Christa Kirsch, *Houston Zoo*

Brad Levy, *Houston Museum of Natural Science*

Susan Llanes Myers, *Holocaust Museum Houston*

Maureen Maiuri, *The Weather Museum*

Connie McAllister, *Contemporary Arts Museum Houston*

Cheryl McCallum, *Children's Museum of Houston*

Christina McKee-Schmidt, *Children's Museum of Houston*

Emily Ponte, *Houston Fire Museum*

Joi Maria Probus, *Museum of Fine Arts Houston*

Victoria Ramirez, *Museum of Fine Arts Houston*

Effie Rosene, *Czech Center Museum Houston*

Tamara Savage, *Holocaust Museum Houston*

Patti Shoemaker, *Downtown Aquarium*

Angelica Stevens, *Downtown Aquarium*

Amanda Stevenson, *Museum of Printing History*

Alexandra Vasquez, *Children's Museum of Houston*

Christine West, *Lawndale Art Center*

Madeline Yale, *Houston Center for Photography*

Susan Young, *Houston Museum District Association*

What you need to know ...

REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION DESK

Check in at the Registration Desk, located in the Bluebonnet Foyer, for conference materials, badges, tickets, and information. Learn more about the Houston Museum District and other regional attractions from local hosts who will be on site to help you make the most of your visit.

Registration Desk Hours:

Monday, July 14, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 15, 8:00 – 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, July 16, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 17, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Friday, July 18, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

ABSTRACTS

The 2008 Abstracts publication, included in your conference bag, provides overviews of all papers and posters to be presented. Additional copies are available for sale at the Registration Desk.

QUIET SPACE

Looking for a place to review your notes? Do you need a moment to gather your thoughts? Houston A room is set up for you. No cell phones, no loud conversation, no meetings ... step in and clear your mind. The Quiet Space is open from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. from Thursday, July 17 – Saturday, July 19.

EXPLORING HOUSTON

The following institutions will offer free general admission July 14-20 to conference delegates (must show conference name badge):

- Buffalo Soldiers National Museum*
- Children's Museum of Houston*
- Czech Center Museum Houston*
- The Health Museum*
- The Heritage Society**
- Houston Fire Museum
- Houston Museum of Natural Science*
- The John C. Freeman Weather Museum*
- Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*

The following are free all the time:

- Byzantine Fresco Chapel Museum*
- Contemporary Arts Museum Houston*
- Holocaust Museum Houston*
- Houston Arboretum & Nature Center
- Houston Center for Contemporary Craft*
- Houston Center for Photography*
- The Jung Center of Houston*
- Lawndale Art Center*
- The Menil Collection*
- Museum of Printing History
- Rice University Art Gallery (summer window only)*
- The Rothko Chapel*

* located in the Houston Museum District

** located in downtown Houston

CONFERENCE EVENTS

Tickets are required for the following events. (Tickets are not available on site; however a ticket Exchange Board will be located in the Registration area. If you have an extra ticket or are looking for one, please check the Exchange Board). Buses will depart from the Smith Street Lobby entrance.

Dinner, Dancing and Dialogue: A Progressive Dinner in the Houston Museum District

Wednesday, July 16, 6:00 – 11:00 p.m.
FREE with full conference registration, advance reservation is required.

Sponsored by the Houston Museum District Association and Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau.

A Night of Irreverence at The Orange Show Center for Visionary Art

Thursday, July 17, 7:00 – 9:30 p.m., \$45
Taste of Texas at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft
Friday, July 18, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m., \$45

If you're interested in checking out Houston's light rail system, meet at the Registration Desk at 5:15 pm. Houston Greeters will guide you from the hotel to the Craft Center via METRORail.

11th Annual April Award Luncheon Friday, July 18, 12:30 – 2:00 p.m., \$40 Bayou Ballroom B

Closing Luncheon Saturday, July 19, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m., Free (advance reservation is required) Bluebonnet A

2nd Annual Membership and New Attendees Coffee Talk Thursday, July 17, 8:00 – 9:00 a.m., Free (registration not required) Bluebonnet Ballroom

New conference attendees, members and prospective members are welcome.

MARKETPLACE OF IDEAS, PRODUCTS, AND SERVICES

Join us in the Bayou Ballroom on Thursday, July 17, from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. to learn more about resources available to help you better understand and serve visitors. Make sure to take some time to meet VSA conference sponsors and exhibitors – and you can check out the poster session at the same time!

VSA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Get involved in your association. Find out more about VSA Committees and how you can take part during the Marketplace on Thursday, July 17, from 11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Several committees will also be holding meetings during the conference. A preliminary schedule is listed below. Please check the bulletin board at the Registration Desk for meeting locations and more information. To learn more about VSA Committees, see page 12.

Board Development Committee Meeting
Thursday, July 17, 12:30 – 1:45 p.m.

Professional Development
Committee Meeting
Thursday, July 17, 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Publications Committee Meeting
Thursday, July 17, 5:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Conference Planning
Committee 2008/2009
Friday, July 18, 9:30 – 10:30 p.m.

Pre-Conference Workshops

Tuesday, July 15 – Wednesday, July 16

Tuesday, July 15

Full Day Workshops, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

How to Design Evaluation Studies Conference Hotel, Whitehall Room

Kerry Bronnenkant, *Senior Research Associate, Institute for Learning Innovation*

Jessica Luke, *Senior Research Associate, Institute for Learning Innovation*

Melissa Wadman, *Impact Evaluation, Office of the President, Liberty Science Center*

Make the Most of Visitor Comments: How to Code Data Houston Center for Photography, 1441 West Alabama

Elisa Israel, *Research and Evaluation Manager, St. Louis Science Center*

Jennifer Heim, *Senior Research & Evaluation Associate, St. Louis Science Center*

Get off the Island: Finding and Funding Your Research Team The Jung Center, 5200 Montrose Blvd.

Kathleen Tinworth, *Manager of Visitor Research and Program Evaluation, Denver Museum of Nature & Science*

Delving into the Mechanics of Measuring: With a Focus on Attitude Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 5601 Main Street

Emma Norland, *Senior Researcher, Institute for Learning Innovation*

Joe E. Heimlich, *Associate Professor and Extension Specialist OSU Extension@COSI*

Tuesday, July 15

Half-day Workshop, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Using Wikis for Project Management Rice University, Sewell Hall, 6100 Main Street

Jes Koepfler, *Graduate Student, University of Toronto, Faculty of Information Studies, Museum Studies Program*

Nick Gamble, *Graduate Student, University of Toronto, Faculty of Information Studies, Museum Studies Program*

For those interested in walking as a group to the workshop, meet in the hotel lobby at 8 a.m. to be escorted by a Houston Greeter to Rice University.

Tuesday, July 15

Half-day Workshops, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

What Research Tells Us about Working with Teachers Children's Museum of Houston, 1500 Binz

James Kisiel, *Assistant Professor, Science Education, California State University, Long Beach*

Researching the Messy Real World: A Look at Quasi-Experimental Designs Conference Hotel, Cougar Room

Mary Ellen Munley, *Principal, MEM and Associates*

Wednesday, July 16

Full Day Workshops, 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Sidebars on Facilitating Logic Model Workshops with Stakeholders Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, 5216 Montrose Blvd.

Joe E. Heimlich, *Associate Professor and Extension Specialist OSU Extension@COSI*

Kate Haley-Goldman, *Senior Research Associate, Institute for Learning Innovation*

How to Conduct Effective Prototype Testing with Mechanical Interactives Children's Museum of Houston, 1500 Binz

Sofie Davis, *Audience Researcher, Science Museum, London*

"Are You Talking to Me?" Can Results from Science Museums Be Useful to Art and Design Museums? Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, 5601 Main Street

Juliette Fritsch, *Head of Gallery Interpretation, Evaluation and Resources, Victoria & Albert Museum*

Beth Cook, *Visitor Research Assistant, Victoria & Albert Museum*

Lenses, Filters and Frames: Calibrating and Cultivating Self As Responsive Instrument for Professional Excellence and Ethical Praxis Czech Center Museum Houston, 4920 San Jacinto

Hazel Symonette, *Senior Policy and Program Development Specialist, University of Wisconsin-Madison*

Taking Control of Your Quantitative Data Houston Downtown Aquarium, 410 Bagby St. @ Memorial Drive

Emma Norland, *Senior Researcher, Institute for Learning Innovation*

Claudia Figueiredo, *Research Associate, Institute for Learning Innovation*

Wednesday, July 16

Half-day Workshop, 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Developing Learning Outcomes Holocaust Museum Houston, 5401 Caroline Street

G-Gina Koutsika, *Head of Gallery Learning, The Natural History Museum, London*

Wednesday, July 16

Half-day Workshop, 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Getting Published Museum of Printing History, 1324 W. Clay Street

Jan Packer, *Senior Research Fellow, School of Tourism, University of Queensland*

Roy Ballantyne, *Professor, Head of School of Tourism, University of Queensland*

Registration is required (Fee: Full Day Workshop – \$125 Member, \$155 non-Member; Half-day Workshop – \$65 Member, \$80 non-Member). Registration may be available on-site pending space availability. For more information, please visit the Registration Desk.

Attendees are responsible for transportation to and from workshop locations. Please check for transportation information, including those seeking shared taxi rides, at the Registration Desk.

Conference Schedule

Wednesday, July 16

6:00 – 11:00 p.m.

**Dinner, Dancing and Dialogue:
A Progressive Dinner in the
Houston Museum District
FREE with full conference registration**

Converse with colleagues and explore three of Houston's finest museums to kick-off the conference. The evening begins with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at the Children's Museum of Houston, one of the top Children's Museums in the country. Then it's on to an elegant dinner among the masterpieces at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, where you'll be treated to a unique performance by the Houston-based Hope Stone Dance Company. Created especially for VSA, this interpretation of visitor experience through dance is sure to spark further dialogue. The celebration wraps up with dessert and dancing under the dinosaurs at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, followed by a special after-hours flashlight tour of the museum!

Sponsored by the Houston Museum District Association and the Greater Houston Convention & Visitors Bureau, this event is free with full conference registration. Pre-registration is required. Buses depart at 5:30 p.m. Meet at the Smith Street Lobby entrance.

Thursday, July 17

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

**2nd Annual Membership and
New Attendees Coffee Talk**

Bluebonnet Ballroom

Sponsored by:

*Don Harrington Discovery Center and
Gallagher & Associates*

VSA's Membership Committee invites new attendees, members and prospective members for coffee and conversation! This is an opportunity to meet other members, network with colleagues, see what VSA membership is all about and share your ideas about how VSA might better serve your needs. Hope to see you there! Don't miss this opportunity to see old and new friends and to win fabulous door prizes.

Free. Registration is not required for this event.

9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

Welcome and Opening Group Plenary

Bluebonnet Ballroom

Sponsored by:

*Graduate Program in Museum Studies
at the University of Missouri-St. Louis and
Fort Worth Museum of Science and History*

This year's opening plenary is designed to bring the memorable hallway, cocktail and dinner conversations directly into the conference. Share your thoughts and find out what your colleague's are pondering through structured conversation. You'll have the opportunity to stretch your thinking and your creativity as you delve into new ideas and approaches through short presentations mixed with small group interaction. This should be one of the best opening sessions ever as the speaker is ... YOU!

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

**Marketplace of Ideas, Products,
and Services**

Bayou Ballroom

Sponsored by

Institute for Learning Innovation

Stop by the Marketplace and meet conference sponsors and exhibitors. Find out more about the resources that are available to help you better understand and serve visitors. While you're visiting the Marketplace, stop by the VSA Committee Tables and learn how you can become more involved in VSA.

Poster Session

Bayou Ballroom

Sponsored by Studiocode

Are We Talking about the Same Thing?
Language and Culture Issues in Cross-Sector Partnerships
Elizabeth Cook

Bringing Evaluation into the Fold:
Evaluating Exhibitions at the Columbus
Museum of Art
Victor Yocco

Defining Enjoyment in Zoos:
A Review of Findings and Methods
in a Q-Methodology Study
Jessica Sickler, John Fraser

Evaluation of Science Café Meetings
in the Research Triangle Area
Stephen Bitgood

Facing the Challenges of Evaluating
Programs on the Exhibit Floor
Kelly Lidinsky

Focus Group to Go: The Pros and Cons of
Recruiting External Community Groups
Elizabeth Daigneault

Getting the Dialogue Started: Lessons
Learned from the Development of a
Statewide Interest Group
Toni Dancu, Alicia Duncan

LibraryThing: Sharing Books,
Making Connections
Cate Rhodes, Marcie Benne

A New Light on Old Data:
Re-examining Melton's (1935) Findings
Stephen Bitgood, Renee Burt

Tools and Methods behind a Rigorous
Video-Analysis Research Project
Adam Allen Klingler, Sue Allen

Using Games as Data Collection Tools
Erin Johnson, Jessica Sickler

Whose Museum is it Anyway? Why
Community Engagement is Vital
for Creating a New Museum in
the 21st Century
Sam Groves

11:00 – 11:30 a.m.

Coffee Break

Bayou Ballroom

12:30 – 2:00 p.m.

Lunch (on your own)

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – One

Whitehall Room

**Meeting in the Middle: Teaming External
and Internal Evaluations to Achieve Goals**

Kathleen Tinworth

This presentation chronicles two successful examples of an internal evaluator working with external evaluators at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science. Lessons to be shared include: how to develop and maintain positive working relationships, how to achieve consistency in methodology, design, and data collection, and how to put it all together to accomplish valid and reliable results.

**Museums as a Setting and Test Ground
for Student Research**

*Judith Larsen, Kesha Williams,
Regina Hall*

The University of Cincinnati and the children's and natural history museums at Cincinnati Museum Center collaborated to create a class that engaged students in research and practical design to enhance informal learning. Program developers will share the preliminary results, challenges, and benefits of this partnership.

Bayou Ballroom A

Action Research in an Informal Science

Setting: Lessons from Zoo Educators

Lisa-Anne DeGregoria Kelly, Leah Pohl

Action research serves as a bridge between research and practice whereby educational practitioners conduct research in order to test strategies to solve challenges present in their instructional practice. In this session presenters share firsthand experience introducing and applying action research in a zoo setting.

Bayou Ballroom B

Visitor Panels: Interpreting and Incorporating Formative Evaluation in Institutional Planning

Daryl Fischer, Julia Forbes, Frank Lopez

Hear from two very different institutions that have used visitor panels to gather feedback in a way that allows internal team members to have direct contact with audiences, process qualitative data, and use it in planning. Presenters share the process and techniques, and reflect on the successes and challenges of this approach.

Bluebonnet B

Leveraging Evaluation Beyond a Single Project

Cecilia Garibay, Christina Schmidt-McKee, Lynn McRainey, Leticia Perez-Castellanos

Evaluation often focuses on assessing a specific project with results from a single study typically aimed to inform that one initiative. There are situations, however, when it is possible to leverage a project-specific evaluation in order to inform other activities in the organization. This session brings together two evaluators and two practitioners to discuss such possibilities. Using examples from three institutions and relevant literature, this session will help practitioners begin to vision evaluation beyond a single project model.

3:00 – 3:20 p.m.

Coffee Break

Bluebonnet Foyer

3:20 – 4:50 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – Two

Whitehall Room

Engage and Educate Visitors while Collecting Data: How Cell Phones are Transforming the Museum Experience

David Asheim, George Ramirez, Damon Waitt, Steven Gemmel, Darren Rudloff, Margaret Fischer

The use of cell phones in museum settings provides the opportunity or new ways of learning about and evaluating visitor experience. Hear from organizations that have utilized cell phones in their visitor experiences and learn about the challenges and benefits of the cell phone as a tool for interpretation and data collection.

Bayou Ballroom B

Conversations across Disciplines: From Theory to Practice – The Spiral Model

Margaret Evans, Martin Weiss, Judy Koke, Martin Storksdieck, Jeff Kennedy

The gap between research, theory, and exhibit design is often difficult to bridge. In this panel presenters discuss the way in which they bridged this gap in the development process for “Life Changes,” an NSF-funded traveling exhibit. Panelists will describe an iterative exhibit development process, called the spiral model, in which the phases of research, design, and evaluation were repeatedly revisited. The opportunities and challenges that were encountered during the project experience will be addressed.

Bluebonnet B

Developing, Validating, and Implementing Standardized Evaluation Instruments: A Conversation

Rick Bonney, Kate Haley-Goldman, Kirsten Ellenbogen

The idea of developing “standardized” evaluation instruments to allow comparisons of audience characteristics across projects is often discussed among educators and evaluators. Designing such instruments is fraught with challenge. Such variation exists across audiences and project goals and objectives that designing “one size fits all” instruments is nearly impossible. Through deconstruction of specific examples, presenters will examine the feasibility of using standardized instruments. Discussion will consider

whether the field might design, test, and offer standardized evaluation strategies that could be used to develop instruments that would enable comparisons, but could be tailored to specific types of evaluations and audiences.

Cougar Room

Swap Stories: How Do You Overcome Real-World Challenges in Logic Modeling?

Marcie Benne, Scott Ewing, Cate Rhodes

Discuss real-life challenges and tactics when using logic models in exhibit and program development processes in this participant-driven session for evaluators who want to provide and gain practical advice on common challenges to using logic models. Session facilitators will briefly share information about logic model use and benefits in informal settings, then facilitate peer discussion around challenges and tactics for using logic models in complex, imperfect, dynamic development scenarios. Serving as an evaluator requires artful techniques; let's swap stories about our art.

7:00 – 9:30 p.m.

A Night of Irreverence at The Orange Show Center for Visionary Art, \$45

Explore the creativity, ingenuity and independent spirit of The Orange Show. This zany outdoor maze-like monument was envisioned, designed, and created by one man, and sets the stage for exploring the creativity and quirkiness of visionary art. Put on your sneakers, t-shirt and shorts and experience Houston's local color at this informal event under the Texas stars. While you explore you'll feast on some of the city's best Mexican food and music.

Pre-registration required. Includes dinner, entertainment, and transportation. Cash bar will be available. In the event of rain, this event will be held at an alternate venue. Bus departs at 6:30 p.m. from the Smith Street Lobby entrance.

Conference Schedule (cont.)

Friday, July 18

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.
**President's Address and
VSA Business Meeting**
Bluebonnet Ballroom

Join fellow members and colleagues for an update from VSA President Kathleen McLean on the 2007/2008 activities of the Visitor Studies Association. Attend the Association's annual business meeting where you'll hear the latest VSA news and find out what's in store for the organization in the coming year.

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Keynote Presentation: Dr. Ford W. Bell
Bluebonnet Ballroom

*Sponsored by:
Informal Learning Experiences
and the following members of
The Museum Group –
Carol Bossert, Daryl Fischer,
Mary Kay Ingenthron, Mary Ellen Munley,
Judy Rand, Paul Richard*



"Today, more than ever, museums are an integral part of the foundation of our civic life in America. They help us understand each other, as well as ourselves, and in doing so allow us to face the challenges of the future, grounded in the lessons of our shared history."
– Ford Bell

As President & CEO of the American Association of Museums, Ford Bell brings an impressive record of scholarship, community engagement, proven leadership and a passion for championing museums as places of lifelong learning and enjoyment. Bell's career extends from the humanities to the nonprofit worlds. His many public service endeavors underscore his commitment to developing organizations and strengthening communities. Bell will share his perspectives on the future of museums and the importance of visitor experience in shaping that future.

Education has been a centerpiece of Dr. Bell's life for nearly 40 years. A respected academic and researcher, he has lectured and published extensively. Since 1995, he has served as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Oncology at the University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine and lectured on a wide variety of topics before foundations, medical associations and universities. He has advocated extensively for science learning, conservation and community health initiatives through his affiliation with a wide range of organizations.

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.
Coffee Break
Bluebonnet Foyer

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – Three

Whitehall Room

**Taking Action towards Inclusion:
Educators and Researchers Working
Together to Achieve Universal Design**
*Christine Reich, Anna Lindgren-Streicher,
Amy Grack Nelson, Susan Sunbury*

In recent years, practitioners and evaluators have begun to take action to create museum environments that are inclusive of people with disabilities. In this session, evaluators and a practitioner will discuss methods and approaches they have used to collaboratively address the issue of inclusion of people with disabilities in museum learning. Two cases will be discussed, each of which applied a different method of collaboration to develop guidelines for designs that are inclusive of visitors with disabilities.

Bayou Ballroom A

**Innovative Evaluation Plans: Means
to Facilitate Partnerships between
Museums and Schools**
*Giuseppe "Pino" Monaco, Jessica Luke,
Johanna Jones*

Learn about successful partnerships between museums and schools, which, by conceptualizing and implementing innovative evaluation plans, were able to accommodate and complement the needs of both institutions. Examples include a study of the impact of participation in the National History Day program, a research study investigating the impact of an art museum multiple-visit program on elementary students' critical thinking skills, and a study of the Learning Through Art artist-in-residence program.

Bluebonnet A

**Discussing NSF's New Framework
for Planning and Evaluating Impacts**
*Sue Allen, Alan Friedman,
Cecilia Garibay, G-Gina Koutsika*

The Informal Science Education program at NSF is developing a new online monitoring system to help the field synthesize its findings, and to assist the NSF in understanding its overall impact on STEM education. In 2007, ISE program officers invited a group of evaluation experts to write a guidebook that describes, for potential project PI's and summative evaluators, how to apply this system to various types of projects. This session provides an overview of the motivation, process and content of the guidebook, an opportunity for extended Q&A by potential ISE-fundees and evaluators, and a place for the airing of concerns and responses from the visitor studies field.

Cougar Room

**Applying Behavioral Economic Theories to
Visitor Behavior**
*Stephen Bitgood, Krista White,
Renee Burt, Stephany Dukes*

This session will provide an overview of behavioral economic theory and describe how it has been and can be applied to visitor choice behavior in museums. Presentations will include an overview of behavior economic theories and in-depth examination of the temporal discounting model, optimal foraging theory, and the matching law.

12:30 – 2:00 p.m.
12th Annual April Award Luncheon
Bayou Ballroom B
Luncheon sponsored by Operand

The 2008 April Award recipient is Sofie Davis, Audience Researcher at The Science Museum, London.

This year's featured speaker, Julie I. Johnson, will reflect on the past and look toward the future to provide a snapshot of visitor studies in the present; the theories, practice, and conversations that will allow visitor studies to continue to influence informal learning settings. Ms. Johnson is Distinguished Chair of Museum Leadership at the Science Museum of Minnesota. She serves on the VSA Board of Directors as Vice President for Professional Development, is co-chair of the CAISE steering committee, and is a former NSF program officer.

2:15 – 3:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – Four

Whitehall Room

**What's Really Going on Here?
Using Triangulation to Investigate
Questions of Interest**

*Jennifer DeWitt, Scott Randol,
Martin Storksdieck*

Researchers in visitor studies face a number of challenges in attaining validity and reliability including small sample sizes and limited time and budgets. Enhancing reliability and validity is important for the credibility, accuracy, and usefulness of their work. Methodological triangulation – the collection and use of various sources of data to address a question of interest – is a key way in which reliability and validity can be enhanced. This session introduces and discusses three examples of how triangulation has been used in visitor studies research.

Bayou Ballroom A

**The Relationship between Exhibition
Environments and Visitors' Behaviors**

Betsy Adamson

This presentation shares the results of a study conducted at Explora that looked at the relationship of physical environments to visitor behaviors in an informal learning setting. The research question addressed whether or not the presence of space-defining walls among the exhibits influenced visitors behavior at the exhibits.

**Post-Visit "Action Resourcing": Promoting
and Supporting Visitors' Adoption of
Environmentally Sustainable Behavior**

Roy Ballantyne, Jan Packer

Research indicates that although participants in eco- and wildlife tourism experiences often leave with heightened awareness of conservation issues and intentions to adopt environmentally

responsible behaviors, only a minority translate those intentions into action. This presentation identifies stages in the learning process and proposes a strategy for facilitating the translation of good intentions into the adoption of everyday sustainable actions.

Bluebonnet A

**Symbiosis or Culture Clash: Research
in Museums**

*Minda Borun, Suzanne Gaskins,
Tsvia Cohen, Kirsten Ellenbogen*

What keeps researchers from undertaking museum-relevant studies and what keeps museum practitioners from understanding or applying research? Why is it important to do research distinct from evaluation? Museums are rich environments for basic research while at the same time they pose a number of obstacles. Moreover, research, while trying to answer larger questions, is not intended to address the more immediate questions that museums, as complicated businesses with a range of visitors, need evaluation to answer. Given this, why and how should museums incorporate research—whether initiated from within or developed from collaboration with academics or other museums? Presenters discuss strategies for making research studies more practical and relevant both to researchers and to practitioners

Bluebonnet B

**The Use of Community Facilitators
to Enhance Visitor Outcomes: Findings
from Space**

Kathleen Tinworth, Robert Jakubowski

In collaboration with the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, researchers from the Colorado State University evaluated the role that community members trained as gallery facilitators had on visitor experience in an interactive space

gallery. Based on these findings, the presenters will discuss the use of gallery facilitators and their potential impact on visitor outcomes.

**Using the Educator Voice and
Evaluation to Improve Exhibit
Design Practice**

Elizabeth Kunz Kollman

This session presents a study conducted to discover how educators scaffold and support visitor use of an engineering design activity in order to improve the creation of stand-alone exhibits. The discussion will focus on the benefits of using practitioners, and not just visitors, as sources of data and on increasing understanding and application of the ways in which research can be used to influence exhibit design.

3:15 – 3:40 p.m.

Coffee Break

Bluebonnet Foyer

3:40 – 5:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – Five

Whitehall Room

**Examining Media, Politicians, and
Brandscapes as Influencers on Visitor
Entry Narratives**

John Fraser

There is a gap between branding strategy research where visitor entry narratives are shaped and the relationship of these narratives to the outcomes of mission-based program delivery. Through examples from IMLS-funded research conducted by the Wildlife Conservation Society, the presentation will examine the values of three prime sources that shape public narratives. The research is a starting point for discussion about how visitor studies can position itself for greater relevance in institutional decision-making.

Congratulations to recipients of the April Award and Student Scholarships

The April Award and Student Scholarship programs help bring new talent to the field of visitor studies and the Visitor Studies Association. VSA is pleased to welcome the following recipients to their first Visitor Studies Conference:

12th Annual April Award: Sofie Davis, The Science Museum, London. Meet Sofie at the April Award Luncheon on Friday, July 18. The April Award was established by Dr. Marilyn (Molly) Hood to honor the memory of her longtime research assistant April Lahm.

2008 Student Scholarships:

Sarah Cohn, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities

Preeti Gupta, CUNY Graduate Center

Tammy Messick, Brigham Young University

The Student Scholarship program supports first-time conference attendance for active students interested in the field of visitor studies.

Conference Schedule (cont.)

3:40 – 5:00 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – Five (cont.)

Building Visitor Advocacy: Not Only Are They Visiting but They Are Also Talking about Us!

Carolyn Meehan

Based on a study conducted at Museum Victoria, this presentation provides a methodology for identifying museums' advocacy drivers — those attributes that will make visitors more likely to recommend visiting. The session will also describe how outcomes of the research are directly linked to the work of the organization to effect changes that are visitor-driven.

Towards Creating Sustained Dialogue Relationships with Visitors

Theano Moussouri

Visitor Studies uses a range of approaches and methods for teams to 'listen to visitors' and introduce empirical evidence into decision-making. This presentation posits that the influence of the team's perceptions about the museum-visitor relationship extends to the choice of methods used to conduct visitor studies. Focusing on a recent formative evaluation, the presenter will discuss how in-gallery evaluation and audience panels facilitates a dialectic between the team and the visitors, and results in new partnerships.

Bayou Ballroom A

Practicing Interpretive Planning: Intentions vs. Actions

Preethi Mony, Joe E. Heimlich

Based on a study conducted at a state forest in the Midwest, this presentation examines an ongoing interpretive planning process to compare theory and practice. The findings show that most participants were not familiar with the theory of interpretive planning, and as a result many of the steps of the process were omitted. Expectations were divergent; however, participants felt satisfied with the overall progress and believed that goals would be met. Findings of the study will be further discussed.

Let's Make it Human: Evaluating Impact and Outcomes of First-Person Enactors

Kathleen Tinworth

This presentation focuses on a study of the qualitative and quantitative impact of first-person enactors on visitor experience at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science's showing of "Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition."

The rationale and hypotheses behind the research project, design and methodology, data collection, analysis and results will be outlined.

Bluebonnet A

Beyond Entrance Fees: Using Economics to Understand Visitors' Experiences at Museums

Caren Oberg, Leticia Perez-Castellanos

Visitor studies continues to seek new ways to understand visitors' motivations for participating in museum experiences. Through the examination of two recent evaluation projects, this presentation illustrates how the study of incentives, a key idea in economics, can be used to explain visitor motivations for participation, especially when traditional models of motivation do not strongly indicate or explain visitor behavior.

Attracting New Citizen Scientists: One Project, Multiple Entry Points

Stephanie Thompson, Rick Bonney

Citizen science is intended to be, in part, a tool for educating the public and affecting positive behavioral change. The Cornell Lab of Ornithology's extensive suite of citizen science projects has traditionally attracted audiences already possessing extensive bird knowledge and engaging in conservation-friendly behaviors. This presentation reviews findings about the Lab's newest citizen science project, NestWatch, which included in its design an examination of making citizen science accessible to a broader audience.

Bluebonnet B

Roundtables

These roundtable discussions present works in progress and offer an opportunity to discuss in small groups a variety of methodologies and approaches.

- Using Rubrics to Quantify Qualitative Data
Stephanie Downey
- A Question of Standards: The Role of the Museum in Public Education
Becky Seabrook
- Mission Related Indicators as a Product of a Zoo Educator Professional Development Program
Lisa-Anne DeGregoria Kelly
- Using Multiple Measures to Define Success for a Special Exhibit
Jon Deuel, Steven Yalowitz

Cougar Room

Where Am I? Using Untours to Learn How Under-represented Populations Experience a Visit

Emily Meyer, Preethi Mony, Nadya Bennett, Victor Yocco, Josh Hause, Scott Stuckman

Many studies have indicated that under-represented populations are not visitors because they do not "see themselves" in the museum. This study shares findings and insights obtained through using untours with one targeted minority population at two different institutions to try to find out what seeing themselves would mean for a museum of art and for a conservatory and garden.

Universal Design Research: People with Visual Impairments Evaluate Tactile Exhibits for an Aquarium

Ellen Giusti

Learn about research conducted as part of the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shore's project to develop a tactile exhibit with user initiated integral audio descriptive information. In addition to providing information in a way that is not currently available in aquariums, this project informs the testing and development of tactile exhibit elements based on universal design best practices, which are applicable to other types of informal learning environments.

5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

VIP Reception (by invitation only)

Sponsored by Independent Exhibitions Lawndale Art Center

Bus departs from the Smith Street Lobby entrance at 5:15 p.m.

6:30 – 9:00 p.m.
Taste of Texas at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, \$45

Calling all cowboys, cowgirls and city slickers! Saddle up for a hoot' and hollerin' good time at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft in the Houston Museum District. Chow down on authentic Texas BBQ, beer and wine. Rustle up local art in *CraftTexas 2008*, an annual juried exhibition showcasing the best in Texas-made contemporary craft. Do-si-do with resident artists as they demonstrate the dynamic world of their process and craftsmanship. Sashay through the museum's outdoor craft garden and boot-scoot with the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo entertainers.

Pre-registration required. Includes buffet dinner, one beer or wine, and bus transportation. Bus departs at 6 p.m. from the Smith Street Lobby entrance. If you're interested in checking out Houston's light rail system, meet at the Registration Desk at 5:15 pm. Houston Greeters will guide you from the hotel to the Craft Center via METRORail.

Saturday, July 19

8:00 – 8:50 a.m.
Visitor Studies Editorial Board Meeting
Houston A

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions – Six

Whitehall Room
Front-End, Formative and Longitudinal Research from Liberty Science Center's Science Now, Science Everywhere Project
Wayne LaBar, Jim Katz, Kate Haley-Goldman

Hundreds of museums have invited visitors to use their own handheld technologies, such as MP3 players and mobile phones, within the museum environment. Use of this technology in informal learning raises many questions. Are visitors willing to use their own devices? What are the barriers to using these devices in the museum? What kind of content should museums be providing? Are museums able to engage teenagers – specifically – with science center content through the medium of the mobile phone? Research focusing on these and other questions will be discussed from

the perspectives of the institution, researchers, and evaluators.

Bluebonnet A
Talk amongst Yourselves: A Study of Mediation and Activity
Joe E. Heimlich, Emily Meyer

Mediated learning is about changing how people think: this session is designed to help change the way participants think about mediated learning experiences. The use of three forms of mediation will share the findings and conclusions from a study on preferences for mediations by youth in a science center. This will be followed by a group discussion of the role of mediation in museums.

Remember the Time When... Investigating Associations and Connections Made by Visitors at Museums and other Sites
Ashley Harris

By capturing the associations and stories that people create while at museums the research presented in this session seeks to identify common structures or elements that are used in creating a 'narrative' of the on-site experience. The presenter explains how she has studied visitor behavior using the theory of intertextuality, a premise commonly used in literary theory to illustrate how texts are created from other previous texts.

Bluebonnet B
Leadership, Interpretation and Evaluation: Twenty Lessons Learned in Five Years
Matt Sikora, Swarupa Anila, Kenneth Morris, David Penney

The Detroit Institute of Arts re-opened last year after a comprehensive rethinking and reinstallation of its exhibitions. Staffers believe the project is noteworthy for its: commitment to accessibility—attempting to address the needs of a broad audience; investment in evaluation—employing two full-time staff and three consultants; use of interdisciplinary development teams—including curators, educators, and marketing staff; integration of interpretation in the galleries—placing all interpretive materials near works of art; and scope—covering 150,000 square feet of exhibitions. This session shares 20 lessons learned over the course of the project, and is intended to spark discussion about relationships between project management, interpretation, and evaluation in exhibition development.

Cougar Room
Small Changes, Big Impacts: Important Lessons Learned for the Design of Mechanical Interactives
Sofie Davis

Through an inside look at the re-opening of Launchpad, the most popular gallery of the Science Museum (London), find out how evaluation played a significant role in enriching visitor experience. Through the formative evaluation conducted, new lessons were learned about interpretation, methods of supporting social interaction, and the ways in which small design changes can improve visitor experiences.

Research in Visitor Studies Applied to Electronic Curriculum Development for Better Learning in Formal Education
Betsy Price

This presentation examines the ways in which research in visitor studies can be applied by teachers to evaluate the learning quality of electronic curriculum and to improve the effective use of the curriculum in the classroom.

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.
Coffee Break
Bluebonnet Foyer

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – Seven

Whitehall Room
Moving from Objectives to Outcomes: One Museum's Journey
K. Allison Wickens

The National Postal Museum education department has recently tested the use of the Outcomes Based Planning & Evaluation model to plan and measure the creation of user-centered programs. This session shares the struggles and triumphs of using this approach.

Skyscraper! Exhibition: People's Perceptions Before and After 9/11
Helene Alonso, Melissa Wadman

"Skyscraper! Achievement & Impact," an exhibition about the science, technology and people behind the construction of skyscrapers, opened at the newly renovated Liberty Science Center in July of 2007. This presentation will discuss the pre and post 9/11 evaluation findings and their incorporation into the exhibition development and design. Preliminary results of the summative evaluation will also be shared.

Conference Schedule (cont.)

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – Seven (cont.)

Bluebonnet A

Visitation by Gays and Lesbians: Findings from a Pilot Study

Joe E. Heimlich, Judy Koke

One of the demographics rarely included in visitor studies is gender, even though gender can be an important component of a visitor's identification with an institution. A pilot study of gay and lesbian visitors to cultural institutions was conducted to lay groundwork for more gender studies of visitors. This session shares findings from the pilot study as well as the challenges identified in the instruments and methods.

Can Segmenting Our Visitors Inform Our Work?

Carolyn Meehan

Starting with the principles of segmentation – what it is, advantages and disadvantages of different types of segmentation – this session will discuss whether marketing models such as segmentation have any relevance to museums and other cultural organizations. This presentation will explore the benefits and limitations of segmenting cultural audiences, the use of segmentation in developing communication messages and delivering exhibition experiences, and the methods by which satisfaction is tracked.

Bluebonnet B

Museums as Restorative Environments

Jan Packer

Restorative environments, particularly in natural settings, have been found to have a combination of attributes that facilitate recovery from mental fatigue. This presentation explores the extent to which museums, art galleries, aquariums, and botanic gardens possess the attributes to provide restorative experiences.

Finding Common Ground within Communities: Value Connections between Zoos and Communities of Faith

Jessica Sickler, Kathleen Condon

This presentation will delve into findings from one study part of a three-year IMLS-funded research project at the Wildlife Conservation Society, assessing the Perceived Value of Zoos and Aquariums. The study examined the connections, conflicts, value, and relevance of zoos

and aquariums to spiritual and faith-based communities and traditions in the United States.

Cougar Room

Risky Business: Linking Risk Communication Theory and Research with Environmental Education and Communication Programs

Sheila Luey, Jenny Klafki

Visitors to Banff National Park are often motivated by the possibility of seeing bears and other large animals during their visit. This session presents an overview of research assessing the effectiveness of educational programming intended to help visitors understand the importance of bears to the ecosystem and the risks entailed in approaching bears too closely. Discussion will include: the theoretical background to the study; a summary of the methodology and analysis of the data; and a description of how the findings and the theory were applied to assess the efficacy of educational programs and make modifications.

In This Together: Evaluators and Practitioners Creating Quality Reflective Programming

Erin Stafford, Mary Wedow

The Evaluation & Planning team at the Museum of Science & Industry is committed to using research and evaluation to inform program development and understand audiences. In this presentation, the internal evaluator and a member of the program staff share their perspectives on the ongoing formative evaluation of the Teacher Professional Development Series. Team members discuss challenges and successes of their work, and how their method has led to changes in programming and practice.

Gulf Coast B

Evaluation is a Connection between Marketing and Mission

Linda Wilson

Marketing is an increasingly important part of cultural institution planning. Using examples from the Shedd Aquarium, this presentation focuses on how marketing, public relations and sponsorship programs are evaluated, and explores the connections between market-related aspects of an institution and exhibit and program evaluation.

Employee Perceptions of Mission/Purpose of an Institution and its Impact on Them

Victor Yocco, Bennett, Emily Meyer, Preethi Mory

This study looks at the impact of employee perception of organizational purpose and how work and worldview are affected. The presentation reports on a study of front-line employees in five different institutions in one city to determine the internalization of the mission in individuals' work and home lives. The researchers will share the methods, challenges in working across institutions, findings, and insights.

12:10 – 1:30 p.m.

Closing Luncheon Bayou Ballroom

Sponsored by Noldus Information Technology

The conference is ending, but the conversation has just begun. Join your colleagues and friends for a few farewell thoughts. You'll have the last word in person and set the stage for continuing dialogue across time and space.

2:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Post-Conference Trip to NASA's Space Center Houston, \$60

Advance Registration Required

We have lift off to the Space Center Houston! Experience the story and history of NASA's space flight program through the museum's exhibits, attractions and activities. After your space adventure, enjoy the views of Galveston Bay while you explore the nearby Kemah Boardwalk, featuring themed restaurants, retail shops, rides, games and amusements.

Bus departs hotel at 2 p.m. from the Smith Street Lobby entrance and returns to the hotel at 10 p.m.

Thank You 2008 Conference Sponsors

The Visitor Studies Association 21st Annual Conference is supported by businesses, organizations, and individuals committed to understanding and serving visitors in informal learning environments. Please make sure to support those whose work furthers VSA's vision of a world where lifelong learning is embraced, and where learning in informal settings benefits individuals, communities, and society at large.

EVENT SPONSORS



Gallagher & Associates

INDEPENDENT EXHIBITIONS



The Museum Group

With support from the following members: Carol Bossert, Daryl Fischer, Mary Kay Ingenthron, Mary Ellen Munley, Judy Rand, Paul Richard



HOUSTON MUSEUM DISTRICT



the Houston Museum of natural science



Noldus
Information Technology



Houston
www.VisitHoustonTexas.com

Jeff Kennedy
associates, inc.

PROGRAM SPONSORS

BRC Imagination Arts
Chedd-Angier-Lewis
Evans & Sutherland
Alan Friedman, Ph.D., Consultant
Julie I. Johnson
Randi Korn & Associates
Left Coast Press
Minotaur Mazes
People, Places, and Design Research
Polshek Architects
Martin Storksdieck
Tisdal Consulting

DONORS

Available Light
Elsa Bailey
Barbara Butler
Cinnabar
Dallas Museum of Art
Guide By Cell
IDEUM
Learning Technologies Inc.
Mid-Atlantic Youth Alive
Morey Group
Portico Group
Dr. Chan Screven
Serrell & Associates
Lee H. Skolnick Architecture + Design Partnership
Superior Exhibits
Thinc Design
Troy Research
Unified Field
Bonnie Van Dorn
White Oak Associates

VSA Committees

Special thanks to the following volunteers whose time, energy, and dedication have enabled VSA to increase the scope and quality of its service to the field:

Board of Directors - Executive Committee

President, Kathleen McLean
President-Elect, Kirsten Ellenbogen
Vice President of Organizational Development, Daryl Fischer
Vice President of Outreach, David Anderson
Vice President of Professional Development, Julie I. Johnson
Treasurer, Beverly Serrell
Secretary, Rita Deedrick
Immediate Past President, Alan Friedman

Board of Directors - Members at Large

Nikki Andersen
Dorothy Chen-Courtin
Cecilia Garibay
D.D. Hilke
Jeff Kennedy
Karen Knutson
Judith Larsen
Mary Ellen Munley
Matt Sikora
Martin Storksdieck
Carey Tisdal
Robert "Mac" West

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vice President – Organizational Development, Daryl Fischer

Board Development Committee

Chair, Cecilia Garibay

Vice Chair, Caren Oberg

Members: Toni Dancu, Ellen Giusti, Julie Johnson, Laura Huerta Migus, Janet Rassweiler, Gabrielle Trépanier, Linda Wilson

The Board Development Committee recruits, trains, and nurtures board members for the efficient and effective operation of the board. The committee reviews the organizational chart annually and makes recommendations to the Executive Committee regarding the structure and organization of board committees. This committee is also responsible for the care and feeding of the current board. This might include making recommendations about professional development opportunities, social activities, board orientation, new member training, awards, commendations, board member departures (i.e. gifts), etc.

Membership Committee

Chair, Matt Sikora

Vice Chair, Leslie Hartog

Members: Kerry Bronnenkant, Elizabeth Daigneault, DD Hilke, Emily Johnsson, G-Gina Koutsika, Anna Lindgren-Streicher, Giuseppe "Pino" Monaco, Melissa Wadman, Elee Wood

The Membership Committee works collaboratively with other VSA Committees and Task Forces to: gather input from the membership at regular intervals; maintain a current membership profile and track and project trends in that profile; identify members' needs for programs, services, and benefits; identify potential members, crafting strategies to attract and serve them; develop and implement strategies to build and retain membership; work with Association Manager regarding policies and procedures related to membership management and retention.

Resource Development Committee

Chair, Robert "Mac" West

Vice Chair, Caren Oberg

Members: Conny Graft, Karen Graham, Jeff Kennedy

The Resource Development Committee organizes, coordinates, and facilitates all planning and implementation related to the financial growth and development of the organization including increasing earned income, contributed income, and in-kind contributions. The committee insures that all fundraising efforts are consistent with the mission and goals of the organization.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Vice President – Professional Development, Julie I. Johnson

Conference Oversight Committee

Chair, Nikki Andersen

Vice Chair, Judith Larsen

Members: Jessica Sickler, Randy Roberts

Conference Planning Committee Members: Joe E. Heimlich, Elisa Israel, Cheryl Kessler, Judith Larsen, Caren Oberg, Monica Rhodes, Jessica Sickler, Robert “Mac” West

The Conference Oversight Committee oversees the conference site selection, program, and logistics for each annual VSA conference and serves as VSA board liaison for those functions. This committee is responsible for setting the strategy and logistics for future conference site selection. The committee provides guidance to the Conference Planning subcommittee and Local Host Committee, both of which are convened annually to design, recruit, and organize the conference program for the following year.

Professional Development Committee

Chair, Mary Ellen Munley

Vice Chair: Cheryl Kessler

Members: Rick Bonney, Kathy Condon, Rita Deedrick, Jennifer DeWitt, Lynn Dierking, Kelly Lidinsky, Dale McCreedy, Emma Norland, Kathleen Tinworth, Amy Grack Nelson, Angela Wenger

The Professional Development Committee is responsible for providing training and growth opportunities for VSA members and other museum professionals. The Committee develops, organizes, and facilitates all training opportunities and professional development for VSA including workshops for VSA members and others interested in the discipline, visitor studies training for other organizations, certification recommendations, etc. This committee is responsible for facilitating the workshops that are a part of the Annual Conference.

OUTREACH

Vice President of Outreach, David Anderson

Publications Committee

Chair, Martin Storksdieck

Vice Chair, Jim Kisiel

Members: Chantal Barriault, Susan Foutz, Jenny Heim, Robert Jakubowski, Karen Knutson, Jessica Luke, Preethi Mony, Melissa Wadman, Steven Yalowitz,

The Publications Committee provides oversight for all publications related to the mission of VSA. This includes serving as the VSA liaison with Francis and Taylor (publishers of the association’s journal Visitor Studies), working with the editors and editorial board of the journal, and overseeing facilitation of the VSA website. This committee is also responsible for development of the Conference Abstracts publication and all other publication-related VSA activities and strategies.

Marketing and Public Relations Resource Group

Chair: Dorothy Chen-Courtin

Members: D.D. Hilke, Leslie Hartog, Jeff Kennedy, Karen Knutson

E-News Team: Dorothy Chen-Courtin, Jenny Heim, Giuseppe “Pino” Monaco, Amy Niedbalski, Randy Roberts, Melissa Wadman

Working with Committees as needed, the Marketing and Public Relations Resource Group supports increased awareness and positioning of VSA core activities including professional development, conference, publications, membership, and overall mission. The MPRRG also coordinates all aspects of the E-News.



VSA

Visitor Studies Association

Randy C. Roberts
Association Manager
P.O. Box 14375
Columbus, OH 43214-4375
Telephone: (614) 670-7379
Fax: (614) 447-2211
e-mail: info@visitorstudies.org
website: www.visitorstudies.org