Trust, training, and flexibility: That’s what it takes to engage volunteers in collections stewardship. Staff members from two small museums and a state history museum share their stories about how volunteers help them meet critical collections needs.

Lisa Scholten  
Chief Curator, South Dakota Art Museum, Brookings, SD

A group of volunteers formulated the concept of a South Dakota Art Museum back in the 1950s. When the museum opened in 1970, volunteers greeted visitors and served as docents. By 2000, the collection had grown to more than 6,500 works in diverse media representing South Dakota, Native American, regional, and American art. The volunteer base was changing, and so volunteers split into two groups: those who wanted to greet visitors and those seeking opportunities out of the public eye where they could make a difference and learn.

At the same time, our 30-year-old museum was facing a crisis in collection stewardship. We were operating with just five full-time staff members and 12 part-time work-study staff. There was so much to be done, including rehousing, preservation, improving access, and plenty of research. While funding opportunities existed through IMLS and NEH, without additional staffing we couldn’t consider undertaking such endeavors, let alone applying for funding.

The solution was to bring volunteers and collections together. Most will agree that the typical collections curator doesn’t want to let “outsiders” touch, move, look at, or breathe near objects. We realized that we needed to change this attitude in the name of progress.

The greatest personal and professional challenge for me as a curator became one of the greatest rewards: asking for help from the untrained and inexperienced. Volunteers brought to the table an overabundance of enthusiasm and curiosity that evolved into dedication and ownership of the collection. With training and time, they became advocates for the collection and cheerleaders for behind-the-scenes efforts.

Over the past eight years, volunteers have worked on numerous grant-funded and nonfunded projects. While we still

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Research by volunteers, including Bonnie Lievan (left) and Gloria Thvedt, has strengthened documentation of the South Dakota Art Museum’s collection.
From the President

Soon after you receive this issue, the AAMV board will be meeting in Houston during the American Association of Museums Annual Meeting. We will be addressing a number of needs for our organization, and one that has always been a challenge is how to better serve both museum staff who manage volunteer programs and docents and volunteer staff who support museums. AAMV is a unique organization in that it is intended to serve both of these populations—in particular as a networking organization where people can exchange ideas and help each other. The AAMV Board includes docents/volunteers as well as volunteer program managers, but we are aware that we tend to focus a bit more on issues of concern to managers in our newsletter, in organizing conference sessions, and in the topics that float on our listserv.

We would love to hear from members as to what AAMV can do better to serve as a network of information and exchange for volunteers and docents. Please speak up in proposing topics for our newsletter, please use our listserv to bring up topics and questions of interest to you, and let us know how we might better serve you as AAMV members.

We will not work any miracles since all of the work of the AAMV Board is done primarily outside of our workday (as paid museum staff or as docents). We are volunteers for AAMV, and some of us have a number of other very engaging volunteer roles as well! But, I can promise you that we will do our best to ensure that AAMV fulfills its mission to support volunteers and the people who support them in museums.

Lois Kuter
AAMV President
Volunteer Coordinator,
Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia
kuter@ansp.org

Transforming Museum Volunteering:
A Practical Guide for Engaging 21st-Century Volunteers

This AAMV publication stimulates creative thinking about finding, training, supervising, and supporting volunteers in a changing environment. Purchase your copy for $29.95 at www.authorhouse.com, or visit the AAMV website at www.AAMV.org for more information and a link to order the book.

AAMV Newsletter

Editor
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President
Lois Kuter, kuter@ansp.org

This newsletter is a quarterly publication of the American Association for Museum Volunteers, the nonprofit membership and service organization dedicated to the millions of volunteers in all categories of museums in the United States and to professionalism in museum volunteer program management. AAMV welcomes submissions of manuscripts for publication. Queries should be made to the President. Information about AAMV’s other services is available at www.AAMV.org.
Join members of the American Association for Museum Volunteers who have put together several conference sessions on docents, volunteers, interns, and volunteer program management. And if you will be at the AAM Meeting, plan to attend our annual luncheon. If you have not gotten a ticket when you registered for AAM, let us know and we can make sure you get one. Contact Lois Kuter, AAMV President, at kuter@ansp.org.

Monday, May 23
9:00–10:15
Talking Shop: Roundtable Discussion with Volunteer Managers and Docents
A discussion facilitated by AAMV Board members on a wide range of topics, including youth volunteers, volunteer interns, volunteer and docent diversity, how to dismiss a volunteer/docent, conducting successful evaluations, expanding your volunteer/docent program, and how to get started if you are new to the field of volunteer management.

12:15–1:45
AAMV Networking Luncheon ($23)
An opportunity to meet experienced docents and volunteers and those who manage volunteer/docent programs in museums across the country, hear what’s new with AAMV, and meet its board members.

2:15–3:30
Unpaid Volunteer Interns in Museums: Perils, Pitfalls, and Pearls
How museums can take advantage of the increasing number of students seeking volunteer internships.
Chair: Deirdre Araujo, Manager of Volunteer Services, Exploratorium Museum of Science, Art, and Human Perception, San Francisco.
Panel: Jeanelle Hernandez, Education/Outreach Department Intern, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, University of Oregon; Mary Anne Schierman, Director of Volunteers and Interns, McLean County Museum of History.

Bloomington, IL; Glenn Williamson, Director of the Graduate Program in Museum Studies, University of Florida, Gainesville; and Debbie Young, Director of Volunteer Services, The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis.

Tuesday, May 24
9:00–10:15
New Directions for Docents: Creating an Effective Learning Community in the Art Museum
How museums work with docents on new ways to engage visitors with collections, embrace technology as a means of interpretation and communication, and leverage the diverse talents of volunteers.
Panel: Danielle Stephens, Docent Program Manager, Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (and newly appointed Education Curator, Aspen Art Museum, CO); Amy Goicoechea, Associate Curator of Education, National Museum of Wildlife Art, Jackson Hole, WY; and Susan Fonda, Manager of School Group Learning, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

3:45–5:00
Career Café: “A Day in the Life...” Reality Roundtables
Volunteer Manager: Deirdre Araujo, Exploratorium Museum of Science, Art, and Human Perception, San Francisco, and AAMV Western Regional Director
Plan to attend this session, another welcome addition to AAM programming on volunteer topics:

Sunday, May 22
2:45–4:00
Creative Use of Volunteers with Collections
How three institutions are using volunteers with collections and the challenges in managing, training, and supervising them.

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Several AAMV Board members are presenters for a session on volunteers and risk management at APGA’s Philadelphia conference, which features a whole track of sessions on volunteers. Bravo to APGA for recognizing the importance of this topic. For the full program, visit www.publicgardens.org.

Wednesday, June 22
Training Staff to Work with Volunteers
Moderator: Holly Cope Hanson, Shangri La Botanical Gardens & Nature Center
Presenters: Carrie McDonald, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, University of Texas; Judy Cashen, Chicago Botanic Garden
While naturally much emphasis is placed on the relationship between an organization’s volunteer coordinator and that organization’s volunteers, the relationship between the volunteers and the staff they work with directly is sometimes overlooked. This presentation will focus on the importance of staff buy-in to the volunteer program and will open a dialogue on our role as volunteer coordinators in providing the staff with the tools they need.

Developing Interpretive Volunteer Docents
Presenter: Joe Lomicky, Longwood Gardens, Inc.
Interpretation takes many forms, but one of the most adaptive methods is to use interpretive docents. Discover how to take your interpretive volunteer team beyond manning a cart or simply answering questions. Today Longwood Gardens’ interpretive teams effectively interpret to guests six hours a day, every day. This model can work at any institution and provides a unique and positive experience for daily visitors.

Sustaining a Citizen Science Program
Presenters: James Boyer, New York Botanical Garden; Ellen Denny, National Phenology Network
Citizen science has become a popular method for conducting investigations at gardens, parks, and nature centers. Effective programs implement different and targeted methods to properly train their volunteers. Eventually volunteers help each other, creating a “train the trainer” model that strengthens the skills of new and old citizen scientists. Overall, these volunteers have proven to be an extremely reliable group, readily introducing ideas to other locations, such as their local community groups and nature centers.

Thursday, June 23
Good Seeds and Wild Weeds: Volunteers and Risk Management
Presenters: Lois Kuter, Academy of Natural Sciences; Karen Fink, National Constitution Center; Michael Kruelle, Hillwood Estate and Garden
What do you do when a volunteer becomes a detriment to your program? How do you fire a volunteer gracefully? What can you do to ensure you get great volunteers? A panel of experienced volunteer program directors will address best practices in hiring and firing volunteers. Learn how to sow their right seeds, nourish growth, and pull destructive weeds in engaging volunteers in your work.

How I Ruined the Docent Program: The Challenges and (Eventual) Successes of Working with Volunteer Staff
Moderator: Kitty Connolly, Huntington Botanical Gardens
Presenters: Mikki Heydorff, Huntington Botanical Gardens; Arlene Ferris, Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden; Christopher Lowe, Franklin Park Conservatory
At one time or another, most garden professionals have faced challenges working with docents. It’s time to own up to our own role in creating those challenges. This panel will reveal the perils of professionalizing docent programs without fully recognizing the motivations, and limitations, of volunteers.

They Ought to Be in Pictures
Presenter: David R. Thompson, Longwood Gardens, Inc.
In the age of YouTube, the video reigns as an effective way of bringing attention to just about anything, so why not a volunteer and staff video to celebrate and recognize everyone’s effort? In this session you will see how two volunteer/staff videos, created for appreciation gatherings, have found continuous life and value as orientation and training tools.

Targeting Nontraditional Volunteers to Support Your Institution: Building Partnerships with Community Organizations
Presenter: Tracy Barnes, Franklin Park Conservatory
As botanical garden staffs shrink and responsibilities increase, it is more crucial than ever to recruit and retain a skilled corps of volunteers. By partnering up with national organizations such as Goodwill, AARP, and the Master Gardeners Association, Franklin Park Conservatory was able to recruit specialized volunteers to fill specific departmental needs. Learn how forging these partnerships solidifies the role that public gardens play in community development and involvement.
Volunteers and Collections continued from page 1

don’t have additional paid staff, we have gained the equivalent of a full-time paid staff member through volunteer hours. The key to our success has been flexibility. Most of the volunteers are retired, and some are college students. They all have lives outside of their time at the museum. While we do take attendance (for documentary purposes only), they know that if they have personal plans, there is flexibility.

Two primary groups work on collections. The Treasure Tuesdays group meets every Tuesday morning to work on rehousing projects. Twelve volunteers have constructed individual storage mounts for the museum’s Native American collections. They will start preserving our archives in 2011. The Thursday Thinkers group consists of six volunteers with a desire to conduct collections-related research. Their efforts have elevated the documentation of the collections. Recently, they served as co-curators for the exhibit, Art of the Basket, featuring Native American baskets from the collection.

Bringing volunteers into collections has been a very rewarding experience. We are addressing collection-related needs while involving volunteers in a way that gives them a greater understanding of the museum and the need to fulfill its mission. In the end, these are winning outcomes for all of us—and for the museum and the community we serve.

Lori Holmberg
Executive Director/Curator, Dakota Discovery Museum, Mitchell, SD

The Dakota Discovery Museum is a small, private nonprofit museum that preserves and promotes the art, history, and culture of the Upper Missouri River region. Its large and broad collection includes works of art, Native American cultural objects, photographs, a library, archival material, and settlement and immigration objects, including large agricultural and transportation items. The collection also has four restored and furnished historic buildings.

Small museums like ours would not be able to survive without dedicated volunteers. With limited funding and just one full-time and one part-time staff member, we rely heavily on volunteers for ongoing projects. Over the past three years our volunteers have contributed more than 6,000 hours of their time. At South Dakota state wage rates, this represents a value of more than $70,200, an incredible amount of savings for our very limited budget.

We involve our conservator at the Midwest Art Conservation Center in developing volunteer training. We hold general training sessions annually and project-specific training as needed. Our volunteers range in age from 20 to 95 and work with the collection in inventory, assessment, accessioning, transcribing, data entry, and rehousing.

A Passion for World War II History

Dedicated volunteers at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans are tackling the large-scale restoration of PT-305, a project with historic and local significance. PT-305 was based in Europe during the war and is among the few surviving vessels of its kind built by New Orleans–based Higgins Industries, which employed more than 25,000 workers at the time. Later it was converted to an oyster boat.

The Higgins Boat Builders, a group of about 75 active volunteers, meets every Saturday for six hours. They include marine architects, master carpenters, model boat builders, and others with a passion for history. One is a World War II veteran, and some are sons and grandsons of veterans. (Volunteers Ron Maranto, George Benadetto, and Ray Asprion are shown below.) Over two years, they have completed about half of the restoration in a warehouse. PT-305 will move in 2011 to the museum’s new Restoration Pavilion, where visitors will be able to observe the painstaking work involved in preserving a significant historic artifact.

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Some of the greatest benefits of engaging with volunteers are their specialized knowledge and experience, their ties to the community (and to other people with knowledge), and their level of commitment to the museum and the collection. I have found that the challenges are ensuring a good match between volunteers and projects and being able to relinquish control of projects, trusting in our volunteers’ judgment.

Since 2004, volunteers have inventoried and assessed hundreds of textiles and historical objects and thousands of archival documents and library volumes, and they have completed the exterior restoration of two historic buildings. We are currently undertaking two major collection projects. The Art Storage Project involves the assessment and rehousing of 250 original works of art. One volunteer has completed more than 200 artworks, ensuring that the collection is safe and secure and that information is available to pursue funding for conservation.

The Photograph Rehousing Project, undertaken by two volunteers, has given us a searchable database of images and secure, accessible storage for photographs.

Utilizing volunteers for collection projects brings knowledge, community contacts, and skills that will enhance your collection, your exhibits, and your programs. The experience is worth the time and training invested.

Beth Campbell
Visitor Services Coordinator, State Historical Society of North Dakota, Bismarck, ND

I am proud to lead 200 volunteers statewide who volunteer for the State Historical Society of North Dakota. Most work at the State Museum in the North Dakota Heritage Center, Bismarck. Our volunteer program is successful in large part because of the support throughout our organization, starting with the director and trickling down through the entire staff. I constantly hear our staff thanking the volunteers and making them feel appreciated. I can’t put a value on that attitude.

Our best volunteers are recruited by our volunteers. Because they enjoy what they are doing and we make sure that they know we value their time, they bring their friends with them. Most of our volunteers are senior citizens (over age 70), but we have a small corps of recently retired volunteers who are making a real difference. These new retirees want more flexibility. We start them with a project that has a definite beginning and end, keep them engaged, and then move them on to another project-based task. We find that we get a valuable product, a volunteer with more diverse training, and a happy paid staff.

Three volunteers work in museum collections side by side with our curators, sometimes independently and sometimes as part of the staff team. In our archives collection, volunteers work in the photo archives rehousing photos and doing data entry and large scanning projects. Our archeology collection has a group of about three “baby boomers” volunteers who help sort and catalog objects.

We seek volunteers in unusual places. We house the paleontology division of the North Dakota Geological Survey. In 2001 they encouraged us to start working with people with disabilities, so we went to a local organization that provides day services. We started with one volunteer doing data entry, then expanded to a group that comes with a supervisor.

Our challenges with collections volunteers are the same ones we would have with any new staff member: Are they properly trained? Do they understand how they should be handling objects? We would definitely be able to place more volunteers in behind-the-scenes areas if they came already trained. Staff needs to understand that the time they invest will pay off with a well-trained volunteer who sometimes outlasts paid staff tenure with the organization.

These articles are based on a roundtable discussion at the Mountain-Plains Museums Association 2010 Annual Conference.
Providing ease of access for all visitors—including those with disabilities—is an essential part of serving the public. In many museums, training on how to work with people with disabilities is an integral part of training for volunteer and paid staff. The following checklist is adapted from a training program at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, developed by director of human resources Karen Kennedy Fink.

**Treat everyone with respect.**
- Do not be afraid to make a mistake when communicating with someone with a disability. Most will appreciate your efforts to communicate with them. Simply imagine how you would want to be treated in a similar situation.
- Treat adults as adults. Never patronize people, youth or adult, by patting them on the head or shoulder. In every situation, treat every visitor with respect.
- If you offer assistance and the person declines, do not insist. If help is accepted, ask how you can best help the person. Do not take over.
- If someone with a disability is accompanied by another individual, always address the person with the disability directly.
- Don’t be embarrassed if you happen to use a common expression such as “See you later,” or “Did you hear that on the news?”

**Use “people first” terminology.**
- Place the person before the disability. Say “a person with a disability” rather than “a disabled person.”
- Avoid referring to people by the disability they have. Instead of “an epileptic,” say “a person with epilepsy.” A person is not a condition.
- People are not “bound” or “confined” to a wheelchair. They use the chair to enhance their mobility. It is more accurate to say “a wheelchair user” or “person who uses a wheelchair.”
- Use affirmative phrases, not negative phrases. See the table on page 8 for more recommendations.

**When working with people who have physical disabilities:**
- Do not make assumptions about what a person can and cannot do.
- Do not push a person’s wheelchair or grab the arm of someone walking with difficulty. Have respect for the person’s personal space.
- Never move someone’s crutches, walker, cane, etc., without permission.
- When speaking to a person in a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, try to find a seat for yourself so you can be at eye level.
- Be aware of emergency evacuation procedures for individuals with disabilities.
- Always stay calm in the event of an evacuation and help others to stay calm as well.

**When working with people who have visual disabilities:**
- Face the person and speak directly to them. Use a normal tone of voice.
- Do not leave the person without letting them know.
- Alert people who are blind or visually impaired to posted information.

**When working with people who have hearing disabilities:**
- Before you speak, make sure you have the attention of the person. Wave, or lightly touch their shoulder or arm.
- Speak in a clear, expressive manner. Do not exaggerate words.
- While you are writing a message for someone, don’t talk. The person will find it hard to read your note and your lips at the same time.
- The goal is communication. Do not pretend to understand someone if you do not.
- If you know any sign language, try using it. It may help you communicate, and it will at least demonstrate your interest in communicating and your willingness to try.

**When working with people who have speech disabilities:**
- Talk to people with speech disabilities as you would talk to anyone else.
- Give the person your undivided attention.
- Be patient, it may take the person a while to answer.
- Speak in a regular tone of voice.
- Tell the person if you do not understand. Ask them to repeat the message, spell it, or write it down.
- To obtain information quickly, ask short questions that require brief answers or a nod of the head.

*continued on page 8*
### Working with People with Disabilities

**When working with people who have cognitive disabilities:**
- Treat adults with cognitive disabilities like adults.
- People with brain injuries may have short-term memory problems and may repeat themselves or need information to be repeated.
- People with “sensory overload” problems may appear disoriented. Try giving information gradually and clearly.
- If in a crowded area, such as the lobby, try to have the person move with you to an area with less stimulation.
- Don’t pretend to understand a person if you do not.
- In conversation, some people with cognitive disabilities may be slow to respond. Be patient.
- Some people with cognitive disabilities may be easily distracted. Try not to interpret distraction as rudeness.

### Labels Not to Use vs. People-First Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Labels Not to Use</th>
<th>People-First Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The handicapped or disabled; crippled</td>
<td>People with a disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mentally retarded; mentally defective</td>
<td>People with mental retardation; he has a cognitive impairment; person with a developmental disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s a Down’s; she’s mongoloid</td>
<td>She has Down’s syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birth defect</td>
<td>Has a congenital disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Epileptic</td>
<td>Person with epilepsy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wheelchair bound; confined or restricted to a wheelchair</td>
<td>Uses a wheelchair; uses a mobility chair; is a wheelchair user</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is developmentally delayed</td>
<td>She has a developmental delay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He’s crippled; lame</td>
<td>He has an orthopedic delay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mute; deaf; blind; suffers a hearing or sight loss</td>
<td>Is nonverbal; has hearing or sight loss; person who is deaf; person with a hearing impairment; he wears glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is learning disabled or LD</td>
<td>Has a learning disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afflicted with; suffers from; victim of</td>
<td>Person who has . . .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She is emotionally disturbed; she’s crazy; lunatic; psycho</td>
<td>She has an emotional disability; person with a mental illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal and/or healthy</td>
<td>A person without a disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadriplegic; paraplegic</td>
<td>Has quadriplegia; has paraplegia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She’s in special ed</td>
<td>She receives special ed services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handicapped parking</td>
<td>Accessible parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special-needs people</td>
<td>People with a significant disability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Understand what it means to use a service animal.**
- Service animals are not just guide dogs for people with visual impairments. There are also comfort and care dogs.
- Never pet or distract a service animal. They are hard at work.
- It is perfectly acceptable to compliment someone on the animal.
- It is also appreciated (if you’re able) to offer water to the animal.

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**Tips & Techniques**

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**Source:** Jane Haskell, extension educator, University of Maine Cooperative Extension
AAMV collaborated with the AAM Museum Assessment Program and LearningTimes to present a live, interactive webinar, “Managing Multigenerational and Diverse Volunteers and Docents,” on March 30, 2011. Presenters Maretta Hemsley-Wood (Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum), Robbin Davis (Oklahoma History Center), Debbie Young (Children’s Museum of Indianapolis), and Carol Wilson (Smithsonian American Art Museum) covered practical topics including managing senior docents, identifying and utilizing family volunteers, and creating access for volunteers and visitors with hearing impairment. If you missed the webinar, you can see the recorded version for a nominal charge through the AAM On-Demand Library (www.aam-us.org/getinvolved/learn/ondemandwebinars.cfm) beginning June 30.

AAMV on Flickr

AAMV celebrated National Volunteer Appreciation Week by creating a Flickr photostream for our members. Please help us build a collection by sharing images of volunteers in action in all parts of your museum. If you have a Flickr site, add AAMV to your contacts list.

Send your photos by email to which92lop@photos.flickr.com. Use the subject line of your message to give the photo or video a title and the body to add a description.

National Building Museum volunteers at the annual Festival of the Building Arts, October 2010.

A Tip a Day on Twitter

Trainer and consultant Nancy Macduff posts quick tips on Twitter every weekday for volunteer program managers. Check out her tweets and follow Nancy here: http://twitter.com/#!/nlmaeduff. Recent tips in 140 characters or less:


• “Personal thank-you is as powerful as public recognition. Get post cards or note cards. Send two thank-you cards each week.”
AAM Survey Finds Economic Stress, Expanded Service

Fewer resources and significant economic stress continue to affect museums in the United States in 2011, according to a report released in April by the American Association of Museums. But museums also report expanded service, including increased attendance at more than half the responding museums and steady or increased service to K–12 students and teachers.

Here are other key findings from this survey of AAM institutional members:

• Many of the 383 respondents attribute attendance growth to the fact that people are spending leisure and vacation time closer to home. They point to a decrease in tourism, budget reductions, fewer school group visits, or local circumstances as reasons for a drop in attendance.
• Military personnel and their families benefited from new or expanded admission discounts in 21 percent of museums.
• The median price of an adult general admission ticket remained the same as in 2009 ($7), while 37 percent of museums remained free.
• Of the 70 percent of museums reporting economic stress, 82 percent were in the mid-Atlantic region. Economic stress appeared less severe in the Mountain-Plains region.
• Most museums reported a reduction in funding, especially government support and investment income.
• Budget-saving measures included hiring freezes (in 35 percent of responding museums), relying more on volunteers (34 percent), deferring building maintenance (30 percent), and drawing more on the collections for exhibitions (29 percent).
• Forty percent of respondents have smaller budgets than in 2010, while 29 percent reported small increases.


StoryCorps Talks to Museum Volunteers

Three volunteers from award-winning museums have shared stories about volunteering with StoryCorps, the nonprofit organization dedicated to capturing the voices and wisdom of Americans from all walks of life. Every year, the Institute of Museum and Library Service honors a group of museums and libraries for their outstanding community service with the National Medal for Museum and Library Service. As part of the award, each institution spends three days with StoryCorps.

StoryCorps interviewed Richard and Masako Murakami, volunteers for the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, a 2010 National Medal winner. Richard and Masako, who were both in Japanese American internment camps during World War II, met and married while volunteering at the museum. They told StoryCorps about the value of teaching younger generations about their wartime experiences. Sybil Gore, a docent at the 2009 medal-winning Tennessee Aquarium, joined director of volunteer services Julie Piper to tell StoryCorps about the rich rewards of making a difference in visitors’ lives.

Listen to these stories and more on the IMLS website at: www.imls.gov/about/storycorps.shtm.

IJOVA Manuscript Deadline


IJOVA is a refereed publication of the Department of 4-H Youth Development and Family and Consumer Sciences at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, NC. The journal seeks to provide an global exchange of ideas and knowledge about volunteerism and volunteer management and administration.
## Minnesota Volunteerism Study

The economic environment continues to challenge leaders of volunteers in all nonprofit organizations. The Minnesota Association for Volunteer Administration (MAVA) has released its second study on the status of volunteerism and volunteer programs in 350 Minnesota nonprofits, confirming that volunteers can have a real impact in difficult times. The study’s conclusions ring true for museums and other nonprofits everywhere:

- Organizations are updating their practices to engage volunteers; a higher level of volunteer involvement is part of how many organizations will emerge from the recession.
- Organizations are relying more on volunteers and finding new roles. Volunteers are part of how organizations are transforming to succeed in a changed economic landscape.
- Be ready for further changes in who is volunteering. Volunteers’ expectations will continue to change, and organizations will benefit by being alert to the changes and ready to adapt to them.
- It is unrealistic to increase reliance on volunteers without investing more resources. In the surveyed organizations, cutting staff for volunteer programs resulted in fewer volunteers and less service. Only 7 percent of respondents saw an increase in their volunteer program budget in 2010, but 55 percent are projecting greater reliance on volunteers in the coming year.
- Volunteer managers should be recognized for the new and more complex role they play. Today’s volunteer managers need the skills to market, delegate, inspire, and sustain the organization’s mission. The expectations on these professionals are greater than ever before.
- Volunteers have a deep impact in communities and have promising potential to further address key problems. Citizen volunteers provide promising potential to address key problems, if we invest to move volunteerism forward.

For the full survey report, go to: [www.mavanetwork.org](http://www.mavanetwork.org).

## Volunteers Make Museums Memorable

In its latest study of museum visitors, the research firm Reach Advisors posed questions about adults’ early museum memories to find out whether childhood experiences at museums affect the motivations and expectations of adult visitors. Their conclusion, reported in the blog *Museum Audience Insight:* “Staff matter. Oh, they really do. . . . Staff, or docents and volunteers (most people cannot distinguish between the two), come up a fair amount.”

The majority of memories involving staff and docents or volunteers are positive, but some are not. Both types can make a museum experience “truly unforgettable for a child.” Some examples:

- “Trip to New York and the Met. I remember the museum seem[ed] huge and I got lost, so many people so many rooms. Staff member found me and brought me to the office and gave me a drink with cookies. It was a great cookie and my parents came and got me.”
- “[The staff member] ruined a perfectly wonderful day with my family. . . . EVERY employee counts. Even the crabby old lady behind the counter in the gift shop makes an impact on a child.”
- “I found a bone in a field and was sure it was a dinosaur bone. . . . [The staff] were so sweet in spending the time to talk with me even though, of course, it was a cow bone. I have become an avocational archaeologist. . . . Museums definitely influence children!!!”

Reach says that “every touch point between visitors and staff (volunteer or paid) is important, but for a child, it can be transformative and memorable for decades to come.” The takeaway for museum docents, volunteers, and volunteer program managers is no surprise: Front-line volunteers and docents can make or break a visitor’s experience. Job placement, training, mentoring, and recognition all contribute to effective public interaction.

To learn more about Reach Advisors’ national visitor studies, read their blog at: [http://reachadvisors.typepad.com](http://reachadvisors.typepad.com).
What is AAMV?

There are more than one million volunteers and volunteer program managers in all categories of museums in the United States. Founded in 1979, the American Association for Museum Volunteers (AAMV) is America’s only national association dedicated to the paid and unpaid museum staff who work together. AAMV is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization.

Who are AAMV Members?

We are volunteers, docents, and paid museum staff who bring a wealth of experience and ideas in promoting volunteerism in museums and in starting or improving museum volunteer programs. We welcome members from zoos and aquariums, botanical gardens, historic houses, and other cultural organizations with an educational mission.

What does AAMV do?

- Promotes professional standards of volunteerism
- Provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and information
- Offers opportunities for continuing education through panel discussion and workshops at local, regional and national conferences
- Encourages volunteers and volunteer managers to become familiar with project and programs both locally and nationally
- Informs and supports museums and volunteerism in advocacy for legislation at local and national levels
- Accomplishes these goals in cooperation with museum directors, staff and boards of trustees

Membership Benefits …

- Participation in a vibrant Members-Only listserv
- Quarterly newsletter
- Access to information to create and sustain a museum volunteer program
- Opportunities to take part in workshops and presentations at state, regional, and national meetings
- Access to state and regional representatives as well as a nationwide network of volunteer management professionals and experienced volunteers
- Advance notice of AAMV publications, such as Transforming Museum Volunteering, plus workshops, presentations, and meetings

Become an AAMV Member Today!

Name ___________________________________________________________ Institutional Affiliation ___________________________ Date ____________

Mailing Address ____________________________________________

Phone ___________________________ Fax ___________________________ E-mail ___________________________

Volunteer ☐ Staff ☐ Title (if staff) ___________________________ Department ___________________________

Check here if you would like to be added to the listserv ☐

MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES

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Make checks payable to AAMV. (Membership by PayPal is available online at www.aamv.org)

If you have any questions about your membership send an email to Carly Shaw at cshaw@nbm.org.

*Allows 3 individuals from same institution access to AAMV listserv

Send membership applications to: AAMV, P. O. Box 9494, Washington, DC 20016