

Farewell to the Faithful: *Visitor Behavior* Reaches Its End

Stephen Bitgood, Editor

This is the last issue of *Visitor Behavior* to be published, at least in the foreseeable future. It is with sadness and regret that we end this publication. As editor, I have been able to feel the pulse of visitor studies for the last 12 years. I have observed its growth, its successes, and its failures. I have shared the goals and visions of the field that hold us together; and I have been painfully aware of the philosophical and methodological differences that push us apart. As an incurable optimist, I am confident that the field will continue to grow and have a greater impact on visitor facilities. I am pleased with the progress of the Visitor Studies Conference which we began in 1988 and the Visitor Studies Association which we began in 1991. I hope that our efforts have had a positive impact on the field.

Since this is my last chance to use this forum, I would like to express my appreciation for the support I received in the last decade plus two. Many of you are already aware of the crucial role played by Arlene Benefield as Managing Editor. The publication was possible because of Arlene's tireless and painstaking work. She has been a real partner in this endeavor. Arlene's organizational skills and no-nonsense approach to carrying out tasks made it work.

Many others have also played important roles in the publication of *Visitor Behavior* over the years. Special

thanks to those who played a key editorial role including Harris Shettel, Marilyn (Molly) Hood, Ross Loomis, Beverly Serrell, Don Thompson, Amy Cota, Sherri Lankford Jens, Wilcomb Washburn, John Koran, Jeff Hayward and many, many others. Thanks to the many contributors over the last 12 years.

Special thanks to the subscribers and readers who supported this effort for so long. Perhaps the major challenge of this publication was similar to one faced by all exhibition centers — how do you reach audiences that differ in their knowledge and interest levels. We have tried to include readable items for the novice in each issue while also providing meat for the more sophisticated readers.

It was not an easy decision to end publication. Several factors contributed to this decision. First, the cost of publishing was never offset by the revenues. Second, Arlene, my right-hand man (person) decided to make a career change and it is difficult to think of anyone being able to replace her. Third, the joy of getting the issues out has diminished in the last year or so; it was time for a change. There are younger and more eager people in the field more than willing to take over the responsibilities of such a publication.

The Visitor Studies Association will be publishing its own newsletter beginning in 1998. As I understand it, the plans are to publish twice a year. Kris Morrissey will be its editor. Readers are encouraged to consider this alternative to *Visitor Behavior*.

Farewell to all!

VISITOR BEHAVIOR

Psychology Institute, JSU
P. O. Box 3090

Jacksonville, AL 36265-9982

NON PROF. ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
JACKSONVILLE, AL
BULK-RATE
PERMIT NO. 2