

## Editor's Note

This issue contains some important material for VSA members:

- Note the call for nominations for officers and board for 1997-99 terms of office on pages 9 and 10. Make additional copies of this form if you wish to nominate for more than one office.
- An application for the April Award Travelship is included on page 11. If you qualify, you should complete this form to compete for the waiver of registration fee for the 1997 Visitor Studies Conference.
- Page 12 contains a form for proposals to the 1997 Visitor Studies Conference to be held in Birmingham, Alabama.

These four pages (9-12) can be taken out of *Visitor Behavior* as a unit without sacrificing other material in the issue.

In addition, this issue contains several articles including part of Kathy Wagner's paper from the last issue, Marilyn Hood's paper on institutional acceptance of audience research, John and Mary Lou Koran's article on studies conducted at the University of Florida, and Bitgood and Tisdal's article on the relation between lobby orientation and overall visit satisfaction.

On pages 18 and 19 is the *Visitors' Bill of Rights* from Judy Rand. We hope this document will be refined and expanded. The Bill of Rights should help give credence to one of the major purposes of VSA — visitor advocacy!

Steve Bitgood, Editor

The following by Kathy Wagner was inadvertently omitted from the last issue of *Visitor Behavior*. We regret this error and hope that it did not cause any difficulty. [See Volume 11, Issue #2 for article]

### Acceptance or Excuses? The Institutionalization of Evaluation (Part 2)

Kathleen F. Wagner  
Philadelphia Zoo

#### Step 11. Include evaluation in department and individual goals.

Last year, one of my performance goals was to have each of my direct reports write at least one grant proposal. They did, and all were fully funded. This year, I plan to have them each undertake or coordinate at least one evaluation project and find funding for it. Stay tuned for the results.

#### Step 12. Have fun and don't give up!

Well, we don't have a full-time evaluator on staff yet, although we're still trying. However, we now include funds for evaluation on every grant proposal and internal project proposal. In fact, when I recently neglected to include a line item for evaluation in a grant application, our Director of Foundation Relations caught my oversight and said, "What about evaluation?" A second indication that we may be succeeding is the fact that we now routinely think of evaluation as a part of our business, and ask "Can Laurie (our grant-funded evaluator) look at that?" A third, and final, indication of institutionalization occurred late last year, when our V. P. of Human Resources borrowed my book on focus groups and hired someone to conduct employee focus groups on our benefit and compensation plan.

#### Summary

Has the Philadelphia Zoo truly institutionalized evaluation? I'd like to present some evidence that says we have:

- Other departments ask for help and data
- Other departments quote our data
- Other departments conduct their own projects (human resources focus groups)
- Grant writer reminds us to include evaluation in grants if we forget
- President asks how we're going to continue the evaluator's position

And some evidence that says we haven't:

- Graphics still hates temporary signs
- We don't always do it
- The position is not a permanent part of our operating budget

Remember my SCUBA diving friend's advice, "If you don't do it right, you die." I'd switch the emphasis to a more positive tone, "Do it right and you'll succeed," to encourage you to work toward institutional acceptance of evaluation. If you're among the lucky few museums with real commitment at all levels, share your success with the rest of us.