



CELEBRATE!
25th Annual Visitor Studies Association Conference

July 24-28, 2012
Raleigh, North Carolina
*Knowing Our Past, Shaping Our Future:
What's Next for Visitor Studies?*



Conference Schedule at a Glance

Monday, July 23

4:00 – 7:00 p.m. Registration Open

Tuesday, July 24

8:00 – 11:00 a.m. Registration Open

4:30 – 7:30 p.m. Registration Open

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

Wednesday, July 25

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

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. **VSA Board of Directors Meeting**
Willow Oak

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

6:30 – 9:30 p.m. **Welcome to Raleigh: VSA Silver Anniversary Celebration at the North Carolina Museum of Art (ticket required)**
Raleigh Trolley begins shuttle from hotel at 6:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 26

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

8:30 – 10:30 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Keynote**
Hannover I & II

10:30 – 11:00 a.m. Coffee Break
Mezzanine

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – 1**
Capital Room, Governors Rooms I and II, and Hannover III

12:15 – 2:15 p.m. Lunch on your own

12:15 – 2:15 p.m. **Visitor Studies Editorial Board Meeting**
Magnolia I

12:15 – 1:15 p.m. **Committee Meetings**
[Communications & Conference Planning]
Capital Room and Governors Room I

1:15 – 2:15 p.m. **Committee Meetings**
[Membership & Development]
Governors Room II and Hannover III

2:30 – 3:45 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – 2**
Capital Room, Governors Rooms I and II, and Hannover III

4:00 – 5:15 p.m.

Concurrent Sessions – 3
Capital Room, Governors Rooms I and II, and Hannover III

6:15 – 9:15 p.m.

Celebrate North Carolina's Past, Present, and Future. Traveling Reception at North Carolina Museum of History and North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences (ticket required)

Friday, July 27

8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Registration Open

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. **VSA Business Meeting & Coffee Break**
Hannover I & II, Mezzanine

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Keynote Presentation**
Hannover I & II

10:30 – 11:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions – 4**
Capital Room, Governors Rooms I and II, and Hannover III

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. **April Award Lunch (ticket required)**
Oak Forest A

2:00 – 3:15 p.m. **Concurrent Sessions – 5**
Capital Room, Governors Rooms I and II, and Hannover III

3:15 – 4:15 p.m. **Poster Session & Coffee Break**
Hannover I & II, Mezzanine

4:30 – 5:30 p.m. **Meet the Committees Happy Hour**
See registration desk for locations.

6:00 – 8:00 p.m. **Hollywood in North Carolina at Marbles Kids Museum (ticket required)**

Saturday, July 28

8:00 – 9:00 a.m. **Committee Meetings**
[Board Development & X]
Capital Room and Governors Room I

8:30 – 9:00 a.m. Coffee Break
Mezzanine

9:00 – 10:15 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions – 6**
Capital Room, Governors Rooms I and II, and Hannover III

10:30 – 11:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions – 7**
Capital Room, Governors Rooms I and II, and Hannover III

12:00 – 1:30 p.m. **Closing Luncheon and Plenary Session (ticket required)**
Hannover I & II

In Memoriam

In the past year, VSA was saddened to learn of the passing of two of VSA's founding members who helped set the direction and build the strong foundation on which our organization continues to build. Join VSA in honoring the memory and the legacy of Chan Screven and Pat Shettel at the Welcome Reception on Wednesday, July 25 and during the VSA President's opening remarks on Thursday, July 26.




Dear Visitor Studies Conference Attendees:

Welcome to Raleigh and the 25th Annual Conference of the Visitor Studies Association! Twenty-five years ago, a hearty group of nearly 100 research-practitioners came together in Anniston, Alabama for the first conference devoted to visitor studies – organized and convened by Steve Bitgood and Arlene Benefield. Your experience at this year’s conference will represent the exciting growth of work and ideas started at that very first conference.

Knowing Our Past, Shaping Our Future: What’s Next for Visitor Studies?

In this milestone year, we would like to reflect on our past, celebrate our achievements as a community, and appraise our current work within the context of cultural institutions and their communities. As Visitor Studies has grown from a passionate group of research-practitioners interested in studying the visitor experience and informal learning, to a burgeoning, multi-disciplinary field, the time has come to dialog about how visitor studies can help envision and shape the role of museums within our increasingly diverse and complex societies.

Planned sessions and events have been organized with a nod towards where we have been and where we are going as an organization. We hope through attending lively sessions, listening to our exciting speakers, or simply connecting with colleagues new and old, you get a sense of where VSA is headed. In line with our call, we hope this year’s conference helps you address the following questions in your work: How can institutions continue to be relevant to a wide range of audiences when facing the challenges of creating community value and low funding? In what ways can we use the work we are doing right now to address the future of museums, zoos, nature centers, visitor centers, historic sites, parks, and other cultural institutions and attractions? In what new ways can we engage visitors in conversations about contemporary social concerns that are important to them?

As you think about these questions, be aware that sessions, events, and activities emphasizing our 25th anniversary conference theme and celebration are highlighted with  throughout this program.

Our Raleigh Hosts

One of the benefits of VSA Conference attendance is the changing venue each year. This year we are pleased to have Raleigh, North Carolina as our host city. It is an opportunity to learn of a community rich in heritage and offerings. Our Raleigh hosts have planned three evening events at a number of local institutions, starting with a VSA Silver Anniversary Celebration at the North Carolina Museum of Art.

In addition to the events planned by our hosts, we will be hosting the 16th Annual April Award Luncheon, the Meet the Committees Happy Hour, and the Closing Luncheon. Consult this program for times and locations of these significant events.

We hope you learn, interact with others, and enjoy this conference. Do feel free to share your suggestions and thoughts with VSA about the 2013 conference that will be in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. We hope to see you there!

With warmest regards,

Your Program Co-Chairs

Robert Jakubowski, Ross Loomis, and Theano Moussouri

2012 Conference Team

Katey Ahmann, *Local Host Committee Co-Chair*
Sarah Cohn, *Association Manager*
Erin Gong, *Workshop Co-Chair*
Valerie Grabski, *Abstracts Editor*
Robert Jakubowski, *Program Co-Chair*
Kimberly Kandros, *Local Host Committee Co-Chair*
Cheryl Kessler, *Workshop Co-Chair*
Emlyn Koster, *Development Committee Vice-Chair*
Ross Loomis, *Program Co-Chair*
Theano Moussouri, *Program Co-Chair*
Camellia Sanford, *Conference Planning Committee Vice-Chair*
Jessica Sickler, *Conference Planning Committee Chair*
Shannon Stout, *Local Host Committee Co-Chair*
Kathleen Tinworth, *Awards Subcommittee Chair*

2012 Session Proposal Reviewers

Jeanine Ancelet	Jerry Luebke
David Anderson	Dale McCreedy
Chantal Barriault	Pino Monaco
Elizabeth Bolander	Kris Morrissey
Minda Borun	Caren Oberg
Donna Braden	Chris Parsons
Lynn Courtney	Molly Phipps
Rita Deedrick	Camellia Sanford
Cathy Donnelly	Beverly Serrell
Scott Ewing	Jessica Sickler
Susan Foutz	Rebekah Sobel
John Fraser	Jill Stein
Ellen Giusti	Carey Tisdal
Amy Grack-Nelson	Loreen Trainer
Steve Guberman	Jeanne Vergeront
Preeti Gupta	Marcella Wells
Joshua Gutwill	Kari Williams
Jeff Hayward	Elee Wood

Raleigh photography courtesy of the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau.



What you need to know ...

REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION DESK

Check in at the registration desk, located in the Esplanade, for conference materials, badges, tickets, and information. Learn more about the sites of Raleigh from local hosts who will be on hand to steer you in the right direction.

Be sure to grab a VSA Member Scavenger Hunt activity sheet at the registration desk. While you meet and chat with VSA members

at the conference, complete the scavenger hunt for your chance to win a free VSA Membership or Membership renewal!

REGISTRATION DESK HOURS:

Monday, July 23, 4:00 – 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 24, 8:00 – 11:00 a.m.;
4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Wednesday, July 25, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Thursday, July 26, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Friday, July 27, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

The 2012 VSA Conference Abstracts introduce the presentations, panels, and posters at this year's conference. Beyond that, they act as a lasting record of the topics discussed here in Raleigh as we shape our future. In keeping with our commitment to environmental stewardship, VSA now publishes the abstracts exclusively in electronic format. Visit www.visitorstudies.org and click on the Conference page to view or download the abstracts in PDF format.

EVENING EVENTS

Welcome to Raleigh: VSA Silver Anniversary Celebration at the North Carolina Museum of Art

Wednesday, July 25, 6:30 – 9:30 p.m. \$45

Sponsored by the North Carolina Museum of Art

The Raleigh Trolley begins shuttle service from the Main Entrance of the Sheraton at 6:00 p.m.

Celebrate North Carolina's Past, Present, and Future with a Traveling Reception at the North Carolina Museum of History and the NC Museum of Natural Sciences

Thursday, July 26, 6:15 – 9:15 p.m. \$40

Sponsored by the North Carolina Museum of History and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences

The North Carolina Museum of History is located 0.6 miles north of the Sheraton. Pick up walking directions at the Registration Desk.

Hollywood in North Carolina! at Marbles Kids Museum

Friday, July 27, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. \$45

Sponsored by Marbles Children's Museum

The Marbles Children's Museum is located 0.5 miles northeast of the Sheraton. Pick up walking directions at the registration desk.

CONFERENCE EVENTS

16th Annual April Award Luncheon

Friday, July 27, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. \$45

Oak Forest A

Meet the Committees Happy Hour

Friday, July 27, 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

See registration desk for locations



CONFERENCE EVENING EVENTS

Tickets are required for evening events unless otherwise noted. (Few tickets are available onsite – check at the registration desk for last minute tickets. A ticket exchange will also be located in the registration area. If you have an extra ticket or are looking for one, please check the ticket exchange board.

Pre-Conference Workshops

Tuesday, July 24 and Wednesday, July 25

Registration is required. (Fee: Full Day Workshops – \$150 Members, \$180 non-Members; Half Day Workshops – \$75 Members, \$90 non-Members) Registration may be available onsite pending space availability. Please check at the Registration Desk for more information.

All workshop locations are within about a half-mile from the hotel. Attendees are responsible for transportation to and from the workshop locations. Please check the Registration Desk for transportation information, including the names of participants seeking to share taxis to and from the workshop locations.

Tuesday, July 24

Conducting Evaluations with Visitors with Disabilities

   9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Anna Lindgren-Streicher, Project Manager, Research & Evaluation, Museum of Science, Boston

Christina Priola, Director, Research & Evaluation, Museum of Science, Boston

Jill Goss, Research Associate, Museum of Science, Boston

NC Museum of History – Demonstration Gallery

Developing Rubrics: Authentic Measures of Informal Learning

  9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Stephanie Downey, Managing Director, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.

Amanda Krantz, Research Associate, Randi Korn & Associates, Inc.

NC Museum of Natural Sciences – Level A Conference Room

Strengthening Visitor Studies through Writing: Part 1 Demystifying Publication

  9:00 a.m. – noon

Kris Morrissey, Director, Museology Graduate Program, University of Washington

Jim Kisiel, Associate Professor, Science Education, California State University

NC Museum of Natural Sciences Nature Research Center – Conference Center Room C

Using Social Science Scales to Measure Impact

   9:00 a.m. – noon

Linda Wilson, Director, Impact Assessment, John G. Shedd Aquarium

NC Museum of Natural Sciences Nature Research Center – Conference Center Room A

Wireless Ways to Study Visitors: An Overview of Ways to Study Visitors with Smartphones, Tablets, and Other Wireless Devices

  9:00 a.m. – noon

Camellia Sanford, Evaluator, Rockman et al

Jennifer Borland, Evaluator, Rockman et al

NC Museum of History SECU Education Center – Longleaf Classroom

Interactive Data Collection and Analysis Methods for Increasing Participation in Evaluation

  1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Amy Grack Nelson, Evaluation & Research Associate, Science Museum of Minnesota

NC Museum of History SECU Education Center – Longleaf Classroom

Making Logic Models Work for You and Your Team

  1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Liz Rosino, Research & Evaluation Strategist, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

Scott Ewing, Research & Evaluation Associate, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

Scott Pattison, Research & Evaluation Strategist, Oregon Museum of Science and Industry

NC Museum of Natural Sciences Nature Research Center – Conference Center Room A

Strengthening Visitor Studies through Writing: Part 2 Rejuvenate Your Writing

  1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Kris Morrissey, Director, Museology Graduate Program, University of Washington

Jim Kisiel, Associate Professor, Science Education, California State University

NC Museum of Natural Sciences Nature Research Center – Conference Center Room C

Wednesday, July 25

Advanced Statistical Techniques: Conceptual Frameworks and Strategies for Application

  9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Amy Cota-McKinley, Associate Professor in Psychology, Worcester State University

NC Museum of History – Demonstration Gallery

Advanced Techniques for Collecting Data with Wireless Devices: Programming Wireless Surveys and Observation Forms

  9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Jennifer Borland, Evaluator, Rockman et al

Camellia Sanford, Evaluator, Rockman et al

NC Museum of History SECU Education Center – Longleaf Classroom

How to Make Things Work for Your Visitors: The Importance of Formative Prototype Testing

  9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Kayte McSweeney, Audience Research and Advocacy, Science Museum, London

NC Museum of Natural Sciences Nature Research Center – Conference Center Room A

Identifying Evaluation Methods: Advantages and Disadvantages

  9:00 a.m. – noon

Terrie Nolinske, Principal, TNI Consultants LLC

NC Museum of Natural Sciences Nature Research Center – Conference Center Room C

Working with Logic Models

   9:00 a.m. – noon

Sasha Palmquist, Senior Research Associate, Institute for Learning Innovation

Susan Foutz, Senior Research Associate, Institute for Learning Innovation

NC Museum of Natural Sciences – Level A Conference Room

Bringing an Organizational Perspective to Evaluation

  1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Jeanne W. Vergeront, Vergeront Museum Planning

NC Museum of Natural Sciences Nature Research Center – Conference Center Room C

Survey Design: Writing Effective Questions

  1:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Amy Grack Nelson, Evaluation & Research Associate, Science Museum of Minnesota

Gayra Osby, Museum Evaluator, Science Museum of Minnesota

Al Onkka, Museum Evaluator, Science Museum of Minnesota

NC Museum of Natural Sciences – Level A Conference Room

CANCELLED

SOLD OUT

Pre-Conference Schedule

Wednesday, July 25

6:30 – 9:30 p.m.

Welcome to Raleigh: VSA Silver Conference Celebration at the North Carolina Museum of Art

Event hosted and sponsored by North Carolina Museum of Art and Raleigh Trolley.

Join VSA and the North Carolina Museum of Art as we kick off the celebration of 25 years of VSA conferences. Heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served in the foyer, with live music as entertainment. The event will also feature "silver anniversary" cupcakes for dessert and lighthearted "remember when" memories of conferences past. Museum docents will be available to take guests on tours of the superb collection, which includes more than 5,000 years of artwork. The 164-acre Museum Park is home to more than a dozen monumental works of art, with artists actively involved in the integration of art into the Park's natural systems and restoration of its landscape.

Pre-registration is required. Evening includes entertainment, hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and dessert. Event ticket also includes transportation from the Sheraton Raleigh Hotel.

The Raleigh Trolley will begin a shuttle at 6:00 p.m. from the Main Entrance of the Sheraton.



25th Anniversary Celebration



2012 marks a major milestone for the Visitor Studies Association – 25 years of bringing our community together for discussion, idea sharing, and professional growth through the VSA Annual Conference. We hope you will join us in celebrating this milestone throughout the conference. Events in the program that are part of this celebration and reflection are denoted with a special icon.

Other conference features that you can look for throughout the conference include:

Badge Marker: How many VSA conferences have you attended?

During your next hallway conversation, take note of how many of the 25 conferences your colleague has attended. Make our first-timers feel welcome, and try to find a member who has been to all 25 conferences!

Remember When: Most Memorable VSA Conference Moments

Remember when Kathy McLean performed an interpretive dance in a plenary session? Throughout the conference's plenary sessions, evening events, and luncheons, we will share some of members' favorite, funniest, and most powerful VSA conference

memories. Visit the Memory Wall in the Registration Area to read others' fond VSA memories and to add your own!

VSA Trivia

How many founding VSA board members are at the 2012 conference? Which city brought in VSA's highest conference attendance? In how many countries does VSA have members? Test your VSA knowledge with the VSA Trivia questions shown during plenary sessions and events.

Finally, don't miss VSA's new Silent Auction! Check the VSA website and your conference tote bag for more information.

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Conference Schedule

Presentation Formats

This year's conference features a variety of presentation formats. Please review the list below to learn more about the kinds of presentations you can attend:



Panel Presentations / Forum Discussions

Panel presentations are full sessions on a single theme. The session includes several panelists who examine an issue, topic, problem, or theme from a variety of perspectives. Panel discussions reserve sufficient time in their sessions for audience discussion about the topic.



Individual Presentations

These sessions include 3 presentations on separate, but related, topics. Each speaker gives a 15-20 minute presentation about his/her project. The session chair moderates the session and facilitate audience discussion and Q&A for all presenters.



Innovative / Alternative Format Sessions

Sessions of this type have proposed alternative, innovative formats for their presentations, with the goal of increasing audience participation in support of furthering discussion of a key topic.



Poster Presentations

Individual presenters provide graphic displays and are present for one-on-one discussions about specific studies or projects. All posters will be presented during a single session that will take place in the Hannover I & II Ballroom on Friday, July 27 from 3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

Thursday, July 26

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Welcoming Remarks, Reflections and Opening Keynote

Dan Spock



Hannover I & II

Sponsored by the Franklin Institute

Dan Spock, Director of the Minnesota History Center Museum at the Minnesota Historical Society, will talk about how a relentless preoccupation with studying and learning from museum-goers over 30 years of museum work has informed the development of his public-centered ethic while coinciding with the growth of the importance of visitor studies in the field. Dan will recall growing up as the son of Michael Spock during his trailblazing years in the Sixties at the Boston Children's Museum where Dan was a testing guinea pig in the development of some of his dad's breakout interactive exhibits. He will talk about how this peculiar childhood gave him a hands-on immersion in the things that make museums wonderful. Dan began his own museum career inauspiciously as a guard at the Adler Planetarium, a job he hated, but in retrospect he sees how his casual observations there taught him early important lessons about what museum visitors do and prefer. Later, he worked at his father's museum repairing exhibits, which unexpectedly blossomed into a fantastic apprenticeship in the audience-centered culture of the Boston Children's Museum. The mentoring he received there, along with his first forays into visitor research as an exhibit designer, informed everything he's done since.



Spock will comment on the challenge of applying his training and research methodology to public history and how it has shaped his work with exhibits and community projects that confront museum habits of thinking. He'll conclude with the discovery, based on visitor research, of the critical role empathy and storytelling plays in the public's understandings of the past and how this has led him to a compassionate practice of museum tradecraft.

CONGRATULATIONS TO VSA 25 YEARS OF GATHERING



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For all you mixed methods lovers – Here's a qualitative experience about the world of quant!

Link up and enjoy.

Conference Schedule (cont.)

10:30 – 11:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

[Hannover I & II](#)

Sponsored by Randi Korn & Associates.

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – 1

Art + Science = New Engaged Communities



[Capital Room](#)

Panelists: Ellen Gusti, John Fraser, Alan Friedman, and Lisa Roberts

Science is often overwhelming and so complex that people turn off, abdicating their civic responsibility to understand and respond to a range of serious issues. This session focuses on art-science collaborations that appeal to non-traditional science learners. Visitor studies explore the power of the arts to engage communities around scientific topics/issues.

Using Capacity Building to Enhance Informal Learning in Museum Exhibits



[Governors Room II](#)

Panelists: Max McDaniel, Kate Betz, and Taylor Overstreet

This session focuses on enhancing informal learning in museum environments through partnerships between museum staff and evaluators. Specifically, this session explains the importance of internal capacity building in evaluation and presents a roadmap to conducting research that enhances visitor learning and builds internal evaluation skills.



Panel Presentations/
Forum Discussions



Individual
Presentations



Innovative/Alternative
Format Sessions



Poster
Presentations



VSA Celebration
and Reflection

VSA Looking Forward: An Invitation for Member Input



[Governors Room I](#)

Panelists: Dale McCreedy,
Emlyn Koster, Randi Korn,

Joe Heimlich, Rita Deedrick, and Vance Yoshida

As VSA looks to the future, questions about international scope, internal structure, outreach to target audiences, and cultural context arise. Learn about and then participate in discussions about the topic you care about most. Help shape VSA's future!

Investigating Interaction and Change in the Visitor Experience



[Hannover III](#)

Chair: Kris Morrissey

Giving and Receiving: A Case Study of an Interactive Exhibit

Lynne Carmichael

An interactive exhibit at Te Papa is studied from the dual perspective of the exhibition team and the visitors. Evidence emerged of the complex and long reaching-effect that the physical environment had on the visitors and the “ripple effect” of that visit on their wider social circle.

Families Talking about Ecology at Touch Tanks

Chuck Kopczak

Little is known about what occurs when families visit touch tank exhibits at aquariums and zoos. This study sought to determine if they talk about ecological topics, and the depth of their conversations. While ecological talk does occur, it is not common, but staff facilitation can increase its occurrence.

Inspiration to Action: Successes and Lessons Learned in Measuring Behavior Change

Kathryn Owen and Mary Jackson

This session will describe the efforts of a large urban zoo over the past five years to engage its audience in conservation behaviors and actions. Successes, failures, and lessons learned from ongoing evaluation of these efforts will be presented.

12:15 – 2:15 p.m.
Lunch on your own

12:15 – 2:15 p.m.

Visitor Studies Editorial Board Meeting

[Magnolia I](#)

12:15 – 1:15 p.m.

Communications Committee Meeting

[Capital Room](#)

Conference Planning Committee Meeting

[Governors Room I](#)

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.

Membership Committee Meeting

[Governors Room II](#)

Development Committee Meeting

[Hannover III](#)

2:30 – 3:45 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – 2

Discussing Repeat Visitors: Supporting Repeated Use through Products



[Hannover III](#)

Presenters: Marjorie Bequette,
Al Onkka, and Scott Van Cleave

What can ILE organizations do, in a 21st century full of increasingly complex systems, multimodal environment designs, and continued population segregation, to continuously draw visitors back? Using a number of evaluations from SMM, we will jump into a discussion of the evaluative issues in recognizing, studying, and understanding repeat audiences.

Responding to the Needs of Museum Visitors with Cognitive Disabilities



[Capital Room](#)

Panelists: Christopher Bell,
Tammy Gordon and Amelia Moody

This panel introduces museum educators to cognitive disabilities. It takes an interdisciplinary approach to providing historical background as well as practical ways in which museum educators can meet the needs of visitors with cognitive disabilities.

Studying Web 2.0 Experiences: An Open Source Session



Governors Room I

Panelists: Jeff Grabill, Beck Tench, and Troy Livingston

Peek behind the scenes to see Web 2.0 conversations from a new perspective. Examine and debate different approaches to facilitating online conversations, compare notes on the differences in impact, contribute to an ongoing research project, and take home protocols to join in the research with your organization's Web 2.0 experiences.

Diversity and Visitor Studies: Barriers, National Identities, and Multiple Worldviews



Governors Room II

Engaging the African American Community: A Qualitative Exploration

Amy Niedbalski and Mike Flynn

African Americans are underrepresented among Saint Louis Zoo visitors. The Zoo sought to understand factors influencing this disparity. To lower costs and gain credibility, predominantly African American churches were used to assist in recruiting and hosting focus groups. An added bonus: by asking churches to help, the community was engaged.

Institutional vs Individual Power: Investigating the St. Barnabas Icon Museum

Theopisiti Stylianou-Lambert and Alexandra Bounia

Museums have the power to negotiate national identities, while individuals have the power to shape personal memories and meanings. This presentation deals with the relationship between institutional and personal power using as an example the St. Barnabas Icon Museum in the North, occupied part of Cyprus.

Evaluation across Multiple Worldviews: Telling the Cosmic Serpent Story

Jill Stein, Shelly Valdez, and Eric Jones

Evaluators from Institute for Learning Innovation and Native Pathways will share their learning from a joint evaluation of the NSF-funded Cosmic Serpent, a professional development program that brings together Indigenous Knowledge and Western Science in museum settings. They will focus on how Indigenous evaluation models were utilized to reflect community voice.

4:00 – 5:15 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – 3

Designing and Studying Math Exhibits About Ratio and Proportion



Hannover III

Presenters: Steven R. Guberman, Troy Livingston, Molly L. Kelton, Elizabeth Fleming, and Al Onkka

In this session, we present three issues that emerged in our work on Math Core — an NSF-funded collaboration to develop exhibits on ratio and proportion: (a) planning for and studying repeat visitors, (b) researching visitors' embodied learning, and (c) evaluation . . . when you have a herd of cats.

Ready to Renovate? Models for Evaluating Installed Exhibitions



Capital Room

Panelists: Stephen Bitgood, Mary Jane Taylor, Steve Yalowitz, and Jeanine Ancelet

This session will present frameworks for carrying out renovation-driven exhibition evaluation, including three case studies of such projects carried out for an aquarium, a history museum and an art museum. Panelists hope to begin a much-needed dialogue about terminology and approaches for renovation-based exhibition evaluations.

Forum: Applications of AEA's Cultural Relevance in Evaluation Statement to VSA



Governors Room II

Presenters: Jill Stein, Joe Heimlich, Shelly Valdez, Christine Reich, and Cecilia Garibay

This open forum discussion will focus on the applicability of AEA's Cultural Relevance in Evaluation statement (April 2011) to the VSA community. Several experts in the area of cultural responsiveness in evaluation will pose a provocative question or comment, and then we will facilitate a discussion on future directions.

National Museums and the European Citizen



Governors Room I

Panelists: Alexandra Bounia, Jocelyn Dodd, and Pille Pruilmann-Vengerfeldt

This panel presents a visitor studies research undertaken in nine national museums in Europe, within the FP7 program "European National Museums: Identity politics, the uses of the past and

the European citizen". Questionnaires, interviews and focus groups provided thought-provoking insights into visitors' ideas and views on the national museums of Europe.

6:15 – 9:15 p.m.



Celebrate North Carolina's Past, Present, and Future with a Traveling Reception at the North Carolina Museum of History and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences \$40

Begin the evening by exploring more than 14,000 years of North Carolina's history and inhabitants at the North Carolina Museum of History, and visit *The Story of North Carolina*, an exhibition featuring fascinating artifacts and multimedia presentations. Enjoy appetizers and beverages while Civil War and Revolutionary War re-enactors regale with tales of North Carolina's pasts.

Enjoy a second course of traditional North Carolina BBQ at the largest natural history museum of its kind in the Southeast. The North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences features an array of exhibits that encourage visitors to explore the natural world and their connections to it. From there, the reception will move across the street for dessert at the Museum's brand new, 80,000-square-foot wing, the Nature Research Center. With state-of-the-art laboratories, interactive exhibits, and high-tech, dynamic presentation spaces, the Nature Research Center demystifies science and helps visitors understand the practical applications of science research in their daily lives.

Evening includes appetizers, dinner, drinks, dessert, entertainment, and two complimentary drink tickets. Cash bar will be available. The North Carolina Museum of History is located 0.6 miles north of the hotel at 5 East Edenton Street.

Event hosted and sponsored by the North Carolina Museum of History and the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences.

Conference Schedule (cont.)

Friday, July 27

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

Hannover I & II

Sponsored by Rockman et al

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

VSA Business Meeting

Hannover I & II

Join fellow members and colleagues for the latest VSA news to find out what is in store for the organization in the coming year and vote on matters of importance to the Association. VSA President Dale McCreedy will discuss recent changes at VSA, including the work in organizational and strategic planning and growth for the future.



9:00 – 10:15 a.m.

Keynote Address

Alison Kadlec



Hannover I & II

Sponsored by the Franklin Institute

Alison Kadlec, Senior Vice President, Director of Public Engagement Programs, and Director for the Center for Advances in Public Engagement at Public Agenda, will talk about how she thinks about accountability and case-making when it comes to museums. While most of her comments will implicitly or explicitly take aim at narrowly construed, excessively quantitative, or externally driven notions of accountability in any context, she believes that in an age of perpetual scarcity of resources, it is incumbent on cultural institutions to articulate their value and actively seek to better understand, document and amplify that value. As an advocate of meaningful democracy, Alison will make the case that museums need to step up and drive the conversations in order to own their power. Alison's views have been shaped by Deweyan Pragmatism driven first by the idea that a democracy is not to be judged only according to its institutions, but also according to the habits of inquiry and communication it inspires in its citizens. Through her work at Public Agenda, Alison strives to improve the quality of public problem-solving through research, issue framing, engagement, and communications. In this context, Alison will analyze museums as sources of civic innovation and the role of play and playfulness in public life, using science museums as a case study. She will talk about the value of museum experiences in a democracy, particularly in a society like ours in which hostile partisan rhetoric undermines effective problem-solving and in which leaders pander to the worst obstacles.



Alison will engage VSA conference delegates in a discussion of how museums can best respond to Sam Chaltain's three questions about education: How do people learn best? (actively, together and throughout their lives); What are the essential skills of a free people? (habits of being and habits of mind); What does it mean to be free? (developing the capacity for self-direction).

10:30 – 11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions – 4

I Wish I'd Never Done That



Capital Room

Panelists: Beverly Serrel, Alan Freidman, Ellen Giusti, Theano Moussouri, Mary Ellen Munley, Barbara Soren, and Margie Marino

Senior professionals in the field of visitor studies will speak about mistakes they have made in their careers and what they have learned from them.

Mediated Discourse: Shaping the Future of Visitor Studies Research



Governors Room I

Chair: Peter Linett

Panelists: Peter Linett, Chloe Chittick Patton, and Cecilia Garibay

This session explores how cultural institutions can use research and evaluation to understand audiences who are demographically and attitudinally different from their usual constituency. Drawing from the performing arts and informal learning, the presentation will explore studies in which ethnographic, qualitative, and quantitative methods illuminate the needs and experiences of new audiences.

Observation Across Disciplines: A View From Visitor Studies



Governors Room II

Panelists: Jim Kiesel, Jessica Luke, Jeanine Ancelet, Molly Phipps, and Judy Koke

This session will use evaluation/research studies to engage both panelists and attendees in discussion of "observation" as a desired process skill or learning outcome—from both arts and science perspectives. Specifically, the session will examine similarities and differences (if any) in how observation is situated and identified within each discipline.

Rethinking Evaluation Reports



Hannover III

Panelists: Amy Grack Nelson, Marsha Semmel, and Troy Livingston

Visitor studies methods are evolving, yet evaluation reports remain relatively unchanged. This panel features three different stakeholders: an evaluator, educator, and funder. They will share reporting guidelines based on analysis of studies on informal.science.org, perspectives on integrating public value into reports, and alternative reporting approaches to support reflective practice.

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

16th Annual April Award Luncheon

Sponsored by Blue Scarf Consulting & Oberg Research

 Oak Forest A
\$45, pre-registration required

The 2012 April Award recipient is **Chris Catanese**, Director of Visitor Experience at New York Historical Society Museum & Library.

Join your colleagues and friends to reaffirm VSA's commitment to the next generation of visitor studies professionals. We'll welcome our guest of honor, 2012 April Award recipient **Chris Catanese** from the New York Historical Society Museum & Library.

This year's luncheon speaker is **Dr. Steve Bitgood**, co-founder of the Visitor Studies Association and co-editor of *Visitor Studies: Theory, Research and Practice*. Dr. Bitgood is a Professor Emeritus of Psychology at Jacksonville State University. He has spoken and published widely and has undertaken extensive research in exhibition centers (museums, science centres and zoos) focusing on how to increase the impact of exhibits by applying psychological principles. He is the author of *Social Design in Museums: The Psychology of Visitor Studies*. Dr. Bitgood has been to all 25 VSA conferences and is well-positioned to take luncheon attendees on a journey through time with "A Tribute to the Mothers and Fathers of Visitor Studies."

Congratulations to the 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:

16th Annual April Award:

Chris Catanese, New York Historical Society Museum & Library. Meet Chris at the April Award Luncheon on Friday, July 27.

The April Award was established by Dr. Marilyn (Molly) Hood to honor the memory of her longtime research assistant April Lahm.

2012 Student Scholarships:

Julie Chiu, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Regan Forrest, University of Queensland, Australia

Katie Schroeder, University of Denver

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

1:45 – 3:00 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions – 5

Behind the Scenes: Learning from Inter-Departmental Collaborations and External Partnerships

  Capital Room
Panelists: Lynn Courtney, Jessica Luke, Sharisse Butler, and Erica Hirshler


A long-term evaluation project at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston invites reflection on the challenges and opportunities inherent in evaluation involving multiple stakeholders in a large arts institution. This session will address collaboration, ongoing roles, and working relationships and the potential for institutional learning about the value of evaluation.

21st Century Learning in Natural History Settings: A Research Agenda

 Governors Room I
Panelists: Bill Watson and Shari Werb

Participants will discuss recommendations of the February 2012 NSF-funded conference, 21st Century Learning in Natural History Settings, for 1) the best opportunities to harness the resources of natural history museums and environments for learning in the 21st Century, and 2) a research and evaluation agenda to advance progress toward them.

Are Art Museums Behind or Ahead of the Evaluation Curve?

 Hannover III
Panelists: Peter Linett, Elizabeth Bolander, Matt Sikora, Ryan French, and Anne Lee

Art museums and visitor studies haven't been the closest of kin. Most art museums don't have an evaluator on staff, and many don't conduct regular exhibition evaluations. But when they do engage in audience research, it's sometimes holistic, big-picture, and creative in ways that other museums can learn from. Join us for a lively conversation about what research is teaching art museums about their audiences—and themselves.

Building Capacity in Evaluation: The CAISE Convenings Continue

  Governors Room II
Panelists: Kirsten Ellenbogen, Leslie Goodyear, and Rita O'Sullivan

What supports, resources, and innovations are needed to improve the practice of evaluating informal learning environments? Join experts from visitor studies and other areas of evaluation to discuss and prioritize capacity building needs for our field.


3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

Coffee Break

Hannover I & II

3:15 – 4:15 p.m.

Poster Session

 Hannover I & II
Sponsored by People, Places, and Design

A Survey of School Field Trip Research Published 2000-2010

Heather Harkins

Children's Responses to Enhanced Exhibits at a Science Museum

Roger Phillips

Inquiry and Memory of Exhibit Experiences

Lisa Szechter

Interest – The Next Big Concept in Visitor Studies?

Tove I. Dahl

Museum Soundscapes and Their Impact on Visitor Outcomes

Robert Jakubowski

Conference Schedule (cont.)



Older People: To Be or Not To Be Museum Visitors
Chi-Hsiang Wang

Family Stories
Theano Moussouri

Unspoken: Sex, Gender, Body Image, and God in Body Worlds
Susan Jagger, Michelle Dubek and Erminia Pedretti

Using Evaluation to Provide Scaffolding for an Uncomfortable Visitor Experience
Zdanna Tranby and Steve Guberman

What's Next for Online Professional Development for the ISE Community
Tammy Messick Cherry and Kara Hershorin

Bilingual Exhibits Research Initiative: Exploring Engagement in STEM Among Latino Audiences
Steven Yalowitz, Cecilia Garibay, Nan Renner, and Carlos Plaza

New Methods for Measuring Affective Response: The Potential of Psychophysiology
Jessica Sickler

Evaluation of the Gallery Guide Tour Program at the Frye Art Museum
Peder Nelson, Mark Rosen, Nick Visscher, and Rose Paquet Kinsley

Harbor Seal Habitat Renovation: Front-End Evaluation
Katie Phelps and Chris Cadenhead

 **Panel Presentations/ Forum Discussions**

 **Individual Presentations**

 **Innovative/Alternative Format Sessions**

 **Poster Presentations**

 **VSA Celebration and Reflection**

The Teachers, the State, and the Zoo: What Learning Goals are Being Met at Self-Guided School Visits
Eric LaPlant, Michelle DelCarlo, and Siri Linz

What Can You Learn from an Orangutan?
Erin Hetrick, Elee Wood, Don Riefler, and Chelsea Libby

Socially Relevant Projects: What Are We Learning
Kris Morrissey, Travis Wildleharth, Katherine Canning, Patty Montano, Kaylan Petrie, and Ari Einbinder

Evidence of Two Types of Engaged Visitor Attention
Stephen Bitgood

Judging Exhibitions with the Framework for Assessing Excellence
Beverly Serrell

Through Their Own Eyes: A Photographic Understanding of Visitor Experiences
Kathryn Schroeder

Design Factors in the Museum Visitor Experience
Regan Forrest

4:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Meet the Committees Happy Hour

VSA's Membership Committee invites new attendees and all members for a happy hour! This is an informal way to meet and chat with other members and VSA leaders, to learn about VSA committees and how you might get more involved, and to see some nearby bars and local watering holes.

Pre-registration is not required for this event. Food and drinks available for purchase. Visit the registration desk for happy hour locations.



6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Hollywood in North Carolina! at the Marbles Kids Museum \$45

The stars are out in Downtown Raleigh for this reception at Marbles Kids Museum, which inspires imagination, discovery, and learning through extraordinary adventures in play and larger-than-life IMAX experiences. Enjoy heavy hors d'oeuvres and beverages outside under the stars while learning about North Carolina's bustling movie and TV industry. You can also take a backstage tour of the Wells Fargo IMAX Theatre at Marbles, which features the newest state-of-the-art IMAX 3D projection system, enhanced audio with 24,000 watts of heart-pumping sound, and a higher brilliance 70-foot wide giant screen.

Guests who purchased advance tickets will see the highly-anticipated next chapter in the Batman film series, The Dark Knight Rises, in North Carolina's only Giant Screen certified IMAX 3D Theatre. The film begins around 7:30.

Evening includes hors d'oeuvres, drinks, and music. Movie screening is an additional cost and tickets must be purchased in advance. The museum is located 0.5 miles northeast of the hotel at 201 East Hargett Street.

Event hosted and sponsored by Marbles Kids Museum.

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Saturday, July 28

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.

Board Development Committee Meeting

[Governors Room I](#)

Professional Development Committee Meeting

[Governors Room II](#)

8:30 – 9:00 a.m.

Coffee Break

[Hannover I & II](#)

**9:00 – 10:15 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions – 6**

Conversations Between Girls and their Parents During Informal Engineering Activities



[Governors Room I](#)

Gina Navoa Svarovsky and Zdana Tranby

This roundtable presentation will share and discuss preliminary findings from the Gender Research on Adult-child Discussions in Informal Engineering Environments (GRADIANT) project, which explores the conversations that occur between girls and their parents while engaged in a range of informal engineering activities within museum exhibits and programs.

Involving Practitioners in Research and Evaluation



[Governors Room II](#)

Panelists: Scott Pattison, Christine Reich, Lynn Tran, and Paige Simpson

By engaging practitioners in conducting their own research and evaluation, the visitor studies field can play a powerful role in helping to shape the next generation of informal learning practitioners. Drawing from a diversity of perspectives, this session will explore the challenges and benefits of supporting practitioner-led research and evaluation.

Embedding Visitor Studies in the Art Museum Through Museum Studies



[Capital Room](#)

Panelists: Ann Rowson Love, Ann Marie Hayes-Hawkinson, Kelsey Picken, and Lauren Connolly

After an overview of an art museum-based graduate museum studies program and the efforts to introduce and embed visitor studies into student and museum staff practices, the

presenters will share findings from recent studies. The panelists will address implications for preparing current and future museum professionals to implement visitor studies.

Visitor Experience: Traditional Approaches and Emerging Issues



[Hannover III](#)

The Museum Experience for Families with Autism: What We Learned

Lesley Langa, Katie Shanahan, Giuseppe (Pino) Monaco, Mega M. Subramaniam, Paul T. Jaeger, and Beth Ziebarth

This presentation discusses needs and motivations analysis of children within the autism spectrum disorder and their families to visit museums, how electronic resources can contribute to enhance the experience, and plans to operationalize the research results into action plans.

Do Objects Play a Special Role in Knowledge Acquisition?

Daniela Bauer and Constanze Hampp

While Internet and TV are limited to use symbolic systems like texts or pictures, museums are able to present “the real thing.” Using authentic objects to communicate content is part of the self-definition of museums. But does this tradition of displaying knowledge also affect the quality of informal learning?

My TripAdvisor: Mining Social Media for Visitors’ Perceptions

Elizabeth Maurer

While many museums have embraced direct social media, like Facebook, they are less engaged with indirect social media. Conversations that occur on opinion websites before, after, and outside of visits frame public perceptions. Over the next decade, museums will need to better understand indirect social media to develop better visitor experiences.

**10:30 – 11:45 a.m.
Concurrent Sessions – 7**

Distributed Evaluation: Moving Towards Richer and More Meaningful Institutional Collaboration



[Governors Room I](#)

Presenters: Gina Navoa Svarovsky, Jane Morgan,

Juli Goss, Liz Rosino, and Jenna Lecomte-Hinely

This session will begin by describing a distributed evaluation study conducted by evaluators from three Nanoscale Informal Science Education Network (NISE Net)

institutions. Session participants will then rotate through a set of roundtable discussions, each focused on a specific challenge or issue faced by the team during the study.

Embodying Visitors: Analysis Techniques for Investigating Multimodal Interaction in Museums



[Hannover III](#)

Presenters: Molly Kelton, Nan Renner, and Suzanne Perin

Museums have long recognized the value of hands-on interactive experiences. This design principle necessitates research and evaluation methods that capture both physical and verbal interaction among people and learning technologies. This interactive session explores multiple approaches to a more full-bodied investigation of acting, speaking, thinking, and learning in museum settings.

Through Their Own Eyes: A Photographic Understanding of Visitor Experiences



[Governors Room II](#)

Presenters: Kathryn Schroeder and Kathleen Tinworth

This interactive session describes the development, implementation, and results of a pilot photo study at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, which explored the visitor experience through images taken by visitors. This session encourages attendees to consider future uses, contexts, and directions for this innovative methodology.

Observation Across Disciplines: A View From Visitor Studies Pathways to Leadership in VSA



[Capital Room](#)

Panelists: Laura Huerta Migus and Marcie Benne

VSA is growing and vibrant thanks to the active participation and input of members like you. With a new strategic vision, VSA is relying on members to make the vision a reality. Meet with VSA officers and committee chairs to explore opportunities to contribute skills and leadership at any level!

12:00 – 1:30 p.m.

Closing Luncheon




[Hannover I & II](#)

Ticket Required


Join colleagues and a panel of discussants for a final conversation and commentary, reflecting on the past 25 years of VSA, the content of the 2012 conference, and visions for the next 25 years of VSA conferences.

Event includes lunch.

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The Board Development Committee is charged with ensuring effective board governance of the Association. The committee is responsible for overseeing elections; monitoring and assessing board processes, structures, and roles; and providing board members with the tools and support needed to fulfill their board duties. Specific responsibilities include: developing a board slate that meets the strategic needs of the organization; reviewing board and committee structures and related policies; planning on-going professional development for new and existing board members; and recognizing board members for their contributions.

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The Conference Planning 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 Team 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: Cheryl Kessler

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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. This committee is responsible for facilitating pre-conference and regional workshops, April Award, and Student Scholarships.

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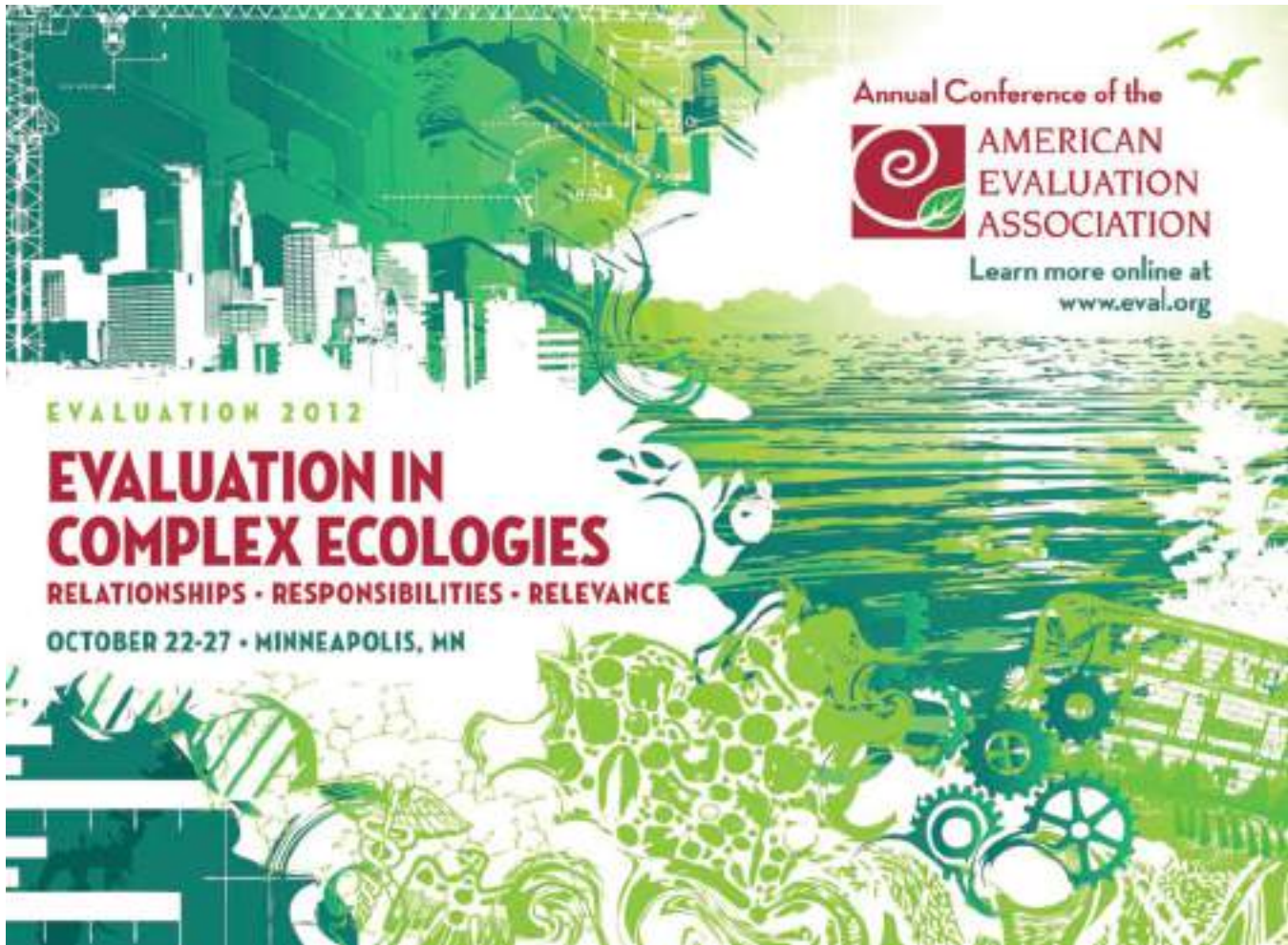
The Communications Committee works to share information about the Visitor Studies Association and its projects to members and to the broader visitor studies community through a variety of media. The committee comprises three subcommittees: Website and Publications, Interactive/Social Media, and Strategic Communications. The committee also provides a liaison to the editorial board of VSA's journal, *Visitor Studies Today*.

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Chair: Marcie Benne

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The Membership Committee strives to create accessible and inclusive pathways for joining and engaging with VSA. The committee co-develops a variety of resources and activities to help members get acquainted with each other, share expertise, develop VSA competencies, create VSA experiences, and collaborate to advance the field.



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In Memory of

Dr. Chandler Screven



Thank you Dr. Screven for inspiring me to pursue visitor studies and stimulating my intellect along the way. I will always remember your work, charming manner, and spectacular piano playing.

Randi Korn

Patricia Shettel



Thank you to Patricia Shettel for contributing her time and talents, including her superb organizational skills and conference planning expertise, to the Visitor Studies Association during its foundational years. Her life and work have benefited us all, both yesterday and today.

Anonymous