

AAMMV

*The Newsletter for
Paid and Unpaid
Museum Staff
Who Work Together*

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR MUSEUM VOLUNTEERS

AAMV Announces New Book

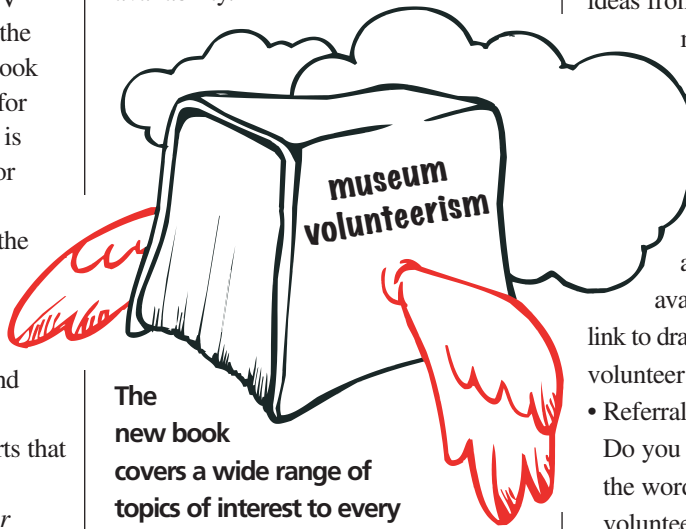
New Book on Museum Volunteerism Nearing Completion – You Can't Manage Without It!

The board of directors of AAMV is pleased to announce that it is in the final stages of producing its new book on museum volunteerism, written for AAMV by Ellen Hirzy. Ms. Hirzy is an independent editor and writer for museums, museum organizations, and other nonprofits. Her work in the museum field focuses on the continuing dialogue about museums' evolving public role, governance, institutional values, and professional practices. She is the principal writer of two major reports that have shaped the thinking about museums in America: *Museums for a New Century* (1984) and *Excellence and Equity: Education and the Public Dimension of Museums* (1992), both published by the American Association of Museums. AAMV is honored to have engaged Ellen to create this new resource on museum volunteerism. It will assist museums of all sizes and their volunteer program managers to utilize their valuable human resources most effectively.

This project was made possible by a generous bequest from a former AAMV board member, Mary Marvin Breckinridge Patterson, and the support of many generous individuals and museums across the country.

The official launch date is planned for early summer (hopefully June!),

when the book will be available for sale. Visit AAMV's website at www.aamv.org regularly for news about the book's availability.



The new book covers a wide range of topics of interest to every museum that utilizes volunteers:

- Chapter 1 – Transforming Museum Volunteering
- Chapter 2 – Creating Volunteer Program Infrastructure
- Chapter 3 – Managing the Volunteer Program
- Chapter 4 – Recruiting, Interviewing, and Placing Volunteers
- Chapter 5 – Volunteer Training
- Chapter 6 – Supporting, Retaining, and Recognizing Volunteers
- Chapter 7 – Evaluating Effectiveness
- Chapter 8 – Legal and Ethical issues
- Chapter 9 – The Future
- Resources
- Volunteer Program Management Tools

Excerpts

Is it time to give your recruiting plan a face-lift? If so, consider these fresh ideas from AAMV's new book on

museum volunteerism:

- Web site — Does the museum Web site have a direct link from the home page to the volunteer page? Are complete information and application materials available online? Post a new link to draw new attention to the volunteer program.
- Referrals from current volunteers — Do you remind volunteers to spread the word about the value of volunteering at the museum? Offer a museum pass or a free beverage coupon from the café for referrals.

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Verdalee Tombelaine

Remembering Verdalee

News of Verdalee Tombelaine's death in Norfolk, Virginia on December 26, 2005, brought forth fond recollections of this very special lady – friend and mentor to many of us working with volunteers.

As a founder and leader of Volunteer Program Administrators in New York City Cultural Institutions, Verdalee planned sessions on pertinent subjects providing invaluable training and networking opportunities for new and established administrators. She was a regular volunteer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the New York Horticultural Society.

As a board member of AAMV she brought her wisdom and expertise. Verdalee was a strong supporter of the original Handbook on Volunteer Program Administration, and she was herself an invaluable resource.

Always immaculately turned out, always thoughtful of others, always ready to enjoy with her friends the cultural offerings of New York City, Verdalee will be remembered for her professional understanding of volunteers and volunteer administration and her encouragement of those in the field fortunate to have known and loved her.

Patricia Sands is a former Director of Volunteer Programs at the South Street Seaport Museum in New York City and a former AAMV board member.

AAMV announces *continued from page 1*

- Advertising — Does the museum use ads and PSAs in local media to build its image as a worthwhile place to volunteer? Ask a volunteer to record a PSA.
- Media coverage — Do articles appear in local newspapers, in organization newsletters, on television, and online? Take a picture of volunteers in action and write a piece on the volunteer program.
- Organize a volunteer recruitment event by coordinating with other nonprofit organizations for a community-wide volunteer recruitment effort.

Food for Thought from the chapter on "Evaluating Effectiveness":

1. Is volunteer program evaluation a routine practice in our museum?
If so, how do we use it to improve our program? If not, what are the impediments to evaluation, and how can we eliminate them?
2. Do we ask volunteers to assess their satisfaction with the program?
Do we ask museum staff and management to assess their satisfaction with the program?
3. Do we do a good job of implementing evaluation results? If not, how can we do better?
4. Is the evaluation of individual volunteer performance a routine practice in our museum? If so, how do we use it to motivate volunteers?
If not, what are the impediments to evaluation, and how can we eliminate them?
5. Do we have clear policies about volunteer expectations, evaluation, performance improvement plans, and dismissal?

In addition to what you have planned for National Volunteer Week, April 23-29, are you building community and encouraging connectedness throughout the year?

Consider these guidelines from AAMV's new book:

1. Speak to volunteers by name.
Make sure that all museum staff members understand the importance of this simple habit. As a tool for remembering, ask everyone to wear nametags, or maintain a bulletin board with volunteers' photos.
2. Give volunteers a place to work.
Provide the space and tools they need and, if possible, an area for volunteers to gather. Provide coffee, tea, and a small refrigerator, or invite them to use the staff coffee room or lounge.
3. Listen to volunteers' ideas. When you make a point of inviting and listening to their opinions and suggestions, you establish a positive culture of improvement instead of a culture that breeds complaining.
4. Communicate and celebrate volunteers' contributions. Promote high visibility for volunteers in all museum communications, internal and external. Be sure to engage the CEO in celebrating their contributions. Remind staff to honor volunteer involvement in department or program achievements.
5. Involve volunteers in the daily life of the museum. Invite them to staff meetings occasionally and other informal gatherings as a way of building community. Be aware of and discourage behavior that excludes volunteers, even if it is unintentional.
6. Keep volunteers informed about museum events and issues. Regular communication about what's happening helps them feel in the loop and part of a team.
7. Set high standards for volunteers.
Low expectations imply work that is of low value, and performance and self-esteem to match.
8. Encourage volunteers to get to know one another. Personal connections are important community-building tools.