



A WORD FROM CARE

AAM COMMITTEE ON AUDIENCE RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

by Ellen Giusti, CARE Chair

I am just back from Cleveland where I served on the AAM National Program Committee for the 1999 Annual Meeting. The conference will be held in Cleveland, next April 25-29. The Committee reviewed 176 proposals and selected 113 to be on the program. The committee, composed almost exclusively of museum directors and CEOs, meets in the host city. The majority of proposals come through the AAM SPC's (Standing Professional Committees) and four members of the Council of SPC Chairs are invited to be on the Committee. In effect, museum CEOs decide what will interest everyone in the field, from students to media producers, educators and designers. CARE submitted 12 session proposals and nine were accepted—a sterling accomplishment. More about the annual meeting in the next issue.

The National Program Committee talked about next year's millennial meeting in Baltimore. AAM would like more panel sessions with a cross-disciplinary focus. This is perhaps at odds with the mechanism that has evolved for submitting proposals, i.e., through SPCs that are specific to each discipline. Fortunately, our field of

visitor studies contributes to all aspects of the museum profession. The AAM annual meeting is not where we preach to the choir. With some 5,000 attendees, it provides us with the opportunity to network with and educate our potential clients from museums across the nation and even abroad.

If any of you did not get a session proposal in before the September 1 deadline, you still have time to participate in the annual meeting. Our poster session in the Marketplace of Ideas—Current Trends in Audience Research and Evaluation—is open until the end of this year. Carey Tisdal from the St. Louis Science Center is chairing the event, so look for more information from her soon about submitting abstracts.

An update on AAM organizational issues affecting those of you who are CARE members: as of January 1, 1999, all SPC members must also be AAM members because AAM believes that SPC members should support the parent organization. In exchange, AAM will take on more chores that SPCs have been doing for themselves, such as sending out information to prospective members,

keeping membership rolls, and collecting dues. If anyone joins or renews his or her CARE membership before then, the old rules prevail. However, participation in the annual meeting is limited to association members. After January 1, 1999, CARE membership dues will be included on your AAM invoice.

So far the Council of SPC Chairs has been unsuccessful in convincing AAM to change its policy on consultants. AAM has been advised that for tax exempt purposes, all profit-making entities must be considered vendors and cannot vote, hold office in AAM or an SPC, or serve as MAP reviewers. This policy has particular impact on CARE and NAME members, as well as others affected by the current museum practice of outsourcing. We will continue to voice our objection to this policy and lobby for change.

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VSA

Visitor Studies Association

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE IS JANUARY 15, 1999

– Your Thoughts, Please –

Please share your thoughts, reactions and ideas for future issues of *Visitor Studies Today!*

Send to the editor via email at: VSAnews@museum.cl.msu.edu

Check the Website for registration information and updates on the 1998 VSA conference in Washington D.C.

The Website address is: <http://museum.cl.msu.edu/vsa>