

The Welcomer

Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association

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2010 Conference!

“And down the stretch they come...”

Over the first weekend of May, we had the great opportunity to watch Super Saver – a horse born and raised in Woodford County, Kentucky (where our conference schedule will find us on Thursday, June 3) – make his way around the track at Churchill Downs to become the 136th winner of the Kentucky Derby. As in years past, as the horses made that final turn we heard the phrase “And down the stretch they come...” As I consider the fact that nearly two years of planning for the 2010 CIVSA Annual Conference is down to less than a month, I hear those same words playing over and over in my head.

While it has certainly become crunch time for the Conference Committee, I can't begin to tell you how excited we all are for the entire program that has been put together. I hope those attending will find an exceptional combination of useful sessions and discussions, energizing speakers, meaningful exchanges of information and ideas, and a few fun moments to remember your time in Lexington.

We feel very fortunate to not only have a wide variety of sessions and discussions from our peers, but several keynote and featured speakers to provide insights, generate ideas and hopefully leave us re-energized as we return to our institutions. We also have a group of students joining us so we can hear their thoughts on visiting our campuses.

In the next couple of weeks those attending the conference can expect to hear from me regarding the details for your time in Lexington including what to bring, what to wear and what to expect. In the meantime, if you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact me. And if you are interested in an additional brief look at the Bluegrass region you might enjoy this article just published by *The Guardian*: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/travel/2010/apr/30/kentucky-derby-visitor-guide?page=all>. You can also follow us on Twitter at CIVSALex2010 for updates before and during the conference.

With a record number of over 135 attendees from 85 institutions, 34 states, DC, Canada and Trinidad & Tobago, we cannot wait for y'all to join us for the start of the 2010 CIVSA Annual Conference. Don't forget to watch the Preakness Stakes on Saturday, May 15 and cheer on Super Saver – who knows, maybe we'll be cheering on a Triple Crown attempt as we watch the Belmont Stakes at our closing dinner. Down the stretch we come... see you in Lexington!

Stephen Barnett, University of Kentucky

Quarterly Conference Calls!

The Member Relations Committee is thrilled to offer Quarterly Conference Calls as an educational opportunity for the CIVSA membership. The quarterly sessions are planned for February, May, August, and November and will take place between 1:00 pm - 2:00pm EST to accommodate all time zones. The sessions will last between 30 and 60 minutes. The only charge to you will be the cost of the long distance call to the dial-in number. Our plan is to have the discussion during the first two weeks of the designated months.

Our first Quarterly Conference Call will take place on **Thursday, May 13**. The expert leading the discussion will be Dr. Goodlett McDaniel, an Associate Provost at George Mason University. For our discussion, the topic will be stress and anxiety....how to recognize it, deal with it, make it work *for* you and not *against* you, and how to lessen it in the workplace.

Here is a link to more information about the topic and from there you can access his bio:

<http://communityrelations.gmu.edu/speakersbureau/results.asp>

If you would like to participate in this groundbreaking initiative, you must **RSVP no later than 5:00pm EST on Monday May 10, 2010** to Sarah Walz, swalz@gmu.edu, for instructions on the dial-in process. And remember, there is no cost to members other than that of the long distance call to the dial-in number!

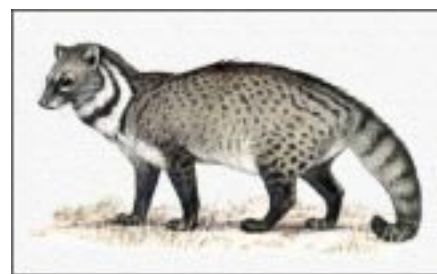
*Becky Nemeth & Sarah Walz
Co-Chairs, Member Relations Committee
George Mason University*

Meet CIVSA's Newest Member!

Meet CIVY! CIVY is a civet and he is traveling the country to meet CIVSA professionals like you! Don't panic, he's not a real civet, but a cardboard one. He is having his picture taken with CIVSA members all over the country and learning creative tips from members like you. If you would like to know where CIVY has already traveled, make sure to check out [his page](#) in the members-only section of the CIVSA website. If you find CIVY in your mailbox, you can help CIVY continue his adventures by sending him to another member of CIVSA within ten days. If you need help choosing a member to send CIVY to, remember that all current members are listed in the members only section of our website. Before you drop him in the mail, make sure to take a creative photo of him on your campus. You may also choose to teach him something unique that your office does, so that it can be shared as a resource for other CIVSA members. You can email your photo and lesson to web@civsa.org. Our goal is to make sure CIVY meets all of our members!

The civet is a little animal with a catlike body, long legs, long tail, and a masked face resembling a raccoon or weasel. Civets, a nocturnal animal, can be found in Africa and the East Indies. CIVY of course lives in America and is now the new mascot for CIVSA! This is a fun way for us to share ideas and learn more about all of the members of CIVSA. Our hope is that you may even meet someone new through the process, or at least learn about our members through pictures and advice on the website. At the conference in June, make sure to look for a display about CIVY in the hospitality suite. There will be more information about CIVY's travels. Have fun with this! And make sure you send CIVY along if he comes to visit you!

*Brittany Monroe
University of
Colorado at
Boulder*



One Father's Take on Campus Tours

Josh Kurtz is brand-new explorer in the wilderness of college admissions. Recently, he set off to survey the landscape the way many parents do—by packing up the car and driving to campus after campus after campus.

Mr. Kurtz; his wife, Caryl Ashrey; and their two daughters left their home, in Takoma Park, Md., late on a Friday night. They returned eight days later after visiting seven colleges and putting well over 1200 miles on their Hyundai Elantra. They filled up the gas tank at least five times. They stayed in cheap motels. They bought healthy food when they could find it and stopped at a Cracker Barrel when they could not. All told, the trip cost the family at least \$750, and Mr. Kurtz, a journalist, blew five days of vacation time.

So, was it all worth it? Sure, Mr. Kurtz says. After all, his daughter Zoe is a high-school junior, and the trip allowed her to get a feel for different colleges.

Still, the question of what, exactly, the family took away from the experience is difficult to answer. "We had heard that these tours tend to emphasize facilities—the cool new student union, the luxury gym—more than academics," Mr. Kurtz said. "That proved to be the case."

First, the family visited Emory University, in Atlanta. Then they drove to North Carolina, making stops at Guilford College, Elon University, and four campuses in the University of North Carolina's system. Mr. Kurtz liked many things he saw and heard, but was struck by the sameness of each tour.

"Each college has a certain kind of surface look, and the students look a little different," he says. "But the tours all seem very similar. They all melded together, both in terms of what you saw and the sort of the raps you got from administrators and students. You knew at some point they would be telling you, 'Hey, see those blue security lights? They're every 500 feet.' On every campus, there was some word about drinking, but how there was no pressure to do it if you don't want to. And at each campus, I marveled at how our student tour guides could walk backwards."

Zoe, who plays the violin and speaks fluent Spanish, has yet to decide what she wants to study, or whether she wants to attend a big college or a small one. She got a bad vibe on one campus, however. Why? Because her tour guide there was a member of the football team, which gave her the impression that the campus was full of jocks, her father says.

As Mr. Kurtz and his wife, a teacher, marched along on the tours, they pondered a single question: How in the world were they going to pay for all this? Although they heard something about financial aid on each campus, they had hoped to hear a lot more than they did.

On some campuses, the family made a point of stopping by the career-counseling office. Why not make career counselors available during the official tour? Mr. Kurtz wondered.

Perhaps the best moment of the trip happened outside the box of the official tour. At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Zoe and her parents were talking about music when a student walking by overheard their conversation. The student, a member of the marching band, offered to walk them over to the music building. There, the student showed them around and introduced them to his friends. It was a moment of unscripted delight.

By the time the family returned home, Mr. Kurtz felt savvier than he had before the trip. Nonetheless, he wasn't sure if the journey would help Zoe decide where to apply. His advice for other parents is blunt. "Don't leave your [BS] detector at home," he says. "On the tours, you're hard-pressed to find anyone who would cop to the fact that there must be a few unhappy students on the campus."

As for the emphasis on campus facilities, Mr. Kurtz wondered about that, too. Still, he admits that some of the cafeterias were impressive. "We were happy when we saw that there were fresh vegetables at the student union," he says.

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Betty's Spring Briefing...

Spring is always a busy time of year on our campuses and as you read through this edition of *The Welcomer* you will see it has been a very eventful time for CIVSA too! We have incorporated and registered CIVSA as a trade name, had new CIVS Standards and Guidelines approved by CAS, announced a new quarterly educational program, launched a CIVSA mascot program, recruited new members and registered over 130 folks from 85 schools to attend the 2010 conference (the most ever!)...and that's not all! We've even actively started working on the 2011 conference! Whew!! The great news is there are more CIVSA members than ever involved in accomplishing all this tremendous work.

With our 2010 conference just weeks away the Conference Planning Committee under the outstanding leadership of Stephen Barnett (University of Kentucky) is hard at work overseeing every final detail. They have a lot of surprises up their sleeves and all I can say is that if you are joining us be sure to leave room in your suitcase for all the extra stuff you will want to take home with you! Other than the outstanding program headed up by Janey Wheeler (Oklahoma City University) and her committee, I can't say what I am looking forward to the most. The conference is packed full of so many great events and opportunities for networking and information sharing. Did you know a featured speaker and a closing speaker were recently added to the program?

If you haven't registered yet it's not too late to make plans to join us in the Bluegrass! Registration is open until May 15 but after that it's too late so hurry and don't miss out! If you are unable to participate this year we will be sure to share session notes, PowerPoint presentations and lots of photos in the *Members Only* section of the CIVSA website right after conference. You can follow us on Twitter during the conference (CIVSALex2010) and we will be sure to tweet the location of the 2011 conference as soon as it is announced.

Until next time... *Betty*

p.s. Word has it there is a rumor floating around that I will be riding a horse – Big Brown to be exact – during the conference opening reception. I am setting the record straight – Nope, not happening!!

*Betty Spengler, CIVSA President
University of Maryland*

Remember!

Registration for the 2010 conference will close on **May 15** and the hotel rate of \$125/night is only available for reservations made before **May 12**. Hurry if you have not yet finalized your conference plans!



From the Research and Assessment Committee

Random Acts of Deflection

This article was recently published in a faculty and staff newsletter at the University of South Carolina. In part, the USC Visitor Center was established to ensure that faculty and staff across the campus became more intentional about helping campus visitors and more mindful about potential acts of deflection. I believe this article reminds us of the importance of our profession and why we need people to pick up the ball and run with it instead of deflecting issues and problems in the hope that someone else will handle them. Happy reading!

Denise Wellman
University of South Carolina

Random acts of deflection: From casual observation to causal research

Funny things happen on the way to making things happen. And when it comes to collaboration, teamwork, community effort, and other good intentions typical of higher education settings, a lot of those things can be categorized as “deflection”: tossing the ball to and from one another’s courts while hoping someone else will pick it up and run with it.

When we decided to write about this phenomenon as co-authors, we found the task became almost impossible because the ball just wouldn’t stay put in either of our in-baskets. We deflected the initial drafting chore back and forth for almost a full year!

Eventually—and we can’t recall who blinked first—the piece was somehow completed and on its way to appearing in the September-October issue of *Academe* (after editors at several peer-reviewed journals deflected it—OK, rejected it). What started as an observation in and around our own department grew to information from experiences (our own and others’) all over campus. The result was an essay that became

all the more timely during the efficiency and accountability demands of the current recession. Deflection—operationalized as passing the buck, ducking the responsibility, ignoring the issue, etc.—actually can be quite an effective time-management tool when you need to get back to more important work. Likewise, recognizing (and quickly diverting) deflective attempts by colleagues can boost work productivity.

Our article, “The Seven Habits of Highly Deflective Colleagues,” is the small beginning of a larger research project that promises to bring scientific methods to the discovery of effective methods for both dealing with deflection from colleagues and dealing out deflection to colleagues.

From e-mails we have received since our article appeared, we now estimate there are at least 27 habits waiting to be uncovered. So, stay tuned for findings from our ongoing study. As soon as we get past our collegial buck passing and ball tossing, we will be ready to collect more data and write more articles.

Seven habits of highly deflective colleagues

Upon beginning our college teaching careers, we expected that some students would greet assignments by deftly dodging responsibility for late submissions: “My dog ate my notes” or “My flash drive got flushed down the toilet.”

The blame game and the excuse ruse are familiar plays among student procrastinators seeking to deflect course requirements. Less expected among early-career realities was our discovery that such deflection was not exclusive to the student community. In fact, our own colleagues—deans, chairs, fellow professors, and administrative assistants—had made substantial strides in their deflective habits since their student days.

Continued on next page

According to Wikipedia, that trusted scholarly source, the meaning of “deflection” varies, depending on its contextual use. Our favorite meaning, because it reflects the deflection we’ve experienced, comes from physics in which it is defined as an event in which an object collides and bounces against a plane surface.

For this effort, we define deflection as a strategy to bounce action or responsibility away from oneself and toward another person, time, or place. Although we contend that deflection occurs in all areas of personal and professional life, we limit our focus to the deflective colleague (*collega deflectivus*) in academe. Our extensive qualitative fieldwork revealed seven natural habits of deflective colleagues, which we are pleased to share below.

Circumspect Deflect. Upon a request for procedural information, assume a puzzled but attentive air, punctuated with “Hmmm.” Follow with some variation of “I’m the new gal around here, and I don’t want to steer you in the wrong direction. You’d better check with an expert.” Don’t commit, and you won’t be asked again.

Classic Deflect. When presented with an idea requiring your potential action, first acknowledge its goodness; then, immediately direct it to a holding pen. “Good idea! Bring me data to support it,” or “Good idea! Form a committee to consider it,” or “Good idea! Run it past my associate dean.”

Cog-in-the-Wheel Deflect. You want to assist your colleagues, but you are powerless to do so: the department chair, dean’s office, graduate school, or some other larger, more powerful entity makes the rules; you are just a cog in the wheel. Keep turning.

Sycophant Deflect. Your colleague has a brilliant idea, and you gush over it and suggest that he take the idea up for executive review. However, before going up, you suggest he dig deep to guarantee he fully understands the contextual history behind his idea. Shortly, your colleague is dazed. Should he go up and then down? Down and then up? Both simultaneously? Whew!

Pirouette Deflect. A subject crash lands on the programmatic, departmental, or committee table, and it’s an inconvenient truth. What to do? Spin the subject around and about until colleagues lose track of the original subject and it morphs into one of your choosing. “Weapons of mass destruction? Actually, the issue is bringing democracy to the people.” Closer to home: “A budget deficit? Actually, it’s a way to reposition departmental assets.”

Introspect Deflect. Tired of youngsters with fancy ideas promising to impinge on your time and territory? As others discuss the idea, appear interested and press one index finger to the lips as your head gently bobs in agreement. Then join the discussion by helpfully noting, “Oh, we tried that [months, years, decades ago], and it didn’t work. Boy, history is a great teacher, isn’t it?” Deflection accomplished.

Paralysis-by-Analysis Deflect. We also spent years discussing, but never writing, this current piece on deflection. Frankly, we are amazed this article is in print, given the intensive deflection it encountered. To that, we can only add a final strategy discovered while writing this piece: the “I need more time to fully investigate it” deflection. We’ll get back to you about this technique ... upon further investigation.

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Welcome New Members!

Jodi Bailey
Alfred University

Corey Blaske
University of Louisville

Patricia Brown
University of the West Indies

Lorena Calderon
University of California, Merced

Jenel Capes
Houston Baptist University

Chris Davis
University of Louisville

Apryl Dervay
Lake Erie College

Sally Farrar
High Point University

Parfait Gasana
Yale University

Susan Hardwegg
University of California, Irvine

Susie Houston
Sam Houston State University

Katelyn Karasack
Saint Vincent College

Tracy Karr
Susquehanna University

Tammy Lawson
University of Louisville

Bernadette Lis
University of Michigan

Clint Lockwood
Sam Houston State University

Jana May
Georgia State University

Laney Morris
High Point University

Jim Parrish
Auburn University

Carol Richmond
Miami University

Donna Seamon
University of Michigan

Cindy Singley
Auburn University

James Sprenger
Southern Alberta Institute of Technology

David Stuempfle
Arizona State University

Benjamin Toll
St. Mary's College of Maryland

Amy Ware
Auburn University

Megan Wheeler
Angelo State University

CIVSA Member Profile

Brittney Joyce, The University of Texas at Arlington

Job Title: Manager, New Student Welcome Center

How long have you been in the information/visitor services world? If we start back at the beginning, my first "job" in information/visitor services was as a campus tour guide at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida in 2003. My involvement at Eckerd led me to pursue a career in higher education, and the path I chose was Undergraduate Admissions and Recruiting. At each university at which I've worked as an admission counselor, I have had the fortunate opportunity to work with campus tours and visitor services through the admissions process. Now, at UT Arlington, I manage our New Student Welcome Center, a position which is completely dedicated to serving our prospective students, their families and special campus guests, and I've held this position since January 2009.

When did you join CIVSA? January 2009

How many CIVSA conferences have you attended? 1 - Boston! Looking forward to Lexington!

What are your major job responsibilities? I am responsible for any planning and implementation for our daily campus tours, housing tours, special group tours, and VIP campus visits for special guests on campus. I also manage our physical space for the New Student Welcome Center and oversee the image and experience that we're providing for our campus guests. The best part of my position is managing our MavElite program (38 campus tour guides, telecounselors, and front desk workers). I also serve on our recruitment events planning committee, participate in a Student Enrollment Services emerging leaders internship program, and help as needed in any endeavor for the Office of Undergraduate Recruitment.

What is a typical day like at your job? Logistics. Now student development theory. Now strategic planning. Now report running. Architecture meeting for the NEW New Student Welcome Center for 2012.

Special tour group ran late. Back to logistics. Daily telecounselor captains meeting. Meet with student and family. Now to graphic design for campus visit communication flow. Daily tour guide captains meeting. Back to logistics. Did I mention report running? :)

What is your best piece of advice for other CIVSA members? DO NOT REINVENT THE WHEEL. When I started this position, I felt as if I had to recreate all our processes, materials, and training program to fit my unique vision for our campus visit program. When I started using the CIVSA listserv to ask questions and the CIVSA website to look at things like training manuals, I was able to spend time modifying ideas with my own spin to make them better and more applicable to MavElite and UT Arlington.

What is the most fun thing that your office does? We take MavElite on an annual fall retreat during the first weekend of the fall semester. We do training on new areas and refreshers on our standard policies, procedures and daily operations in the New Student Welcome Center. Since I come from a student affairs background, I also love giving the students some exercises in teambuilding and leadership development. The BEST part of retreat is our annual MavElite Olympics - we break the group down into Front Counter, Tour Guides, and Telecounselors and have them compete against each other for homemade medals and bragging rights. It's by far my favorite part of the year!

What is your favorite part of working in visitor/information services? MavElite. It is my honor and pleasure to work with our students and help them develop as college students and campus leaders. At the end of the day, being able to watch them take ownership of their positions and practice the mission, vision and purpose of our office is extremely rewarding.

How many items are on your current to-do list? Which to do list? I have four: to do today, to do tomorrow, to do next week and to do SOMETIME. :)





"I am so excited about this program. As the only CIVSA member from my institution I was a bit anxious about attending the upcoming conference as a first timer. Kudos to the Member Relations Committee for a great idea. Count me in!"

Tamika Bynum
 Coordinator of Admissions Events/
 Assistant Visit Coordinator
 Earlham College



- Enhance professional development
- Share expertise with other professionals
- Gain national recognition
- Improve customer service
- Develop more effective training programs
- Enhance student learning

SOUND INTERESTING?

THINK RESEARCH & ASSESSMENT!

The Research & Assessment Committee invites you to submit a proposal for a research project to be presented at the 2011 CIVSA conference!

Early Deadline for Proposals.....August 1, 2010
 Proposals Awarded.....September 1, 2010

If your proposal is selected, you will present at the 2011 annual conference, be eligible for a reimbursement of the 2011 conference registration fee, and be published in the Fall 2011 Welcomer.

For more information, contact any member of the [Research & Assessment Committee](#).

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Have a question for the Board?
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