

*the*  
**CIVSA WELCOMER**  
 Collegiate Information and Visitor Services Association



*Shopping in Old Town Alexandria*

## The Countdown to Alexandria!

By Stephen Barnett, CIVSA President  
 University of Kentucky

For the past several months we have been anxiously anticipating the celebration of our 20th Annual Conference, and without a doubt, the Conference Committee has worked innumerable hours to enhance this year's conference and make it an experience you will never forget. Since my first conference in 2005, I have enjoyed moments that I will always remember, so to honor this great occasion I thought I would share with you my top 20 memories of CIVSA conferences – but given the space in the Welcomer and with attention spans in mind, I'll just do 10! I do this more so to encourage first time attendees to soak up the entire CIVSA experience and participate in every event possible, but also to hopefully help returning attendees remember some of their fondest memories as well.

### *In this issue*

Letter from the President	1
CIVSA Conference Tees	2
Make the Most of Conference	3
CIVSA Cares	4
Have you seen CiVY?	5
CIVSA Strategic Plan	5
NCAA Tournament	6
CIVSA Roundtable	6
CIVSA Member Profile	7
What We Don't Talk About on the Admissions Tour	8
New Members	10

10. Arriving at the Salt Lake City airport for my first conference and riding a shuttle with Bryan Jue and Janey Wheeler who were so welcoming to me and made me very glad I was on the way to my first CIVSA conference.
9. Amazing event locations such as the Queen Mary in California, Sundance in Utah, the Odyssey on the Potomac in DC and Mile High Station in Denver (will likely be adding the Monuments by Moonlight Trolley Tour to this very soon).
8. Leading roundtable discussions on Town and Gown Relationships in Boston in 2009 and CRM Systems in San Antonio in 2011.
7. Presenting my first session on Visitor Center Communication Plans at Notre Dame in 2007.

(Continued on next page...)

6. Touring AMAZING campuses around the country and learning best practices from colleagues and student ambassadors from Pomona, California to Boston, Massachusetts and innumerable places in between.

5. Learning from our Keynote Speakers on everything from Who Moved My Cheese to Monday Morning Messages to Thinking Sideways (and very excited about Invisible Leadership this year).

4. Seeing our largest number of conference attendees ever shuffle around to take the group picture at Red Rocks in Denver in 2012.

3. Hosting the 2010 Annual Conference in Lexington and seeing members cheering on their horses watching the Belmont while the sun set over our closing dinner at Keeneland.

2. Appreciating the friendships that I have developed since my first conference in 2005 in Utah that will continue long after my professional career.

1. Reaching 500 members in 2013 and celebrating our profession, this Association and our friendships (both old and new) in Alexandria, Virginia!

Let the "Magic" begin... or continue actually!

See you in Alexandria!

Best,

Stephen Barnett



2005 CIVSA Conference Attendees at BYU  
(We see you hiding in the back, Stephen)



2012 CIVSA Conference Attendees in Denver at Red Rocks  
(We see you hiding in the back again, Stephen)

**BRING HOME A PIECE OF OUR 20 YEARS OF CIVSA MAGIC BY ORDERING A 2013 CONFERENCE TEE SHIRT!**

**VISIT OUR FACEBOOK FAN PAGE FOR THE SPREADSHIRT T-SHIRT SHOP TO ORDER!**



## How to Make the Most of Your CIVSA Conference Experience

by: Ashley McDermott, Louisiana State University



Just about a year ago, my supervisor surprised me with a CIVSA brochure and an email stating, "Take a look and let me know if you are interested." At the time I had never heard of CIVSA or considered consulting peer universities to enhance our own visitation program but looking back, it was one of the best decisions I have made!

Weeks later I was packing my bags and heading for the Mile High City. Once there, I learned some extremely valuable information, and while it would take far too long to review all of my notes from last year's conference, here are a few tips on how to get the most out of your own CIVSA conference experience.

**Come Prepared** - While we are a more casual conference, it is still important to remember all of the typical conference essentials! Pack note taking materials, electronic chargers, comfortable shoes, plenty of business cards, and extra school swag for some new friends!

**Attend As Many Sessions As Possible** – You never know what you will learn from others and what you can apply to your university.

**Mix It Up/Divide And Conquer** – Vary the subjects of your sessions. Even if you think your university has something "mastered" do not be afraid to check out how your peers do things and share your own expertise!



*Old Town Alexandria and the Potomac River*

**Open Up** – Open your mind to ideas, methods, and processes of others! Large public universities can learn so much from small community colleges or private schools and vice versa!

**Network, Network, Network** – I have met some of the best people and fantastic (professional & personal) friends from last year's CIVSA conference.

**HAVE FUN!** – CIVSA is by far the most educational, diverse, and fun conference I have ever attended! But like everything else, the experience is what you make of it! So pack your bag and get ready because this year's conference is 20 years in the making and promises to be nothing short of magical!



Haven't registered for the 2013 CIVSA Annual Conference? Don't miss out!  
Visit [www.civsa.org/conference](http://www.civsa.org/conference) to register!

## CIVSA Cares - Ronald McDonald House® Charities of Greater Washington D.C.

by: Ashley Bair, Conference Publicity & Promotions Chair



As excitement builds and we all begin making our CIVSA conference plans, I urge you to remember one of our organization's deep commitments - setting standards of excellence by inspiring and supporting others. This year, we are raising the bar and introducing CIVSA Cares, our annual charity drive to benefit a prominent service organization in our conference host city.

This year, for CIVSA's inaugural charity drive, we have selected the Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Greater Washington D.C. (RMHC®). RMHC relentlessly works to address one of the most urgent needs of our community – children's health. They are dedicated to improving children's access to quality health care through their programs.

Their cornerstone program, Ronald McDonald House®, provides a home-away-from-home to families with seriously ill children being treated in local hospitals. Over the last 33 years, more than 22,500 families have stayed at either of their two area Houses, helping their child heal faster and better. Other programs include their Ronald McDonald Care Mobile® that provides free primary health care to thousands of children in D.C. annually; their Ronald McDonald Family Room at Children's National Medical Center that provides a place to rest and regroup just steps away from their child, and an outreach program that helps children and young adults reach their full potential, all without any government funding. This means that RMHC of Greater Washington D.C. relies entirely on the generosity of individuals, the business community, philanthropic groups, and the public at large.

CIVSA members will have the opportunity to make contributions by check, provide Wish List items or make online donations at [www.rmhc.greaterdc.org](http://www.rmhc.greaterdc.org) (please make sure to note 'CIVSA Cares' if making an online contribution). The Wish List will be circulated prior to the conference but if you are looking for an easy way to help, gift cards are always welcome!

### **Gift Cards Make a Versatile, Helpful and Useful Donation!**

Grocery

Walgreens/CVS

Home Depot/Lowes

Target/Wal-Mart

Staples/Office Depot

Bed Bath & Beyond

Michaels/AC Moore

Visa/Master Cards

**Please plan on joining our CIVSA team in making our first  
CIVSA Cares drive an overwhelming success!!**

# SHAPING OUR FUTURE!

by Janey Wheeler, Emeritus  
Strategic Planning Committee Chair

In November 2011, CIVSA began working towards our first plan to strategically grow while exploring ways to best meet the needs of the membership. That work is now complete thanks in large part to the many members who offered their input through surveys and brainstorming sessions. We are excited to announce the plan will kick off in CIVSA's 20th anniversary year!

## Coming to conference?

Join us at the Annual Business Meeting in Alexandria, VA on Wed, June 5 to learn more about The Plan designed to promote and strengthen CIVSA in a format we hope you won't soon forget!

## Can't join us this year?

To insure all of our valuable members are a part of this process, The Plan will be available on the CIVSA website via the same announcement format following Conference so stay posted!

# WHERE IS CIVY?

**AMBER ALERT: CIVY hasn't been seen in over 7 months!**  
Where will CIVY travel next?....

CIVY is a civet and he is traveling the country to meet CIVSA members. If you find CIVY in your mailbox, continue his adventures by sending him to another member of CIVSA within ten days. 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. E-mail your photo and lesson to [web@civsa.org](mailto:web@civsa.org)!



# CIVSA and THE NCAA TOURNAMENT

**CONGRATULATIONS to all our member institutions that made the Men's and Women's NCAA Tournament!**



Special CONGRATULATIONS to Benjamin Toll, The George Washington University, for winning our annual CIVSA March Madness Bracket for the THIRD year in a row! Ben won free registration for our annual conference in Alexandria for his on-point team selection.

*Pictured left: Ben visits Atlanta to celebrate the win with the University of Louisville Cardinals! Can Ben FOUR-peat next year?!*

## CIVSA Roundtable

**Countdown to Conference**

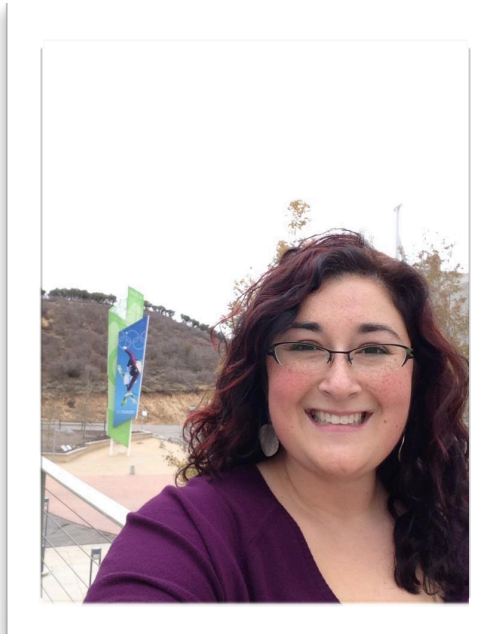
Tuesday, May 14th at 3:00PM EST

Moderated by:

**Kim Schon**

Associate Director of Admission for Event Management, Bucknell University  
CIVSA Executive Board Treasurer

- An official invitation will be sent out prior to the call with information on how to RSVP and how to access the call. If you have questions or ideas for CIVSA Roundtables, contact Catie Taylor (University of Evansville), Member Relations Co-Chair, at [ct37@evansville.edu](mailto:ct37@evansville.edu).



## Member Profile

### Megan Beresford, University of Washington - Tacoma

*In the CIVSA Communications survey, several members suggested a “get-to-know-other-members” or “get-to-know-the-Board” feature for the Welcomer. This is the ninth; look for more profiles of other members in the future issues.*

**Job Title:** Associate Director of University Recruitment

**What are your major job responsibilities?** I oversee the recruitment efforts of UWT. This includes supervision the admissions advising staff, territory management, and campus visitation.

**How long have you been in the information/visitor services world?** Including time as a student, 11 years.

**When did you join CIVSA?** Fall 2010

**How many CIVSA Conferences have you attended?** 2, San Antonio and Denver.

**How many items are on your current to-do list?** About 20. I have color coded electronic sticky notes on my desk top.

**What is the most fun thing that your office does?** I'm just getting to know them. . . but we do hold quarterly socials. For winter quarter we held a Luau themed gathering. There were flowers everywhere, hula hoops, limbo, a Hawaiian shirt contest, and of course delicious food.

**What is a typical day like at your job?** First stop –coffee. I'm 100% Northwest in that regard. I like to attack emails first thing in the morning. I usually have 1-2 meetings a day or find myself prepping for them. Right now I'm in strategic planning mode, learning a new culture and trying to inspire those around me on a daily basis.

**What is your best piece of advice for other CIVSA members (about student training, customer service, unique traditions, your website, or anything!)?** Don't be afraid to hire an introvert. Tour guides are often ENFJ style people –which we love! But I have found that students who have introverted tendencies connect one-on-one with guests at a much more meaningful level. Different personalities are a blessing to any team. Don't be afraid to hire the student who is not typical –they just might surprise you and inspire your whole team.

**What is your favorite part of working in visitor/information services?** Event planning. I love it! The crazier the details, the better. I love that while the guests may not realize it, I know that the small details impact their impression of campus and their overall visit experience.



*Megan was one of our 2012 CIVSA Conference Foot Award Winners!*

## What We Don't Talk About on the Admissions Tour

Reprinted with permission from *The Chronicle of Higher Education (Run Your Campus blog)*

Posted Wednesday, May 1, 2013

by: James M. Lang

The season of submitting applications to colleges and awaiting their decisions has come to an end in my house. But I'm not talking about the job market.

We now face a nerve-racking month of figuring out which college my oldest daughter will attend. I should be more precise: She is deciding where she wants to go, and my wife and I are deciding whether we can afford it. She has been offered excellent scholarships and financial-aid packages by some institutions that are further down the pecking order. But, as is typical, the package was less generous from her dream university. I'm spending a lot of late evenings with my calculator and financial statements, assessing the impact of each choice on our household budget—and weighing the implications for her four younger siblings.

I have found the process equal parts dread-inducing (on the financial front) and fascinating (on all other fronts). My daughter has always pushed herself academically, and I am pleased to see how her effort has translated into exciting opportunities. I was happy in college, and I am hopeful, like any parent, that she will find happiness there as well.

Most fascinating has been the view of our profession from the other side—seeing it from the perspective of a parent, peeking into offices and buildings as an outsider, rather than strolling across my familiar quad and offering friendly smiles to visiting families.

In total we took seven or eight campus tours, all at colleges and universities in the Northeast, including Ivy League institutions and small liberal-arts colleges. We will be making our last couple of visits this month, as my daughter seems to be narrowing down her choices to two viable finalists. We have also attended multiple information sessions on various campuses, reviewed more brochures and pamphlets than I can count, and she has done two overnight visits.

What has struck me most forcefully throughout the process has been the almost total absence of dialogue—from tour guides, admissions representatives, or promotional literature—about what most people see as the main functions of college: teaching and learning.

During one of our recent conversations about her prospects, I asked my daughter whether she could remember a single one of her tour guides describing in any detail a really amazing course they had taken, or a powerful "eureka" moment orchestrated by a teacher, or any other experience related to their learning in their courses.

"Nope," she said.

"So what did you take away from those tours?" I asked.

She shrugged and rolled her eyes. (She's smart, but she's 17.)

"I don't know. More like a general sense of what the campus was like."

I knew she had attended two classes on one of her overnight visits. Surely the prestigious liberal-arts college she visited must have funneled her into some showcase course where she would experience the power of the college classroom. I asked her what those classes were like.

"The teacher showed a PowerPoint and then we talked about it," she replied.

"Did it strike you as any different from what you do every day in your high-school classes?"

"Nope."

I want to be careful here to avoid hasty generalizations, and not to apply my own limited experience to every college and university in America. Still, we were touring some top institutions in our region, and I can attest that our experiences in that respect were remarkably consistent from campus to campus.

We learned all we could ever want to know about living quarters, dining-hall food, exercise facilities, campus social life, clubs and activities, libraries, special programs and opportunities, and financial aid. We learned next to nothing about what made each campus unique or distinctive in terms of the daily learning experiences my daughter would have there, or about outstanding teachers or teaching practices on campus.

(continued on next page...)

I understand why that's the case. Like any parent of a prospective student at a residential college, we are preparing for our child to live on her own for the first time. What shape will that new life take? I want to be able to envision my daughter in her new room, and gain a sense of what her peers will be like, and know that she will have access to food and facilities that will allow her to lead a healthy lifestyle.

But I also know that students spend many hours each week sitting in classrooms like my own, or doing work that arises from those classrooms, and that most of us see the primary function of colleges and universities as offering the best possible educational experience. Shouldn't we give prospective students a clear picture of that feature of their future lives, and see if we can use that picture to entice them to join us because they are as excited about their learning as they are about their dorm rooms?

It's not like we would have to start from scratch in describing the work of teaching and learning. We talk about it on our campuses with each other; we hold professional conversations about it in forums like this one; and we spend endless amounts of time and resources assessing it and preparing those assessments for administrators and accrediting bodies. Surely we can find ways to invite parents and prospective students into those conversations, or start new ones.

I want to offer a modest proposal, drawing on one of the most fundamental lessons I teach to students in my creative-nonfiction course. New writers in this tricky, hybrid genre typically compose essays filled with reflections, explanations, and generalities. They like to jump directly into their theme statement, and then find as many

ways as possible to say it over and over again.

Experienced writers know that we are story-listening animals, as well as story-telling animals, and that the best essays find ways to ground abstract meditations in detail, scene, and narrative. For the first half of the semester I am constantly reminding students to take their profound reflections about life and ground them in the world.

So likewise, crowing banalities about excellence in teaching and learning to prospective students probably won't get us very far. Generalized statements about the small student-faculty ratio are unlikely to stick in a prospective student's mind as much as would a specific story about a professor whose devotion to teaching made a real impact on someone's life.

I suspect that most students get their first real sense of a college campus from their tour guides, so my modest proposal would start with them. At the beginning of the year, a faculty member or academic administrator could work with the student tour guides on articulating the three most powerfully charged learning experiences those students have had on the campus. Have them write the experiences down, and practice narrating their stories. Help the guides understand what made those experiences so powerful, and how those learning experiences were—or were not—connected to the good work of an educator on the campus. Then ask the tour guides to stop at three different points on the tour and tell those three stories.

Real, heartfelt stories about learning would inspire prospective students far more than another brochure touting "caring professors."

This approach could have a ripple effect, inspiring the tour guides to think more deeply about their own learning, which could, in turn, inspire their friends and peers to do the same. It could also end up providing a rich set of materials for the institution to draw upon in promotional materials, as well as helping identify faculty and staff members who are making the biggest difference in the lives of students.

I offer this proposal less as a blueprint than as an effort to start a conversation (I invite readers to offer their own proposals in the comments below), and to encourage institutions to consider whether, in the public profile we present to our tuition-payers, we need to pay more attention to the most fundamental work we do on the campus.

Touring another campus as both a parent and a faculty member, I know where to train my eyes in order to get a sense of the teaching and learning environment there. Most parents will not have that insider knowledge, and could use our help in gaining a clear picture of what their sons and daughters will experience in the classroom. We should be doing a better job of giving them that help.

*James M. Lang is an associate professor of English and director of the college honors program at Assumption College. His new book, "Cheating Lessons: Learning From Academic Dishonesty," will be published by Harvard University Press later this year.*

# WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

## REGION I

**Cheryl McCrary**  
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**Tamara Long**  
Seattle University  
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University of Alaska Fairbanks  
Fairbanks, Alaska

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Kilgore, Texas

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**Cristi Stevens**  
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Mississippi State, Mississippi

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New College of Florida  
Sarasota, Florida

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**Darien Moore**  
**Sandra Popham**  
Northwood University  
Cedar Hill, Texas

**Lenell Hahn**  
**Alix Reilly**  
**Alyssa Shaffrin**  
Southeast Missouri State Univ  
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

**Gary Bush**  
**Chelsea Feraco**  
Southern Polytechnic State Univ  
Marietta, Georgia

**Erika Bazaldua**  
**Matthew Logan**  
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Nacogdoches, Texas

**Denelle Rodriguez**  
Texas Wesleyan University  
Fort Worth, Texas

**Vanessa Valdez**  
The University of Texas Pan-Am  
Edinburg, Texas

**Jessica Bobo**  
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Birmingham, Alabama

**Kristen Davidson**  
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Fayetteville, Arkansas

**Penny Hatfield**  
University of Central Arkansas  
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Rochester, Michigan

**Brian Heidlebaugh**  
**David Johnson**  
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Athens, Ohio

**Jes Arney**  
**Nicole Graham**  
**Barbara Lieske**  
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**Nina Laney**  
**Carolyn Smith**  
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**Joshua Jacobs**  
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**Jamie Abromaitis**  
**Kurt Heissenbutfel**  
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