



Staff wearing appropriate uniforms are easily identified in a tour group or at a visitor services center.

Do Clothes Make the ---?

*"Long before I am near enough to talk to you on the street, in a meeting... you announce your sex, age, and class to me through what you are wearing - and very possibly give me important information (or misinformation) as to your occupation, origin, personality, opinions." -Alison Lurie, *The Language of Clothes**

Last June at the 4th National Conference at Cornell University, a number of issues were identified as possible common points of interest for discussion with the membership. One of those issues was the question of whether visitors services/information programs require the wearing of special attire/uniforms by staff or volunteers. A survey in the fall issue of The Welcomer requested information on this subject from readers. The following is what we learned:

Not all programs require specific attire or a uniform as such; however, all but one program have some form of personal appearance guidelines. The reasons for such guidelines appeared time and again in survey responses - "our staff must present a professional image;" "to give a uniform and professional look;" and, finally, printed in bold in the University of Massachusetts at Amherst's dress code, "first impressions are important."

Other reasons for required attire include the feeling that it gives staff members an opportunity to demonstrate their pride in their institution and the fact that it readily shows visitors who is in charge and who can answer questions.

Required attire ranges from fairly specific standards of dress at, as you might guess, our service academies, to blazers in school colors, to a special golf shirt, T-shirt or nametag at various other institutions. For example, guides at the U.S. Naval Academy wear navy blue and butter uniforms, while gift shop and front desk personnel wear navy blue and white. Staff also receive a silk scarf or tie as appropriate. At Illinois State University, student staff wear navy blazers, while at the University of South Carolina, the blazer is garnet. Other institutions provide special shirts or name badges.

Some of the most interesting information received had to do with appearance considered inappropriate while "on duty." Some of those "no-no's" included: cut-offs; tank tops; halter tops; short shorts; torn, tattered, "holey" kneed jeans; clothing noting illegal products or services; clothing with logos of other institutions; clothing noting alcohol, tobacco or drug messages; wet hair; facial piercing (other than ears); and baseball caps.

The Cornell University Information and Referral Center Employee Handbook gives the following advice to its staff: "Generally, whenever there is a question about whether clothing is appropriate for working, it is probably not appropriate." Certainly, the implication is that author Lurie's premise on the information communicated by an individual's attire can be generalized to the information/misin-formation communicated about the institution he/she represents.

Institutions responding to uniform survey:

Baylor University
Illinois State University
Northwestern University
United States Military
Academy
United States Naval Academy
University of Dayton

University of Georgia
University of Kentucky
University of Maryland at College Park
University of Massachusetts at Amherst
University of South Carolina

Jan Thompson, greeting a visitor at the University of Maryland at College Park's Visitor Center, wears her Maryland sweatshirt with pride.



Around CIVSA

President's Report

Life is certainly rich and full these days. We are running from visitor to visitor, prospective student to tourist, alumni events to middle school programs. I know that things must be the same on your campus. As we all approach one of the busiest times of the year, have heart, the CIVSA National Conference is just a few weeks away. The rainfall in Columbia has dampened many a campus visit over the past few months, but no doubt El Nino is just getting all that moisture out of the way before June.

If you haven't made plans to attend the conference, shame on you! Registrations are pouring in and you will be missed if you don't make plans now to attend. The conference program looks great (see conference information); the T-shirt exchange will be bigger and better, we have mentors for our new attendees, new vendors and sponsors, and lots of great food and fun. The CIVSA website is frequently updated with new information about the conference, so check it out at or give me a call at 800-922-9755 if you have any questions.

You will soon have the opportunity to nominate a colleague for the Nick Kovalakides Award and submit a bid to host the CIVSA National Conference in 2000. I urge you to take a moment to seriously consider these opportunities. In this fast-paced world, information is everything. Visitor and information centers are the "gateway" to our campuses, therefore it is important that we be at the forefront of providing client-centered services to a wide variety of constituents. Our profession will only continue to grow. There is no better way to help direct the future of our profession than to host the national conference at the start of the next millennium. Furthermore, be a part of recognizing a CIVSA professional who has tirelessly given of him or herself to further the organization by nominating them for the "Nick Award." Put your thinking caps on and look for this information in the next few weeks.

I count on seeing you in June! If you can't make it, be assured that you will be in our thoughts.

- Denise Wellman, President

Welcome New Members

Welcome our newest CIVSA members

Lynette Breininger

Information Clerk
Student Union Operations
Kutztown University
(610) 683-4000

Gregg Fletcher

Director of Cantor Film Center
Information and Student Services
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Nickie W. King

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Amy Lopez will replace Maria Snizik as
a representative from the University of
Dayton, her information is as follows:

Amy Lopez
Director, Kennedy Union and
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University of Dayton
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Dayton, OH 45469-0620
(937) 229-3333 (937) 229-3889 (fax) lopez@udayton.edu

-Celisa Manly, Director of Membership

Kudos to UMass Campus Conceirge

Rob Brooks, longtime CIVSA member and director of Student Affairs Special Services at the University of Mass-achusetts, Amherst, has been honored as the Citizen of the Year by the Amherst Area Chamber of Commerce. Brooks, who oversees the Robsham Visitors Center and heads up the 40-member commencement planning committee, is also a noted volunteer in the Amherst area. News of the honor came as Brooks was recovering from a January heart operation. Congratulations, Rob, and glad to hear you are on the mend.

Congrats to CIVSA Presidents

Congratulations to former CIVSA President Matt Weismantel and current CIVSA President Denise Wellman for being honored recently by their respective institutions. Matt Weismantel received the Rutgers President's Award for Excellence in Administration for the establishment of the student information and assistance center. Matt was praised for "accomplishing phenomenal growth in this important campus service and resource, with limited budgetary resources in an area with little precedents or models." Denise Wellman was honored by the University of South Carolina Mortar Board chapter (a student organization comprised of outstanding senior students) with the chapter's Excellence in Teaching Award. This award is presented to members of the faculty or administration who have been influential in the lives of USC students. You make us proud, guys!

Visitor Center Video Available for CIVSA Members

Why do we do what we do? Why build a university visitor center? What are the advantages of relying on student staff? CIVSA member Ron Kemp of North Carolina State University has produced a video to answer some of these specific questions. The 20-minute video was originally presented to the North Carolina State University Board of Trustees in an effort to generate interest in the creation of a university visitor center. The professionally produced video visits some existing CIVSA member institutions and includes short interview segments. The video presents a general overview of the potential advantages of a university visitor center. The video is available for \$10.00 from CIVSA Headquarters. Send a check payable to CIVSA to Riverstede, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 542 George Street, New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-1167. For more information, please call Headquarters at (732) 932-9342, ext. 675.

Soaring to New Heights in the Low Country

Dr. Patricia Moody, director of the Masters Program in Business and Marketing Education/chairman of the USC Retailing Department and a nationally know motivational speaker, will give the keynote address at the 5th National CIVSA Conference. Plans for the 1998 CIVSA Conference are nearing completion. One of the plans is for YOU to be in Columbia, South Carolina, June 7-9, 1998. There will be great presentations, good food, and opportunities to meet other professionals in the field. The one-on-one contacts with individuals in similar positions have been one of the main highlights of CIVSA conferences in the past.

Some of the fun events will be the optional special tours before and during the conference, the unique Owl Prowl, and the T-shirt exchange that will take place after the awards banquet on Tuesday evening (be sure to bring an x-large or xx-large T-shirt from your institution and participate in the exchange).

Conference registration will take place in the Clarion Town-house Hotel. Look on the CIVSA website for dates and times. As we begin Soaring to New Heights of Service, won't you join the flight?