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A Sampling from the 1994 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

AVA

ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION

The mission of the Association for Volunteer Administration(AVA), an international membership organization, is to promote professionalism and strengthen leadership in volunteerism. Members include volunteer program administrators in a wide variety of settings: agency executives, association officers, educators, researchers, consultants, students—anyone who shares a commitment to the effective utilization of volunteers.

Individual membership is open to salaried and non-salaried persons in all types of public, nonprofit and for-profit settings. Organizational membership is available for international, regional, state/provincial, district and local organizations which choose to join with AVA to promote and support effective leadership in volunteerism.

AVA is an association run by its members. Active committees include: Public Information; Professional Development; Resource Development; and Public Policy. Members also plan the annual "International Conference on Volunteer Administration," a major event held each year in a different city in the United States or Canada. This Conference provides participants the opportunity to share common concerns and to focus on issues of importance to volunteerism.

AVA is divided into thirteen geographic regions, each of which develops a variety of programs to serve its members. These can include annual regional conferences, periodic local workshops, newsletters, and informal "cluster group" meetings.

Two major services that AVA performs, both for its members and for the field at large, are Certification and Educational Endorsement.Through the Certification process, which recognizes leaders of volunteer programs who demonstrate professional performance standards, AVA furthers respect for and appreciation of the profession of volunteer administration. Similarly, AVA Educational Endorsement is given to those workshops, courses, conferences and training events that provide opportunities for professional growth in volunteerism.

Finally, AVA produces publications, including informational newsletters and booklets, and THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION.

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1994 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

Association for Volunteer Administration Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Award Acceptance Speech

October 8, 1994

Billie Ann Myers

At the 1994 Conference on Volunteer Administration in Anaheim, California, Billie Ann Myers was presented with the Harriet Naylor Distinguished Member Service Award.

Ms. Myers has been an AVA member since 1985, and was formerly the director of the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism as well as the administrator of the Delta Service Corps, the largest model for national and community service in the United States. As Director of the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism, Ms. Myers founded a volunteer council of volunteer managers, called the Spirit of 110, from all state agencies. She also assisted in establishing the Department of Human Service Volunteer Clearinghouse, which recruits and places volunteers within the department.

The extent of Ms. Myers's influence in the field of volunteer administration extends beyond the borders of Arkansas. She is chair of the National Assembly of State Offices of Volunteerism and serves in the National Governor's Association Study Group on Youth and Community Service. Her leadership and support made it possible for several states to create their own state offices of volunteerism.

She also serves on the National and Community Service Act Coalition Steering Committee and was consulted extensively during the drafting process of President Clinton's National Service Initiative.

Thank you for this honor and thank you for being here to share this time with me. All of us appreciate recognition. Recognition from peers whom I love and respect is the highest form of recognition for me. I want to thank Jamie Henderson, from Wichita Falls, Texas, for nominating me for this prestigious award. There are many people responsible for my being here today and I will not be able to name them all. Some are in this room, many are back in Arkansas, or in other states and nations, and some have gone on to other worlds. There is someone I want to single out to include in this recognition: Dub Myers, my husband and best friend for forty-two years. Thank you, honey, for giving me roots for security and stability, and wings to freely fly, and for believing in me even when I didn't believe in myself.

I am grateful that receiving this award requires an acceptance speech. It forced me to focus on the important thought I want to emphasize today. I had great fun rereading the speeches of former distinguished members and benefiting once again from their wonderful wisdom and wit. I did a lot of soul-searching and sifting to get to today. Susan Ellis reminded us in her acceptance speech in 1989 that this award is given for contributions made on behalf of AVA. This started me thinking about my relationship with and debt to AVA. I thought about all the truths I have learned from colleagues in AVA and in the broader volunteer field. From Harriet Naylor I learned that being a pioneer is a powerful but sometimes lonely job; from Ivan Scheier I learned the value of vision and the need for leaders to be keepers of the vision; from Laura Lee Geraghty I learned how to lead a state office of volunteerism to be a driving force for change and still survive; from Sue Vine-

yard and Steve McCurley I learned that mutual trust and confidence are essential in establishing long-distance partnerships (or any kind of relationship, really); from Marlene Wilson I learned about the two faces of power and how important it is to be comfortable with having power; from Joanne Patton I learned that persistence and commitment are necessary characteristics to change government; from Katie Noyes Campbell I learned the importance of being willing to pick up the reins and move forward even when the occasion is unexpected; and ... from the staff of the Arkansas Division of Volunteerism and the Delta Service Corps, the volunteer field in Arkansas and AVA Region IV, I learned about loyalty, cooperation, and teamwork that minimizes conflict and turf battles and maximizes effort and production; and from all of the world's volunteer force I have learned that it is not foolish to expect the impossible.

How many of us remember the first AVA conference we attended? Good. The first conference I attended was in 1981 in Philadelphia. That conference had an enormous impact on what I would do in the coming years. For the first time I heard Harriet Naylor, Ivan Sheier, Marlene Wilson, and Eva Shindler-Rainman, and participated in a creative workshop designed by Susan Ellis. It was also the first time I worked on national service issues.

How many of us have children or grandchildren under the age of 21? Wonderful, we have an enormous investment in the future. Dub and I have three grandchildren: 20, 17, and 5. They give us hope for and confidence in the future.

How many of us have parents 70 or older? Aren't they wonderful! My parents are 80 and 84, and they taught me about responsibility, honesty, truth, and love. They provided us with a sense of ourselves in history and they gave us a model for life from which we can pick and choose to create our own model for the next generation.

It is because our children and grandchildren give us hope for the future, our parents have given us a foundation, and our colleagues share their wisdom and expertise, that most of us feel an obligation to leave the world a better place for our having been there.

John Mason, another fine AVA member, once asked me the question: "If you had only one opportunity to pass on the important truths in your life, what would you say?" So, John, if you are listening, here's what I'd say....

If we are to have a better world it will have to be built community by community and it will have to start with us, individually. If we want a world community that is friendly not hostile, cooperative not competitive, love-filled not hate-filled, then things will have to change, like the kaleidoscope of our conference theme. And where does the change begin? It has to begin with you and me, for the only thing I can really change is me, and the only thing you can change is you. We can't change each other, we can only model the way we want the world to be and trust that our example will encourage others to risk making change happen.

Maybe this is an example of what I am thinking: In a small town in Arkansas, a young boy about six years old who had severe physical challenges—we will call him Jimmy—was preparing to enter regular first grade. It was the second week of February and his family had just moved to this town. Jimmy was excited about starting to school, but his mother was apprehensive because she knew people could be cruel. Valentine's Day was just a week away, and Jimmy's excitement grew day by day as he and his mother made his valentine box and bought cards on which Jimmy carefully printed his name. At last the fourteenth arrived, and Jimmy went off to school with eyes sparkling and a smile stretching from ear to ear. Jimmy's mother could hardly stand the tension of the waiting. Finally, the bus came and Jimmy got off. His mother, seeing his serious expression, rushed out to comfort him. When he saw her he shook his head and said, "Not one. Not a single one." "You mean you didn't get any valentines?" his mother cried. And Jimmy, with a big smile, said, "Oh, I got valentines but, Mother, I *remembered everybody* with a valentine. I didn't forget one. Not a single one."

So how do we learn to think like Jimmy? I believe there are at least three attributes we must develop if we are to build the world community.

1. The first is by developing a vision—Harriet Naylor said, "We need imaginative inspiration to dream of what could be." It has been said, and demonstrated, that anything man can envision man can do. We are limited only by our vision or lack of it. Having a vision of the community we want to live in and not losing that vision when we are caught up in the sometimes grinding tasks of living is, I believe, the first attribute. Vision is the business of leaders, and we are leaders in our chosen field. Someone said, "Leaders are people who infuse vision into an organization, a community, or a society."

2. Without this second attribute—positive thinking—making the vision a reality would be difficult. Only those who think positively will have the courage to take the necessary action even if it is risky. Positive thinking is faith that things are better than they appear to be and that doing the right thing for the right reason will produce good results in the long run, regardless of initial appearances. It is seeing the resources and not the deficiencies; recognizing the good in ourselves and others, and building on the good while overlooking the bad; and it is knowing that neither resources or opportunities are finite, therefore there is no reason to fight or undermine others to protect ourselves. Yes, it's *accentuating the positive and eliminating the negative* and, yes, it's thinking like Jimmy. Albert Szent-Gyorgi said, "Discovery consists of looking at the same thing as everyone else and thinking something different." That is also a good definition of positive thinking.

3. This brings me to the third attribute—tolerance. I am truly concerned by the lack of tolerance in our society. We cannot have a real community without a huge dose of tolerance. Change is full of opportunity to resort to distrust, protectionism, criticism of others, fear of failure, or fear for survival. All of these fears and negative behavior create a climate ripe for intolerance. But I think we, above all others, must develop more tolerance, less fear of our differences, and more confidence in our similarities. A woman I admire greatly and whom I first heard at the 1984 AVA Conference in North Carolina, Maya Angelou, has written:

... mirror twins are different
although their features jibe,
and lovers think quite different thoughts
while lying side by side.

We love and lose in China,
we weep on England's moors,
and laugh and moan in Guinea,
and thrive on Spanish shores.

We seek success in Finland,
are born and die in Maine.
In minor ways we differ.
In major we're the same.

I note the obvious differences
between each sort and type,
but we are more alike, my friends,
than we are unalike.

Please join me in repeating her refrain:

we are more alike, my friends,
than we are unalike.

we are more alike, my friends,
than we are unalike.

It becomes increasingly easier to be tolerant when we focus on our alikenesses and not on our unlikenesses.

One of the advantages of being sixty years old is having been able to see all those wonderful moves of the 1940s. One that really shaped my life concept was *The Enchanted Cottage*. Robert Young was a dashing American, flying for the RAF (Royal Air Force), and Dorothy McGuire was a less-than-attractive librarian in a small English village outside London. When Robert Young was horribly burned in a plane crash, he was sent to the village to recover. He was so disfigured that many people turned away from him. But the

homely librarian befriended him and they fell in love with each other and moved into a small cottage on the edge of the village.

A miracle happened inside that small cottage. When the couple was outside they were seen as unattractive and even ugly, but inside the enchanted cottage they were extraordinarily beautiful because they were seen through the positive eyes of love. I have seen that miracle again and again in the years since, and I now truly believe that the making of a miracle is always the result of the positive power of love reflected in the thinking of man. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder and when the beholder is love all things become beautiful. Maybe—we can create community and thrive in the kaleidoscope of change into the next millennium by developing vision, positive thinking, and tolerance, or maybe—by simply loving one another. Maybe that is all it takes for that miracle to happen.

Again, thank you for loving me enough to give me this award and for allowing me to share these thoughts with you.

1994 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

Images of the Future

Ivan Scheier, PhD

BACKGROUND

Mind you, one expects challenge in dealing with the future, unless one happens to have an inside track on the supernatural. I don't, and indeed the purpose of this manuscript is to make futurism possible for ordinary mortals, as a do-it-yourself enterprise.

As of early 1993, I had been trying to complete a futuring book for ten years—*much* longer than a book usually takes for me—and it just wasn't coming together. Insight came while presenting the gist of the proposed book to a bright and caring group of volunteer leadership professionals in Chicago in February 1993 (Chicago AVA). The insight: Don't try to reduce futurism to a science when, in fact, a lot of it is art. The process is as much metaphor as method; intuitive finesse along with stepwise formula. As such, it can still be useful and practical.

My neatest formulation as of the Chicago experience had nine "precise" steps—just grind them out. In actual practice, the process moved backwards as well as forwards; several steps happened all at once, or skipped, or were transformed into something similar but different. By contrast, the approach born of this chaos relies more on analogy and vision than on scientific steps. That must seem obscure for now, but the future usually is, on first glance, if you're honest about it.

Sequence I remains relatively standard and covers the basic context within which any approach to futuring must function: definition of the term *futuring;* purposes and benefits in the process; pitfalls and paradoxes. It is what I see as the only satisfactory section from a previous publication entitled *Shapes and Scenarios in the Future of Volunteerism* (Limited circulation, VOLUNTAS, 1989).

The intention is for this material to be useful as-is. This is, nevertheless, a snapshot of a book still being written. In fact, I begin to suspect this book will *always* be in process, never finished, and never "easy reading." That does not excuse intolerance, impracticality, imperfect communication, or boredom. It does, however, invite your partnership in an ongoing evolution of understanding. That evolution may be exceedingly slow. Indeed, what I have mainly learned in preparation of this book is humility. The sense is of venture on the very outer border of things we are given to understand, and maybe in danger of trespass beyond.

SEQUENCE I: DEFINITION, PURPOSES, PITFALLS AND PARADOXES

A. Purposes

Futuring is an attempt to predict trends and events which haven't occurred yet. Usually, it also involves attempts to control these events or at least deflect them in a desired direction.

The future has two parts, one shared by all humanity on our planet, and another

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Over the past thirty years, *Ivan Scheier* has been a volunteer, a volunteer coordinator, director of a volunteer center, researcher, author, publisher, and—both in North America and overseas—a trainer and consultant in the field of volunteerism. Involvements have included President of the Association of Voluntary Action Scholars, Executive Director of the National Information Center on Volunteerism, and Chairperson of the Alliance for Volunteerism. Ivan is currently Director of the Center for Creative Community and Dreamcatcher-in-Residence at the VOLUNTAS Retreat Center, headquartered in Madrid, New Mexico.

that is unique to you as an individual, your program, your organization, community, etc. A revolution in Chile is desperately important to the people who live there; it is vastly less urgent and immediate in its future potential for a hospital volunteer program in Peoria. Conversely, an impending $5,000 local budget cut may be crucial in Peoria, but wouldn't make much difference to the national budget of Chile.

This unique component is the concern of this article, for we believe every person needs to be her or his own futurist. Therefore, competency as a futurist should be added to the list of skills expected of the volunteer leader. Forecasts from Ottawa, Washington, New York, Chicago, Toronto, and Los Angeles are only a rough starting point—unless you happen to live in one of these cities. At best, generic forecasts are full of white spaces that only locals can fill in.

To say that no one else can completely cast and shape the future *for* you, is not to claim it's easy to do for yourself. Futuring is commonly seen as forbidden ground for anyone unprepared to steep in esoterica—or mysticism. Not so. This entire article is invested in demonstrating feasible futuring processes. Indeed, we are already "unconscious futurists" in much of what we do, in planning, leadership, etc. Please reserve judgment on the issue for now, and let the article speak for itself.

B. Why Bother?

For the rest, it's worth repeating that while forecasting has its fascinating moments, it is on the whole a difficult, time-consuming enterprise, requiring considerable tolerance of ambiguity, and having little in the way of supportive equipment. So why bother? Here are some reasons you can use as talking points to convince yourself as well as colleagues and bosses. On that, you'll be confronting a common perception that time spent on futuring is a luxury we can ill afford with so many pressing problems in the present; and anyhow, it's too complex and esoteric for us to handle by ourselves.

Again, why bother?

1. *Sheer curiosity.* Futuring has its satisfactions just as "a spectator sport."

2. *Hope, morale.* Futuring is a chance to escape the frustrations of the present, dream of better days, and plan for them. It is no accident that the theme song of the U.S. civil rights movement was *We Shall Overcome*, and one of its greatest moments the "I have a dream" speech of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. In the field of volunteerism, hope as a reason for futuring was suggested by an African-American woman, a volunteer coordinator in a prison—surely a person who deals with challenges aplenty in the present. So, futuring is a process we might expect to sustain and re-energize the burnout-prone careerist, board member, volunteer, etc. Futuring is a great morale-booster at retreats.

3. Somewhat ironically, *attempting to predict the future is one of the best ways to understand the present.* If you plan a future trip to, say, Edmonton, Alberta, it does make a difference whether you're starting from Denver, Colorado, or Melbourne, Australia. If your starting point is Denver and you decide to travel by car, you have to take stock of the current condition of your car, your finances, etc. Similarly, if you're predicting that more youth will be interested in volunteering in the next five years, and you want to attract your share of them, you need first to understand thoroughly the strengths and weaknesses of your *current* work with youth volunteers.

4. Futuring is a path to *empowerment* because it enables us *to exercise at least some control over our destiny* as individuals or as organizations. The position is somewhere between two extremes in belief about the nature of reality. At one extreme, we are helpless spectators of a totally predetermined future. If you don't like it, get off the planet! At the other extreme, the future is totally random, and cannot be influenced. You might still want to get off the planet, but in this case you can't even *find* the planet.

Our view is intermediate: Sometimes, to some extent, you can intervene to shape the

future in a desired direction; you also have an equivalent capacity to choose courses of action leading to disaster. To be sure, if a lightning strike is headed your way in the immediate future, you don't have any real choice in regard to moving out of its way. But, you might have had some prior choices which determined how vulnerable you would be to a lightning strike. Again, though one U.S. presidential candidate claimed otherwise, we ordinary mortals can't stop predicted hurricanes. Nevertheless, foreknowledge can help us prepare for them and soften their negative impact. In both these examples, prediction can at least facilitate avoidance of the inevitable, or preparation to deal with its impact.

There are possible gradations in degree of control for us. If, to use the previous example, a larger pool of potential youth volunteers is predicted for the future, there is much we can choose to do or not do to make our program more attractive to them. At this level of time-expressed empowerment, we have Gregory Baum's ringing declaration: "Every person is called upon to create their own future."

5. To a certain extent, futurists do more than forecast a fixed future; they can creatively *invent* futures. The futurist perspective is a necessary ingredient in long-range planning because it helps us to understand clearly that any future is a mix of our capability and the world's inevitability. Some planners operate—unconsciously perhaps—as if they had total power to shape the future. This is like planning for a picnic, the food, entertainment, location, etc., without taking account of weather predictions, e.g., the possibility of a storm which we do *not* control. For this reason, good long-range planning is full of alternative plans (Bs, Cs, and etcs.) to take account of future "outside" influences we don't control. Again, consider the hospital auxiliary which plans to use next year's gift shop revenue to purchase needed equipment for the hospital. Some future inevitabilities not under complete control of the auxiliary had better be considered in this plan, for example:

- Will hospital policy or economic hard times cut into gift shop revenues next year?
- Will the hospital move to place management and staffing of the gift shop more directly in hospital hands rather than as a volunteer operation?

6. *Futuring* not only recognizes that we can to some extent control our own future, but also *recognizes how the future may influence us*. The conventional view of causation is that individuals or organizations are largely the product of what has gone before—the past pushing us into the future. This view underestimates the extent to which, conversely, the future *pulls* us toward it. Some of the most effective and fulfilled people and organizations I know live in the grip of dreams, refusing as they can the restrictions of their past. Indeed, the nicest thing anyone ever said about VOLUNTAS is that it is an organization that lives five years in the future. (Not everyone on our board is entirely pleased with that assessment, I might add.) Philosopher José Ortega y Gasset makes the point eloquently: "Life is a series of collusions with the future; it is not so much a sum of what we have been, but what we yearn to be."

7. Once again, the increased ability to control our destiny and the future visioning it involves, combine to suggest that *futuring is an essential component of long-range planning*.

8. Clearly, too, the individual or organization that looks ahead to explore and implement possible futures, has more *opportunities for creativity and effective problem-solving*, especially for tough problems that have resisted conventional attempts at solution in the present.

9. Competency in futuring is a vital ingredient in effective *leadership*. As John Gardner reminds us, the difference between a manager and a leader is the ability to capture and communicate a positive vision of the future.

10. Finally, let's hear it for the current *popularity* of futuring. We've seen how fu-

turing ties us to a number of key concepts in contemporary thinking, such as empowerment, creativity, leadership, long-range planning, etc. Beyond that, the calendar contributes to the importance currently attached to futuring by decision-makers in foundations, government, media, politics, etc.—all of them potentially powerful allies for us as individual programs or organizations. Moreover, as noted at the end of this section, I think the current popularity of futuring might last a long while, this time around.

C. Paradoxes in Predicting the Future (or at least puzzlements)

1. *Just making a prediction tends to change it.* The prediction that continuing your current sunbathing habits substantially increases the risk of skin cancer can change behavior in a way to help make that prediction less likely. Similarly, the confident forecast that United Way will reach its ambitious fundraising target this year can create optimism and mobilize resources in such a way as to make success more likely. Conversely, pessimistic predictions may negatively impact performance as self-fulfilling prophecy, and *overly* optimistic ones simply set you up for failure. In every case, though, the process of prediction tends to affect its product.

2. *The "easiest" predictions are often the best (most accurate).* As a general rule, I suggest you start with predictions most likely to come true, if only to build morale in this uncertain business. I usually begin a day-long workshop on futuring by predicting we will break for lunch about 11:45 AM, and I go on from there to prophesy death, taxes, and formal volunteer recognition banquets. I once finished a futuring workshop with a forecast that if we met again years hence, participants would still not know how to spell my name. We did, and they didn't.

One good basis for "sure things" is their unvarying occurrence in the past, though even here we should be prepared to deal with the occasional "mutant emergent." This Frankensteinian term was coined by professional futurists to include usually unpleasant (to put it mildly) surprises like the atomic bomb, which changed the nature of warfare, and, in more recent times, the AIDS virus. The mutant emergent can sometimes be a pleasant surprise, as cold fusion will be if it works out as a practical energy source. But mutant emergents tend to be traumatic; for example, the surprise firing of the top executive you were counting on to continue active, positive support of your program.

Sticking to shorter future time frames is another way to increase the probability of prophecy; I suggest between six months and three years. Less than six months (say, next week) may be too easy, and, in any case, doesn't usually allow enough time to prepare for predicted events or react to them. Very long-term predictions may be fun as fantasy, but are less useful as strategy. As time unfolds, the lattice of possibilities increases geometrically, or even astronomically, and is soon beyond the realm of ordinary probability. To be sure, I was once told by someone who lived in an Asian community, that Asian people tend to plan successfully in 20-year time frames! Perhaps so. I only suggest (enviously) that they probably cycle back to adjust predictions more often than every 20 years.

A third way of increasing the certainty of predictions is to predict the options people or organizations will have rather than try to foresee exactly which of these options they will take. For example, it may be easier to prophesy that a healthy new volunteer program will be faced at some point with a growth/no growth decision, than to predict which way it will go at such a crossroads.

3. *"Backcasting" is the best preparation for forecasting.* "Back-and-forth casting" is even better. This is the wisdom in Churchill's warning: "The nation that forgets its history, has no future." Or, at least, that nation will have little *understanding* of its future. Only consider: the major way we have to predict the future is to project trends from the past and present. If I don't "backcast" to discover that an executive

has had much experience in the past as a volunteer, and what kind of experience that was, there's a lot I will miss in forecasting how that executive will support my volunteer program. Nor is such backcasting always as simple as discovery of fixed facts. Totalitarian governments may be the worst offenders in rewriting history (à la George Orwell), but most of us do it to some extent, especially when faced with failure or exposure. The backcaster in such situations must be able to penetrate self-deception as well as deliberate dissembling.

"Back-and-forth casting" is a delving into history to find whether your program or organization did some futuring, the predictions of which have already come due. A great deal can be learned from what these predictions were, which ones were accurate, which were not, and why. But we rarely do that. I've participated in about 15 futuring studies in volunteerism and returned to the scene of the crime only twice at due date. The idea seems to be much like "do good and disappear," only here it is more like "predict and disappear," or at least have the decency to die before your prophecy comes to term. Whenever possible, I would very much like to see prognosticators brought back on or near the target date of their predictions to discuss results. Perhaps then, wiser for the experience, they could forecast the next slice of the future.

I once had a valuable experience of this type. In 1968, as a coordinator of volunteers and sometime trainer in criminal justice volunteerism, I predicted that volunteers would just about disappear from the criminal justice system in five years even though in 1968 volunteers were entering the system at a substantial and steadily increasing rate. I prophesied this in a national newsletter out of deep concern that increasing numbers of volunteers were simply exacerbating already strong correctional staff resistance to volunteers, while we as coordinators stood by and did little but deplore the situation.

By 1973 my prediction was mercifully forgotten (as they usually are), except by me. I say "mercifully" because my estimate of no volunteers left was off only by about half a million! Interestingly enough, however, the *rate* of increase had begun to flatten out, and within a few years the *number* of volunteers in the system leveled off, e.g., *stopped* increasing. So, though the prediction was a disaster, statistically speaking, the warning it was wrapped in—start doing something about staff resistance to volunteers—probably should have been better heeded. And I learned plenty about the awesome momentum (inertia) of what was essentially a social movement of volunteers into the criminal justice system of that time. Even if the track is blocked, you don't stop a freight train all at once.

4. *The best way to predict the future is also the worst.* As just noted, the best, perhaps the only way, to foresee the future is by taking a running start from the past. The danger is that in so doing, we will underestimate the subtlety of nature. This happens when we go beyond acceptance of past influences on the future to assume that the past will influence the future *in the same way* as it influences the present. That usually doesn't happen; current trends accelerate, decelerate, or even reverse themselves. And even when you can predict more or less of a vital factor in the volunteer future—e.g., more working women, seniors, youth, the very process of management itself—you cannot be sure these factors will *behave* in the same way in the future.

5. *The assumptions that served so well in the past may be the greatest barriers* to imaginative visualizing of positive futures. The entertaining of new and different assumptions enables us to imbue our possible future with qualitative as well as mere quantitative change. Only consider the barrenness of assuming that more older people in the future simply means more people in need of services. Once that anchor assumption is lifted, we are able to see that more older people in the future can also mean more wonderful volunteers to *provide* service. It is certainly not neces-

sarily good news for the rocking chair business.

D. Pitfalls: Some Things to Be Careful of

1. Try to be clear and consistent on who or what you will be predicting for or about. Yourself as an individual? Your volunteer program? Your organization or group as a whole? Your association or coalition? Your neighborhood? Your community? Your nation? Your choices in a framework for futuring are wide. Only be sure you carefully choose the "unit of study" you most want and stick to it. To be sure, you can't separate entirely the fate of your program/organization from yourself as an individual. But, at some point, you might leave that program so the strands must be separable.

2. Beware acting as if your program or organization were an island unto itself, unconnected to the mainland. In fact, the parts of the future in which you are most interested, such as youth development or volunteerism, are connected to the whole of society, e.g., the economy and/or major social demographic trends. Early on, you must therefore identify, from the society at large, what the futurists call "environmental factors" or outside influences which are likely to have an impact upon you and your life.

3. Recognition of the importance of environmental factors that have an impact on the phenomenon studied does not mean that phenomenon is entirely passive; it may also act back upon these environmental factors. Thus, volunteerism not only will be affected by factors such as recession and/or an aging population, but also may affect those factors; for example, by helping to keep chronologically older people younger, both psychologically and physiologically. Also, we are beginning to realize that volunteers can contribute to economic development in a number of significant ways, at least to mitigate recession effects.

4. As already noted, the glamour of far future frameworks lures us with opportunity for fantasy. Less glamorous shorter frameworks, nevertheless, are your best bet if you seriously intend to help shape your own future; that is, unless time spans are *too* short, in which case you endanger making the goal too small. At the other extreme, overly long time frames might signify lack of commitment to actually making the goal happen.

5. Wishful thinking is the curse of the unwary futurist. There's a powerful, usually unconscious temptation to read into the future what you *hope* will happen. Beware that, but know that deliberate self-conscious visualization of the ideal may have a place in realistic prophecy. In fact, futurists sometimes deliberately project three scenarios in studying a phenomenon: the *best* possible or ideal future; the most *likely* future; and the *worst* possible, or disaster scenario.

6. There is always a flurry of futuring around each year that ends in a zero—the turn of a decade—and volunteerism futuring has been no exception. What happens when we reach the year with *three* zeroes at the end will probably be more like an orgy than a flurry. The more immediate point is the mistake of seeing future study as a relatively rare, elaborate and often ritualistic *occasion* rather than a *routine ongoing process*. Let's break the pattern of making a future prediction every ten years and forgetting it within ten months. Instead, let's continually cycle back to evaluate, refine and renew our predictions. Indeed, a circle without end is one of the alternative images of the future.

Look for "Sequence II, Modeling the Future," to appear in the Fall Issue of *The Journal of Volunteer Administration.*

1994 International Conference on Volunteer Administration

Making Every Conference Count

Susan J. Ellis

How many AVA International Conferences on Volunteer Administration have you attended? (I've been to eighteen.) How many national conferences of any type have you attended? (I've lost count.) Why, exactly, do you go to conferences? How can you be sure that this event proves worthwhile for you?

These were the opening questions I posed to participants in my workshop at the 1994 ICVA—a session purposely scheduled in the very first workshop time slot so that the principles discussed could be immediately applied over the next four days at Disneyland (perhaps an appropriate site to be creative!). Over the years I have come to realize that no two people experience a large conference in the same way. Because there are so many different workshop choices and such diverse faces likely to be across each banquet table, whether a conference is rated "great" or "mediocre" is often more an indication of luck of the draw than of the caliber of the programming.

My hope in this workshop was to provide participants with a new framework or perspective from which to make the most of this and any conference. The first step was to consider what, if anything, makes a national/international conference different from a regional or local one. I believe that people who come to a major event like the ICVA focused solely on the workshops are missing the point. In fact, I take the maverick position that discovering a useful workshop is icing on the cake—a wonderful addition to the real value of traveling many miles to attend a national event.

Here is the list generated by the group of some of the unique aspects of a national conference versus a local one:

- Very few people know you or your organization, so you can feel free to talk about internal politics and other issues you might not want to air closer to home (not to mention more freedom to play).
- It's an opportunity to become aware of issues having an impact elsewhere now, and heading your way soon.
- You can begin to sense percolating trends (things said by keynote speakers, comments in workshops, conversations at the bar).
- You might find colleagues doing innovative projects you can replicate or adapt.
- It's a chance to reaffirm being part of a larger profession or even a movement.

In truth, you can gain more *training* (practical information and skills) in an all-day workshop back home than in a sequence of unconnected 90-minute sessions at a national event. But you cannot see the *context* of your work from only one geographic location.

Once we freed ourselves from judging the ICVA by its workshop presentations, we next needed to look at the conference in a fresh way. I offered some ideas from a wonderful book by Roger von Oech titled *A Whack on the Side of the Head: How You Can Be More Creative* (Warner Books, 1983). Among other mental exercises, von Oech urges readers to fantasize about conversa-

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tions between disparate people: a stockbroker and a circus clown; an airline pilot and a prostitute; a minister and a truck driver. After having some fun brainstorming about some of his examples, I asked the group to consider:

- What could a director of volunteers in a hospital learn from someone who leads volunteers in a museum, and vice versa?
- Someone in a literacy program and someone delivering homebound meals?
- Someone with the Girl Scouts and someone in an AIDS program?

Through this process, it became clear that it is limiting to spend a conference searching for people in *similar* agencies. Of course it's wonderful to share ideas with colleagues who understand your setting, but it is sometimes more eye-opening to talk with someone from a completely different situation—yet with the commonality of working with volunteers.

To test this idea, the workshop participants paired up with a partner from a dissimilar organization. Each person shared a major success and a major failure experienced in running a volunteer activity. This practice session had several points:

1. A chance to prove that you can indeed have a meaningful exchange with someone from a setting that superficially seems unrelated to yours.
2. In order to get something from a colleague (information, contact leads, new ideas), it is critical to give something back. What can someone learn from you? Directors of volunteers often need prodding to talk about their achievements. How comfortable are you with the notion that someone else can learn something from you? If you come to a conference prepared to share your experiences, thoughts, even questions, you will find that others will respond in kind. Attending a conference in the "sponge" mode, waiting to soak up other people's ideas, does not create dynamic exchange.
3. We can learn just as much (sometimes more) from what did not go right as from what is working well! Yet it is common only to share success stories. Being willing to talk about problems encountered may be an even greater service to colleagues—and may even help you to gain clarity on what exactly went wrong. (Remember the benefit of being far from home and unknown?)

I am pleased to report that the pairing up exercise worked beautifully. Most people could point to something valuable in their conversation, and everyone enjoyed talking. Which led to yet another point: It's okay to have fun at a conference! Returning to work refreshed is, in fact, a legitimate rationale for going away.

We spent the remainder of the workshop discussing the suggestions I made in a handout, "Roadmap to Making This a Million Dollar Conference." Each element of the conference experienced is examined for possible learning opportunities:

The Keynote Speakers

Is there something you can learn from their presentation styles?

For each speaker: *What two things confirmed what I thought? What two things gave me a new thought?*

The Workshops

Is there something you can learn from the presenters' styles?

Listen to the other workshop *participants* carefully. What did you learn from their questions?

GO TO A WORKSHOP FOR THE PRECISE REASON THAT, ON THE SURFACE, IT DOES NOT SEEM TO APPLY TO YOU. (Were you right?)

Keep a running list of all the ideas to which you reacted negatively:

- I don't like that idea.
- That didn't work when we tried it.
- That won't work if we try it.

- I don't think that applies to me.
- People in my agency wouldn't like it.

When you get home, review the list carefully. Are any of the ideas worth a second chance? What makes these ideas negative for you and what can you learn about yourself or your program from this observation? (Note: you may be right . . . the idea might be awful!)

The Special Events

Make a point of meeting some new people. The informal conversations during special events often develop into wonderful professional friendships.

Be nice to any "leaders" you see at special events . . . feel free to take this chance to talk to them as colleagues. Don't assume they're too busy. You might discover they'd like the company!

The Exhibit Area

GO TO IT OFTEN!

BROWSE. See what the trends in the literature are. What seems to be percolating?

READ. (It's free.)

TALK TO THE EXHIBITORS—they'll be surprisingly helpful about their products. If you feel you're being given a "hard sell," move on.

Notice who else seems interested in the same books or exhibits that you are. Strike up a conversation and find out why.

Take home brochures and other literature for possible use later.

The Hallways

Eavesdrop! If people choose to talk in public, then the conversation *is* public. You might even be able to join in.

Find someone standing alone (before a meal is a good time) and be friendly.

Making the Most of Conversations

Your goal should be to identify colleagues with whom you can *stay in contact* after the conference and with whom you can share information.

First: Become articulate about *your* work! What is most interesting about what you are doing? What have been some recent accomplishments of volunteers? What trends and issues are beginning to affect you—both good and bad?

TRY TO TALK TO AS WIDE A DIVERSITY OF PEOPLE FROM AS MANY DIFFERENT SETTINGS AND REGIONS AS POSSIBLE.

Some interesting questions to ask other people:

- How have you grown as a professional in this past year?
- What has been the finest achievement of a volunteer in your program?
- With what issues are you grappling right now?
- Are you finding good assignments for young volunteers? older volunteers? etc.
- What do you think is a concern specific to your state, province, country, town, etc.?

Listen to the questions other people *ask you*. What do their questions tell you about your work?

Private Time

Try to rest occasionally! Watch TV, exercise, or read a book . . . anything unrelated to volunteerism . . . for at least 30 minutes each day of the conference.

At the end of each day (and on the trip home) ask yourself: What did I learn about *myself* today?

The Conference Registrants List (Afterwards)

Highlight the names of people you met at the conference, making margin notes to remind you about them.

Note people you did not have the chance to meet but who either live nearby (how about a post-conference breakfast meeting?) or seem to be with a similar program (call one a month and chat).

We also discussed "taking the conference home." Take home materials even if they are heavy to carry and you're not sure you need the information right now. With some distance, you may discover that an exhibitor's catalog or workshop handout has a kernel of insight you can use. Also,

find ways to report on what you have learned to others in your organization: your boss, staff colleagues, volunteers. Can you make a brief presentation at a meeting? Write a short summary? Record your thoughts on an audiotape that people can borrow? This will insure that you "debrief" your jumbled reactions into an articulate form—one way that actual learning takes place. It also demonstrates that sending you to conferences is worthwhile for the whole organization, so they should send you again next year!

Finally, I gave everyone a "starter set" of questions he/she might find useful as a guide to better listening at the conference. It is reproduced here. By coming to a conference with listening goals ("What insight do I hope I'll get while I'm here?"), you will find yourself prepared when the information passes by.

THINGS YOU MIGHT
WANT TO LEARN ABOUT
AT THIS CONFERENCE

What is happening in the volunteer field in other countries? In other parts of my country?

What are trends in a completely different setting that might have implications for my setting?

What are my colleagues doing to tap into the Americorps program?

Are there any new recognition ideas out there?

Specific examples of what the following types of volunteers are actually doing somewhere:

- Families volunteering together
- Children under the age of 14
- Graduate students
- Middle management business people
- Blue collar workers
- People on unemployment or disability benefits
- People with mental health problems
- Teachers (not just students!)
- Newly-arrived immigrants (of all types)

Has anybody been sued regarding a volunteer incident (not a rumor . . . a first-hand story)? What are the details?

What are the reactions now, after a year or so, to "mandated volunteering"?

Are there programs considering "paying volunteers"? What does this mean?

How many people here have been promoted this year and now have a higher position, with the volunteer department still under them? How many people have been laid off?

What new issue surprises you?

What things that you share seem to surprise other people?

Are you having fun?

Later in the conference, several workshop participants sought me out to report their experiences in putting some of these ideas to work. Two people thanked me for giving them permission to relax and play—and to discover that once they stopped feeling compelled to attend every single workshop session they actually began to learn more from what they did hear. A few people spoke about how the exhibit area was more interesting than it seemed at first, when they only walked through to see if they "needed" something. And everyone noticed that they talked to many more people, especially to those whose nametags indicated unusual or unknown organizations.

It is my hope that this article will multiply the effect of the workshop and that each reader will approach future conferences with wider expectations. Join us at the AVA International Conference on Volunteer Administration in Boston this October and come tell me how you've made it worth a million dollars to *you*.

"Banking" Volunteer Hours

Sandra E. Cann, Virginia W. Junk and Linda K. Fox

INTRODUCTION

Volunteering is part of our American culture. One out of every five persons volunteer his or her time to churches, schools, civic or political organizations (Hayghe, 1991). Volunteering is considered a national pastime for older persons (Wilson, 1993). Sharing experiences, expertise, wisdom and skills is one of the advantages of volunteer work for these persons (Rouse, 1992). The availability of older persons for volunteer work will significantly increase due to age shifts in the American population (Fischer, 1991; Stevens, 1993; Sandell, 1987). Currently persons age 65 or older account for 12 percent of the population (Longino, 1994). This percentage will increase to 14 percent in 2010 as the baby boom generation begins to retire (U.S. Bureau of Census, 1989).

As the proportion of older persons increases in the United States and the ability of government-funded social services to meet the needs of the community decreases, older persons can become resources of increasing value through volunteer work (Heil, 1991; Kaiser, 1993; Romero, 1987). The knowledge, abilities and skills acquired by older persons throughout their lifetimes are valuable assets to be shared through their volunteer work (Kouri, 1990).

Time spent in volunteer work can also be beneficial to older persons as a source of future assistance for themselves. This would be possible through a program designed for older persons to volunteer now and "bank" volunteer hours to use as a source of help when they need it in the future. To effectively evaluate a program designed to "bank" volunteer hours, it is important to know older volunteers' demographic profiles and how factors in the profiles are related to influence an interest in banking volunteer hours.

NATURE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to provide information about older persons, age 50 to 70, who would be influenced to volunteer now if they could bank their volunteer hours to use as a source of help when they need it. The first objective is to describe these persons, including:

a) Gender, age, self-reported health, ethnicity, education, total family income, employment status, marital status, and household composition.
b) Whether they live in a metropolitan or non-metropolitan community.
c) The number of years they have lived in their current community.
d) The extent of their involvement in church or religious activities.
e) Whether or not they are involved in political activities such as campaigning for a candidate or promoting specific issues.
f) Whether a person is satisfied with volunteer opportunities and community service groups in his/her community.
g) Whether the person considers himself/herself to be retired.

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The second objective is to determine which of the above factors are significantly related to a person being influenced to volunteer now if he/she were able to bank his/her volunteer hours.

BACKGROUND

Persons who volunteer have previously been profiled primarily using the demographic characteristics of gender, age, income, employment and marital status. Urban areas have been predominant in these studies where a diverse ethnic population exists. No previous studies were identified that profiled those who would be influenced to volunteer if they could bank their volunteer hours. Three western states with predominantly rural populations are the focus of this study.

Between 1987 and 1993, six previous studies were identified which examined older persons as volunteers. A 1987 study by Romero, who considered the household composition of volunteers, reported that having dependent children under the age of 19 in the household did not affect male volunteerism. Romero also found being financially secure encouraged males to volunteer more.

The American Association of Retired Persons (1988) conducted a telephone survey of 2,001 Americans over age 45. They found college-educated persons volunteered more and spent more actual hours in volunteer work than those with less education. Older persons who either worked part-time (51%) or were self-employed (40%) were more active in volunteer work. Those with an income of over $30,000 contributed the most volunteer time and only the concerns about their physical limitations were a constraint on the degree and type of volunteer activities they chose. Community-related projects involved 40% of volunteer activities, with 57% of volunteer work involving church work. Most African-Americans (71%) in the study volunteered for work in connection with their churches. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) reported most opportunities to volunteer came from associates or friends in the workplace.

According to Kouri (1990) older persons between the ages of 65 and 74 provided 40% of the volunteer workers in the United States, with 20% of the volunteers over the age of 75. Of those doing volunteer work for religious organizations, most were over the age of 65.

Fischer et al. (1991) found that women volunteered more throughout their lives than men, and college-educated persons volunteered more than those with fewer years of education. The health status of older volunteers was an important factor in how frequently and to what extent older persons volunteered. Volunteers in church-related work, social welfare activities, health and civic organizations (such as Lions and Rotary Clubs) are more apt to have an education level of at least some college. Older persons who remain employed (59%) volunteer more than those who are not employed, and married persons are more apt to volunteer than a single person. Fischer et al. also reported the type of volunteer work men and women chose was different. Men chose recreational and employment-oriented volunteer work and women chose volunteer work with a health and education emphasis. Hayghe's study (1991) using data from a 1989 Current Population Survey, also found that women volunteered more than men. But, in contrast with Fischer's study, Hayghe found volunteers with a college degree were less likely to participate in church-related volunteerism than those without a college degree. The study also reported that those with higher income levels were more likely to volunteer. Hayghe reported the opportunities to volunteer increased if both spouses were employed because of their extended group of friends and associates known through the work place. Hayghe also found that Blacks and Hispanics volunteered less often than Caucasians. Hayghe stated the reason for this was because Blacks and

Hispanics, as a group, have less education, income, and higher unemployment rates than Caucasians. However, Hayghe did find that volunteers who were Black, Hispanic, and persons over age 65 volunteered more hours a week than other volunteers to various projects.

Stevens's (1989–90) study of one metropolitan volunteer organization also found that women volunteered more often than men throughout their lives. Over half of the 151 sample of older persons who volunteered in a metropolitan area survey had an annual income of less than $10,000, with 23 percent reporting an income of less than $5,000 a year. Of those surveyed, 62% were minorities; this percentage was not typical for the population-at-large. The majority had been community residents for over 30 years. The reasons given for satisfaction in community volunteer work were tied to personal recognition, respect found in holding a position and interacting with professionals and other volunteers.

In 1992 Stevens studied a sample of 248 older persons and reported a positive relationship between volunteer satisfaction and retention of older volunteers. Five factors were related to volunteer satisfaction: a sense of purpose, gaining social ties, increased self-esteem, having personal recognition, and appreciation for work well done.

Stevens's 1993 study was of 119 older female volunteers in the northeastern United States. Stevens reported 45% were between the ages of 60 and 69, and 44% between 70 and 79 years of age. The study found that of 199 racially diverse, older women (60–93) who did volunteer work, only 17% were Caucasians with 25% being Black and an additional 19% Italian. In this study only 27% of older women who volunteered were married, with the remainder either widowed (53%), divorced (5.1%), separated (2.6%) or never married (12.0%). Of the 119 older women volunteers, slightly over half had lived in the same community for over thirty years and another 20% had lived in their present communities between twenty and thirty years. According to Stevens, the number of women available for volunteer work will increase along with the growing population of older persons. Stevens reported "a sense of usefulness" a major factor in volunteer satisfaction among 119 older (60–93 years) volunteers.

METHODS

The research reported in this study was conducted in conjunction with Western Regional Project W176, entitled *Housing Transitions of the Maturing Population: Consequences for Rural/Non-Metropolitan Communities in the Western Region.* Funded by Agricultural Experimental Stations in Idaho, Nevada, and Wyoming, this project examined factors in community satisfaction of older persons, age 50 to 70, in these three states.

In order to adequately represent the three states' populations, it was determined that 600 completed surveys were needed per state, with half from metropolitan areas and half from non-metropolitan areas. A dual frame sampling method was used, including an equal combination of phone numbers obtained from telephone directories and from random digit dialing (Frey, 1989; Groves and Lepkowski, 1985). This dual method was used because using names only from phone directories often underrepresents renters and lower-income persons and excludes households with unlisted numbers. In particular, Nevada has a high percentage of persons with unlisted numbers who would not be included if the sample were obtained solely from listed phone numbers.

For both samples, each phone number was screened via a telephone call to determine if someone in the household met the age criteria and was willing to participate. If more than one person in the household met the criteria, then the person with the most recent birthday was asked to respond. The most recent birthday was used in order to maintain random gender representation.

Instrument

A telephone survey was developed by the research team, based on the Dillman (1978) method of the phone survey item construction. The survey questioned respondents about their satisfaction with their communities, by referring to various aspects related to community life.

Data Collection

A pool of trained interviewers collected data for all three states via telephones at the Social Survey Research Unit computer-aided telephone survey lab at the University of Idaho. Telephone interviews were conducted from November, 1993 through March, 1994.

For the phone directories sample, a letter was sent prior to the phone survey. When called, many of the respondents commented that they would not have participated if they had not first received the letter. The random digit dialed calls were "cold calls" with no prior notice to the households that they called. Response rates ranged from 43% in Nevada to 57% in both Idaho and Wyoming.

Data Analysis

Percentages were used to provide a profile of the demographic characteristics of the volunteers. Cross-tabulations and the Chi square statistic were used to determine the relationships between each independent variable and the dependent variable of banking volunteer hours.

FINDINGS

This study was designed to meet two objectives: (1) to describe those persons who would be influenced to volunteer now if they could bank their volunteer hours, and (2) to determine the relationship between the degree of influence a volunteer bank would have on a person's volunteering now and an older person's demographic characteristics. The survey questionnaire that is the focus of this study and the older persons' responses is shown below:

If you could "bank" (or save up) the hours you spend in volunteer work to use as a source of help when YOU need it, to what degree would that influence you to do volunteer work NOW? Would you say . . .

		N	%
1.	A Great Deal	266	17
2.	Some	560	35
3.	A Little	281	18
4.	Not At All	359	22

Only 22% of the respondents in these three states said they would not be influenced to volunteer. As the emphasis of this particular study is to learn how being able to bank volunteer hours for future needs influences older persons to volunteer now, only those persons answering "a great deal," "some," or "a little" were used in the following data analysis. Table I displays the demographic profile of those persons who would be influenced to some degree.

Persons of both genders would be almost equally influenced to volunteer. Of those who could be influenced, the female's average age was 60 and the male's was 59. The majority (86%) rated their health as good to excellent when comparing it to others their age. The prevalent (94%) ethnic group in all three states was White, which represents the racial composition in these three predominantly rural states (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990). Over 50% of the respondents had some college or were college graduates, with 37% being at least high school graduates. The annual family income for the majority of respondents was over $25,000 a year. Just over half of the respondents were employed. Seventy-three percent of the respondents were married, with an additional 22% being either divorced (11%) or widowed (11%). Sixty percent of respondents lived with another person, 20% lived with two or more other persons, and 20% lived alone. Over half (60%) lived in their current residence over 14 years. Those living in non-metropolitan areas of the predominantly rural states accounted for just

Table I
Demographic Characteristics of Those Who Would Be Influenced to Volunteer

Descriptor	n+	%
Sex		
Female	841	52
Male	791	48
Mean Age		
Female	841	52
Male	791	48
Health		
Excellent	491	30
Very Good	550	34
Good	363	22
Fair	154	9
Poor	73	5
Ethnicity		
White	1533	98
Black	17	1
American Indian	18	1
Hispanic	3	<1
Education		
Less than 12 years	174	11
High School Grad	604	37
Some College	457	28
College Grad	396	24
Employment Status		
Employed	674	41
Retired	839	51
Family Income		
Less than $15,000	249	18
$15,000 to $25,000	297	21
$25,000 to $35,000	224	16
$35,000 to $50,000	295	21
$50,000 or more	338	24
Marital Status		
Married	1184	75
Separated	16	1
Divorced	190	11
Widowed	194	11
Never Married	42	2
Community Size		
Metropolitan	766	47
Nonmetro	866	53
Community Tenure		
1 to 7 years	337	24
8 to 14 years	225	16
15 to 21 years	248	18
22 to 33 years	303	22
Over 34 years	281	20
Involvement in Church or Religious Activities		
Daily	71	6
Once a week	727	62
Once a month	152	13
Six times a year	83	7
Once a year	146	12
Political Involvement		
Involved	402	25
Not Involved	1232	75
Community Service Groups		
Not Satisfied	54	3
Don't Know	345	21
Somewhat Satisfied	422	26
Very Satisfied	814	50
Community Volunteer Opportunities		
Not Satisfied	33	2
Don't Know	160	9
Somewhat Satisfied	255	16
Very Satisfied	1187	73

+ Note: n varies since not all persons answered all questions

over half of those who would be influenced to volunteer.

Most (62%) of the respondents were involved with church or religious activities once a week. In contrast, only one quarter of those questioned were involved in political activities. Fifty percent were "very satisfied" with service groups, 26% were "somewhat satisfied" and only three percent were "not satisfied." Most persons were either "very" (73%) or "somewhat satisfied" (16%) with volunteer opportunities.

Cross-tabulations and the chi square statistic were used to test the significance of the relationships ($p < 0.05$) between each independent variable and the dependent variable of how being able to bank hours would influence a person to volunteer now (see Table II). The gender of respondents was not significantly related to banking volunteer hours, though males were more likely to be influenced "a great deal." Older persons between 67–70 years of age would be more influenced to volun-

teer if they could bank volunteer hours than those between the ages of 50–66. Those in poor health were significantly more likely to be influenced by being able to bank hours than those who reported their health being either good or excellent. Ethnic orientation was not significantly related to an increased interest in banking volunteer hours, although a tendency to be influenced "some" to "a great deal" was shown more by Black, American Indian and Hispanic respondents. However, in this sample very few respondents (<one percent) were non-white. Neither the education level nor the family income was significantly related to an increased interest in banking volunteer hours. Employment status of the respondents had no effect either. Their marital status was not related to increased interest in banking volunteer hours, but those who had never married were more likely to be influenced "a great deal" than those who had been or were married. Neither how long a person lived in the community nor the number of people a person lived with was related to a person being influenced by the opportunity to bank volunteer hours. Living in a metropolitan or non-metropolitan area did not affect the older person's interest in banking volunteer hours.

Among the community satisfaction and participation questions, significant relationships were found between volunteer opportunities and political involvement as they related to banking volunteer hours (see Table III). Those who were "less satisfied" with volunteer opportunities within their communities were significantly more likely to be influenced to bank volunteer hours. Of the 402 respondents who were politically involved in their communities, 30% would be greatly influenced if they could bank their volunteer hours.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of the building momentum to shrink government, many publicly supported social programs may have reduced funding. This will make the job of practitioners, who continually look for new ways to interest persons to volunteer through various recruitment and marketing strategies, even more challenging (Cook, 1993–94). Volunteer banks could be one way to fill the gap while allowing persons to maintain their independence and dignity.

Being able to bank volunteer hours will influence a large majority of persons

Table II
Cross-tabulations of Respondents' Demographics With the Degree They Would Be Influenced to Volunteer by Being Able to "Bank" Their Volunteer Hours

Demographic Variables	n+	d.f.	Chi Square Value	Chi Square Significance
Gender	1197	2	4.93004	.08501
Age	1200	8	18.88857	.01547*
Self-reported Health	1197	8	19.47751	.01250*
Ethnic	1065	6	7.12544	.30940
Education	1197	6	3.88765	.69188
Employment Status	1107	2	2.64650	.26627
Total Family Income	1041	8	8.28488	.40615
Community Tenure	1028	8	6.66633	.57302
Marital Status	1193	8	5.91195	.65709
Household Size	1195	6	3.90215	.68992
Current Community Size	1198	2	1.01023	.60344

* Denotes significance at the 0.05 level
+ Note: n varies since not all persons answered all questions

Table III
Cross-tabulations of a Person's Participation and Satisfaction in Community Organizations With the Degree They Would Be Influenced to Volunteer by Being Able to "Bank" Their Volunteer Hours

Dependent Variable = Volunteer Participation				
Independent Variable	n+	d.f.	Chi Square Value	Chi Square Significance
Participation				
Service Groups	1200	6	23.20360	.00073***
Volunteer Opportunities	1200	6	16.37820	.01186**
Satisfaction				
Political Involvement	1200	2	8.15446	.01695*
Church or Religious	851	8	7.89055	.44423

* Denotes significance at the 0.05 level
** Denotes significance at the 0.01 level
*** Denotes significance at the 0.001 level
+ Note: n varies since not all persons answered all questions

age 50 to 70 to volunteer now. Persons age 67 to 70 are more likely to be influenced to volunteer by opportunities to bank volunteer hours than those age 50 to 66. These younger persons are primarily still in the workforce, and therefore probably have more limits on the time they have to spend in volunteer work.

The profile of the older persons who would be most influenced to volunteer are those age 67 to 70, of both genders, predominantly White, in good to excellent health, married, and not living alone. These persons have at least some college education, are employed, and have a family income of over $25,000 per year. The majority have lived in their communities for at least eight or more years, attend church or religious activities once a week and are not involved in politics. Knowing this profile will help those who want to start or revitalize a volunteer bank to target older persons who are more likely to become involved. The older persons in our society are a relatively underutilized community resource. While many are involved in volunteer activities, our expanding proportion of vital, healthy older persons provides an opportunity to engage them to a greater extent in helping their communities. At a time when many younger persons are seeing the aging segment of society as an economic drain, due in part to Social Security transfer payments and Medicare, volunteering to bank volunteer hours as a source of help for themselves could be a way to show the contribution older persons make to our society.

Volunteering and banking volunteer hours may be increasingly used as a family resource management strategy for people in caring for their relatives. Men and women who would not normally add volunteering to their busy schedule may do so if the volunteering is balanced by the use of these hours as a resource to help with an aging family member. This would be particularly true if a relative in need lives too far away for the person to provide the help personally. They would be earning help that would then be volunteered in the community where their relative lives. This could overcome a person's reticence to accept help perceived as charity, since a relative earned the help for them. It would also save money for the individual in need, the family, taxpayers and the government by putting less of a demand on some public services.

Although the number of persons "not satisfied" (33%) with opportunities to volunteer in their communities is rela-

tively small, these same persons are the ones who would be influenced to the greatest degree to volunteer if they could bank their hours. Since 36 states have some form of volunteer banking (Wexler, 1994), proponents of volunteer banks could make efforts to be sure that older persons are aware of opportunities to volunteer, and to point out the benefits to the individual and his/her family as well as the community.

Community leaders and program directors can explore volunteer banks in states similar to theirs to determine what might work best in their state. Since this study focused on predominantly rural western states, the profile of western volunteers and what motivates them to volunteer may be different from the profile in urban areas or in predominantly urban states in other parts of the country. Clearly, some older persons are motivated by being able to bank their hours. The challenge is to determine how best to involve them in volunteer efforts for their benefit and for the benefit of their community.

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Appendix A

In February a survey was sent to volunteer bank programs listed in Time Dollar Network's "Directory of Volunteer Service Credit Programs." The intent of the survey(see Appendix B) is to determine how programs are both similar and different related to age range of typical volunteers, number of people who participated in the past year, average number of volunteer service credit hours redeemed, types of services that can be exchanged for volunteer service credits, the sponsoring organization area the program covers (town, city, state), and if they have reciprocal agreements with other service credit programs.

Gathering this information and further information about what works and what doesn't will aid coordination and information exchange among programs. If you are involved with a service credit program or would like to start one please contact:

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Volunteer Research Coordinators
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University of Idaho
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(208) 885-7264
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Appendix B
Information on Volunteer Service Credit Programs

1. Name of city
2. Volunteer service credit program started in 19___.
3. Is the volunteer service credit program only in your city/town or is it a statewide program?
   __ A. City/town-wide
   __ B. Statewide
4. What is the age range of typical volunteers in your program? (Check all that apply.)
   __ A. Under 50 years of age
   __ B. Between 50–60 years of age
   __ C. Over age 60
   __ D. Other (please explain)
5. Approximately how many participants were in your volunteer service credit program last year?
6. What is the approximate average number of service credit hours redeemed?
7. How are the volunteer service credits accounted for?
   __ A. The organization keeps records
   __ B. Individuals keep track of their credits
   __ C. Other (please explain)
8. What types of services can be exchanged for volunteer service credits?
   __ A. Home assistance
   __ B. Child/adult care
   __ C. Other (please describe)
9. Do you have reciprocal agreements with other service credit programs?
   __ Yes __ No

   Would you be interested in exploring the possibility of reciprocal agreements?
   __ Yes __ No

Letters

Dear Editor:

Thank you very much for publishing in your Spring 1994 issue, Marlene Wilson's "Polishing the Potential of Volunteer/Staff Teams" from your 1993 International Conference on Volunteer Administration. As with anything I have ever heard or read of hers, I found it most interesting, stimulating, and ringing a chord with my own experience.

The particular chord this article rang was with my own experience in developing mission statements with a group.

She is right, "mission statements need to be short, snappy and inspiring." But I have seen people misinterpret this idea and confuse a mission statement with a slogan. The two are not the same. Surely Marlene would agree.

For instance, the preamble to the United States Constitution exemplifies a "short, snappy," most "inspiring" mission statement. But phrases like "United we stand, divided we fall," "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," while shorter, snappier, and "inspiring," are not mission statements, but slogans.

Our understandable, commendable desire to easily inspire people and to make our work appear and be as hassle-free as possible can lead us to wishful, unwittingly confused mission statements with slogans. Although we need them both, they are not the same. One cannot substitute for the other.

Sincerely,

Carol Weinstein
President
Friends of Fort Tryon Park, Inc.

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A. THE JOURNAL OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION provides a forum for the exchange of ideas and the sharing of knowledge and inspiration about volunteer administration. Articles may address practical concerns in the management of volunteer programs, philosophical issues in volunteerism, and significant applicable research.

B. Articles may focus on volunteering in any type of setting. In fact, THE JOURNAL encourages articles dealing with areas less-visible than the more traditional health, social services, and education settings. Also, manuscripts may cover both formal volunteering and informal volunteering (self-help, community organization, etc.) Models of volunteer programming may come from the voluntary sector, government-related agencies, or the business world.

C. Please note that THE JOURNAL deals with volunteerism, not voluntarism. This is an important distinction. For clarification, some working definitions are:

volunteerism: anything related to volunteers, volunteer programs or volunteer management, regardless of funding base (including government-related volunteers).

voluntarism: refers to anything voluntary in society, including religion; basically refers to *voluntary agencies* (with volunteer boards and private funding)—and do not always involve volunteers.

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