

IN THIS ISSUE

Trends and Transitions

This issue of *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration* (Volume XXIV, Number 1) has as its theme “Trends and Transitions.” The theme is first and foremost appropriate to the memory of our dear friend and colleague, Mary Merrill, who for the final two years of her life had been transitioning the former *Journal of Volunteer Administration* towards a more international audience and focus and a Web-based delivery medium. Thus, at its conference call meeting on June 12th, the Editorial Board of *The JOVA* (now *The IJOVA*) voted unanimously to implement these two transitions immediately with this issue.

Secondly, “Trends and Transitions” is very appropriate in light of the unexpected transition (many would suggest upheaval) that the professional members of the former AVA have experienced since February of this year. Suddenly gone was the proud and dedicated professional organization that had arisen from nothingness 45 years ago yet last year served a thriving membership of more than 2,000. As Editor, I invited the former members of the AVA Board of Directors to contribute to this issue, and while none have accepted my invitation to date, I do hope that some will do so in the months ahead. However, I must state emphatically that I do not criticize any former Board or general AVA member for their silence during this difficult transition. Each of us has grieved in some manner and to some extent over the demise of our organization, and some still grieve today. But having lost a dear colleague, my mother, and my professional association all in five short months, I have faith that out of grief will arise new hope, new promise, and a new professional association that will carry on the pioneer work of Mary Merrill and the original founders and previous leaders of AVA.

And thirdly, this issue addresses critical trends and issues facing both the volunteer administration profession as well as the larger social phenomenon of volunteerism. The lead Feature Article was one of the final professional pieces authored by Mary Merrill. In it Mary identifies six critical trends facing volunteers and volunteerism globally and discusses the challenges they present to volunteers and the program managers and administrators that support them. Cravens’ Feature Article then provides greater focus upon one of the trends identified by Merrill: the role of information technology in volunteering. Cravens presents the reader with a brief history and overview of online volunteering practice followed by cutting edge organizational research identifying existing and emerging factors critical to the success of virtual volunteers and online volunteerism internationally. In the final Feature Article, Graff explores a premise previously considered taboo to the professional manager of volunteers: the idea that volunteers could possibly return less value to an organization than they cost to sustain. The author’s innovative approach to cost-benefit analysis in volunteer programs is not currently a trend – it’s a necessary reality.

Tools of the Trade includes two reviews of books that each challenge and enable today’s manager of volunteers to address successfully two critical trends in our profession. Shultz’s review focuses upon a “reliable and thorough tutorial for managers to oversee program evaluation,” again addressing the ongoing and enlarging trend toward impact assessment in volunteer programs. Edwards’ review highlights what is, in her opinion, “‘the one thing’ you will

want to add to your library on the subjects of leadership and management,” two concepts so critical to our profession as we face both planned and unplanned trends and transitions.

The issue closes with three excellent Commentaries that bring the issue full circle on how volunteers, volunteerism, and volunteer organizations must continue to change and transition to meet the emerging trends and needs of a rapidly changing global society. Bahrieva highlights new roles for volunteerism and volunteer administration in the emerging NGO sector in her native Uzbekistan. Allen focuses upon fundamental aspects of volunteerism that must be recognized and addressed if we, as managers of volunteers, are to be successful in “creating organizational environments that engage volunteers effectively.” The issue closes with the keynote address delivered by the Honorable George Weber, Secretary General Emeritus of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, to the 10th IAVE Asia Pacific Conference. He so accurately concludes, “Our volunteerism miracle is far from built out. Perhaps it never will be completely. But so long as volunteerism is made of people . . . we will always be building to success.”

Welcome to *The International Journal of Volunteer Administration*; we are happy you have joined us to explore the trends and transitions we face as we continue to nurture, support, and sustain the unfinished miracle of volunteerism.

R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D.
Editor