

The Bulletin

A Quarterly Publication of the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration

message from the president



The never ending winter has spawned a term I have never heard before. So I have questions. What is a Polar Vortex? Have we had one before? Who gets the credit for this sensational name? When will the winter of 2014 end? I know that many Academy members have experienced a winter like few before. My wish to you huddled, cold, windswept, and muddy masses is for a quick snowmelt, and water for our western states.

Committee Activity

The members of the Academy have been working as we started 2014. The Board of Directors Executive Committee met in February and acted regarding:

- the Gold Medal Agreement renewal with our partner NRPA
- the Book Sales Task Force recommendations (look for news on this soon)
- the Youngification Task Force recommendations (look for news here soon)
- the Legends Committee report and recommendations
- the appointment of Academy member and Pugsley Award recipient Ron Dodd to the Pugsley Committee, and
- the Strategic Plan development discussion

The Executive Committee actions will be presented to the entire Board of Directors on April 9 for affirmation.

All the Committees and Task Forces are working, but some are off to a fast start. Dianne Hoover and the Legends Committee may literally change everything about the program. Joe Wynns and the

Urban Directors Committee have some interesting developments to review in the effort by many organizations to be more relevant to urban operations. Marc Heirshberg and Robert Armistead have jumped in with both feet on the Youngification Task Force. Art Anselene and the Gold Medal Committee will see the implementation of additional changes to the process this year. Karla Henderson masterfully coordinated the Book Sales Task Force, which could result in a significant reduction in the inventory of some of our publications at Sagamore Publishing. Many thanks to these members and their committees and task forces.

NRPA Legislative Forum

Our partner NRPA conducts its annual Legislative Forum on March 25 and 26 in Arlington, VA. The Forum is a great opportunity for a coordinated effort to influence Members of Congress on issues of importance to parks and recreation agencies and professionals. Register for the Forum at <https://www.nrpa.org/legforum/?NRPAHmCF> and advance your career, your agency, and your profession.

Illinois PARC Grants

Illinois Governor Pat Quinn released \$25,000,000 in Park and Recreation Construction (PARC) grant RFPs at the Illinois Park and Recreation Conference in Chicago late January. Does your state also fund parks and recreation construction grants, or land acquisition and development grants? Let me know at john.mcgovern@rac-llc.com.

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from the editor

by Arnie Biondo, Editor

I've been eager to help with this newsletter since joining the Academy, but as timing would have it, John McGovern appoints me as editor and I take a new job at the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County within the same few weeks. I apologize for the delay with this issue, but from this point forward, watch for this bulletin on a regular basis.

Now I'll ask for a little help. The Academy has professionals who are in the thick of innovation, adaptation, successes and solutions, and we want to share those stories, so please send them along. I will work to include them in the appropriate editions. Your input doesn't have to be lengthy or perfectly written; you can even send bullet points. We'll weave it all into prose. Simply pass along your information to abiondo@dupageforest.org.

Meantime, I have some recommended reading for all of us.

"You Don't Need a Title to Be a Leader"
by Mark Sanborn, Doubleday

"Lincoln On Leadership" by Donald T. Phillips, Warner Business Books

"The Five Temptations of the CEO"
by Patrick Lencioni, Simon & Schuster, Inc.

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Technology

If they can do this in Italy ... how about here? A research project at the University of Palermo in Italy has created a virtual cane for persons with sight impairments, using the typical smart phone. The phones "read" lines in a route much like a cane would detect a route. Many smart phones can also read infrared and that too could be a breakthrough. Interested in the article? Go to: <http://www.technologyreview.com/view/523401/app-turns-smartphone-into-virtual-cane-for-the-blind/>.

We could write about technological advances every day. Look for more from our own Technology Task Force, including the release of the new website, very soon.

US DOJ Issues Guidance Regarding OPDMDs

Attention all of you land management agencies and parks and recreation agencies. The US Department of Justice has released long awaited guidance regarding policies permitting the use of Other Power Driven Mobility Devices (OPDMDs). A person with a disability using an OPDMD can go anywhere indoors or outdoors that a pedestrian can go. Get it at <http://www.ada.gov/opdmd.htm> and use this guidance to develop a policy for your agency regarding OPDMD usage.

Welcome our New Editor

Finally, welcome our Editor Arnie Biondo. Arnie changed jobs in January, leaving the Carol Stream (IL) Park District and accepting the Executive Director position at the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County (IL). Arnie is not known for holding his thoughts to himself. Look for an occasional Biondo-fication in the newsletter.

Here's to hoping this is the last snowfall before next winter ...

John N. McGovern, J.D.

President

American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration

Bylaw Ballot Deadline Extended to May 15

by Andee Chestnut, Executive Secretary

Because the Academy did not receive 50 percent of its bylaws revisions ballots by the Feb. 28 deadline, the board has approved a May 15 extension.

1. If you have already emailed your ballot, you do not need to resubmit a new one.
2. If you sent your ballot via U.S. mail and signed it, you do not need to resubmit a new one.
3. If you sent your ballot via U.S. mail and did not sign it (Don't worry, you weren't required to do so.) you will need to vote again. Email info@aapra.org and indicate in your message how you wish to vote on each question. (You can also email info@aapra.org if you need another copy of the bylaw revisions or the ballot questions.)
4. For any other questions regarding the bylaws revisions, contact Rich Grodsky at 847-869-8377 or rich@grodsky.net or John McGovern at 224-293-6451 or john.mcgovern@rac-llc.com.

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THE BULLETIN

Spring 2014

Editor

Arnie Biondo
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County



2013 Pugsley Awards

by Fran Mainella, Pugsley Committee Chair

In October the Academy announced Beverly Chrisman of Lexington, S.C., John H. Davis of Culpeper, Va., and Barry S. Tindall of Falls Church, Va., as the winners of its 2013 Honorable Cornelius Amory Pugsley Award, the most prestigious award for outstanding contributions to the promotion and development of public parks in the United States. The Academy presents the award each year in partnership with the National Park Foundation and the Davey Tree Expert Company.

Beverly Chrisman has been an advocate for parks and recreation activities for more than 40 years. She has been active at the local, state and national levels and served as the National Recreation and Park Association board chair from 1991 to 1995. A sought-after political consultant with a reputation for excellence in grassroots organization, she has been involved in numerous successful campaigns for South Carolina governors, state legislators and members of Congress. She is committed to the idea that all things are possible and that by working together people can make a difference in the lives of others.

As a leader in the field of parks and recreation for more than 40 years, John Davis is credited with breaking down barriers in the 1960s by encouraging professionals of color to attend a 10-state Southern Regional Conference for the first time. He served as NRPA president in 1975 and was the executive director for 10 additional years. During his tenure, membership grew substantially, and he gained recognition for increasing public visibility and support for parks and recreation.

Barry Tindall was NRPA's director of public policy for more than 35 years and was involved in successful initiatives such as continued appropriations for the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the restoration of urban parks and facilities, the transfer of federal surplus lands to state and local agencies, and the transfer of reclaimed toxic sites to local agencies. He worked for the inclusion of recreation objectives in clean-water strategies and for greater involvement of recreation entities in U.S. Department of Agriculture summer-school food programs. He pushed for gender equity, services for youth in high-risk environments, the conservation of abandoned rail rights-of-ways for local and state recreation, and the development of trails as a part of federal transportation programs.

This year's winners stand in good company. Previous winners have included Stephen Mather, the founder of the National Park Service; former Secretary of the Interior Stuart Udall; noted conservationist Lady Bird Johnson; and Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the founder of the Special Olympics.

Legends Committee Update

by Dianne Hoover, Legends Committee Chair

The Legends Committee has recently been addressing the question of relevancy: How relevant are the more than 100 tapes that exist, and how should we move forward with the program? After a few group email exchanges and a conference call, the committee decided to survey Academy members and National Recreation and Park Association networks such as educators, administrators, ambassadors and young professionals.

Thanks to the help of Linda Caldwell and Jan Geden, the survey generated a whopping 216 replies. While the committee has not yet had a chance to digest all the information, it's clear that the Legends tapes have not been used to their fullest extent and that future information will need to look different.

The committee discussed making tapes more topical than personal, and survey respondents seemed to support that idea, stating that they were interested in the person as well as the one or two things that made that individual a legend, such as career focus or specialty. Replies also indicated that tapes under 15 minutes are better-suited to today's market.

There were several suggestions on how to make existing tapes more usable, such as indexing and summarizing them by specialty or topic. Such an effort would take a tremendous amount of time and resources but might be a good candidate for a dissertation project. There was also an interest in taping histories from Academy members who have been part of the parks and recreation movement from the beginning.

The Legends Committee will soon summarize the survey's results and make recommendations to the board. Thanks go to the committee members who were so engaged in the process, to Linda Caldwell for entering and retrieving the survey data, and to all Academy members who responded and gave us such great input.

You Can Do It, Too!

Bringing professionals together to tackle interesting topics, sticky issues or grand ideas may be one of the best things that Academy leaders can do, and according to the Carol Stream Park District, hosting a symposium to do so can be easy. The district organized and communicated almost entirely by email, gaining recommendations for attendees from presidents and directors of state associations. There wasn't a registration fee; participants only needed to provide for their transportation and lodging. (The district secured a block of hotel rooms at a low rate.) Sponsors covered the cost of refreshments as well as Friday and Saturday dinners and a Saturday breakfast.

Community Engagement Symposium

In November 2013 the Carol Stream Park District in Illinois hosted a group of professionals to discuss the concept and practice of community engagement in public parks and recreation. Participants were Brian Meyer, Carrie Fullerton, Julie Vogl, Ron Salski, Dave Haring, Joe McCann and Stacy Snapp from Illinois; Becky Benna from Ohio; Justin Cutler from Oregon; Ron Grall from Wisconsin; Lisa Paradis from Massachusetts; Mike Pfahl from Florida; Jimmy Gisi and Detrick Stanford from Georgia; Jan Ficken from Minnesota; Jason Genck from Colorado; and Dave Noble and Lisa Moore from Tennessee. Barbara Heller of Heller and Heller Consulting in Illinois facilitated the symposium, which was sponsored by Play Core, Williams Architects, Heller and Heller Consulting, and DMP Consulting

Greg Stopka of the Alliance for Innovation started the day with a presentation on the "Six Qualities Linked to Innovation."

1. Inclusive Leadership
2. Relentless Creativity
3. Extensive Internal Partnerships
4. Robust External Partnerships
5. Authentic Community Connections
6. Reality-Focused/ Results-Driven

The symposium challenged participants with a number of questions.

- What are successful ways to engage your community?
- How do we find citizens willing to participate?
- How do we engage and reach underserved markets?
- How do you determine and measure what's important?
- Are we as parks and recreation professionals equipped to measure what's important to citizens?
- What's required to make parks and recreation services as essential as police, transportation or fire?

Answers to these and related questions generated a lot of discussion.

- We need to engage, to get out and go where the people are. Get over the fear of engaging people in conversation about what you do. Low-tech, grassroots initiatives are best, but it takes a long view and a system.
- Partner with other public service agencies. Form alliances to address opportunities or problems. Tie communication, feedback and input efforts with existing events or programs. Use multiple input points, such as mom blogs.
- Ask front line staff to identify influencers, key people and opinion leaders. Read Malcom Gladwell's "The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference."
- To prove yourself, measure community benefits.
- Drop meaningless measurements, and simplify the measurement process. The average organization wastes 25 percent due to inefficient internal processes.
- Simple is best. Don't lock into one measurement tool. Cast the net multiple times to ensure you're capturing all that's out there.
- In the end, the customer or service user defines what is valuable to measure.
- Measure not "how many" but "why is something important."

In the end, the group's consensus was that we all need someone to challenge our thinking.