

directions

Journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

a Silver History, a Gold Future ~ ANCA Turns 25!

The year 2014 is a milestone year for the Association of Nature Center Administrators. It is the 25th anniversary of our existence – 25 years of service to the leaders of nature and environmental learning centers.

In 1989 12 visionary individuals, brought together by Tracy Kay, founded an organization to nurture nature center leaders and provide a forum to discuss challenges and opportunities facing the profession. After searching for a home within existing professional groups, the decision was made to form a new organization instead and ANCA was launched.

ANCA's membership (now 600 strong!) has much to be proud of. 19 annual Summits, 100+ Peer Consults, 7 professional development publications, a mentor-

ing program, leadership awards presented to 14 of our exemplary colleagues, countless options for



networking and resource sharing, and, 25 years of promoting excellence in nature center management.

ANCA is committed to serv-

ing all nature and environmental learning centers including non-profits, governmental, and residential education centers throughout North America and beyond!

To acknowledge the accomplishments of ANCA over the past 25 years, we have planned a year-long celebration, which began at the Surf's Up Summit in Newport Beach, CA and culminates at the 2014 Beyond Boundaries Summit in Kalamazoo, MI.

We will not only be recognizing the people who invested in growing and expanding ANCA, but we will also be highlighting our success stories, providing tips & tools, and much more. Our "look back" will be complemented by a "look ahead," with a focus on what opportunities the next 25

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Founded in 1989, the Association of Nature Center Administrators is a private non-profit organization dedicated to promoting and supporting best leadership and management practices for nature and environmental learning centers.

Serving more than 600 members, ANCA is the leader in the profession.



Rooted in Experience. Reaching for Excellence.

Directions is a quarterly publication of the Association of Nature Center Administrators, distributed to members of ANCA as a membership benefit.

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Director's Notes

Showcase Your Center! Call for Summit Hosts

Jen Levy
Executive Director
Association of Nature Center
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One of the unique aspects of the annual ANCA Summit is the location – each year the Summit takes place at a member center, not a hotel or convention center. This provides the host the opportunity to showcase their center and region.

Summit host sites have included residential and day-use facilities, urban and rural centers, small sites (less than 4 acres) and large (1,400 acres), and have been located throughout the United States. Serving as a Summit Host will put your center and staff in a very select group of ANCA members who have successfully organized, planned, and conducted a national event that brings together leaders in the field of nature and environmental learning center management.

Potential hosts are selected based on criteria established by the ANCA staff and board and past Summit hosts. If you are interested in learning more about hosting the Summit, please email Jen.

Amber Parker, executive director at the Marine Science Consortium, hosted the Summit in 2012 and had this to say about the experience:

“Hosting the ANCA Summit was one of the best whole-staff experiences our organization has had. Prior to the Summit we were in an intense revitalization phase that required some significant leaps of service, teamwork, and program. The ANCA Summit became our goal for completion of those leaps. Every staff member knew that hosting our peers was serious business and that The Marine Science Consortium’s new facilities, grounds, customer service ideals,

and programs must demonstrate the utmost in professionalism. “ANCA is coming!” was our mantra.

“When the day finally came and peers from across the continent began to arrive, it was wonderful to see the sense of pride and concentration on every staff member’s face. Not only did they know they were doing a great job, but they also enjoyed the fellowship of people with like minds. When I left for this year’s Summit I carried with me the well wishes and greetings from many staff, kitchen to administration to education, who wanted me to say “hello!” and “we miss you!” to the people they met and with whom they bonded last year. I can honestly say that our organization is better for having hosted the Summit and would encourage any other organization to give it a try. Your experience will be remarkable and fruitful.”



Kalamazoo Nature Center in Michigan is hosting the 2014 ANCA Summit.

25 Tips: Working with Boards

1. ANCA's *Director's Guide to Best Practices* is the go-to resource for information on how to work effectively with a board.
2. Primary Responsibilities of Board Members
 - Approve programs and services that reaffirm the mission and insure relevance to the community.
 - Review and approve financial statements that accurately and thoroughly reflect the fiscal status, including: budgets, profit and loss statements, and balance sheets. Approve the annual audit by an independent CPA.
 - Hire, supervise and evaluate the ED. The ED should receive a formal evaluation annually.
 - Represent and promote the organization to the public.
 - Attract resources, including money, volunteers, goods and services to the organization.
 - Fulfill its governance role (if it is a governing board) and establish and monitor policies.

Board Recruitment & Development

3. A Fund Development Policy that clearly states your organization's expectations for board participation is a must. Once you have a policy, it should be a part of your board recruitment. Clear expectations that are mutually understood are a cornerstone of a good relationship.
4. "Capable trumps wealthy." Use a board skills matrix to identify "holes" in the skill sets of your board and recruit in a targeted, smart way to build your board.
5. Take a broad approach to diversity when you develop your board. Race and gender are important considerations, in addition to age, professional skills, geography, financial resources, and influence.
6. Term limits become a necessary best-practice once your nonprofit evolves beyond the start-up stage. While it is difficult to cycle effective competent members off your board, term limits are a healthy way to build ambassadors for your organization in the community.

Executive Director/Board Chair Relationship

7. The ED and board chair should meet to develop the board meeting agenda. The agenda should be based on the strategic plan and focused on forward-looking issues.
8. According to LaVal Brewer, the board chair has the "easiest job in the room." Successful board chairs delegate well. Their main responsibilities are to:
 - Run the board meetings and ensure board and/or committee follow-through on assigned tasks, and set an example by making a leadership-level gift.
 - Establish a solid, working relationship with the ED to coordinate high-level activities such as annual planning, strategic planning, policy development, fundraising plans and budgeting. This should be accomplished with regular communications including face-to-face meeting (outside of board meeting) monthly and regular phone calls and emails.
 - Oversee the annual evaluation of the ED with either the executive committee or other board committee assigned to personnel.
 - Maintain current knowledge of programs and activities so they can act as the spokesperson for the organization, particularly at times of crisis.

Board Evaluation

9. Develop an annual agreement outlining board member's roles and responsibilities and have each board member sign it.
10. Report engagement of board members towards the success of your fund development campaign. Example: "15 out of 18 board members have made gifts to the annual fund to date." You won't need to mention names and single out individuals to promote participation.

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11. Establish board self-evaluation protocols and help your board evaluate its strengths and weaknesses on a member-by-member basis annually.

Communicating with and training board members

12. Executive Directors should maintain relationships with all board members. Typically, there are about 15% of board members that we love, 70% somewhere in the middle and the remaining 15% we can't stand. The tendency is to spend the majority of our time working with either end of the spectrum, and this is a very poor model. Put plans in place to help you spend time with ALL members of your board.
13. An ED should be in communication with their board chair once a week. The rest of the board members we should be in touch with (outside of board meetings) at least once within a three-month time period.
14. Develop and use an appropriate dashboard report format that provides a high level, strategic snapshot of the organization's financial status and progress towards its strategic goals on a monthly basis.
15. A good book to mine for ideas on how to deal with rogue board members is available from Board Source. The author is Katha Kissman and the book is *Taming the Troublesome Board Member*.
16. Avoid creating an "inner circle" of board members. Be sure that all information that goes to the Executive Committee also goes to the board unless it is strictly confidential.
17. Develop a crisis or emergency communication plan for your board. In an emergency situation, assume the media will look to your board for information about the situation. Make sure you communicate to them before they are put on the spot.
18. Every board member needs development. Training should be an ongoing, continuous process. Resources for board training can range from low cost to expensive. A low cost suggestion is to use the menu of 8-12-minute Podcasts on different board topics available from www.Boardstar.org. More comprehensive development can be accomplished by bringing in a consultant for a board retreat.
19. All committees need to have a purpose that is clearly stated and written down. Clarifying roles of board and staff in fundraising.
20. Fundraising is a professionalized process that should be run by the staff. It should engage the board. Boards are NOT FUNDRAISERS. You don't want a fundraising board, you want a board that fundraises. The example given by LaVal Brewer of how a "fundraising board" can get an organization into trouble is the Central Asian Institute, whose board fulfilled their role as fundraising for their charismatic ED and author of the best seller, *Three Cups of Tea*. The board was not aware of administrative problems throughout the organization and the results were catastrophic for the organization and its mission. Staff "own" the revenue-generating functions of the organization, which includes fundraising.
21. Expect your board members to:
 - Data mine their relationships for prospects
 - Be familiar with your case for support
 - Thank donors
 - Comply with fund development policies of the organization
22. The staff is responsible for:
 - Working with the board to develop the long-term fundraising strategy and case for support
 - Organizing and executing the fundraising program
 - Developing relationships with funders
 - Coordinating visits by staff and board to get money
 - Planning and overseeing donor recognition and cultivation
 - Working with staff to develop promotional materials for fundraising

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years may hold for our profession and how we can best position ourselves for success.

Some of the elements of our strategic plan call for producing “white papers” on trends and key environmental education issues, establishing regional networks and workshops, publishing additional monographs, and maximizing our ability to serve our members via technological avenues.

In order to accomplish these things, we must continue to grow our membership and expand fundraising efforts. Already, we have implemented strategies to increase membership retention, have begun an annual fund program, actively pursued grant opportunities, and

established an Advisory Council specifically focused on expanding development opportunities.

As part of the 25th Anniversary Celebration we are looking to secure financial support by utilizing strategies that celebrate ANCA and the stories of our members. The Surf’s Up Summit launched the anniversary celebration with the “Experience Tree.” The very fabric of ANCA is all about experiences... the experience of your first Summit or perhaps your nineteenth; the experience of shar-



photo by Jen Levy

Saul Weisberg, executive director of North Cascades Institute, adds an experience to the Experience Tree at the Surf’s Up Summit.

ing a profound “ah-ha” moment with another ANCA member; the experience of finding a best practice; the experience of working with remarkable colleagues who care deeply about their profession; the experience of friendships that have spanned 1 or even 25 years... and on and on. Here are a few

of the experiences that were shared at the Summit:

“Spending time with my nature center peers – PRICELESS!”


“No one should be lost when others know the way.”

“ANCA, especially the Summits has been my therapy. I am not sure I could have made it with out the help and support of my ANCA friends.”

“As a first timer I have to say this has been a “better than ever expected event.”

To acknowledge the sharing of best

practices over the past 25 years, we are compiling “best practices” lists that present 25 Tips on a variety of management and leadership topics. We are pleased to present the first 2 lists, Working with Boards and Social Media, in this newsletter. Look for additional lists throughout the year.

ANCA has so much to be proud of, 25 years of excellence behind us and now reaching for the next 25. 




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Boards (continued from page 5)


- Insuring compliance with funding sources, regulatory requirements, and report progress towards campaign and plan goals to the board on a regular basis

23. An excellent resource, by Jerold Panas is called *The Fundraising Habits of Supremely Successful Boards*. It offers a wealth of practical fundraising advice and can be read in about an hour. It is available on Amazon.com.

24. Don't take an old process, or some other nature center's process and lay it on a new group without thoroughly adapting to your organization's policies, practices and culture. Above all, have any new policy reviewed by legal counsel.


25. The ED is responsible for communicating to the full board. Staff have appropriate communications with the board through the function of committees. The ED and staff are responsible for daily operational functions of the organization. If board members have concerns about staff, they should be communicated to the ED, not directly to the staff. 


This tip sheet, compiled by Patty Weisse, was assembled from notes taken from the ANCA Summit 2013 workshops, Build a Better Board: Communication and Build a Better Board: Fund Raising, presented by LaVal Brewer of LaVal Brewer Consulting, the facilitated session, Board Development & Motivation, led by Saul Weisberg of the North Cascades Institute, and tips submitted by Summit attendees. An additional resource is, Leadership in Tandem: The Board Chair/Executive Partnership, by Pat Wyzbinski from Management Cornerstones, 915 E Brady Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202.




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- Nature Watch

Bronze:

- Domokur Architects
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- Naturalist Journeys
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Peer Consults - We know the business. We're in it too!

ANCA offers consulting assistance to nature centers and other environmental education organizations at very reasonable rates.

The cost includes transportation, lodging, and meals for the team, plus a \$3,250 fee that goes toward supporting ANCA's professional services. Our board of directors and members, provide these services with no personal financial gain, while you gain the advantage of advice and guidance from some of the profession's most respected and experienced leaders.

What can be covered? Well, just about anything involved with planning, funding, and operations.

Some topics include:

- Assistance with long range and strategic planning
- Review facilities and trails
- Program evaluation
- Personnel & human resources issues
- Fundraising and fiscal management
- Green building
- Exhibits
- Starting a center
- Organizational structure

Join the Team!

ANCA's Consult Services are a success because of it's members' participation on Consult Teams. Please consider sharing your experiences and lessons learned.

Consult Team members donate their time but all expenses are paid. Participating in a Consult is a great way to see other parts of the country, learn about other nature centers, and take home valuable knowledge for your own center.

So don't delay!!!

PLEASE fill out the skills survey in the Member's Section on ANCA's web site at www.natctr.org.

To find out more about ANCA's Peer Consults contact:

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the potential to become a vehicle for environmental education in and of itself.

• Be Able to Justify It

There are those in the environmental education field who are understandably concerned about anything that may encourage people to spend more time sitting in front of computer screens. How will you justify your organization's use of social media? Remember that, like any other piece of technology, social media is just a tool and can be used in any number of ways. It's not going away, and we have nothing to lose by being part of it. What's more, good social media content has the potential to actually get people outside. It's easy to imagine someone inspired by photos of birds and wildflowers to go seeking those things in their own neighborhood.

For those who are interested, many resources are available on the effective use of social media to promote nonprofit organizations. Books on the subject include *Social Media for Social Good: A How-To Guide for Nonprofits* by Heather Mansfield, *The Dragonfly Effect* by Jennifer Aaker and Andy Smith, *The Networked Nonprofit* by Beth Kanter and Allison Fine, and *101 Social Media Tactics for Nonprofits* by Melanie Mathos and Chad Norman.

Social media is here to stay. However, it can be much more

than people posting photos of their cats and describing what they had for breakfast. Environmental education can harness this tool to move beyond the walls of the nature center and into people's daily routines.

Next time you see someone sneaking a peek at their smartphone, don't despair—just point them to your organization's Facebook page or Twitter feed, and they'll be hitting the trails in no time. 🌿



Having recently finished her master's degree in environmental education from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Rebecca Deatsman now lives in eastern Oregon, where she is the Education and Projects Coordinator for the North Fork John Day Watershed Council and continues to educate about natural history through her blog (<http://rebeccainthewoods.wordpress.com>) and Twitter feed (@rdeatsman).

25 Tips: Social Media for Nature Centers

1. K.I.S.S.- Keep It Short & Simple
2. Create leads for upcoming events and include registration links
3. Title posts with thoughtful keywords that will resonate with search engines and readers.
4. Ask questions to engage: "How many creatures can you spot in this photo?"
5. Try to respond within 24 hours to a comment, wall post, or mention.
6. Promote other people's and/or organizations' content. It builds followers.
7. Remember branding!
50 low quality photos, or 8 high quality? Be sure to take pictures of all aspects of your center, not just people or just landscapes.
8. All things ephemeral:
Got a neat flower on a trail? Let visitors know with a quick post.
9. Try to include an illustrative and good looking photo with your posts.
10. Turn a picture into a meme, with text in the image, instead of a picture and comment.
11. Always link back to your source ('share' buttons) and give credit to others in the form of tags (@ANCAnews).
12. Let others defend you on your wall. Never ever delete someone else's post!
13. Tweets should have some type of #hashtag included.
14. Always greet a new follower with a message, for example "Nice to Tweet you! Greetings from #ANCAsummit."
15. Scared of Pinterest?
Use boards for each event/idea and a board that allows your constituents to post.

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More From the Field:

the Best Advice I Ever Heard: Nature Center Edition

Magill Weber
Consultant
Mayes | Wilson & Associates, LLC
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There are thousands of books, magazine articles, and websites devoted to the “best ever” advice. The advice is generally from business leaders and sports stars, and includes generic platitudes such as, “take chances” and “there is no future you can’t create” (attributed to Michaels Jordan and Bloomberg, respectively). But perhaps it was the eccentric billionaire T. Boone Pickens, among countless others, who said it best, when he told the graduating class at Oklahoma State University, “choose who to take advice from.”

In the interest of tracking down some wisdom for nature center professionals, we reached out to leaders from across the country, and asked them to share some of the best advice they had ever received. Here is what they said:

Advice on Running Successful a Nature Center

Unless you’re incredibly lucky all of the time, to be truly successful in any endeavor, you need to have a clear idea of what you want to accomplish, a plan to accomplish those goals, work effectively as an organization, and raise money to support your programming. Along

those lines, Charity Krueger, executive director at Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm in Ohio, shared an excellent piece of advice she received related to day-to-day nature center work.

“The best professional advice I ever received was to create a vision and strategic plan by engaging our staff and board in a bottom-up planning process. If you want your plan to succeed,



Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Milwaukee, WI included staff's input when designing their new building for an even better result.

implement an action planning process – creating objectives assigned to individuals or teams that are reviewed and celebrated every six months. This has kept us on task and enabled us to succeed beyond our dreams. It is also important to remember that every challenge can be turned into an opportunity.”

Charity also passed along some advice she would give to others, based upon her own experience.

“Treat every visitor as a VIP. Early in my career in the 1980s, staff and volunteers were holding

a party for a retiring employee. A volunteer informed me that someone wanted to talk to the director. I looked across the room and noted an individual that I did not recognize dressed in rumpled, dirty clothing. I stepped away from the celebration to talk to the individual who explained that he wanted to give a gift to help us rebuild a barn that had burned to the ground. As he wrote the check,

I was shocked to see that it was for \$1,000. I wondered afterwards that if I had not made the time to talk with him if the amount would have been the same.”

Buffy Cheek, who recently retired from Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in Wisconsin, shared some advice about building a new building (besides raising lots of money). This advice can apply to many aspects of running a nature center

or a program.

“This advice was to get the staff’s input first, before the architect or anyone else’s. Though I loved my staff, my first instinct was to let the architect lead the way since I had never been involved in building a building, especially a green one. However I followed the advice I was given and it worked beautifully. The staff brainstormed and produced wonderfully creative ideas, many

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of which were implemented in the new building and subsequently copied by a number of groups who visited the building after the grand opening. The ideas included changing traffic patterns inside and outside, new ways to consider storage of educational materials within easy reach, and a number of other topics. Of course the staff understood that the final decisions were mine and the board's to make, but by starting with them with no parameters, they were able to think above and beyond the usual. In addition, they felt great pride and ownership when the building was open for business. The advice really worked."

Advice on Raising Money
If you've ever been to the Schlitz Audubon Center, you know how good this advice turned out to be! Buffy Cheek also shared some fantastic fundraising advice with ANCA's executive director, Jen Levy.

Like many executive directors, Jen struggled to make time for fundraising while she was also dealing with running an organization, and handling the day-to-day crises that seem to arise for all of us. Buffy's advice to Jen was to create a weekly "development day." That day is blocked out exclusively for fundraising activities such as grant research and writing, donor letters, thank you letters, and phone calls to donors. Jen says she was initially skeptical, but she started to do this weekly and reports that, "it is really working." Even better, Jen works from

home on her development days so that she doesn't get distracted. Says Jen, "I highly recommend everyone schedule development days in their calendars!"

Advice On Working with Your Board

Working well with a board is key to the success of any executive director, and one of the common advice themes we heard was re-



Be transparent and honest when dealing with your board. Working well with your board is an art that must be mastered.

lated to working with your board.

Holly Dill of the Environmental Learning Center in Florida says her best advice is to "be honest and transparent." That is great advice for dealing with your board, or anyone else for that matter. Holly also recommends checking the members-only section of the ANCA website.

When it came to working with her board, Patty Weisse of Baltimore Woods Nature Center in upstate New York recounted a presentation by Mike Riska of Delaware Nature Society, at an

ANCA Summit in Michigan years ago. Mike asked the crowd for a show of hands, as to whether or not their boards made their lives easier, or more difficult. When the crowd overwhelmingly indicated that their boards were making their lives more difficult, Patty recalled, "[Mike] was very clear that he couldn't do HIS job without his board, and the rest of us would be a lot better off if we changed our relationship with our boards. Initially, I remember thinking he was wrong. With time and a few knocks, the wisdom of his advice became more than apparent. Working well with a board is an art that ANCA really helped me master."

Gordon Maupin, executive director of the Wilderness Center in Ohio recounted his experience as a young executive director, seeking out mentor Hal Mahan from the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Some of Hal's best advice to him was, "As the execu-

tive director you will win every single battle with your board, but you will always lose the war."

Gordon's mentor explained that the board served so long as it was fun for them and it was their hobby. "However, if it stopped being fun because you were creating unpleasantness, strife, and discord, they'd get rid of you." Gordon kept that advice in mind over the years.

"I was very careful (sometimes too careful) to pick only the most

important battles with board members with whom I disagreed. It was my style to explain problems while offering solutions or alternative solutions. Many times I backed away from minor things. Usually if the board person was really wrong it showed up pretty quickly without a fight. I avoided surprising the board with anything unpleasant. I made sure they were fully informed and felt included in dealing with difficult issues.”

Advice On Keeping Things in Perspective

Another common thread in the advice shared by nature center leaders related to keeping things in perspective. Many stressed the importance of maintaining a positive outlook regardless of how bad things might seem at the time.

“Replace anguish over an unchangeable past with hope in an uncharted future.” That was the quote from Tina Popson of Potawattamie County Conservation in Iowa, paraphrasing what had been written about President Abraham Lincoln. Tina often thinks of that advice, mindful to be “hopeful, optimistic, and always ready to move forward in the face of obstacles.”

“Don’t sweat the small stuff.” This advice was given to Michelle Skedgell, executive director at Pierce Cedar Creek Institute in Michigan, by one of her board members, an attorney. (Ironic, she notes, given his profession). This advice has stuck with her the longest, and that she reminds herself of it when she feels overwhelmed. Michelle says her board member counseled her that, “so many times

you just have to let things go to keep your focus on the big picture. Don’t get mired in the details and lose sight of the goal.” Thinking back on that advice helps her balance and refocus.

Speaking of balance, “keep your life in balance,” is the line Bill Rose of Kalamazoo Nature Center in Michigan calls, “the best advice I ever received.” Many others agree. Whether it is finding that work-life balance, remembering to take time for yourself, or keeping your daily challenges in perspective, many in the nature center pro-



The All People’s Trail (APT) is a railed, elevated boardwalk and is one-third mile long at Shaker Lakes Nature Center in Ohio.

fession find these to be important words to live by.

Advice on Being Patient

Kay Carlson from the Nature Center at Shaker Lakes in Ohio passed along some important advice she received while attending her first ANCA Summit after becoming an executive director – give it time. One of the other long-time directors told Kay that he thought it took five years for a new ED to hit their stride. Said Kay, “at the time I thought, holy moly! I’m never going to make it that long!

“This advice made me feel bet-

ter because it gave me some perspective on how long it really takes to understand the organization, and then to figure out how to make the necessary changes in order to move in the direction of that vision.”

Kay is proud to report that she just celebrated her fifth anniversary as executive director, and is finally hitting her stride. Kay says she couldn’t have done it without the great advice she received from many people, and thanks her “many older and wiser ANCA friends.”

Along those same lines, Katie

Watson of Pajarito Environmental Education Center in New Mexico shared the advice she received from John Scott Foster of Wesselman Nature Society in Indiana. “Don’t rush failure.”

Katie is reminded of this advice in the face of expectations, including her own, to “keep things moving forward.” She keeps this advice in mind working on everything from a

new capital campaign to working with designers on exhibits for a new nature center building. Says Katie, “its good for me to remember sometimes that a delay is worth it if it makes for a higher quality result.”

Advice on The Profession

One nature center director shared some advice on the profession itself, summing it up as, “remembering why I got into this business in the first place” on tough days.

Echoing that sentiment, Charity

(continued on page 13)

Krueger from Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm shared some advice she received years ago that is close to the hearts and souls of many in the nature center profession. “Make your avocation your vocation and then you will always love what you do.” She continues that, “even today I don’t know if I am playing or working all the time.”

However, even when you love your work, sometimes you have to remind others that working at a nature center is a professional endeavor. Gordon Maupin added some advice he likes to give to others on maintaining a professional image around a board.

“When we had executive committee meetings or full board meetings, I always wore a coat and tie to the meeting. And, I insisted that my staff wear a coat and tie or female appropriate business attire. When board members asked why I did that, I told them directly that as board members they deserved the respect that the coat and tie demonstrated and it was also to remind them that this was my profession not my hobby. I recall one board member being mildly surprised that my job was my....well, job.”

On Keeping Advice in Mind Until You Can Use It

The type of advice that changes your life doesn’t always sink in at the time. Bill Rose from Kalamazoo Nature Center summed it up well:

“The advice that can be meaningful for a person changes depending on experience, age, and the particular circumstance at the time. We don’t really absorb in-

formation until we are in the right context to have it be meaningful and relevant. And, sometimes we don’t know the importance of the advice we receive until we can see it from the distance of time.”

I couldn’t agree more. I distinctly remember the first day on the job at a large Midwestern law firm. Fresh out of law school, our group of new attorneys nervously awaited introductory remarks by an imposing senior partner to start off our training. The partner strode in purposefully and proclaimed in a thunderous voice (picture Morgan Freeman with a Chicago accent) that he was about to give us the SINGLE GREATEST PIECE OF CAREER ADVICE that we would ever hear. Of course, when someone makes such a bold statement, you had better sit up and listen. We were rapt. That advice was...

“Never wear sweatpants to the grocery store.” Though we all laughed at the time, I’ve spent the last decade contemplating that simple wisdom. I’d like to think that it doesn’t mean that we’re all on the work clock 24-hours a day, but instead that your appearance, values, and demeanor should reflect what people expect out of the profession. In other words, walk the walk. Which is actually pretty decent advice. 🌿

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www.mayeswilsonassociates.com

16. Team approach? Use the *Cult of Personality* and have the person creating the post sign it.
17. Add more social networks when and if you’re ready: Include Instagram, Pinterest, and Twitter.
18. Complete and optimize your social media profiles (e.g.: bar at top of Facebook homepage)
19. Post at different rates and times and see how they do. Adjust accordingly.
20. Ask followers to share a key post every so often. Make the ask in the post itself.
21. Make content generation and following/follower management part of your daily routine.
22. Prominent, one-click sign-ups for all social media: link directly to your home page on that network and use multiple share buttons.
23. Use LinkedIn’s “Your Day” feature
24. Link content between website/blog and social media. Users should be able to find details and all events on each one.
25. Don’t take yourself too seriously. Social media is a place to have fun while educating!

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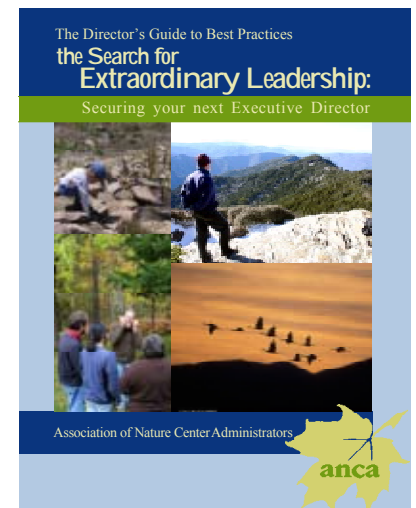
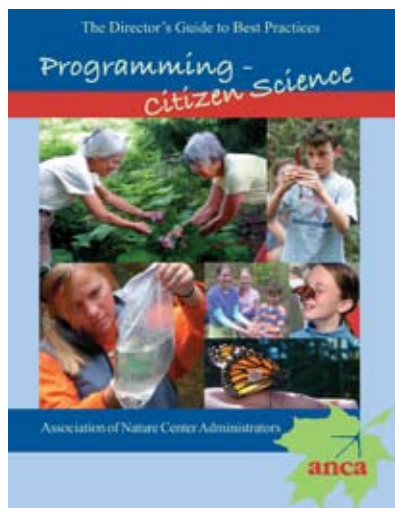
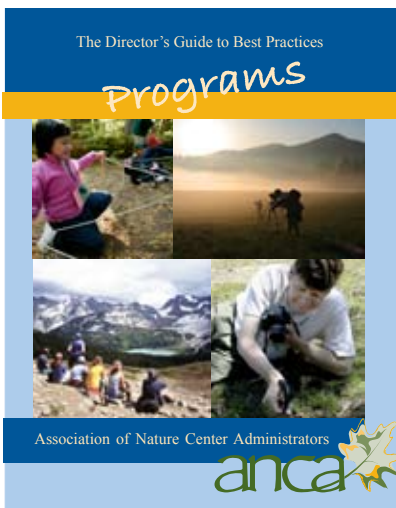
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