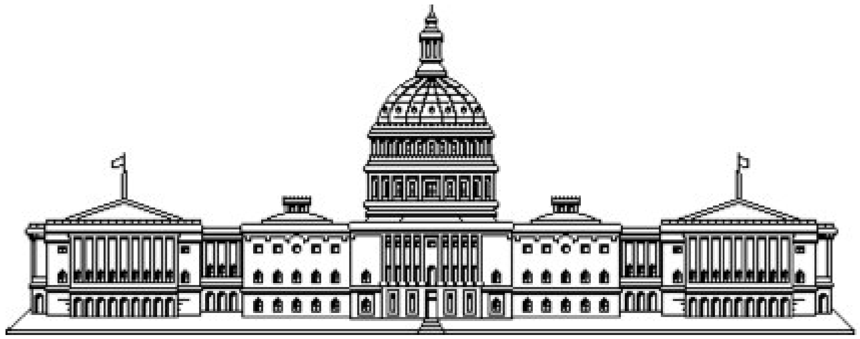

APRA-Metro DC Newsletter
September 2001

From the President:

Well, it's a good thing that prospect researchers seem to handle change well, since we continue to have change within the leadership of APRA-Metro DC. As Tess Samuel informed you in the February 2001 newsletter, she had agreed to serve as interim president of the chapter. She served with great skill and enthusiasm from November 2000 through May 2001. I moved into the president's slot as of June 1. I would like to thank Tess for her leadership, friendship, advice, and for the integral role she played in rebuilding the chapter board.

Tess was kind enough to recruit Cynthia Granger of George Washington University as our newsletter editor before stepping down from the board. Cindy makes her debut with this issue! Last December, we installed DeAndra Hicks as our new conference chair, but she took a new job in March 2001, and was unable to continue her board service. As a result, Rumana Chaudhuri asked Gloria Benton of the AAUW Educational Foundation to join us in that role. You will get to see the results of Gloria's initial efforts at our conference on Friday, October 19, 2001. (See the article on page 10 for additional information about the conference.) This spring, I was able to persuade Sarah Cadbury of the National Parks Conservation Association to join the board as membership chair.

In the meantime, we have some continuing board members who have quietly conducted our business, and I would like to thank them for their help and support in keeping the chapter afloat:
(continued on page 2)

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From the President (continued from page 1)

- Rumana Chaudhuri has been the anchor for the chapter. She has served as the program chair for over two years, and is making the transition to the role of communications chair. She volunteers to help with almost everything, and is extremely thoughtful. Rumana has presented many excellent programs, helped launch the new brown bag lunch programs, recruited new board members, supplied two of the speakers for our upcoming conference, and played a major role in organizing our 2000 conference. Hooray for Rumana!

- Joan Doyle has been a wizard as our treasurer/membership chair! She has managed our finances, prepared financial reports, maintained our membership list, prepared two membership directories, and has helped publish several issues of the newsletter. She suggested the $5 discount for members who renewed for two years in 2001. Kudos to Joan!

- Karen Dechman joined the board in December 2000, and migrated from communications chair to the role of Website manager. Karen actually built our Website and brought us into the 21st century! She maintains the Website and posts information as requested. Well done, Karen!

APRA-Metro DC's board and membership have many things to look forward to in the next year, including our own conference in October and the APRA International Conference in August 2002. I would like to invite you to volunteer for these events, and to consider joining the board. See the Call for Nominations piece on page 10 for more details. If you would like to know more about these board positions, please contact me. I would be delighted to discuss them with you!

Deb Wallower

CALL FOR BOARD NOMINATIONS

The volunteer board of the APRA-Metro DC chapter has one board position that is currently vacant, and will have two more vacancies by the end of its fiscal year in December 2001. We hope you will consider joining us! We are actively seeking candidates for:

Program Chair (board member's term expires in December)
Secretary/Historian (currently vacant)
Treasurer (board member's term expires in December)

If you would like more information about these positions, or you are ready to fill a vacancy now, please contact:
Deborah Wallower
National Wildlife Federation
Phone: 703-438-6028
E-mail: wallower@nwf.org

DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS: Friday, November 2, 2001.

Prospect Research: The Development Officer's Perspective

Each September, the Development Office of the George Washington University holds a retreat, in a different location, with a different group of planners, and with a different theme. The underlying theme of this year's retreat was how each fundraising department contributes to the overall mission of Development, and how Development contributes to the overall mission of GW. As we near the end of our Centuries Campaign, and we all grow a little worn-out, this year's theme helped us all, in our own roles, to focus on the bigger picture.

I believe that this theme proved to be extremely beneficial, especially to the research staff. As we all do from time to time, we had begun to get so wrapped up in our own jobs, our own daily tasks, that we were beginning to lose sight of why we do what we do, and who ultimately benefits. Why do we spend countless hours poring over articles, searching the Internet, and pulling together these in-depth profiles? And is it useful, appreciated, is it enough for our DOs? The theme stuck with us over the course of the next week or so, and we thought it would be interesting to get some feedback from our DOs, on what, in their view, the role of the Research Department really is. We thought that we would become better equipped to help them do their jobs, and at the same time renew our faith and sense of importance in our part of the big picture. Therefore, we set out to create a little survey and do a little interviewing. During the process, it came to us that perhaps our colleagues at other institutions might find the answers informative and uplifting, and so we would like to share it with you.

The following maps the conversations and information we received from our little survey, along with our comments and reactions to the results. We received a number of responses, and in the interest of space, we have provided selected responses to each question. We gained a lot of insight, but also answered the why, and in so doing, regained our own motivation to contribute. We hope it will do the same for you.

What do you see as the role of the Research Department in your fundraising efforts?

- *To identify new prospects and provide data to the DO in preparation for a visit, or upon his return.*
- *The Research Department is our PARTNER. Their work furthers our ability to be focused and successful. They are key. To assist us in identifying major prospects; to keep us current with critical information on present prospects which could affect their willingness and/or capacity to give; to keep information on prospects current to the best of your ability.*
- *To help identify new prospective donors. To help present an accurate financial and biographical picture of a prospective donor in preparation for a solicitation.*
- *The Research team is dedicated to finding timely information about prospects but also can be useful in drawing connections and possibilities that the DOs may not see.*
- *Prospect identification.*

As you can see, the theme is generally the same and DOs have a succinct view of the role research plays in their ability to solicit major gifts. While these responses certainly show the emphasis placed on, and need for, research services, it also shows a rather simplified view of our world.

What, in your opinion, is the most useful aspect of the Research Department to your solicitation needs?

- *Identifying new prospects.*
- *Prospect identification.*
- *Financial and biographical background information.*
- *Scanning lists and identifying and qualifying prospects for the University and individual units; creating and maintaining prospect profiles with current information, responding to specific requests for information which don't require profiles.*

Wow, it's nice to know there isn't just one!

- *Prospect identification. Basic biographical (contact) information. Assistance in understanding a prospective donor's capacity.*

One response was simply *good information*, which of course, is the key to our profession. I don't think I have ever met a researcher who intentionally gave out *bad information*. But what this answer provides is the importance fundraisers put on our data, and that those hours in the Internet, on the phone, and reading papers, are worthwhile and crucial steps in the process. Even if we do sometimes get it wrong.

The least useful?

- *Data Management, not an effective use of a researcher's time.*
  For smaller shops, this would be a very difficult aspect of the job to remove.
- *Inaccurate major gift ratings.*
  This is a difficult one to get around since we only use available public information and we must develop ratios and rating strategies for the sake of consistency. See below for more on this issue.
- *None.*

Which holds a higher value to your process, prospect identification or research request fulfillment?

Overall prospect identification was viewed as valued slightly, but only slightly, higher than request fulfillment. Which is quite interesting considering the number of requests we receive on a weekly basis. In fact, we have made major efforts to remove ourselves from the "reactive research" stage as much as possible and try to only provide as much information as is absolutely necessary. The question, however, is what is really necessary? As you'll see later, this varies widely, with different DOs valuing different pieces of information, and most highly valuing the information that is the most time-consuming and costly to collect.

Would you like to have more interaction with the staff, or do you find the current situation and level of contact to be sufficient for your needs?

This is a rather large issue for us at GW, not only because of the structure of our development office, but also because of our staffing level. Regardless, it is obvious from our responses that most DOs wish for more contact with researchers, outside of just contact with the director. One interesting response, which I believe to be the wave of the future:

- *Would be the most effective if we were to have the equivalent of "analysts" in the research department. Each "analyst" would be familiar with and follow a particular unit.*
- Another said that *"researchers often provide excellent strategy advice."*

In my wildest imaginations, this is exactly the scenario GW would have; however, the reality is that we have too many schools, divisions and programs, and far too few researchers. In the past, we assigned researchers to particular schools, but not to the extent of serving as analysts. With at least five units assigned to one researcher, the job simply becomes too large. Often one researcher would become overwhelmed with requests, all others would pitch in and everyone would inevitably have their hand in every pot. And while we would remember certain names which crossed our desks, not one of us could ever remember all of the very important people or projects for all of the assigned schools. It's a tough one to solve without unlimited resources.

Do you ever utilize the Prospect Research Links on the Alumni/Development Services website? If so, how would you rate their usefulness and importance in your job?

As expected, there was a group who utilized the links regularly and a group who never used them. Those who use them find them to be extremely useful, especially for finding basic information when the research office is overwhelmed with work.

Are the current profile formats and levels (I, II, III, and Corp/Found depending on the status of your prospects) conducive to your needs? If not, why?

The formats do seem to be liked well enough by DOs; however, there are two very divergent schools of thought on the amount of information needed for a first visit. Many want all the information they can get, others only require basic biographical information with a hint of capacity. What most DOs don't realize is that it takes the same amount of time, effort and research to do both. In order to provide a hint of capacity, we must first gather all public financial information and analyze the results. The final product may look different, but the effort behind it is the same. The reality of the situation is this: there are 4,000 active prospects in our pools, so it is impossible for us to provide detailed information on those individuals prior to the initial call. Thus, what is the most important piece of information…

What are the first pieces of information you look for in a research profile? And how much information do you feel you require prior to making a first visit with a constituent?

- *Biographical and financial.*
  Title, company, worth.
- *Title and position, financial, philanthropic giving.*
- *Previous giving record.*
- *Salary, net worth, property value, previous contacts.*

All of the answers sound similar. Enough biographical information to get a feel for the person the DO is visiting, and enough financial information to know the major gift level of the individual. The first is a given, the second is a little more difficult. While researching financial information is certainly easier than it was five years ago, it is still one of the most time-consuming and expensive aspects of research. It is also the most controversial since we only use public information, and our suggestions can't be based on that which we don't know, i.e., a mortgage, a bank account, credit card debt, number of children. As you'll see in the next section, taking public financial information and attempting to place a "net worth" value or a giving capacity on an individual often places us in the hot seat.

We continue to maintain that with the exception of prospect identification, we will not perform financial research until an ask is imminent. Yes, we do realize the contradiction in this statement. On the one hand, we insist that we won't provide financial information until a development officer has met with an individual, while the other hand is actively working the calculator and qualifying newly identified prospects before a DO even has his/her assignment.

Are different parts of the profile valued differently for different constituent types (i.e., alumni, parents, trustees)?

We only received one yes to this question: *I look at parents differently. I look at siblings, especially college-age siblings and private secondary schools.*

What specific public information would you like to see added and/or removed from the profile?

No response.

Are you generally satisfied with the turnaround time of your requests, and with the Research Department' s reaction to "emergency" needs? Please include any suggestions for improvement.

- *Yes.*
- *Yes.*
- *Yes.*

We request 10 days per profile (i.e., don't call us with 20 requests due in ten days), although our turnaround time is generally shorter than that. And while we are rather generous with emergency requests, we try to get away from providing full profiles, but rather an e-mail or a memo with the pertinent information and perhaps some links to bio information.

Are you generally satisfied with the new prospects identified by Research at the Monthly Campaign Meetings? If not, why?

- *I'm satisfied that we have a pipeline of names to visit.*
- *Yes.*
- *Sometimes you guys find awesome prospects; other times I think you just create work for me.*

Although prospect identification is often touted as the most useful aspect, everyone has a different opinion on the information provided, especially the major gift ratings. Unfortunately, in this case, we can't satisfy everyone all of the time, we simply have to create a standard, a set of procedures, and utilize them in every instance. This process is especially difficult at the end of a campaign, when the big fish have been fried and we're looking for minnows in the middle of the ocean.

Do you feel that the ratings provided by research are "generally" accurate and useful? Or would you prefer to create your own ratings after a qualification meeting?

- *They are useful in prioritizing prospect activity. They cannot replace ratings by those who actually make the calls, but it's a good first start.*
- *Sometimes ratings are way out of line, sometimes they are okay.*
- *Yes, I like them the way they are.*
- *Yes. Please don't change this - it will be more trouble than it's worth.*
- *After! I think the research department should know more about the economic environment. Unless a home is worth a million dollars, it is irrelevant.*

All of the above comments are to be expected when dealing with the controversial issue of net worth and ratings. We stress that our ratings are based on a ratio of public information, i.e., the value of the house, not the mortgage on that house, and should only be an indicator, not a fact. There are those who see the value of ratings for what they are, and those who would rather not have the ratings at all. However, with the exception of one response, it is generally believed that the majority of the prospects we identify are at least major gift prospects at some level, if not at the level that we have rated them.

Do you utilize and create prospects out of the press releases sent to your attention by the Research Office?

- *Yes! Frequently.*
- *Yes.*
- *Sometimes.*
- *Yes.*

This is one of the best ways to locate new individuals for DOs to contact.

Do you feel the process of weeding the pending pools has been helpful in your endeavors?

- *YES.*
- *Yes.*
- *Probably.*
- *What weeding?* Hmmm, not sure how to take that answer.

Do you peruse the pending pools on a general basis yourself, or do you depend on the Research Department for that function?

- *I peruse.*
- *Both.*
- *I depend upon Research for this.*
- *We try, but…*

Once again, an indication of the vast differences in what DOs feel that research should be responsible for overseeing. Some leave this entirely up to us, some peruse the pools themselves, others do both. Our policies state that DOs should peruse the pools, with some assistance from the Research Department.

So, while the role of research and the basic premise in the very first question was similar, DOs diverge greatly on how they see the responsibilities of research within that context. Yes, our role is prospect identification and request fulfillment; however, the details and the responsibilities, vary widely.

This survey provided us with a great deal of information and an idea of the needs of our DOs. It also allows us to rethink our strategy and decide whether or not to change any of our current procedures and policies to best assist the majority of our DOs, even while it shows that we must continue to do what is best for the majority, knowing that we will never be able to satisfy everyone. We hope it has also provided you with some useful information. If not, we hope it was at least entertaining!

Conference Overviews

The MARC Conference
Sarah Cadbury

'Sigh, Labor Day has come and gone. What did you do this summer? Any interesting travels?' 'Oh, the beach and a National Park!' 'Couldn't make it to the APRA conference in beautiful Chicago you say? Yes, but did you go to Princeton?'

Fundraising researchers from Virginia to New York gathered this June on the campus of Princeton University for the Mid-Atlantic Researchers Conference (MARC). Overall, the quality of the presentations was excellent.

The conference is held every year at a university in order to keep costs down. Housing is available on campus, and while the dorm rooms are not elegant, the price of $30 a night couldn't be beat. If you aren't interested in reliving your freshman year, there are always nearby hotels. This year, the registration fee was only $195 and included most meals (the pre-conference workshop was an additional $50). The total cost, including transportation, easily fell between $300 - $350.

Three major themes throughout the conference were:

- the importance of understanding your constituency by employing market research techniques, industry research, and database modeling;
- the trends from the 'new economy' will continue (especially since the economy is still much stronger than it was ten years ago); and
- the importance of working with the front line fundraisers and volunteers.

The gathering started with two pre-conference workshops: "Advanced Private Company Research" by David M. Lawson, President of Prospect Information Network, LLC (P!N) and "Bulls, Bears, and Guardian Angels – Prospecting in an Entrepreneurial Society" by Bobbie Strand, Principal of Bentz Whaley Flessner.

MARC held a Plenary Session each day. Juliet Gumbs, a fundraising consultant from New York, spoke about the growing role of people of color in philanthropy, how researchers can identify these prospects and help the front-line fundraisers understand how to tailor their ask. Barbara Larson, from the Community Foundation Silicon Valley, discussed the 'social venture philanthropy' of new millionaires (which she assured us, didn't all suffer in the dot-bomb). Shelby Radcliffe McClintock of Bucknell University ended the conference with a talk on 'making the most of your conference high.'

There were five breakout sessions, each offering four tracks: Essentials, Advanced/Management, Research & Development in the 21st Century, and Research & Development Potpourri. Sessions were not overly specialized and it was easy to identify a relevant subject. Presentations were typically geared to researchers working in a variety of settings, not just large universities.

MARC has plenty to offer to researchers–from all sizes, types and levels. It is especially invaluable to those who cannot afford to attend the APRA International Conferences. Look for details about MARC 2002.

Reflections on the 2001 APRA International Conference

By Deborah Wallower

The conference kicked off with the reception on Wednesday evening, where I had a chance to greet old friends and make some new acquaintances.

Thursday morning, I attended a breakfast meeting for chapter presidents, chaired by Elizabeth McHugh, Vice President, Member Services. She announced new chapters, grants to chapters, and chapter name changes, along with some marketing opportunities. This was followed by a discussion that touched on topics of general interest: ways for chapters to communicate during the year (APRA is working on this), suggestions for sharing newsletter articles, and an inquiry about reduced rates for members with vendors (APRA had looked into this concept, but couldn't find a way to make it work). The highlight of the meeting was a talk by Michel Hudson (now past president of APRA) on leadership development.

The first session I attended was given by Debbie Miller from Virginia Tech, who spoke on "Raising the Bar in Research." I had heard that she was an excellent speaker, and she lived up to her reviews! She talked about moving from a reactive to a proactive mode, how changing technology has changed research, information management, and marketing the success of a research shop.

There was a debate on "Is Prospect Research a Profession?" which featured our chapter members Jon Thorsen and Tess Samuel (on the "pro" side), as well as Margo Knig ht and David Sterling (on the "con" side). The group was kept in order by moderator Jane Riss. I only made it for the Q&A part of the session, but judging by the lively nature of that segment, I suspect that the actual debate was rather spirited! Not surprisingly, certification came up during the discussion.

The session given by Judy Pier and Gwen Nordgren (who are both professional organizers) on managing development records provided some excellent filing concepts and records retention guidelines. The speakers emphasized the need to set up and maintain a master list of every file in the department, and to have one person take charge of the files. This session made it clear that my organization has plenty of room for improvement.

The basic track at the conference offered some good opportunities to brush up on basic skills. I attended "Getting the Most From Your Local Treasure Trove," an enlightening talk on libraries given by Aimee S. Fitzgerald, MLIS. When the speaker failed to appear for one session I had selected, I chose to go to the presentation given by Susan Shiroma of the Foundation Center on "Research for Foundation and Corporate Giving." I always learn new things whenever I spend time with staff from the Foundation Center!

The keynote speakers both spoke about trends in philanthropy. Judith E. Nichols, Ph.D., CFRE, spoke about paradigm shifts for donors and prospects, and how to change fundraising paradigms to respond to those demographic shifts. Paul G. Schervish, Ph.D., talked about the new physics of philanthropy, and used vectors (such as material and spiritual) to discuss changing trends in giving.

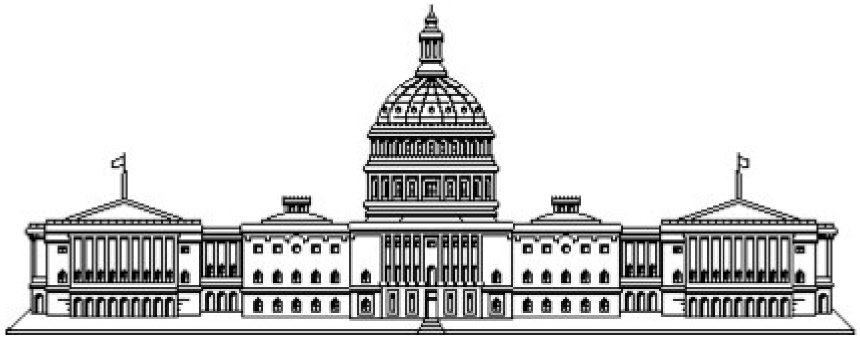
APRA's conferences are always of the highest quality, with a wide variety of session topics and expert speakers. APRA International offers scholarships, and APRA-Metro DC usually has offered an annual scholarship for the conference registration fee. If you are given an opportunity to attend an APRA conference, I recommend that you take it!

Don’t forget the APRA-Metro DC 2001 Conference!
Friday, October 19, 2001
Red Cross Visitor' s Center & Museum, Washington, DC

9:30-10:00 a.m. Registration and continental breakfast
10:10-10:35 a.m. Keynote address: The Power of Research in a Competitive Fundraising Environment
Marie Mattson, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
10:45-12:15 p.m. Successfully Researching Today' s Wealth
David Lawson, Prospect Information Network (P!N)
12:15- 1:30 p.m. Lunch
2:00- 3:00 p.m. Panel Discussion: Shop Talk
Moderator: Jon Thorsen, American Red Cross
3:15- 3:45 p.m. FBI -- Intelligence and security research
3:45- 4:00 p.m. Wrap-up

ADVANCE REGISTRATION IS PREFERRED.
Members of APRA-Metro DC, APRA-MD and APRA-VA - $25 fee. Non-members - $35 fee
Anyone who registers on the day of the conference will pay $35.
Registration fees include a continental breakfast and boxed lunch with beverage.

REGISTRATION FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 10, 2001
For additional information and the registration form please contact Gloria Benton at bentong@aauw.org or 202/728-7627 or Deb Wallower at wallower@nwf.org or 703-438-6028.



APRA METRO-DC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name____________________________

Organization______________________

Title____________________________

Address__________________________

____

City_____________________________

State____ Zip____________________

Work Phone______________________________

Work Fax_________________________________

E-Mail __________________________________

Please return this form, along with your check for $20.00 payable to APRA Metro-DC to:

APRA Metro-DC
American Cities Building
P.O. Box 1181
Columbia, MD 21044

Chapter membership provides you with the following benefits:

- Informative and engaging research-related programs and tours (such as the Library of Congress), opportunity for professional development and networking, access to the best minds in Metro-DC;
- Brown Bag lunches for information exchange;
- Scholarship opportunities to attend the APRA national conference;
- The APRA Metro-DC newsletter, containing useful information about upcoming programs, recent events, search tips, new member listings, and job openings in development research and related fields;
- Access to the member-exclusive sections of the web site;
- A copy of the most recent APRA Metro-DC Membership Directory, currently available in print format, soon to be accessible as well in an online version exclusively for members;
- Opportunity to be "in the loop." You will be included on the APRA Metro-DC e-mail notification list. Be the first to find out about upcoming programs and other events.

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