



The Academy of Leisure Sciences

MEMORANDUM

DATE: August 2, 1993

TO: Members of the Academy of Leisure Sciences

FROM: Doug Kleiber, President Elect

SUBJECTS: 1. Toward more and better communication
2. On disseminating what we know

In addition to updating the membership directory, I think we need to hear the voices of members more clearly, more currently and on a more regular basis. We all know at least a little bit about each other. But my sense is that our knowledge is based mostly on "yesterday's news." Certainly the accomplishments of members is an important basis of this organization, indeed the basis of our selection in the first place; but members continue to grow and continue to contribute to the field of recreation, parks and leisure studies in many ways. Furthermore, many of you have developed elaborate networks that make you privy to information that allows you to speak authoritatively about a variety of topics. I think it is time to establish other mechanisms for sharing information.

In keeping with our commitment a few years ago to move beyond being merely an honorary organization, Bev Driver and Geof Godbey have led an effort to "go public" with what we know about the value of leisure and recreation. This initiative has resulted in some important news articles and will hopefully, with all of our efforts, be still more fruitful. But my feeling is that what we have been able to report in those white papers and press releases does not capture what we know and more important what we are learning. Therefore I ask you to consider the value and viability of a *newsletter* or an *electronic mail network* (or a combination of the two) that would keep us informed about what is "hot" for us, what is going on of special import and relevance with our colleagues, and what we would like to know more about. A newsletter would be the simplest, if not cheapest, alternative, but e-mail has the advantage of greater flexibility and immediacy and the potential to promote dialogue. So as a start use the attached form to indicate whether you feel the newsletter and/or e-mail idea is worth exploring for the Academy, how you think it might work best, and whether you would like to be a part of it. In either case I will take what I learn and share it with other members. If the form doesn't suit your interests and e-mail does, I can be reached via e-mail - dkleiber @ UGA.Bitnet

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Having launched in the direction of more internal communication, let me also return to an issue of external communication that was discussed at last year's meeting. In Cincinnati I raised a cautionary note with respect to the press releases that were being prepared. It was to the point of being careful about what we claimed. Lou Twardzik responded that now isn't the time for caution - our voices need to be heard loudly clearly and unequivocally (or words to that effect - sorry, Lou, if I didn't get that quite right); and my reading was that those in attendance were very much in agreement with that posture for the Academy. We have only to look at declining resources and closing programs in both public and academic settings to see the need to fight the trivialization of the field that we have all experienced. Nevertheless, perhaps only for the sake of argument and dialogue, let me reiterate my reservation.

I think as an academy devoted to the sciences associated with leisure, our credibility is at stake in the claims that we make. If we have only value positions to present, we should do so vigorously and persuasively; but as we try to support our positions with data, every extravagant overstatement ultimately weakens our position, and is also inconsistent with what led us to the Academy in the first place.

At the same time, it seems to me that we need to be doing and/or promoting the kind of research that is rigorous and systematic with respect to testing the alleged benefits of recreation and leisure activity. Furthermore, I believe that we should entertain and encourage a critical stance toward leisure services, leisure resources, leisure practices and leisure behavior in general. Such was the tone of the "Leisure Apartheid" piece in the collection for public information that Geof Godbey has pulled together. As we escape our ivory towers and join those who trumpet the value of leisure and recreation, we should keep in mind that we may be of greatest service to the field by helping our academic and professional colleagues sort the wheat from the chaff with respect to the value of leisure and recreation.

- an editorial comment for your consideration.

Membership Survey on Information Sharing

Name _____

Which of the following would you favor:

___ 1. a newsletter
how often? _____

how organized? _____

___ 2. an electronic mail "listserve" for Academy members

___ 3. combination of 1 & 2

___ 4. Neither, I'm too busy and have too much else to do

___ 5. Other _____

Would you be willing to help develop a newsletter or e-mail
process? _____ If so, how? _____

mail address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Send ideas and information to:

Doug Kleiber
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
225 Hardman Hall
University of Georgia
Athens, GA 30602

Phone: 706-542-5064

FAX: 706-542-7917

E-Mail: dkleiber@UGA.Bitnet or dkleiber.@uga.cc.uga.edu