

Association for Volunteer Administration  
February 23, 2006

Dear AVA Members,

As you know, AVA was created over 40 years ago to link volunteer managers with the latest, best practices in volunteer management. Over the years, thousands of individuals and organizations benefited significantly from AVA's certification program, journal, Member Briefing, CyberVPM, and VM magazine. As well, the International Conference on Volunteer Administration brought the best instructors together to educate individuals managing volunteers on all levels of experience, resulting in new friendships, camaraderie, and the renewal of old friendships. Through the years, AVA has experienced the ups and downs that many non-profit organizations do and has been gratified to know that you have remained active stakeholders and advocates of AVA's mission and vision.

At this time, there have been a number of developments concerning AVA of which many of you have not been properly informed. To protect the association, the AVA board has been extremely careful in its discussions and still is not in a position to inform the membership of some developments. All the answers to our questions are not known yet, but AVA is in the process of working to uncover the truth.

I am truly saddened to inform you that AVA is in the process of closing its doors on March 1, 2006 because there are no funds to continue operating. Starting in June 2005 the board persistently asked about the financial status of the organization. The board never really was given a true picture of AVA's financial situation until January 2006 when it learned that AVA was \$300,000 in debt. Our auditors informed the Executive Committee that too much money was spent on salaries and Executive Director travel and that ICVA expenses were unusually high. The board also learned that assets were mismanaged, and signatures on AVA's money market and checking accounts were changed without the board's knowledge. Large sums of money were transferred from AVA's money market account to its checking account in December, and then the money was spent. Unauthorized contracts for future conferences were made. Delving deeper, AVA found other signs of mismanagement, misappropriation of restricted funds and abusive, unauthorized spending. The Executive Committee voted to terminate three employees on January 10, including the Executive Director and Office Manager. The Henrico County Police Department is investigating possible criminal charges.

In mid-January the Executive Committee met in Minneapolis, Minnesota to discuss the sustainability of AVA and how to best handle contracts that were signed without board approval for the 2006 ICVA. After lengthy discussion with among AVA officers and with Minnesota AVA chairpersons who were planning the conference, the board concluded that plans could not move forward for an international conference this fall.

On February 3 the board, staff, and three *pro bono* attorneys met via teleconference to discuss options for the future of AVA, including bankruptcy and dissolution. The decision was a difficult and emotional one for the board to make. Some members, affiliates, and other organizations offered limited financial assistance, but there was no long-term solution in sight, funds were almost completely depleted, and the reality and gravity of the situation called for extreme action. In the end, the decision was made to ask the members to dissolve AVA. Attached you will find

the form with instructions for you to vote on the dissolution of AVA and transfer of assets. The AVA office will close its doors in Richmond, Virginia on March 1, 2006.

AVA has been a cornerstone of volunteer resources management at its best. Collectively, we can bring together the talent of individuals like you to create a similar association to take its rightful place in the volunteer arena in the not-too-distant future. The professional credentialing program (CVA) and *The Journal of Volunteer Administration*, both copyrighted, will have temporary "homes" for now-places where their credibility and integrity will be preserved. Individuals who have been committed to these programs are planning to continue in their roles. Unfortunately, this past weekend AVA's dear colleague Mary Merrill, journal editor, passed away. Those involved in the transfer of the journal to "a new home" are also committed to carrying on her work.

A simple web page is being developed for members to communicate with each other and to learn about plans for a new association for those in the field of volunteer resources management. The last edition of *VM* magazine will be posted on this web page. In addition, there has been some discussion about combining conferences with similar associations in the future.

Although this is a very sad time for all of us, the critical work started by AVA remains a strong force for all those whose professional careers soared because of AVA's existence. I have been told that donors are more willing to support the start-up of an organization, rather than helping to pay off an organization's debt. The good news is that with the help of AVA members and affiliates, as well as that of donors and funders, we now have the opportunity to build a new, stronger, and wiser association. I ask for your patience and input as a new organization is created.

I hope that you continue to interact with other members and consultants to keep your core knowledge up-to-date. I invite you, as a valued member, to discuss this letter by contacting me at [edidimamoff@yahoo.com](mailto:edidimamoff@yahoo.com). I am also interested to know if you would like to be involved in a task force and/or have skills (or funds) for the start-up of a new association.

Thank you for all of your past, present, and future support. It has been an honor to serve AVA.

Sincerely yours,

Ellen M. Didimamoff, CVA  
President  
Association for Volunteer Administration

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## **Update on Association of Volunteer Administration**

February 27, 2006

Dear Members,

As my last official communication to all of you, I would like to answer some of the most common questions and concerns regarding the dissolution of the association. But, before I do

that, I would like to acknowledge Paige Tucker, CVA, who was our Professional Development Manager before taking on the challenge of Interim Director in January.

Paige spent countless hours trying to keep AVA afloat and viable. Once the decision was made to dissolve the association, she continued to work long days and some weekends, helping to resolve all that needed to be done. AVA owes her a debt of gratitude for all her hard work. Mike Lastfogel, our "behind the scenes" Director of Operations, has also spent countless hours helping to close things down, and in building a new web page for volunteer resources managers. These two wonderful employees are tremendously dedicated to AVA and the profession. The AVA board would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank both Paige and Mike for all they have done and continue to do for those of us in the field of volunteer resources management.

I would also like to thank Katie Campbell, CVA, for helping AVA during this crisis. Katie has really rolled up her sleeves to help in all ways possible. Also to be thanked are volunteers from the Greater Richmond Association for Volunteer Administration who assisted by helping pack up the office and perform other duties. Special thanks also go to Alice Soto, a previous employee who volunteered in the office during the past couple of months.

Here is an update regarding AVA and our field since my last communication to you:

**Credentialing:** Katie Campbell, CVA, will continue managing the CVA program as a volunteer, and she is working with others in finalizing the details of preserving the CVA program. The exam will be offered May 24, and portfolios will be read and scored. All CVA committees are intact, and the Credentialing Council will retain control of the program. Current portfolios are being reviewed with the goal of finishing up scoring on the 2005 group by the end of March. The CVA credential will be awarded to successful 2005 candidates under AVA's name before it legally dissolves. If you have questions, please contact Katie at [ktquiraing@comcast.net](mailto:ktquiraing@comcast.net).

**The Journal of Volunteer Administration:** R. Dale Safrit, Ed.D., will serve as editor, and he is working out the details for continued publication. Dale can be reached at [dale\\_safrit@ncsu.edu](mailto:dale_safrit@ncsu.edu).

**Earned CEUs.** If you earned CEUs through attendance at the 2005 International Conference on Volunteer Administration, you will receive a certificate by mail from AVA in the next week or so.

**New Web Site:** A new web site is being created for everyone interested in the field of volunteer resources management, (not just AVA members): [www.vmweb.org](http://www.vmweb.org). This website should be live in the next few weeks. Watch this web site for information on the formation of new groups for people in the field, as well as other information related to conferences, etc. Please inform your colleagues about this site. Note: Content will be removed from the AVA web site ([www.avaintl.org](http://www.avaintl.org)) on March 1.

**CyberVPM:** This Yahoo group will continue but will no longer be connected with AVA. Meghan Kaskoun has agreed to continue coordinating the schedule of moderators for now. If you are interested in being a volunteer moderator, please contact Meghan at [MKASKOUN@cincinnatiarts.org](mailto:MKASKOUN@cincinnatiarts.org).

**2005 International Conference on Volunteer Administration:** In a previous message, I wrote that there had been overspending related to this conference. Let me be clear in stating that the local planning committee, under the umbrella of the Florida Association of Volunteer Centers,

was in no way responsible for this overspending. In fact, the committee stayed within the budget and produced a super conference!

**2006 International Conference on Volunteer Administration:** The conference for this year has been cancelled. Please watch the new web site, [www.vmweb.org](http://www.vmweb.org) for conferences offered by other organizations this year. Unfortunately, pre-payments for the 2006 ICVA cannot be refunded, as AVA does not have the money to do so.

Here are some conferences scheduled for this year:

Hands On Network	Boston, Massachusetts	March 9-11
National Conference on Volunteering & Service	Seattle, Washington	June 16-20
ASDVS	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Sept. 20-23
Volonteurope	Strasbourg, Germany	Oct. 5-8

**Membership Dues:** If you made a membership payment since mid-January 2006, your check or credit card information was mailed back to you last week. Again, unfortunately, money is not available for refunds of membership dues paid prior to that. Membership payment will continue to be returned. We estimate that AVA's post office box will be closed at the end of April.

**The Future:** The following description will be included in registration information for the National Conference on Volunteering & Community Service hosted by the Points of Light Foundation in June.

"Our Profession: Focus on the Future. In the wake of AVA's dissolution many of us are asking, 'what now?' This meeting provides an opportunity for any and all to consider some options for continuing to advocate and support our professional identity. The specific agenda will be shaped by on-line conversations prior to the conference, and probably led by an external and impartial facilitator. All are welcome to attend-former AVA members and non-members. Registration for the entire conference is encouraged, but not required. The Points of Light Foundation has generously arranged the space and time for this gathering."

For information about this conference, go to [www.pointsoflight.org](http://www.pointsoflight.org).

Many thanks for being a part of AVA and helping to forward our wonderful, rewarding profession. My sincere best wishes to you in all your future endeavors!

Sincerely yours,

Ellen Didimamoff, CVA  
President