

# Where have all the VOLUNTEERS gone?



Lunch with NEMA  
April 24, 2019

Sophie Huget, New Britain Industrial Museum

# Introducing Myself

Sophie Huget

Executive Director,  
New Britain Industrial Museum

Responsible for:

- Fundraising
- Budgets
- Programming
- Collections
- **Volunteer Management**

NEW BRITAIN  
**INDUSTRIAL**  
**MUSEUM**



# Poll: Who makes up your organization?

- A) All volunteers
- B) Mostly volunteers, one staff person
- C) Many volunteers, some staff
- D) Mostly staff, some volunteers



Poll: Number of Volunteers?



Poll: Number of Staff?



18 : 1

**Volunteers-to-Staff in Museums**  
according to *AAM's 2009 Museum Financial Information*

# Quick thing: Volunteerism & law.

Meet your new friend, *Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)*

Become familiar with the “exceptions”

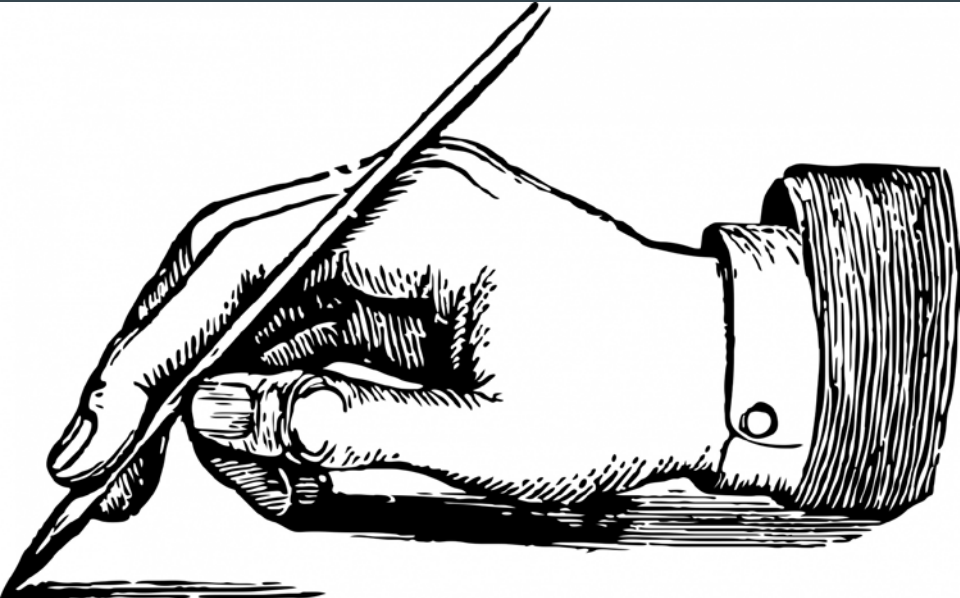
Except except except. As someone who has worked in museums of various types and sizes, and combed through the financial statements, org charts and policies of literally hundreds of museums of all types, I'd be unable to hazard an opinion on whether any given volunteer, or set of volunteers, is “displacing” a full time, paid employee. Does the volunteer director of a tiny, all-volunteer historic house museum “displace” a (theoretical) paid director the governing authority would otherwise have to fund? Would a large museum employ more (paid) interpreters if they didn't have a dedicated and passionate core of docents?”

IMPORTANT READ: Thanks to Elizabeth Merritt who wrote this brilliant piece for AAM - <https://www.aam-us.org/2016/10/18/volunteers-and-museum-labor/>

Grab a piece of paper.



# Jot down...



- Where did you have YOUR best volunteer experience?
- What did you like about it?
- Who was supervising volunteers?
- What leadership qualities did they have that you respect?

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?? : ??

Volunteers-to-Staff in OUR Organizations

# What do your volunteers do?

- A) Assist with large events (wayfinding, ticket sales, set-up/clean-up)
- B) Serve on the board or in committees
- C) Visitor Services (Give tours of museum/historic site, museum store sales)
- D) Administrative duties
- E) Work with collections
- F) Marketing
- G) Development

# Clone a volunteer. What is their primary function in your organization?

Why would you clone them?

What is their primary function in your organization?

Have you thanked them recently?

Brainstorm: would they like to help with volunteer recruitment & retention?

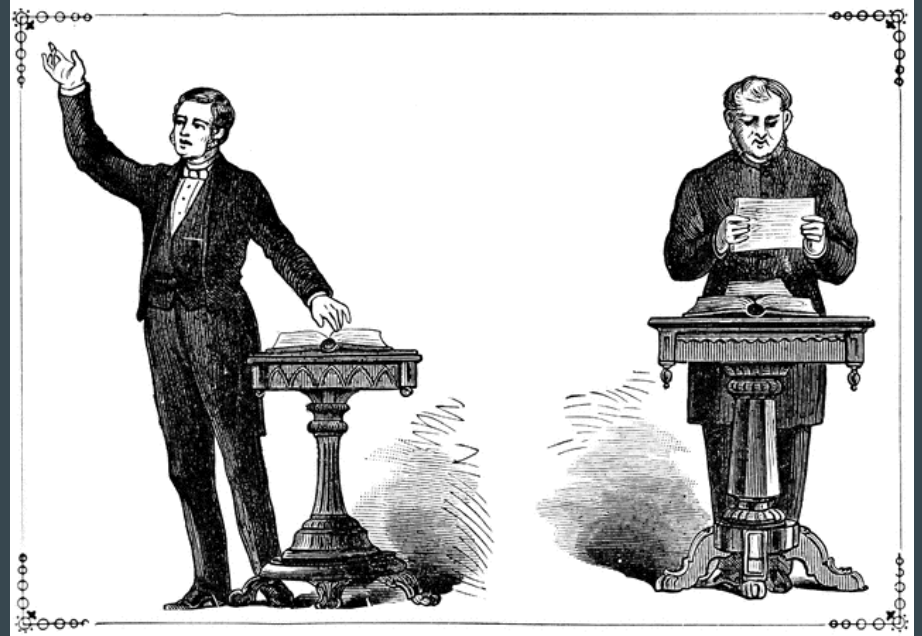
Not so fast, skippy...

# Preparation:

- Volunteer application form
- Volunteer management structure
- Volunteer job descriptions
- Volunteer training structure

# For instance...

Not everyone is comfortable with public speaking, so if giving tours is the only volunteer opportunity you're offering...



...it's likely you'll turn away talented and passionate people who can serve in other ways.

# For instance...

Not everyone wants an administrative role that requires being behind the scenes.



That may be what you want or need the most help with, but many volunteers will shy away if they feel misled and end up asked to fulfill filing and organizing tasks.



# For instance...

Not everyone can step into a collections role...



...and many collections managers/registrars/curators do not have the requisite time to train each interested person on proper object handling procedures.

Or the idiosyncratic parts of their collections management database.

# For instance...

Not everyone can step into a development, finance, or marketing role, either.

These are specialized fields that require *each team member, including volunteers* to understand the organization's mission.

# AND while we're at it.

*Social media.*



Make your own institutional decision about this.

For many museums, this is a major component of their public voice.

Social media content can be prepared by volunteers who know the museum's goal and strategic plan.

# Elephant in the room.

There should be oversight, at least.



It's tempting to give Millennials the social media reigns as they are getting their foot in the door of the museum world.

Not all Millennials are comfortable adopting the ORGANIZATION'S voice.

# TL;DR

Volunteer Job Descriptions.



Be upfront with your needs and the expectations associated with each of these roles.

Who's volunteering?



# Men, Women & Children

Visit <https://www.nationalservice.gov/serve/via> for  
all the details you could want.

*Snapshot:*

26.5% of males volunteer nationwide

33.8% of females volunteer  
nationwide

26.1% of GenY

28.2% of Millennials

36.4% of GenX

30.7% of Boomers

24.8% of the Silent Generation

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# Training Structure

*Let's Brainstorm!*





# Recruitment 101

You have the tools together  
now get some people!

- Table events like job fairs and town-wide events
  - Recruitment parties
  - Outreach lectures
  - Community partnerships
-

# How do we KEE them?

- Make it fun
  - Make it meaningful
  - R-E-S-P-E-C-T
  - Communication,  
communication, communication
  - Stay flexible
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Yonked from the AASLH blog! All credit to Kristen Laise at Belle Grove in Virginia.

<https://aaslh.org/recruiting-and-retaining-great-volunteers/>

# Resources

These will be sent to you after the webinar is over!

Thank you for participating today!