

2012 Nancy DeLaurier Award

Presented April 19, 2012 to
Patti McRae Baley, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Presentation remarks from Merriann Bidgood

The Nancy DeLaurier award is for those individuals who have made a distinguished achievement in the field of Visual Resources. Patti McRae Baley has shown such a tireless and dedicated effort in promoting the VRA Raffle, which supports the Tansey Travel Awards. I am honored to present Patti McRae Baley with the Nancy DeLaurier award.

The VRA Raffle has been one of the most anticipated events in the conference schedule. Every one looks forward to seeing what the grand prize will be, or what new piece of Chris Sundt jewelry will adorn the lucky winner. The main focus of the Raffle is to promote the Tansey Travel Awards. Without the funding that is raised for the Tansey Awards many of our colleagues and friends would be unable to attend the annual conference.



Every person who knows Patti comments on her skill at coordinating and managing the donations, the volunteers, and the main event of the VRA Raffle. The hard work is often rewarded with cheers from the crowd for another fine performance and a bigger pot of fund for more travel awards for the following year.

One of the best things about Patti and the VRA Raffle was her ability to make even the shyest new member in VRA become a Raffle Rouser. It is this welcoming spirit that many look forward to.

Thank you Empress Patti for all of your hard work and dedication.

As you have taught us, Figure 8,
Touch Pearls.

THE BUZZ..... "Each year Patti would excitedly email me after the conference to tell me the grand total from ticket sales, and we would both be thrilled about the number of travel awards that would be available for the following year's conference. Each year at the Business Meeting the string of award recipients seemed to stretch farther across the room, and this was in large part due to Patti's energy and efforts with VRAffle fundraising." Jackie Spafford

"Her creation, the VRAffle, was the perfect "cocktail." It was so much fun that we hardly realized we were giving money." Eliza Lanzi

" I first met Patti when I attended my first Visual Resources Association conference in Kansas City. My co-worker was scheduled to help set up the VRAffle and she invited me to come with her and "meet someone fun!" Well, I did – and within moments of meeting Patti I was laughing and engaged and felt WELCOMED." Greta Bahneman

"The high point for me was the 25th anniversary event in Kansas City. Opening with a choral number updating the old song, "Everything's Up to Date in Kansas City" from the Rogers and Hammerstein musical "Oklahoma," Patti's Raffle Rousers, some attired as computers, described the marvels of the digital revolution. Renate Wiedenhoeft, chief executive of Saskia Images, even stormed onstage from the audience at one point in the guise of an intellectual property lawyer to present a cease and desist order for copyright violation." Karen Kessel

"Patti brought her love, passion and full blown enthusiasm for a good time and it overflowed and became catching for us all. The result: more interest in the VRAffle and hence more \$ for the awards to help others in the profession". Scott Gilchrist

"I know we will stand and cheer, with a unanimous "Figure 8, Touch Pearls!"" Jenni Rodda

Patti McRae Baley's Remarks:

A quick survey of past recipients of the DSA and The NDL awards reveals a surprisingly high percentage of them have been bestowed on members with the surname McRae. Between the great Linda McRae and myself, we have taken home 13.3% of the VRA's two top awards in the past 15 years. Speaking as a resident of Las Vegas, the odds bode well for VRA member Erik McRae, and all future VRA members from Clan McRae.

Thank you all. I would first like to thank Merriann Bidgood, one of the original Raffle Rousers, who nominated me for this great honor and guided the process, and those who wrote such touchingly lovely support letters. I will treasure them. Also, profound thanks to the Awards Committee for having found me worthy. I am pleased and humbled to the point of stupefaction (but not silence) to accept this award, which is especially sweet as my husband Virko is here today. Thank you from the bottom of Our imperial heart. There are worthies I will probably fail to thank here so I beg forgiveness, pleading tiara fatigue.

At the VRA/ARLIS joint conference in Minneapolis, I abdicated the VRAffle throne in order to tend to personal family matters. Last January 6, Margaret Webster informed me of this tremendous honor. I was accustomed on every first Friday in January to posting the first of a series of epistles to VRA-L publicizing the VRAffle (my weekly harangues), and for the first time in years there was to be no blurb that day. Since you are a room full of metadata fans, I am happy to pinpoint the creation date of the first VRAffle message to March 24, 2003. So, it was a delicious bit of kismet that the call came that first Friday. From that moment, I began to cogitate on how it is that I am standing here today.

Just as no one becomes a scholar or artist by themselves, I am only standing here today because of a network of esteemed individuals of great charity. In other words, there is no "I" in VRAffle. Without donations from hundreds of caring vendors, chapters and VRA members, I am not standing here. Absent the volunteers who sacrificed part of their precious conference time, and I am not standing here. Remove the organizational skills, wit, and level head of Lady-in-Waiting Rebecca Moss of the University of Minnesota, and the likewise savvy Interim Lady-in-Waiting Jenni Rodda Loory of NY's IFA, I am not only not standing here, I am huddled in a corner, babbling incoherently. Withhold the brilliant talents of Allan Kohl of MCAD, who selflessly threw in his lot with the Empress starting with the Mermaids of Miami in 2005, bringing his fine theatrical talents and showmanship to the drawings, and I am in no way standing here. Delete the collaboration of the Development and Travel committees and the Executive Boards (especially the Treasurers) of the past 10 years, I am not standing anywhere near the dais. Withdraw the support of UNLV's Department of Art and Dean of Fine Arts, I could not afford to stand here. And rescind the loving support of my soul mate Virko, and I am sitting in the audience. I thank them all here and now.

Flash back to a conference room in St. Louis when I was VRA Secretary. A volunteer was sought to MC the ARLIS Silent Auction for the first joint conference and I heard myself say, "I'll do it". I shocked myself in taking this on because I had never MC'ed anything. What overrode my deep desire to wait for someone else to volunteer was a deeper desire to give back to the organization that had advantaged me so significantly. Without the VRA, I would have flamed out. Soon after earning my MA in Art History I got my first position in visual resources in July of 1994. My entire training as a VR professional consisted of a hands-on instructional by my University of Memphis predecessor that stretched across a span of 3 hours. That was it. Without help, I was headed for an epic fail.

Enter the VR division of SECAC, which was meeting in New Orleans in October 1994. I obtained funding and a carful of undergrads to drive to the Big Easy. There I had the pleasure of meeting Christina Updike and Sandy Walker among others, who enthusiastically welcomed me into the fold, introducing me to this organization called the VRA. The next spring my education continued at my first VRA conference in NY. Year after year, I advantaged myself with the wisdom and knowledge of my generous-to-a-fault peers, eventually bridging the digital divide in my UNLV solo shop. VRA gave me every practical and technical tool I needed to succeed. It is the *sine qua non* of my career, at the root of all my professional achievements of the past 18 years.

Rewind back to that fateful Board meeting. “Who wants to MC this Silent Auction?” “I’ll do it.” Because, how could I not? I didn’t feel I was doing enough for the VRA even as Secretary, and this sounded like something I could actually do. And it was a great cause. How hard could it be? And I could wear a fabulous outfit for the occasion (I have always ascribed to the idea that the one who dies with the most couture wins.) And it was a one off! I’d make it up as I went along (my go to move) and that would be it. Well, that wasn’t it. Next came Houston in 2003, and the “21 Raffle” for the 21st conference, organized and executed by Merriann Bidgood. VP Jeanne Keefe suggested the “bid for individual items” format and it was so. At the drawing, Merriann and Rebecca Moss and Treasurer Ann Thomas assisted along with others and there was even a last minute, nerve-wracking live auction of a Chris Sundt neckpiece. Afterward, John Taormina proclaimed me “Empress”, and once one is made Empress, it is never undone. The following year, the name VRAffle was introduced in Portland and, with the help of co-Chair Debra Royer and the first grand prize, donated by Archivision, Inc., the VRAffle was established as a conference staple. But- the ticket prices always remained ridiculously affordable- \$2 each, 6 for \$10, 12 for \$20.

Not counting the first Silent Auction in St. Louis for which I found no data, I have documented that the grand total raised benefitting VRA’s Travel Awards, excluding ARLIS’s portion last year, is \$22,208. The VRAffle turned out to be more play than work, and over the years the process was developed and refined, culminating in my writing the VRAffle Procedural manual. It details every aspect of the VRAffle down to the last jot and tittle. By the way, the Development Committee has done an outstanding job on the Vendor Slam raffle, and I’d like to encourage all to bid.

Now the VRAffle needs a new leader to guide it. So, the person- and you know who you are- sitting out there looking for some way to give back to VRA, may be thinking to themselves, “hey, I can take this fundraiser to the next level!” Be Our guest, says the Empress. You will never regret it, and you can even choose your own signature wave. May I suggest any of these- the Light Bulb, the Fan, the Windshield Wiper, the Sporadic Flutter, the Rodeo Queen (this requires riding a horse draped with a spray of roses).... But- this one is perpetually taken! [Figure 8, Touch Pearls]. Thank you!

[Link to full Convocation ceremony on Slideshare](#)