

ARKANSAS • KANSAS • LOUISIANA • MISSOURI • OKLAHOMA • TEXAS

The Idea Vampires

Kristina Hardwick, Bossier Parish Community College, Shreveport, LA

Ideas. Where do we get them? Are there any new ones? I remember spending months before each new school year searching for new display ideas, new school programs, new holiday and seasonal programs, new outreach and weekend programs. Sometimes I felt as though late in the night a new kind of vampire had invaded my home, leaving me bereft of creative thought. For any of you who have that sinking feeling you may have suffered a visit from the Idea Vampire, I offer these website suggestions.

enature.com

This site offers online searchable field guides to over 4800 plant and animal species. It also includes habitat guides, news features, and tips for educators.

nationalgeographic.com/wildworld/

Wildworld offers a generous selection of interactive maps that pinpoint Earth's riches and most endangered natural regions. Educators can click on the Educator's Guide which offers lesson plans and activities.

nbii.gov/index.html

The National Biological Information Infrastructure is an electronic gateway to biological data and information maintained by federal, state, and local government agencies, private sector organizations; and other partners around the nation and the world. Topics include biodiversity, amphibian decline, invasive species, and educational links.

priweb.org

The Paleontological Research Institution website offers educator-friendly guides to the paleontology of your area as well as information and activities from mastodons to whales to the formation of petroleum.

womeninmining.org

The Women in Mining site is dedicated to providing educators, students, and the general public with information about the importance of minerals. Since Earth Science Week is October 13-19, you should

check out the activities and games list. "Birdseed Mining" is one of my favorites - very little cleanup is involved when done outdoors!

mii.org

The Mineral Information Institute is a nonprofit agency that helps educators by providing many free and some low cost materials about natural resources. The activities files are large and will take some time to download, but they are definitely worth it.

earthsciweek.org

Did this newsletter not reach you in time for Earth Science Week, October 13 - 19? Try next year by going to this site. This year's theme is "Water is All Around You." Plenty of information on planning activities and getting the community involved can be found at this site.

educate.si.edu

You haven't been to the Smithsonian yet?! Now is the time. Download an activity where you read Williams Clark's description of a sage grouse and have some third graders create a drawing based upon Clark's description. Then show them a picture of the real thing. There are plenty of activities and lesson plans related to art, science, social studies, and language arts.

Of course, if you have been bitten more than once by the Idea Vampire, you may require more serious treatment. I suggest reading *A Whack on the Side of the Head* by Roger von Oech. This book is filled with provocative puzzles, anecdotes, exercises, metaphors, cartoons, questions, quotations, stories, and tips. It can break through your mental blocks and unlock your mind for creative thought. Best of all, for the endlessly busy interpreter, it is written in bite size pieces. George Willett, the illustrator, will appreciate me saying that the pictures alone are worth the purchase. Still feeling creatively woozy? Try reading *The Pleasure of Finding Things Out* by Richard P. Feynman. You have to admire someone who speaks so highly of the benefit of a good walk in the woods and

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Editors' Corner

Pam Tooley and Lisa Cole

We've done something a little different this time. Enclosed you will find all the "pre-packet" stuff that goes out before you come to the Region Six Workshop (in Oklahoma City this time around, March 2-5). It's all here--in one place. You don't have to look all over your desk for it. So, take some time and fill out the awards and scholarship nomination forms. Decide what you'd like to share with the rest of us, and fill out the call for

papers. Or, copy the forms and send them to someone else you know who needs them.

Help us get set to visit OKLAHOMA!

Greetings from the Beach!

Cindy Donaldson, Publicity/Promotions Chair for NIW 2002

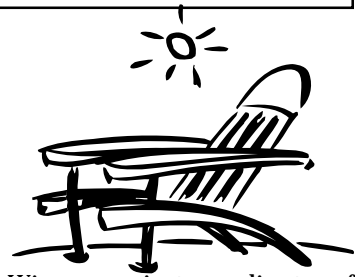
Are you going to be in Virginia Beach, November 12-16? To whet your appetite, here is a glimpse of sessions to be offered. Included this year are: "Let's Go for a Walk," "It's a Bugs Life," "Al Nino's Wild and Wacky Weather," "When Feathers and Fundraising Converge," "Getting Your Exhibit Off to a Good Start," "Be Relevant or Be a Relic," "The Corps of Discovery," "Training Interpreters for Success," and "A Pirate's Life for Me."

Not enough? How about listening to one of these dynamic speakers? Tony Cohen is the founder of the Menare Foundation and author/lecturer about the Underground Railroad. Holly Shimizu is Executive Director of the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, DC. The Title of Holly's keynote presentation is "A Passion Play: Interpretation and Beyond."

Our own Bill Weldon will portray Patrick Henry, "Virginia's Son of Thunder!" Tom Wisner, project coordinator of Chestory: The Center for the Chesapeake Story, is a singer and songwriter. Tom has dedicated his life to the rivers and bays in Region Two.

Still not enough? How about a choice of four separate special events on the evening of Wednesday, November 13? Solve a murder mystery, cruise the Elizabeth River, learn a Colonial period dance or two, or sample the flavors of The Old Dominion.

Volunteer while at the National Workshop and receive a limited edition T-shirt! Contact Joyce Pietschmann, (202) 565-1032 or Joy_Pietschmann@nps.gov.



Going to NIW? Don't forget...



Spread the Word!! This year, bring your own tote bag to the NIW. Everyone who brings a tote bag receives a raffle ticket for a stupendous, interesting, one of a kind basket full of Region Two items. Those of you who forget receive a recycled, reusable plastic bag. Don't forget! Tell all your friends, neighbors and those NAI members who are going to Virginia Beach for NIW 2002.

Come by the Region Six Booth at the NIW and pick up your special Region Six - Nametag Ribbon and visit with other region members.

Director's Report

Shea Lewis

There's something liberating about packing up all of your personal possessions, your wife and two cats, into a twenty-foot U-Haul and moving cross-country. You might remember Wallace Keck, our previous director, who recently moved to Idaho to be the Superintendent of City of Rocks National Reserve. In his goodbye letter, printed in *Visions*, he mentioned that one of his first duties was to fill an interpretive position within the reserve. I have filled the position of Chief of Interpretation at City of Rocks in Almo, Idaho.

My move from the region sparked some interesting discussion between the NAI Executive Committee and the NAI National Office. One of the largest issues brought forward was, "Could a Regional Director lead from outside of the geographic region?" After the discussion, it was decided that I could stay in office based on 1999 changes to the NAI bylaws that "...deleted the requirement that regional officers must reside in the region they represent" as well as "allowed members to join any one region of their choice, regardless of their place of residence." So, technically I'm still a Region Six member. I'm just geographically challenged. I'm excited to stay in office and fulfill my commitment to NAI and Region Six. Even though I no longer live in the region, I have a strong connection to the members of the region and don't want to drop my work in another's hands. Though this is not the most ideal situation, the region will still be able to conduct business as usual. It helps that I also have the support of my new boss to continue as director and work on region business as well as attend regional meetings. I appreciate the support of the Region Six Board of Directors, NAI Executive Committee, NAI National Office and many members to fulfill my commitment.

Since my last report, I attended NAI's Spring National Board Meeting in Ft. Collins. The first day and a half were spent on strategic planning. Some items of interest from the planning session include:

- * Strengthening sections and regions
- * Building NAI as the voice of interpretation
- * Professional development
- * Leadership development
- * Growing a membership that is culturally and professionally diverse

Visions -- the newsletter of Region VI of the National Association for Interpretation -- is edited by Lisa Cole, Heard Natural Science Museum, McKinney, TX, and Pam Tooley, Environmental Education Specialist, Lucas, TX. Articles and other newsletter correspon-

Items of interest from the board meeting include:

- * Approval of National Committee Chairs
 - Cem Basman — National Elections
 - Debbie Tewell — Awards
 - Gail VanderStoep — Ethics
 - Vern Fish — Scholarships
 - VP for Administration — Personnel
- * NIW 2005 will be held in Mobile, Alabama
- * A Certified Interpretive Host certification category was approved and will be implemented
- * NAI will pursue the publication of *The Interpreter* magazine providing that grant funding can be achieved
- * The Northwest Territories are recognized as part of Region Seven and Nunavak Province as part of Region Five
- * The Legacy Trust Fund will be reactivated at this year's NIW
- * "InterPress" will be the official imprint for NAI Publishing.

Another highlight for Region Six was the hiring of Lisa Brochu as NAI's new Training and Program Director. Lisa has been a long-term and active member of Region Six. She made many sacrifices to come and work for NAI, knows the certification programs inside and out, and there is no one better for the job. Way to go Lisa!

The NIW is quickly approaching. I hope to see many of you in Virginia Beach! There will be a regional meeting held during the concurrent sessions which will be a great opportunity to hear about what's going on in the region. I also hope to see you in the Exhibit Hall. Make sure you come by the Region Six booth to pick up your special Region Six-Nametag Ribbon and visit with other Six'ers. I will also be representing the region at Fall National Board Meeting, during the workshop. Please be sure to communicate your issues and concerns to me before that time. I hope to see you at the NIW!



dence should be sent to us at one of our addresses (see back page). We use a Macintosh system and will gladly accept submissions on 3.5 disks or by e-mail in a text-only format. Please send a hard copy as well. Printed on recycled paper.

What are Your Sources of Inspiration?

Cyndi A. Evans, Missouri Department of Natural Resources at Prairie State Park

Why are you an interpreter? Did you grow up probing the soil with a stick just to see what you would find? Maybe you had an insect collection, pressed leaves in a telephone book, fished in a farm pond or camped under the stars. Was it, therefore, a love of the natural world that inspired you? Maybe you lived in a make-believe world of the past where you imagined yourself huddled, behind a fallen log, peeking over the edge to spy on an enemy soldier. Or did you see yourself whirling in your hoop skirt across the dance floor?

Possibly a program or interpreter encouraged your career. Several people and their presentations have inspired me. Once on a visit to a state park, there was an almost magical snake. The naturalist opened the cage and the snake leaped from its confines directly toward me. That same naturalist deftly caught the snake mid-air and he certainly captured my attention as well. Once at a workshop I learned the importance of clear communication and listening. We had a variety of activities, but two I remember well. Two selections of music were played, but I did not guess that they were actually the same song, just played differently. I also recall the struggle I had to verbally and accurately describe a photograph to a partner. My family remembers the competition between my son and myself as we learned to use flint and a steel striker from a first-person interpreter. During other programs I was pelted by foil balls, sprinkled with water, ate crickets, dressed as an owl and enjoyed

songs sung by a mother and the dancing of her son around a campfire.

You have, no doubt, had similar experiences. Now, we find ourselves on the other side of the window. Instead of looking in, desiring what was on the inside, we are looking out. How do we inspire the visitors to come in, thereby gaining a better appreciation and understanding of the resource we interpret?

We give great programs! The inspiration for programs comes not only from research, but also from individuals in NAI. We attend regional workshops to see them do what they do best - present programs and provide new ideas. During the breaks, we brainstorm to solve a problem or recharge an old program. While on vacation, we watch those same people at their sites giving presentations.

Who among those people has inspired you recently? Who gave a super hike? Wrote a really thought-provoking article? Perhaps, that person was your mentor and helped you in your chosen career.

Now, that you are thinking in the desired direction, take a few minutes and write it down. Nominate the people that interpret so well and give them the recognition they deserve (an award nomination form is included in this newsletter).

One must love nature as the deer loves the cougar, as the dry grass loves the flashfire, not for pleasantness, but for the last part of ourselves.

--David Brendan Hopes

Check out Region Six on-line!

www.nairegions.org/6/



International Environmental Education

Schanée Anderson, Sunset Zoo, Manhattan, KS

This summer I was able to do what most of us dream about, travel to another country and promote environmental education. For more than seven years Sunset Zoo has been actively involved with the Asunción Zoo in Asunción, Paraguay. The relationship started as a sister zoo program to help with animal husbandry and has blossomed into a wonderful international education program.

In 2001 I traveled to Paraguay to find out if there were environmental education needs we could assist with and quickly discovered how hungry educators and students were for information. Over the next year Conservation Education Intern Molly Edmonds and I researched and wrote 41 graphics for animals found at the Asunción Zoo. The graphics focused specifically on Paraguayan animals and their importance to the country.

I had also made contacts with a kindergarten to fifth grade private school named Eco Esquela which is thematically based on environmental topics. There are five schools located throughout the country. Although the school had very passionate teachers, few resources were available for the educators. This was the perfect opportunity to introduce Project WILD and Project Learning Tree into Paraguay. Both projects have had parts translated into Spanish. Project WILD is a wonderful bilingual resource because it has activities completely translated. PLT has student pages and the glossary translated.

In July we packed up 120 project books (Laura can testify as to how heavy these really are!), the finished graphics, and all the tools and supplies needed to do workshops and work at the zoo. Eight, 69.5-pound suitcases later we arrived in Paraguay. Workshops were scheduled over a weekend in a small farming town called San Juan Bautista. Eco Esquela has a

farm school located there with a wonderful classroom and outdoor facilities. Many teachers had to travel up to four hours to reach our workshops. On both Saturday and Sunday we presented workshops for 20 teachers using a translator. For those of you who have never used a translator, you cannot imagine how difficult it is to explain the Habitat Lap Sit. The translator just kept turning to me and saying "really, you want them to do what?" We had a wonderful time Fashioning Fish and becoming Energy Sleuths.

Although working with the educators was a thrilling experience, one of the best surprises to us was our translator. William is a young man who teaches English at three schools, two public and one private, just to make ends meet. He never really had any interest in environmental education, that is until he spent two days working with Project WILD and PLT. By the end of the weekend he was hooked. Now we are trying to work out an internship to bring him to the United States this winter to intern at several Kansas zoos. You just never know where the "wonderment" will come from.

We also worked with 53 teenagers from an English language institute. Although this year's focus for these students was to volunteer at the zoo and learn more about animal enrichment and basic husbandry, we hope to train the students and teacher in Project WILD and PLT next summer. The students could then travel to local public schools and use the activities to teach younger students about environmental issues.

To say working with these students and teachers was a life changing experience is an understatement. We often take for granted the resources we have available to us. Working with this project has brought the excitement of teaching back to me.

The Idea Vampires, continued from page 1

is also able to author other books like Quantum Mechanics and Path Integrals and Statistical Mechanics: A Set of Lectures.

I remember once listening to an interpreter from Arkansas State Parks telling me that his noninterpreter coworkers had no idea how hard he was working

when he appeared to be just sitting at his desk and looking out the window. Hard work? If you have no idea just how hard, perhaps you have been lucky enough to have missed a visit from the Idea Vampire. And, if you have never been bitten, then why aren't you submitting an article for Visions?!!! We need you!



State Report



ARKANSAS

Jay Miller

Fort Smith National Historic Site hosted several programs for National Lands Day, including a monarch tagging and release program where Girl Scouts worked with park staff to both tag the butterflies and to provide public programs. For National Hispanic Heritage Month (September) the historic site presented a Mexican War cannon program and a children's hands-on workshop featuring Mexican folk art.

Greg Clemons (Park Ranger at **Lake Ouachita USACE**) reports that the clash of steel rang through the forest June 22 at **Lake Catherine State Park** during the 7th Annual Live Steel Tournament, hosted by **Colonel Walter Butler's Dragoons**. The Dragoons, a 17th Century historic re-enactment group, are from the Hot Springs area. There were 14 swordsmen and two swordswomen competing. All dressed in period costume (Europe--1634) and used weapons of the period. Colonel Walter Butler's Dragoons is one of six live blade groups in the United States. "Live blade" means the swords are real fighting blades that have been blunted and sharp edges rounded. The sword length must be 48 inches or less with a weight of no more than three pounds. Proficiency must be shown before anyone is allowed to compete. Greg invites anyone interested in historical re-enactment or sword fighting to contact him. The group has appeared at various statewide events as well as out of state. They've been invited to Missouri, New Jersey and Virginia. They also have a living history encampment complete with a working cannon.

James Wilborn has had great success with overnight kayak trips on beautiful **Lake Ouachita**, and **Kelly Farrell** has begun two-hour trips/programs on **DeGray Lake**. Both state that the kayak adventures fill fast. Kelly says that the water interpretation activities offered at DeGray fill almost immediately and they need more staff in order to offer more kayaking, lake tours and snorkeling activities to meet the demand.

John Morrow spent a few days in August at the nearby wildlife refuge improving his birding. He discovered an amazing array of birdlife, including roseate spoonbills, and immediately planned a birding weekend at **Lake Chicot**.

John Morrow, Steve Dunlap and Don Simons, all decked out in stunning living history garb, joined the staff at **Old Washington Historic State Park** to celebrate the opening of the restored 1874 courthouse, the 1940's WPA Gymnasium and the 1857 Crouch House exhibits. The Crouch House exhibits tell the story of construction, tools, materials and processes in the mid-19th Century.

Welcome to our newest interpreters--who I'm sure will be members of NAI very soon. **Billy Nations** is at **Old Washington** and **Lori Anderson** is at **Petit Jean**. Both have excellent interpretation experience and I am very excited about having them in the interpretive ranks. We've filled these two and have four more interpreter positions to fill, including one just created at **Cane Creek State Park** in southeastern Arkansas. ■

Share Ideas, Get Ideas, Stay Connected!

Region Six is pleased to announce the initiation of a new listserv--NAI Region 6-L. This listserv provides an opportunity to NAI members and others interested in the field of interpretation to share ideas and get information from their colleagues in the region. This will also offer an avenue for publicizing workshops and training opportunities.

To subscribe, follow these instructions:

1. Send an e-mail message to: listserv@ualr.edu
2. Leave the subject line of the e-mail message blank.
3. In the body of the message, type: `subscribeNAIRegion6-Yourfullname`



Once you subscribe, you will receive a confirmation message and instructions for interacting with others on the list. We hope you will join the list and encourage your colleagues and friends to do the same.

Our thanks go to the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) Public History Program for acting as host for this listserv.

State Report

KANSAS

Schanée Anderson

Fall is filling up quickly in Kansas!

Events

--Safari Adventure Day (**Sunset Zoo** and **Topeka Zoo**)--On Thursday, October 10 and Friday October 11 Sunset Zoo will host environmental education activities throughout the zoo.

--**Wilson Lake** will host Eco-Meet on October 2, 2002. The state Eco-Meet will be at **Kanopolis Lake** on November 6, 2002.

--Eco-Expo - **Rolling Hills Zoo**, Salina, Kansas--September 25, 2002. Career fair for high school students focusing on careers in ecology and life sciences. More than 12 presenters will present programs throughout the day.

--Cub Scout Day (**Sunset Zoo**)--On October 19, Sunset Zoo will be overrun by boy scouts! This annual event draws more than 500 scouts who participate in animal programs, behind-the-scenes tours, and service projects.

--Learning for Life Organization - Salina, Kansas - This is a new program developed by **Lori Hall**. In September the program will investigate the river and in October focus on forests.

--SPOOKtacular - **Sunset Zoo** - Trick or treating has never been so much fun! Kids of all ages will tour the zoo looking for more than 30 trick or treat stations.

--Nightshift - **Mr. & Mrs. F.L. Schlagle Library** - Nightshift is an evening to see and learn about local live owls from **Operation Wildlife**. The presentation will be followed by an "owl prow!" on the nature trail to call owls in. If interested contact www.kckpl.lib.ks.us/schlagle/

Conferences

* ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING A CERTIFIED INTERPRETIVE TRAINER WITH NAI but cannot afford to travel to exotic locations? **Sunset Zoo** is trying to get a group of interested people together to host a training session in Manhattan, Kansas. NAI has said they would be interested if we had ten or more people committed to participating. It would tentatively be planned for sometime in March or April. Please contact **Schanée Anderson** at anderson@ci.manhattan.ks.us or (785) 587-2737 for more information.

New for the Fall

* **Rolling Hills Conservation Center**, Salina, Kansas is proud to announce a name change to **Rolling Hills Zoo**. To better represent the institution and its mission, it was decided to go with the name and logo change.

* The **Topeka Zoo** Giraffe Yard was renovated to welcome African Ground Hornbills; new ADA accessible restrooms by the Children's Zoo complete with a hand washing station; outdoor orangutan yard begins in September; new quarantine building in progress; axis deer yard emptied to welcome pronghorn; concessions stand remodeled; new exhibits for kestrel, great horned owl, African gray parrots, and black and white ruffed lemurs; new public fencing throughout the Zoo.

* **Lori Hall**, director of education at **Rolling Hills Zoo**, Salina, Kansas has resigned her position to spend more time with her family. She has scheduled a few upcoming programs for youth in Salina. She will continue her work with Kansas Wildlife and Parks Commission and stay connected with colleagues and friends through NAI, EcoMeet, and Kansas Naturalist.

* **Jared Bixby**, educator director at **the Topeka Zoo**, has resigned his position and has accepted the director of education position at **Rolling Hills Zoo**. The education director position at Topeka Zoo has not been filled at this point.

* Two new books for your book shelf: **Ted Cable, Ph.D.** has revised Interpretation for the 21st Century. The 15 guiding principles set forth in this book will assist anyone who works in parks, forests, wildlife refuges, zoos, museums, historic areas, nature centers, and tourism sites to more effectively, and joyously, conduct their work.

* **Wilson State Park** is in the process of completing a new handicap accessible trail which will also feature native plants that encourage wildlife.

Wonderful staff and volunteers

* **Rolling Hills Zoo** would like to extend a very big THANK YOU to **Cynthia Vernon** for donating 842 hours of her time to the zoo between August 2001 and July 2002.

* **Danielle Rickleffs** of the Topeka Zoo is developing the Alien Invaders Outreach Program with funding and support from the Junior League of Topeka. This is an eight-week partnership with area elementary schools focusing on invasive or non-native species. ■■■



State Report



LOUISIANA

Kristina Hardwick


Gay Brantley reports that **Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge** north of Monroe will host the grand opening of the Environmental Education Center on 12 October. The celebration will be part of the annual Fall Festival held during National Wildlife Refuge Week. During the week following the opening the refuge will conduct educational seminars, guided ecology walks, and a night hike. The visitor center at the refuge is a restored planter's house that is over 100 years old. Other facilities at the refuge include a raised asphalt boardwalk trail, 400-foot wildlife pier, observation deck with scope, an amphitheater with a covered pavilion, kiosks, arboretum, and a demonstration prairie restoration area. All areas contain numerous interpretive panels. The fast-track development of the five-year-old refuge has been accomplished with the support of the Friends of Black Bayou, Inc., the City of Monroe, the Ouachita Parish Police Jury, Cleco-Mirant, the Monroe Garden Study League, the Junior League of Monroe and many individual volunteers. Since the completion of the first phase of facility development, Black Bayou Lake NWR has been selected to help pilot a newly developed EE program called Rhythms of the Refuge. My hat is off to Gay for her tireless effort at the refuge. She is the only interpretive staff person for the refuge. She formerly worked in wildlife management for 13 years at the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries office in Minden. She was also the first Project Wild coordinator in our state, developed an aquatic education guide for upper elementary grades, and illustrated the definitive guide to freshwater fishes of Louisiana. With the help of **Bob Eisenstad**, the dynamic president of the Friends of Black Bayou, Inc., I look for great reports to come from the refuge!

Claire Coco, the Natural Resources Director at BREC **Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center**, reports that the next two large events at the center will be the Wetlands Heritage Festival on September 22 and the Animal Stewardship Day on November 17. Animal Stewardship Day is a popular event with many parents and their children attending to learn proper pet care. Claire also reports that the center has just received a Volunteer Service Award of \$500.00 from Exxon/Mobil.

Chris Butts, Education Specialist for the **Lafayette Natural History Museum and Planetarium**, reports that the updated facility will open this fall. In July 1996, a three-story building in downtown Lafayette was acquired by the newly consolidated city-parish government to be remodeled as the new facility. It contains 72,000 square feet of space dedicated to the education and interpretation of Louisiana's natural history.

The **Alexandria Museum of Art** in Alexandria, Louisiana, has been chosen to host the "Heart of Spain" exhibit in 2003. This exhibit will contain religious antiquities on special loan from cultural institutions in Spain to help celebrate the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial.

Annie Richardson, from the **NASA/JPL laboratory** in Pasadena, reports that anyone in Region Six is welcome to obtain a copy of "Voyage on the High Seas," the new Jason-1 poster/board game. It is free and available from the ocean topography from space website. Check out the feature section at <http://sealevel.jpl.nasa.gov> for more information. (Annie and I met at an online coral reef conference hosted by NASA/JPL. I highly recommend their programs. The programs are free, convenient and informative. Programs also qualify for CEU credits. College credit for some programs is given for a nominal registration fee.)

That's the news from Louisiana. Keep the reports coming! 

<p>NAI's Employment Opportunities Service</p>	<p>Jobs in Interpretation a biweekly employment service for interpreters. Available in hard copy, fax, or e-mail.</p>
<p>NAI-Jobs P.O. Box 2246 Fort Collins, CO 80522 888-900-8283 Fax: 970-484-8179</p>	<p>Subscription Rates: \$7.00 per issue (hard copy) or \$4.00 per issue (e-mail). All NAI members receive 5 issues per year without charge by request; each additional issue is \$4.00 (hard copy) or \$2.00 (e-mail).</p>



State Report



MISSOURI

John Miller

Cyndi Evans (Liberal) announces that a resource steward position is now open at **Prairie State Park**. Over the past year or so the groundwork has been laid for what is referred to as a "partnership park;" combining several aspects of the operation at Prairie State Park under some administrative guidance at **Stockton State Park**. The purpose of this shift is to focus more attention on the resources at Prairie State Park. In order to accomplish this shift, they have converted the park superintendent position at Prairie State Park to a natural resource steward position to allow more active management of prairie resources. If you are interested in applying for this unique opportunity to manage one of the best prairie parks anywhere, I encourage you to get on the natural resource steward register (<http://www.oe.state.mo.us/pers/classspecs/1217.htm> for more information) or you will need to fill out a state merit application and mail it to the address contained in the merit application. If you would like more information about this position go to the MO Department of Natural Resources human resources web site at <http://www.dnr.state.mo.us/humanres.htm> or the Office of Administration at <http://www.oe.state.mo.us/pers/index.shtml> to get more information about the merit application process. The in-house announcement is open until September 17.

Lynn Youngblood (Blue Springs) reports that **Scott Maxey**, former naturalist at **Burr Oak Woods**, has a new addition to his family. Chloe Marie Maxey was born on May 3. This makes three precious little Maxey girls.

Tom Meister (Glencoe) reminds everyone to "follow the herd" to the Prairie Day event at **Shaw Nature Reserve** on September 21. The event runs from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. in addition to interactive activities and demonstrations there will be living history presentations, archeology exhibits, flintknapping, and prairie plants from local nurseries. Visitors can also buy prairie-related foods such as buffalo burgers and kettle corn at the event. For more information about the prairie day event, call (636) 451-3512 or (314) 301-1500 or go to www.conservation.state.mo.us/areas/stlouis/.

Cyndi Evans (Liberal) reports that **Prairie State Park** will host a special Prairie Day event, called **Prairie Jubilee**, on September 28, 2002. The event runs from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Activities include a workshop on prairie restoration and wildflower gardening, dulcimer music by Woodsong, storytelling by **Richard and Judy Dockrey Young**, living history loop with trappers, pioneers, settlers, cowboys and buffalo hunters, bison chip throwing contest, wagon rides to view the bison, a bison burger lunch, and lots more. For more information go to www.mostateparks.com/prairie or call (417) 843-6711.

The Wonders of Wildlife (WOW) national outdoor recreation and conservation school will be held at **Roaring River State Park** October 11-13. For more information about this family conservation education event, contact **Sonya Estes** at sestes@wondersofwildlife.org or visit the web site at www.wondersofwildlife.org

George Kastler (Jefferson City) reports that the following awards were presented at the Association for Missouri Interpreters (AMI) conference in August: Undergraduate Scholarship--**Christina King**, Graduate Scholarship--**Lisa Lacombe**, Distinguished Interpreter of the Year (Seasonal Category)--**Amy Dozier**, Distinguished Interpreter of the Year (Professional Category)--**Jamin Bray** Best Interpretive Effort of the Year (Individual Category)--**Tiffany Addington** Best Interpretive Effort of the Year (Group Category)--**Kathy Thiele** and **Shanna Raeker** (naturalists, **August A. Busch Conservation Area**).

Syd Hime reports that "Connecting Education and the Environment" is the goal of the Seventh Annual Conference on Environmental Education November 22-24, 2002 at **Tan-Tar-A Resort**, Osage Beach. The event, cosponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation and the Missouri Environmental Education Association (MEEA), will highlight the best practices of teachers and non-formal educators making a positive difference in student achievement. Conference workshops will illustrate a variety of ways natural resources, conservation and the outdoors can be integrated across the curriculum for early childhood to adult students. Field trips to **Ha Ha Tonka State Park** and **Bagnell Dam** are also on the schedule. Registration for the conference is \$135 for MEEA members and \$160 for non-MEEA members who sign up by November 1. Late and on-site registration is \$195. A special \$85 fee is offered to full-time students. For more information and online registration go to www.successlink.org or call (573)751-4115 ext 3899. ■



State Report



OKLAHOMA

Steve Black and Neil Garrison

The big (BIG!!!!) news is that **Bob Jennings** retired (Tulsa's **Oxley Nature Center**). Now, don't get us wrong. We're not implying that Bob has big feet. All that we're trying to say is that Bob left some big shoes to be filled. We all wish you the best of luck, Bob, in the new adventures that are ahead of you. Bob's e-mail address is still: OxleyBoss@aol.com Maybe all of us need to participate in a good-natured contest to see if we can give him some suggestions for a new electronic mail handle. I don't know. Maybe something like: GoneFishin@aol.com.

A scholarship was granted to **Susie Ruby** (Tulsa's **Oxley Nature Center**) so that she might attend the National Leopold Education Project conference in Baraboo, Wisconsin in August. The guest speakers at the conference were Nina Leopold Bradley, Estella Leopold and Carl Leopold (the children of Aldo Leopold). In July, **Roy Beckemeyer** (Wichita, KS) presented a couple of programs on dragonflies at Tulsa's Oxley Nature Center (one for the staff; a second for the public). The staff at Oxley highly recommend Roy's program. You can contact him at this e-mail address: rovb@southwind.net

Loraine Richmond (**Fountainhead State Park**) reports that they have finally (after 3 years) completed the nocturnal room. You actually walk into a hollow tree and are looking out at a sunset scene. There are three levels on one side. Below is a diorama depicting wetlands, woodlands and grasslands and is geared toward younger (and shorter) visitors. The middle level is actually a likeness of the park at night with lots of nocturnal animals to be seen. On the top level you look out at the canopy of surrounding trees. There are Screech Owls and a Great Horned Owl sitting on branches and if you look close you can even see a Hummingbird's nest. If you're brave, there is a hole you can put your hand into and guess what you feel.

Kristi Silvey (**Beavers Bend State Park**) says the Nature Center was busy all summer - between visitors from as far away as New Zealand, Russia and Japan, and wildlife rehabilitation. When the hot weather of July hit, they broke out the hand-made ice cream program and it has been a hit! Visitors have much greater respect for those who used to make so much ice cream by hand after they have had a go at it themselves! An ice cream participant suggested that they try roasting biscuits at our campfire program (how, you might ask, do you roast a biscuit? I know I asked!) Seems this is an old trick from the Girl Scouts: stretch out a canned biscuit into a rectangle, and wrap it around a stick (we use our marshmallow roasting sticks) then roast it over your campfire. When done, 'fancy it up' with your choice of butter, honey or cinnamon sugar. It has been a hit! They are running out of biscuits before they run out of marshmallows! Amazing what you can learn when you ask for advice from your visitors! Beavers Bend is hosting Oklahoma's second annual BioBlitz in September! September 13 & 14, botanists, biologists, and other 'ologists' galore will meet at the Carson Creek area on **Broken Bow Lake** and in 24 hours catalog as many different species in the area as they can find.

Mike Caywood gave a glowing report on the large number of interpretive programs that are being conducted at **Alabaster Caverns State Park** (Freedom, OK). Last year's "Lantern Tours" were such a success that they added a few additional days this year for the program so that there were a total of 13 of these guided hikes through the cave. (The tour participants go through the cave with all of the electrical lights turned off; each of the tour participants is issued a hand-held lantern to illuminate their way through the cave.) Mike also said that he was actively involved in the guided nature hikes that took place at the **Selman Bat Cave**. During the month of August, the general public is taken to the cave mouth at dusk and is given the opportunity to watch the large numbers of bats exit. Mike uses a live diamondback rattlesnake to illustrate his safety advisory on why all of the tour participants should stay on the designated trails.

A 160-acre parcel of private property was donated to **Quartz Mountain State Park** in July of this year. This crucial piece of real estate provides an invaluable connection between two portions of state park property (Quartz Mountain and Little Baldy Peak) that were separated from each other.

Some personnel changes are slated to be made at the National Park Service's **Washita Battlefield National Historic Site** (Cheyenne, OK) this autumn. The education position at this work site is going to be upgraded from a part-time job to a full-time slot. Chief Park Interpreter **Steve Black** attended four months of training in Georgia this summer in order to enable him to also take on the job responsibilities of law enforcement at this location. Superintendent **Sarah Craighead** recently took a job as the new Superintendent at **Saguaro National Monument** (Tucson, AZ). Congratulations, Sarah! 🍷



State Report



TEXAS

Brian Barnette

Well, I guess the honeymoon is over . . . this issue's appeal for news brought only three responses. Maybe y'all were too busy out enjoying this summer's relatively mild temperatures to sit down and write about it. That's OK - I know where you are (at least, some of you). Meanwhile, what was it Spencer Tracy said about Kate Hepburn? "There's not much meat on her, but what's there is choice." So here are some choice morsels from the faithful few . . .

First, a mea culpa to **Chris True** up at **Ray Roberts Lake State Park**. He answered my previous request for news, but I lost his message in my Outlook inbox. Just for the record, Chris was busy getting ready for the summer rush, and continuing to work on wildlife habitat improvement along their Park's Greenbelt Corridor. They are planning a series of interpretive wayside panels for their wetlands area, and hope to construct a viewing platform within the next year.

Other TPWD news comes from **Julie Coombes**, Interpretive Planner for TPWD. Seems our little old state agency is on the cutting edge of interpretive training. More than two dozen people, from all branches of the department, gathered at **Bamberger Ranch** in the Hill Country the week of July 8 - 12 to receive interpretive training from none other than NAI Executive Director **Tim Merriman** and our own **Lisa Brochu**, NAI Program Director. Folks, it don't get no better than that. By the end of the week, most of the participants had become Certified Interpretive Guides (CIG) and several had become Certified Interpretive Trainers for the CIG program. Ultimately, all interpreters in TPWD will have the opportunity to become CIG's through NAI. Texas will be the FIRST state to pursue NAI certification for all its interpreters. I wish I had the space to share some of the participants' comments with you. They're plumb inspirational . . .

As if that wasn't enough, TPWD will also be pilot-testing NAI's new Certified Interpretive Host training, which is designed for anyone who interacts with the public--not just interpreters. Another first for the Lone Star State . . . Also from TPWD: the department has filled all but one of its Regional Interpretive Specialist positions. Congratulations, **Linda Hedges**, **Lupita Barrera**, **Karen Watson**, **Dawn Bello**, **Chris Holmes**, **Mart Swanson**, and **Barbara Parmley**. And here's a great opportunity: Project WILD, Project Learning Tree, and Project Food, Land, and People have teamed up with the Texas Nature Conservancy to offer a unique three in one training. If you have attended at least one basic workshop in any of the three programs, you can become certified as a facilitator in all three programs. What a bargain! The workshop is scheduled for January 24-26 at **Clymer Meadow Preserve** near Greenville. For more information, contact **Cappy Manly**, Project Wild Coordinator, at 512-389-4369 or cappy.manly@tpwd.state.tx.us

Melissa Martin is busy at the **Texas Discovery Gardens** in Dallas preparing for their annual butterfly exhibit, one of the highlights of the State Fair. This summer, she and **Patty Dillehay** took their programs on the road, visiting local rec centers and day camps. They also found time to plant a vegetable garden.

As for me, here at the **Dallas Museum of Natural History**, I had my 15 minutes of celebrity as a result of a little exhibit we did on the West Nile Virus. They say timing is everything, and we put our exhibit up just as WNV was hitting the metroplex. Somehow, I got tagged as an expert, and I did five TV interviews in a week and a half, plus a chat with a reporter for the AP that ran in papers across the country. I thought I was hot stuff, 'til one of our friends went on a local morning show to promote our Reptile Weekend. If you haven't seen the infamous gecko attack (it made the Leno show - twice) check out nbc5i.com and look for the story "When Reptiles Attack Anchors." If you've ever worked with live animals, you'll empathize . . .

On a more serious note . . . A few weeks ago, a fellow naturalist and Texan retired after 25 years in the profession. Although I probably met **Bob Jennings** over 20 years ago, when I first got started in AIN, I've never been to his nature center, never attended one of his programs, never seen him give a trail walk. I only see him once or twice a year at conferences. Still, in his quiet, self-effacing way, he has served as a role model for me and who knows how many others. I consider Bob to be the epitome of interpretive naturalists (snakebite notwithstanding), and I just want to thank him for all that he has given to this organization and profession. Bob, it won't be the same without you.

That's it for now. I hope to see you all at Virginia Beach in November. In the meantime, drop me a line about what's happening in your world. If you don't, I might just have to fill the next issue with transcripts of the commercials in the gubernatorial campaign . . .





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DEADLINES FOR VISIONS ARE:

Fall 2002: August 20
Winter 2002: November 20
Special issue: December 20, 2002
Spring 2003: February 20
Summer 2003: May 20

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