

ARKANSAS • KANSAS • LOUISIANA • MISSOURI • OKLAHOMA • TEXAS

Finding Purpose in a Paradox

Brian Barnette, Dallas Museum of Natural History, Dallas, TX

"Hey!" the fourth grader said. "It's a bearded dragon!"

We were in the Bison Hall, and the students were busy deciphering the clues that introduce our "Mineral Mystery" program. And the "bearded dragon" the boy had spotted was actually the Texas horned lizard that has kept a silent vigil in the pronghorn diorama for over half a century.

But the significance of the boy's comment went far beyond the simple misidentification of a reptile. To me, it symbolized a paradox that underlies one of the great challenges, if not opportunities, we face at the Dallas Museum of Natural History – namely, that kids today are better informed than any generation in history about nature around the world, yet less familiar than ever with the environment in which *they* live.

How could this be? Actually, it's not all that hard to understand, when you consider some of the changes that have taken place in our society in the last twenty years.

For instance, if you visit the children's section in your local library or bookstore, you'll see shelf after shelf of bright, colorful books, written especially for kids, on all kinds of nature and science subjects. There are books on individual species, everything from vampire bats to naked mole rats. There are series, such as the *Eyewitness* books, that cover a variety of topics in depth, complete with amazing full-color photographs and illustrations. There are field guides designed especially for young readers, including junior versions of the popular Peterson and Audubon series. Even the storybooks have come a long way from the days of talking bunnies and dancing bears. Today's animal protagonists include armadillos, bats, and iguanas, often realistically portrayed in their natural habitats.

Then there's television. Once upon a time, the only regularly scheduled nature program on TV was *Mutual of Omaha's Wild Kingdom*. Sure, there were occasional National Geographic specials and Disney documentaries, but when it came to nature shows, Marlin was the man.

Today, with the proliferation of cable channels, there are whole *networks* devoted to nature programming. Along with the children's channels and the general

science channels, you can find some sort of nature show on the air, twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Most of these programs feature outstanding photography and the latest in computer-generated special effects, which combine to make obscure or complex subjects easily understood, if not downright entertaining. Many of these shows are available on video as well.

Finally, of course, there's the Internet. It's a rare beast indeed that can't be found somewhere on-line. Between the various encyclopedias, dictionaries, and organization web sites (including ours), you can find out something about almost anything merely by clicking your mouse.

So it's not too surprising that today's kids are so well-informed about the wild world. From toddlers to teens, they're bombarded with information from all directions. Why, then, do they often seem to be so clueless about their own backyards and neighborhoods? Possibly because they tend to spend much less time there than previous generations.

When I was a kid, we spent a lot of time outside. Mostly we played in our own front and back yards. Frequently we made trips down the alleys adjoining our block, looking for lizards. And occasionally we made an expedition to one of the local creeks, where we



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Editors' Corner

Pam Tooley and Lisa Cole

In this issue, you will find three very important pieces of paper: the Region Six Awards Nomination Form, the Region Six Scholarship Application, and the Small Grants Application. That means it is also time for the traditional appeal from your editors to **PLEASE FILL OUT AND RETURN THESE FORMS!!** If you don't make the

nominations/send in the applications, no one can win. And we know you don't want that. So, whip out that pen, find a comfy chair, and start writing! We'll all be glad you did.

A Transformation

Andy Allen, Teaching Responsible Earth Education (T.R.E.E.), New Orleans, LA

"We are going out in the woods?" the fourth-grader asked as many of his fellow classmates were visually taken aback by the thought of experiencing the "woods." This sudden dose of reality had come after the letter and detailed map from E.M., their mysterious and unknown guide on this journey, were unveiled. The class at Dr. Charles Drew Elementary School was being prepped for their Earthkeepers Training session by staff from the nonprofit organization, Teaching Responsible Earth Education (T.R.E.E.). The mood in the classroom was mostly excitement and wonder, yet this was mixed with fear of the unknown.

Drew Elementary is a public school set right in the middle of the "Ninth Ward," a low-income community in the heart of urban New Orleans. Almost all of these kids had never experienced nature outside of what they saw on television. Yet, through a grant from the Junior League of New Orleans, these students were going on an adventure like none they had experienced before.

I am sure that another dose of reality hit these students as the bus picked them up at their school, a building completely surrounded by concrete and void of any accessible green areas, to start them on this mysterious adventure. Yet, as the bus pulled up to Jean Lafitte National Park and they were happily greeted by several of the program leaders, including T.R.E.E. staff and Junior League of New Orleans Volunteers, the students could not help but smile.

Peering into the poorly lit space that was known as E.M.'s Lab, the Earthkeepers in training seemed to be a bit apprehensive. However, they found their seats

quietly in anticipation of meeting E.M. They also looked around the lab at all of the strange natural objects, books, maps and other various items strewn across E.M.'s shelves, desk and floor. Yet, the only sign of their odd leader was a chair that was still rocking as they walked in. They were then given their tasks of learning more about the earth, experiencing it in a new way, using their knowledge to protect it and sharing what they learned with others. These seemed to be daunting tasks, yet the students took it all in stride.

Later on, the Earthkeepers in training all stepped down slowly from the safe boardwalk to the new world that awaited them. The semi-tropical forest filled with palmettos and towering oak trees was the stomping grounds for Jean Lafitte, the Cajun Pirate, and the setting for their first adventure. They were to be "Munchline Monitors," observing food chains to make sure that they were running smoothly. Apprehension was thrown to the wind by the time they began to dig into the forest looking for any sign of "munching" they could find. No one could contain their excitement when the numbers were all tallied and they had found hundreds of signs of munching.

I watched these kids transform over the next few days. They could not wait to get back into the woods each time we left for lunch or bathroom breaks. Their first time at Magic Spots, a period of solitude in the forest, was not easy. However, the ongoing question became, "When are we going to Magic Spots?" It is so amazing to think that over 30 fourth-graders and adults can sit in the woods together so quietly that the combined sound of the birds and the wind was almost deafen-

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Director's Report

Pat Silovsky

Greetings everyone! NIW is right around the corner! I hope that many Region 6'ers are planning to attend. I have heard of several Kansas members planning to make the trip, in spite of the leaner times we are facing. The Region will have a booth in the exhibit hall, and we are in need of members to help man the booth. For the first time, our region will be selling a product--our storytelling CD entitled "Whisper on the Wind." If you will be able to donate some time at the booth, please contact me at pats@wp.state.ks.us.

I'd like to welcome David Latona and Eric Leonard to the Board. David has stepped up to fill the Louisiana State Coordinator job vacated by Kristina Hardwick, and Eric has volunteered to be the new Region Six webmaster. I'd like to thank Kristina for her many years of service as the Louisiana state coordinator and also say thanks to Craig Johnson for filling the webmaster position prior to Eric.

The small grants program is available again this year. The deadline for submission of the application will be January 12. And, while you are at it (filling out applications, I mean) please go ahead and nominate some of your peers for an award. Region Six offers six different categories and I'm sure you know someone who is



Pat Silovsky

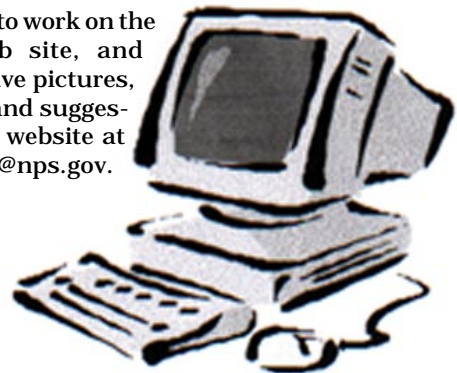
*When the air moves, it pulls from the bending grass around me
a soft outrush like a deep breath slowly vented, the wind giving
voice to the grass, and it lending a face to the wind.*

William Least Heat Moon, Prairyerth

Meet our new Region Six webmaster...

I've been designing expanded park web sites for the NPS since 1996, and feel very strongly about the interpretive possibilities that the Internet has to offer. As the region Six webmaster, my main goal for the site is to provide themembers of the region the opportunity to contribute. Thewebsite should represent the full range of facilities, resources, and people that the region has to offer, and the only way we can do that is by encouraging everyone to participate. What I want most are pictures; pictures of the places everyone works at, and pictures of programs. I'm glad for the

opportunity to work on the region's web site, and hope to receive pictures, comments, and suggestions for the website at eric_leonard@nps.gov.



Purpose in a Paradox, continued from page 1

searched for tadpoles, crawdads, and fossils. I don't think today's kids do those things much anymore.

There are many reasons for that. One that has received a lot of attention in recent years is the lack of free time in so many kids' lives. Between school, sports, scouts, and church, kids' days are often filled to overflowing with things to do. Those "hazy, lazy days of summer" are long gone.

That summer haze is another factor. Who wants to go outside on an ozone action day? It used to be that all kids had to worry about was getting a sunburn. Now we know that UV rays can lead to skin cancer. Then there are allergies, dehydration, heat exhaustion - chasing critters through cyberspace in an air-conditioned house starts to sound pretty good.

In addition to health concerns, there are safety considerations. Gone are the days when kids could simply roam the creeks, alleys, and vacant lots of their neighborhoods at will. Parents fear their children might fall prey to some sort of criminal; landowners fear they might be held liable should a child be injured on their property. Far easier - and safer - just to keep the kids in the house.

So - we have a generation of kids that's more familiar with pandas than they are with possums. What does

that mean for the Dallas Museum of Natural History?

For one thing, I think it underscores the importance of our dioramas. As "snapshots" of Texas wildlife in its natural habitats, they are invaluable as a way to show visitors, including children, aspects of the biodiversity of Texas they might never experience otherwise.

It's also important that we provide opportunities for people, especially children, to discover nature on a personal level. We must design programs and exhibits that allow hands-on encounters of the sort that once were common in our lives. If kids can't go to the creek, then we must bring the creek to them.

I also think it may give us something to think about as we plan our future. Of course, it's important to maintain a global perspective. Not only because we need it to understand the environmental challenges we face, but also because there are a lot of really interesting things out there (have you ever seen a naked mole rat?). But as we have seen, there are many voices telling those stories. It's up to us to explain how it all relates to us, and how our local natural history relates to the rest of the world.

That's the story that we are best suited to tell.

Write A Nomination!

Cyndi A. Evans, Prairie State Park, Liberal, MO

Some of you have heard this before. Tough! Read it anyway. We have a problem. Each year the awards committee receives very few nominations. In some categories no awards are given, because nothing was submitted. The committee members are not able to make nominations; it is a conflict of interest. You, the members of NAI Region Six, must do it. Last year I wrote what I hoped was an inspiring article to encourage nominations for the Richard Baldalf Award, Distinguished Professional Interpreter, Meritorious Service, Best Newsletter Article, Outstanding Site Publication and Outstanding Interpretive Program. It didn't help.

Don't you know of a site or individual deserving such an honor? Look around. Our region overflows with great interpreters. I think we have the best. Prove it. Write a nomination! You may have the opposite problem; there are too many worthy people. One of our members agreed with you and found a solution. She began by nominating one person and then each successive year she names another individual. You can, too.

Perhaps you feel that you lack the information to write a nomination. Write down what you know; it may surprise you. Ask other members. Call co-workers or a supervisor. There are lots of ways to gather information. You don't have the time? We all have too much to do. Consider though, in these days of reduced budgets, we must recognize the quality of the interpreters in our region. Remember too, sometimes the only way we receive recognition is to do it ourselves. It could make a difference. Make time. Can't afford a stamp? You may send an e-mail. Look for the electronic form on the NAI, Region Six website - www.nairegions.org/6/. It is easy. It saves time. It saves money. Write a nomination!

Finally, I have one more thing to persuade you. Bribery! For each nomination you send in, you will get ten wooden nickels! These seemingly useless coins will be as good as money at the next NAI Region Six Workshop, to be held March 7-10, 2004 in Kansas City, Missouri. Among all the outstanding things planned for the workshop, you can buy all kinds of cool stuff at the Trading Post using your wooden nickels.

National Association for Interpretation Region VI Mini Grants Application

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Description of Project:

Benefits of Project:

Dollar Amount Requested

Project Timeframe (i.e. amount of time needed to complete project)

Does this project have potential cost-sharing partners? Please provide details.

Submit by mail to: Pat Silovsky
3115 Hatchery Dr.
Junction City, KS 66441

or e-mail to pats@wp.state.ks.us (electronic form at the NAI Region VI website)
Call (785) 238-5323 with questions.

Region Six mini-grants program has a total of \$1,000 to award to one or more recipients. The number of awards and the value of each award will be determined by the mini-grants committee.

POSTMARK DEADLINE is January 19, 2003



State Report



ARKANSAS

Jay Miller

Long-time superintendent of Hot Springs National Park **Roger Giddings** retired in early September. Roger was very active in the parks and tourism business throughout Arkansas and did a great job at Hot Springs, overseeing land acquisition of thousands of acres to protect the watershed of the famous springs and successfully garnering funds to restore the **Fordyce Bathhouse** as the park visitor center. Most recently, he aided in seeking funds to stabilize and renovate several of the National Landmark bathhouses on Bathhouse Row. Best wishes, Roger.

Bill Black, superintendent of **Fort Smith National Historic Site**, continues to work closely with the **University of Arkansas at Fort Smith** as that school's degree program in history with an emphasis in interpretation of historic sites gets underway this fall. Students completing this course will have an American history degree complete with five or more courses in interpretation. They will be NAI-certified and will have completed substantial portions of the NPS interpretive training courses.

Jody Morris, director of the **Jonesboro Nature Center**, is hiring interpretive staff in preparation for the opening of this very fine facility. **Michael Gross** and **Ron Zimmerman** were the interpretation consultants, and **Split Rock Studio** is developing and installing the exhibits. This will be the second of four nature centers planned by the Game and Fish Commission. They are now hiring a director for center number three in Fort Smith, and will begin planning soon.

Arkansas State Parks has hired **Amber Hamilton** as interpreter at **Crater of Diamonds**, and **John Morrow** is moving from **Lake Chicot** to the interpreter position vacated by **Steven Dunlap** at **Petit Jean**. We will soon be hiring a second interpreter at the Crater and one to work with **Sarah Keating** at the fine new state park interpretive center at **Lake Dardanelle**.

Eight Arkansas State Park interpreters completed the CHI workshop held in September at **Queen Wilhelmina State Park**. They were joined on the mountaintop by interpreters from Vancouver, Washington state, Louisiana and other exotic places.

James Wilborn continues to have great success offering kayak camping trips on **Lake Ouachita**. I went on one last spring and was pleased when, after all the food, scenery, kayaking, camping on islands and more, the group voted the whole event excellent and James' nighttime program the highlight of the trip.

Arkansas State Parks and Program Services artist **Melissa Smith** received an Award of Merit for the self-guiding trail booklet, Louisiana Purchase Historic State Park in the 2003 Graphic Awards competition sponsored by the Printing Industry Association of the South, Inc. A news release from PIAS states, "[this annual competition] is designed to recognize and honor those responsible for the creation, design and production of top-quality printed materials; those which have impact, appeal and effectiveness."

The Louisiana Purchase Patch Program, created as part of the commemoration of the Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial, is alive and well and living on the web under www.ArkansasStateParks.com. By completing questions or visiting sites in Arkansas and sending \$5 and the completed form, anyone can receive a great looking commemorative patch. ■

A Transformation, continued from page 2

ing. Kids who had picked their Magic Spots based on the low abundance of spiders in the vicinity were now making holes to invite spiders to share their Magic Spots with them. While following a walk outlined in E.M.'s diary, they fearlessly waded through the thick palmetto and hopped over fallen logs to find their way through the "Unexplored Area." It was only a week earlier when this same area on the map had made them all cringe. Kids who had said, "I don't think I want to do that," at each activity, were now saying,

"Can we do it again?" They truly were changing.

When the bus came to pick them up on the last day, they all walked slowly and reluctantly to the parking lot. Many asked if they could stay longer, even overnight, instead of going back. "We could sleep in E.M.'s Lab," one kid protested. But, in the end, the newly titled Earthkeeper Apprentices all climbed on the bus armed with their knowledge of the earth and experiences that will last them a lifetime.

State Report

Kansas

Schanée Anderson

Events

- Wilson State Lake will host an Eco-Meet October 1. The State Eco-Meet will be held November 5 at Quivira.
- With help from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and US EPA 319 Funds, KACEE has developed the Statewide Kansas Water Celebrations Project to assist in the planning and implementation of water celebrations throughout the state. The goal of the project is to recruit and assist water festival planners to serve all 105 Kansas counties by providing start-up funding, training, technical support, and a water festival resource guide. Grant applications for water celebration start-up funds are available through Melissa Arthur, Statewide Water Celebrations Coordinator at melissarthur@sbcglobal.net.
- Sunset Zoo, Topeka Zoo, Sedgwick County Zoo, Rolling Hills Zoo
Four zoos in Kansas are working together to host Safari Adventure Day at all facilities on October 10. Each zoo will host anywhere from 300 to 1,000 students. Students will participate in structured workshops throughout the zoos focusing on animals, culture, and the environment.

Conferences/Meetings/Workshops

- The **Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education** (KACEE) Conference will be held in Manhattan, Kansas November 7-8. This year's theme is "EE at Home: Creating a Sense of Place." Concurrent sessions will focus on Wildlife in the Classroom, Prairie Potpourri, and Growing Naturally. Contact **Shari Wilson** at Wilson_shari@swbell.net or at 916 287-6879. There is also an excellent pre-conference program highlighting camping with kids and outdoor activities on November 6.
- **Garden City Zoo** will be hosting the Mid-America Zoo Alliance conference Sept 24-26. Sessions on animal husbandry, safety, exhibit design, education and more will be scheduled. There is no registration fee. Anyone desiring registration information can access it at: www.garden-city.org/zoo
- **KACEE** will be hosting a Water Celebration Planning Workshop on September 25-26, 2003 in Garfield Park, Topeka, KS. The workshop is a networking and training opportunity, designed to provide tools for planning watercelebration eventlogistics and curriculum, along with a behind-the-scenes water celebration experience at the Topeka Water Festival. Travel stipends are available. Contact **Melissa Arthur** at melissarthur@sbcglobal.net for a registration form.

New for the fall

Two outstanding books now available from Kansas Author

Kansas State University professor **Ted Cable**, Ph.D has two exciting books now available for purchase. *Traveling Across Kansas: A Guide to I-70*, focuses on the amazing sites along I-70 and is a must for anyone traveling across the state. You will discover information about some of your favorite Kansas places as well as discover new places to stop on your next visit. *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources* is also available in second edition. The authors painstakingly updated the first edition, adding current research and information. Both books are available at Amazon.com.

Martin and Osa Safari Museum

National Air Tour Hosts Two Wild Pieces of Naturalist History!

Don't miss your chance to see two of the most amazing field tools pioneering naturalists **Martin and Osa Johnson** employed to capture wildernesses now vanished. Two full-scale replicas of the Johnsons' amphibious airplanes will fly on this 26-city national tour. Host cities in our region include Kansas City, Wichita, Tulsa, Fort Worth, Shreveport, Little Rock, and Chanute, KS, the hometown of the original planes. The Johnsons painted their "Flying Boats" like a zebra and a giraffe and used them as mobile animal filming blinds; an innovation that provided a much safer working environment for both the Johnsons and their wild subjects! For a full listing of tour venues and to see photos of these replicas, which were built using photos from the archives of the Safari Museum, log on to: www.safarimuseum.com!

Wonderful staff and volunteers

- **Gail Sheridan**, Education Assistant at **Garden City Zoo**, is leaving to move to Wyoming with her husband. She will be replaced by **Andrea Smith** of Maryville, MO. ■■■



State Report



LOUISIANA

David Latona

It is my pleasure to represent such a great state in the field of interpretation. Many exciting things are happening in our neck of the region at many different agencies.

The annual **Fall Festival** at **Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge** in Monroe will be held October 18, following a week of special interpretive programs/activities celebrating National Wildlife Refuge Week.

Black Bayou Lake NWR is piloting an Environmental Education program called “**Rhythms of the Refuge.**” Teachers will receive a workbook with refuge-specific information and activity ideas to help them plan field trips. On-site workshops help teachers become comfortable leading activities on the refuge and familiarize them with equipment and resources that can be checked out. The first of the “Rhythms of the Refuge” field trips are expected this fall and a second teacher workshop has been scheduled.

Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park announces several recent changes in park staffing. Senior Park Naturalist **Fred Christian** announced his well-deserved retirement, effective August 16. Although Fred will be missed, he promises to come around occasionally and even volunteer now and then. Maybe we can persuade him to continue to participate in Region Six’s great conferences. Do naturalists really retire anyway? Park Director **Larry Raymond** and Park Naturalist **Judy Sneed** will cover Fred’s duties until his position is filled. Part-time naturalist **Lisa Wright** also resigned her position at the park in May of this year. After three years with the park, Lisa was offered an opportunity to teach additional classes at Bossier Parish Community College and wanted time to prepare for the added teaching responsibilities. Part-time naturalist **John McBride, Jr.** is still with the Park, but has been temporarily reassigned on a full-time basis to the Parish of Caddo’s **Eddie D. Jones Park**. Full-time park ranger **Doug Rainwater** was called to active military service in January of this year and is still serving in Afghanistan. When Doug returns, John will be available to provide interpretive programs at both Walter Jacobs Nature Park and Eddie Jones Park. Three new part-time naturalists were recently hired to replenish the diminished park staff. Welcome to **Rachel Demascal**, **Catherine “Katie” Hall** and **Kimberly Warren**. All three part-timers got lots of hands-on experience during eight weeks of “**Earth Camp 2003,**” held at the Walter Jacobs Nature Park pavilion. More than 275 children and 30 adults from eleven different sites participated in the interactive, hands-on nature camp held each year in the park.

The **Louisiana Office of State Parks** is growing by leaps and bounds, from new facilities to new employees to exciting new interpretive programs. Many new overnight facilities have opened in North Louisiana. Among the new facilities to be opened in the future is a Visitor Center at **Fort St. Jean Baptiste State Historic Site** in Natchitoches, Louisiana and even sooner will be the opening of the new Visitor Center and Curation facility at **Audubon State Historic Site** in St. Francisville, Louisiana. With the opening of these new facilities will come more new interpretive positions, so look out for more “Parkees” in the state.

Sam Houston Jones State Park in Lake Charles, Louisiana was the grateful host to an **AmeriCorps/NCCC** team during March and April. The team was requested to begin management of the site’s longleaf pine savanna. Because fire has been managed against for many years at SHJ, yaupon, wax myrtle, and pine straw have accumulated in large amounts, making wildfire a serious danger for the park and surrounding properties. With the help of **Jim Robinson**, manager at the **Louisiana State Arboretum State Preservation Area** and **Gary Pinson**, maintenance foreman at SHJ, AmeriCorps/NCCC worked many long hours clearing the underbrush in the savanna to open the ground up to sunlight and reduce the dangers of a wildfire. In order to properly restore the savanna to a thriving wildlife habitat, a long-term, controlled burn plan will be implemented in the future.

One last tidbit is the newest addition to the interpretive staff in the Louisiana State Park System, **Don Smith**. He is our newest import, haling from California! Can we recruit or what?!? Don is stationed at **Mansfield State Historic Site** in Mansfield, Louisiana. He joins an already strong staff of interpreters and adds to the qualities with an extensive knowledge of period costuming. As a matter of fact, he builds and sews historic reproduction artifacts and costumes in his free time. We are all excited to have him on our team.

Many thanks to those of you who submitted to this summary. Excellent!





State Report




MISSOURI

John Miller

Grady Manus (Kansas City) requests that you mark your calendar for **March 7 – 10, 2004** and plan to be in Kansas City for the **NAI Region 6 Interpreters' Workshop**. The theme for the workshop is **"Exploring The Past ... Mapping The Future."** Please come early and take part in one of the six **pre-conference workshops**. Sections that will be offering sessions are Environmental Education, Cultural Interpretation and Living History, Nature Center Directors and Administrators (they will offer their now world famous nature center road show) and the African-American Experience. There will also be a caving trip to "The Devil's Icebox" and a half-day session, "Echoes From the Past," on primitive hide processing. The committee has some exciting **keynote speakers** to inspire you. **Corky Mayo**, Chief of Interpretation for the National Park Service, will enlighten us on the trends in interpretation into the next century. Captain William Clark of the recent Corps of Discovery (sometimes known as **Bill Weldon**, Manager of Living History Program Development at Colonial Williamsburg) will reminisce about the journey to the great Western Ocean and back. Don't forget to bring your **wooden nickels** from the Oklahoma Workshop for our trading post. We also want you all to bring your favorite **nametag**. You will receive five nickels if you do (and there will be a big bonus for the "most creative" nametag.) There will also be first, second and third place **prizes for early paper proposals and registrations**. Think of it ... 50 wooden nickels for the first paper proposal and the first registration. We will also give 50 nickels to the first awards nomination received and 10 to each person that submits a nomination form. Does this sound like bribery? WELL IT IS! But that's okay 'cause we said so. During the opening reception, in addition to the trading post, we will conduct the **"GREAT MID-AMERICA CUP SWAP."** Bring a cup ... it doesn't even have to be clean ... well maybe it should be. Participants place a cup on the table and take another of their choice. No fuss, no muss just cups and mugs going home to new families. There will be an expanded **exhibitor's hall** with more vendors and we we'll have extra tables if you'd like to set up a site or agency table. Feel free to bring site brochures and newsletters to share with your fellow interpreters. Both All-Day and Half-Day **Field Trips** are being developed. Perhaps we have saved the best for last. The **sessions** ... that's what we do these workshops for ... are going to be great. We already have a special session with a group from the Missouri Department of Conservation that have built several dugout canoes and are doing some innovative and successful programs using the Lewis and Clark theme. So please come and join us ... it won't be the same if you're not here with us! For more information check out the Region Six web site at www.nairegions.org/6.

The **Association of Missouri Interpreters** (AMI) conducted their annual workshop on August 25-28th in Kansas City. In addition to several great field trips and a float trip down the Missouri River, there were many wonderful presentations and sharing sessions. Outstanding presentations were provided by the **Burr Oak Woods Staff** and **Marian Gooding**. The auction raised \$2000 for scholarships. Award winners were: **Rita M. Martin** of Ha Ha Tonka State Park (Best Interpretive Effort - Individual), **Friends of Rock Bridge Memorial State Park** (Best Interpretive Effort - Group Category), **Judee Sachleben** of Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center (Distinguished Interpreter of the Year - Volunteer), **Christy Dablemont** of Pomme de Terre State Park (Distinguished Interpreter of the Year - Seasonal Category), **Grady Manus**-Historic Consultant (Distinguished Interpreter of the Year - Professional Category), and **Craig Hensley** of Burr Oak Woods CNC (Best Workshop Presentation— Bird Banding and Bird Interpretation). Scholarship winners were **Jamie Hubert** (Undergraduate Scholarship) and **Jeremy Soucy** (Graduate Scholarship), both from the University of Missouri-Columbia. Around 65 interpreters attended this year's workshop. AMI is a chapter of NAI Region Six.

Janet Price (Middlebrook) reports **Jamin Bray** recently showed off her musical talents at **Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park**. Approximately 160 people enjoyed "Jammin' with Jamin's Front Porch Favorites." With no more stage set than a chair and a porch rail, Jamin serenaded the audience under the stars. Jamin, former naturalist at **Montauk State Park**, has left the Missouri State Park system to pursue other opportunities.

Shanna Raeker (St. Charles) reports on some new employees and assignments in the St. Louis Area. **Rhonda Anderson** has transferred laterally from the **Busch CA** to **Columbia Bottom**. She will be establishing a new interpretive program from the ground (or marsh) up! **Nick Davis** joins the MDC staff as the new Interpretive Programs Supervisor for the **Busch CA & Rockwoods Reservation**. Nick comes to Missouri from South Carolina and previously worked at **Fossil Rim Park** in Texas. Welcome aboard! Two new Conservation Education Consultants were hired as well. **Jennifer Fakes** will work out of the Sullivan office and **Dick Turner** will work out of the St. Louis Office. 



State Report



OKLAHOMA

Steve Black and Neil Garrison

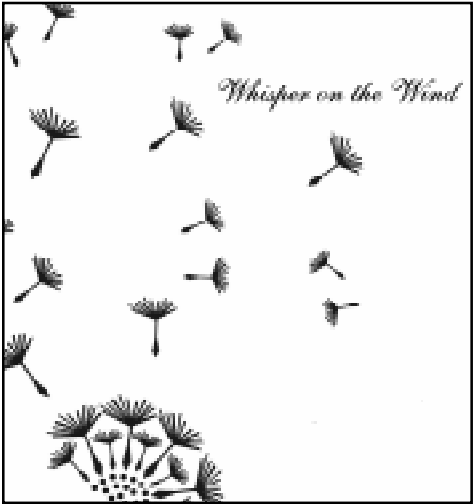
The long hot dry summer and continued drought has brought about some drastic changes at **Quartz Mountain Nature Park**. **Sue Hokanson** reports that the Altus Lake is either 37% full or 63% empty, depending on your outlook in life. The falling lake level has also brought about some interesting finds. In addition to the almost daily change in the scenery of the shore, things have been popping up. A visitor from Granite, OK was walking along the shore in July and found what he thought were bones. He got the park to come see them and the park brought in experts from Oklahoma City. It was determined that they were teeth, **BIG TEETH**. They were the molars of Mammoths. Due to the extremely crumbly nature of the molars, they were left in place and the staff reminded visitors to the park about not handling archeological resources.

Kristi Silvey from **Beavers Bend Nature Center** said that even though the current recession has hit the park hard, with no seasonal naturalists hired this year, the park was able to work out an agreement with the Choctaw Nation to get some help. A high school graduate was brought in for six weeks and got them through part of the busy season but Kristi still says that it seems busier than ever. Kristi also reports that park visitors have made an impact on park programming by helping out with suggestions for new programs. They told the park about roasting biscuits - pretty cool! This year another visitor suggested 'pigs in a blanket' roasting - it has been a hit! They put a cocktail sausage on a marshmallow roasting stick, then stretched out a canned biscuit and wrapped it around the sausage, then roasted it. Contact Kristi for more information.

Bob Jennings, formerly of **Oxley Nature Center** in Tulsa, has signed a contract to write a book called *Birds of the Great Plains*. As far as the date of publication goes, we'll have to let you know. Good Job Bob!

Neil Garrison reports there are some new inhabitants of **Martin Park Nature Center**. The Boy Scouts built six honeybee boxes for the park, and the staff was hoping that the bees would begin to occupy them in the spring of 2004. But wouldn't you know it, five of the boxes already had a colony of bees living in them 24 hours after they were installed. Neil is also very excited to announce that \$74,000 worth of improvements have been made to the park pond. Want to see photos? Contact Neil, he'll be glad to show you.

Mary Davis has been named the new Chief of Interpretation of **Washita Battlefield NHS**. That means that **Steve Black**, the co-state coordinator with Neil Garrison, is moving on. Steve will report to his new park, **Pea Ridge NMP** in early October. Other things are also happening at Washita. The ground breaking for the park's new Visitor Center/Administrative Complex will be September 27. In addition, the park's new interpretive video will make its public debut that day. City-wide festivities are planned for the day. For more information, please contact Steve. 🗨️



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State Report



TEXAS

Brian Barnette

Greetings from Dallas, where on this August afternoon millions of people owe their sanity to Thomas Midgley and Charles Franklin Kettering . . . Here at the **Dallas Museum of Natural History**, we had a great summer, with good participation in our summer camps and overall attendance up 25 percent! DinoMaze has been popular, and soon we'll be setting up "Hunters of the Sky," a traveling exhibit on birds of prey, which will run through the State Fair. If you get a hankerin' for funnel cakes and corny dogs, come on up and pay us a visit.

In other local news, **K.C. Rudy**, naturalist *par excellence* and financial adviser to the stars, has left the **Lacerte Family Children's Zoo** at the Dallas Zoo to tackle greater challenges as Regional Director of Education – North Texas Region for the National Audubon Society. He will be developing education plans for the **Cedar Ridge Preserve** (formerly the Dallas Nature Center), the **Dogwood Canyon Nature Center**, and possibly the **Great Trinity Forest Interpretive Center**. That ought to keep him out of trouble for a little while . . .

Down in the capitol, **Clark Hancock** reports that the new Dino Pit at the **Austin Nature and Science Center** is a big success. Actually, it consists of six sand pits representing different geological time periods, with replicas of some of the region's more impressive fossil finds hidden beneath the sand. Visitors of all ages get a taste of what paleontologists do when they excavate the remains of some prehistoric creature. Specimens include the 30' Onion Creek Mosasaur, the 18' wing of Big Bend's Quetzalcoatlus, the Shoal Creek plesiosaur, and many others. You can check out their web site at <http://www.tmm.utexas.edu:8007/> . . .

Lori Hutson and her cohorts at the **Houston Arboretum & Nature Center** are trying to beat the late August heat with a slide presentation on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. (Nice try, Lori, but I've been to Houston, and it'll take more than a noted documentary producer and a lady from the Gwich'in Tribe to cool down the Bayou City.) Lori adds that they've started offering their Tadpole Trooper classes for pre-schoolers (including one section in Spanish, taught by bilingual naturalist **Katerina Graham**). And they will soon be gearing up for Halloween at the "ArBOOretum" . . .

And now, for the TPWD report, courtesy of **Julie Coombes** . . . several staff members from the **Big Bend Ranch State Park Complex** (that's the Ranch, the Warnock Environmental Center, and Fort Leaton) partnered this summer with the Presidio Public Library to encourage children to read and to increase their awareness of the natural resources around them. Their strategy of reading books such as *Stellaluna* and *The Lorax* with the kids, followed by outdoor nature activities, must have worked: they started the week with 22 children, and ended with 38! . . . A Certified Interpretive Guide class for TPWD employees was held at **Bastrop SP** July 28-31. Trainers included four Regional Interpretive Specialists: **Lupita Barrera, Chris Holmes, Dawn Bello, and Cory Blackwell**. State Parks Director **Walt Dabney** also dropped in to discuss his vision for the Interpretation Program in TPWD . . . **Texas Nature Trackers** is a TPWD program that uses trained volunteers to monitor local populations of species of concern. Two training opportunities are being offered this fall: Texas Mussel Watch, September 13 at the **Fort Worth Nature Center**; and Texas Amphibian Watch, September 26 at the **Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center** in Athens. Both programs cost \$10 per person. For more information on Nature Trackers (or almost anything else outdoors in Texas) check out the Parks and Wildlife website: www.tpwd.state.tx.us.

Well, that's all y'all sent me, so that's all I got. Thanks to Julie for updating her e-mail info. If you have e-mail, and didn't get a reminder for news items from me, I must not have your current address. Please send me an update at bbarnette@dmnhnet.org After all, it's only fair that I bug you too!

Hope to see some of you folks in Sparks for the National Interpretive Workshop. If not, we'll catch you down the road.

Oh . . . Tom and Charlie? They invented Freon® . . . bless 'em.





PUBLICATION INFORMATION

Articles submitted for publication in Visions should be sent to the editors at:

Lisa Cole: Heard Natural Science Museum, One Nature Place, McKinney, TX 75069, (972) 562-5566, fax: (972) 548-9119, Lcole@heardmuseum.org or

Pam Tooley, 29 Manor Lane, Lucas, TX 75002, (972) 727-4189, e-mail pmtool@worldnet.att.net

INFORMATION CAN ALSO BE SENT TO ANY OF THE VISIONS STATE COORDINATORS:

Arkansas: Jay Miller, Arkansas State Parks, Little Rock, AR, 501-682-2187 (work). InterpComm@aol.com

Kansas: Schané Anderson, Sedgwick County Zoo, Wichita, KS, sanderson@scz.org

Louisiana: David Latona, Louisiana Office of State Parks, Baton Rouge, LA, 225-342-1479, dlatona@crt.state.la.us

Missouri: John Miller, Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery Conservation Center, Branson, MO, 417-334-4865, millej@mdc.state.mo.us

Oklahoma: Co-Coordinator: Neil Garrison, Martin Park Nature Center, Oklahoma City, OK, 405-755-0676, atlatlgarrison@hotmail.com

Steve Black, Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, Cheyenne, OK, 580-497-2742, steve_black@nps.gov

Texas: Brian Barnette, Dallas Museum of Natural History, Dallas, TX, 214-421-3466 x230, bbarnette@dmnhnet.org

REGION VI OFFICERS

Pat Silovsky, Director: Milford Nature Center, Junction City, KS, 785-238-5323, milnat@flinthills.com

Jodi Morris, Deputy Director: Crowley's Ridge Nature Center, Jonesboro, AR, 870-933-6787, mjmorris@agfc.state.ar.us

Sarah Keating, Treasurer: Lake Dardanelle State Park, Russellville, AR, 501-967-5516, diamond_digger@hotmail.com

Shanna Raeker, Secretary: August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area, St. Charles, MO, 636-441-4554 x327, raekes@mail.conservation.state.mo.us

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Scholarship: Kelly Farrell, DeGray Lake Resort State Park, Bismarck, AR, 501-865-2801, Kelly.Farrell@mail.state.ar.us

Awards: Cyndi Evans, Prairie State Park, Liberal, MO, 417-843-6711, dspevanc2@mail.dnr.state.mo.us

Elections: Don Simons, Mt. Magazine State Park, Paris, AR, 501-963-8502 x203, mutantnnn@hotmail.com

Membership: Brian Stith, Missouri State Museum, Jefferson City, MO, 573-751-2854, nrstib@mail.dnr.state.mo.us

Visions
NAI Region VI
Heard Museum
One Nature Place
McKinney, TX 75069

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR INTERPRETATION

P.O. Box 2246
Fort Collins, CO 80522
Phone: (970) 484-8283 Toll-free @ 888-900-8283
Fax: (970) 484-8179

Region Six Web Master:

Eric Leonard, Arkansas Post National Memorial
1741 Old Post Road, Gillett, AR 72055, 870-548-2207 (phone), 870-548-2431 (fax), eric_leonard@nps.gov

DEADLINES FOR VISIONS ARE::

Winter 2003: November 20
Spring 2004: February 20
Summer 2004: May 20
Fall 2004: August 20

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