



# VISIONS

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ARKANSAS • KANSAS • LOUISIANA • MISSOURI • OKLAHOMA • TEXAS

## Beyond the Horizon (Thoughts on Becoming an Effective Interpreter of Natural Resources)

Gladys J. Rigsby, Lake of the Ozarks State Park, Kaiser, MO

What is it exactly that draws us toward nature, like a moth to a flame? What is it that holds us there, awestruck and spellbound, to study and then attempt to interpret what we see, hear, or “feel” as Naturalists? For each of us the answers to these questions are a little different. Perhaps it all began as a child along the banks of a small stream with a big ol’ worm on the point of a hook, or the day that you watched a newborn fawn wobble to its feet for the very first time. For me it began when my Dad showed me a dew-covered spider’s web on a cool spring morning in the woods when I was barely four years old. I remember looking at it closely with all of its tiny water jewelry sparkling in the sun’s gentle early light. And I can remember Dad saying that a spider is a great builder, an excellent architect in nature. He also told me that all of the strands of that web were connected to one another to make one complete - - whole and perfect!

That spider’s web still holds me spellbound. Now that I work as a Seasonal Park Naturalist for the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, it brings me a deep feeling of what it means to be an effective interpreter of nature. You see, as Naturalists I believe that we touch the strand that affects the whole person when we interpret what nature has to offer. This is like the touched strand of that spider’s web which affects the whole structure. Hopefully through my interpretive programs visitors will also “feel” that deep sense of wonder at the outdoor world and forever remember the day that they were spellbound by nature’s infinite beauty. Perhaps they will in turn pass that “feeling” on to others and become “keepers of the flame.” Keeping that special feeling, that flame, alive is a goal of mine as a Naturalist. I believe that I am a keeper of the flame and bearer of the torch handed to me by other Naturalists who also want that “feeling” of enjoyment to continue forever.

Many memories remain etched within one’s mind, and often those memories involve the natural world around us. My thoughts often drift to those summer memories of Dad and I rocking and tossing back and forth as waves from passing boats slapped the fishing dock we were atop at Lake of the Ozarks State Park.

The creaking of the cables and the rushing sound of water meeting shoreline are forever etched in the treasure chest of my mind. New memories become etched there each day I work at the same Park.

Today as I walked along Lake View Bend Trail, I felt the gentle breeze - - cool and refreshing. I smelt the aroma of a sassafras twig, heard the piercing cry of a broad-winged hawk, and stood in awe while observing a doe and her tiny fawn resting in the woodlands not far from the trail. It’s hard to describe my inner feelings as a Naturalist, but I do know that this is the life for me! I am an interpreter of nature, a keeper of the flame and bearer of the torch from Naturalists who passed through these rugged hills of the Missouri Ozarks long before I was even a twinkle in my Dad’s eye.

As I work on my interpretive programs for the week, I try to keep in mind that I am a “keeper of the flame and bearer of the torch.” Who, if not I, will talk of sassafras spice, or crying hawks, or deer of the field? Yes, there are others who are interpreters of nature too, but they are bearers of torches they carry, each with a different flickering flame, each with a theme for travelers passing through the Park. Therefore, my interpretation, my story of nature, must be told by me.

So how does one become a bearer of the flame? From my own personal experiences this past summer season I have come to learn a few key aspects of effective interpretation. I try to keep in mind what Freeman Tilden emphasized: “Interpretation should capitalize on mere curiosity for the enrichment of the human mind and spirit.” I have also come to realize that as a Naturalist, one must maintain a connection to the natural world and a desire to interpret it to others. Perhaps most importantly, whatever you do while training to become a Naturalist, don’t ever give up your dream of becoming a truly effective interpreter of resources. For you can become a bearer of the torch and keeper of the flame and pass on that feeling to others if you truly desire it. Just interpret from the heart. And remember, if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again; for after all practice does make perfect!

## Editors' Corner

Lisa Cole

Well, we've all heard that interpreters wear many hats. Right now, I'm wearing more hats than I can balance on my head at once! I must apologize for the lateness of this newsletter. In it, you will find much interesting information...much of it now outdated. I appreciate your patience--I've heard nary a complaint. I will do better next time!

In the meantime, I hope you will enjoy Missouri's fine contributions to this newsletter. Have a

wonderful spring!

By the way, Pam says "hi," too. I left her name off, because I just didn't want her to have to make an apology she doesn't owe...she had all her pieces ready on time!

## Making a Pit Stop in the Adventure Race of Life

James Dixon, Springfield Conservation Nature Center, Springfield, MO

I recently had the opportunity to participate in the Mark Twain Forest Adventure Race held near West Plains. "Grueling" is probably the best adjective I can think of to describe the event, but "foolhardy" works well also. The race consisted of several different legs, beginning with a 6.5-mile run over the hills which characterize this part of Missouri. The run was immediately followed by a 10-mile canoe trip on the White River. Upon completion of the canoeing portion of the race we used a map and compass to orienteer our way through five miles of forest. The last leg of the race consisted of a 25-mile mountain bike course. The race lived up to its name. It truly was an adventure. Several times during the course of the event I wanted to stop and marvel at the scenic bluffs we were racing past. I also longed to stop paddling and take a few minutes and flip some rocks in the streambed in search of hidden critters. But of course it was a race . . . no time to stop and smell the proverbial roses.

After completing the race it occurred to me that sometimes our everyday lives can make us feel like we're in some sort of adventure race - as we rush from work to school to the babysitter to soccer practice. Not much time to smell those roses.

A large part of our jobs as interpreters is to encourage "rose-sniffing," to get people to contemplate those things that are truly important, those things that make us what we are. Natural history interpreters, in particular, strive to help people realize the centrality of nature. (Those same forces that made and govern the rose also made and govern us.) Nature is not just some obstacle to be overcome in the "adventure race" of life.

With interpretation, half the battle is convincing a person to slow down and take a closer look. Once you've got their attention, it's much easier to get them to notice those roses they are missing out on.

The next time a visitor walks through the front doors of your site, it just might help if you view them as making a pit stop in the adventure race of life. Hopefully your interpretive program just might convince them to take the time to enjoy the rest of the trip.



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-

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.

# Director's Report

Pat Silovsky

I just wanted to say a big "Thank You" to the 2003 Regional Workshop crew in Oklahoma City for putting on a tremendous workshop in March! Now that everyone is back in the grind at their various workplaces, the break during the conference seems all the more refreshing. There were many great ideas shared at the workshop and I'm sure lots of "pilfering," oops, I mean, borrowing of ideas resulted. Weather in the Midwest is always full of surprises and this conference was no different with ice storms occurring in Kansas while it was still 70°F in Oklahoma City!

I am happy to say that more "traffic" is occurring on the listserv. This is a great forum, outside of the workshop, for sharing ideas and getting help with particular problems. I would like to encourage everyone to sign up. Send an email to Listserv@ualr.edu. Leave the subject line blank. Type the following in the text area: Subscribe NAIRegion-L yourfullname.

## Region Six Meeting Minutes

Recorded by Pat Silovsky

### Organization

The National Association for Interpretation Region Six includes the following states: Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. Elected officers of Region Six for the 2002-2003 term are:

Director: Pat Silovsky, Junction City, KS  
Deputy Director: Jodi Morris, Jonesboro, AR  
Treasurer: Sarah Keating, Russellville, AR  
Secretary: Shanna Raeker, St. Charles, MO

### Membership

As of the end of the fourth quarter, this region has 434 members. Membership efforts are focused on recruiting new members, particularly targeting under-represented agencies and organizations in the region. The regional workshop in March gained us 15 new members.

### Finances

Sarah Keating, treasurer, reported our financial status as of April 3, 2003 to be financially healthy. In the midst of the current market trends, we lost a little money on our mutual fund, but we have made it back,

And, while I am hawking various virtues of the region, don't forget the CD entitled, "Whisper on the Wind." This is Region Six's first attempt at marketing an interpretive product. The CD is a collection of cultural and natural history stories and songs from Region Six members. Many thanks to Molly Postlewait for her untiring efforts to get this CD produced. Thanks also to these Region Six members who were able to give their valuable time and talent to the production of the CD: Dan Field, Mary Gillihan, Grady Manus, David Owen, Chris Pistole, Janet and Roger Price, Molly Postlewait, and Charley Sandage. And finally, thanks to John Miller for his help in marketing the CD. In fact, contact John at millej@mdc.state.mo.us to find out more about purchasing a CD.



and the JANUS mutual fund now has over \$17,000. Current assets also include \$8,000 in the checking account. A \$500 donation was made to the INS section. Some revenue (\$85) has been made from the sale of the Region Six CD since its debut in March, 2003.

### Scholarships

The 2003 Scholarship Auction raised \$3,310.47. With this amount, two undergraduate and one graduate scholarship of \$700 each, with additionally up to \$250 each for travel expenses to the conference, will be awarded in 2003. A mini-grants program will also be funded in 2003 with the amount awarded between \$500 to \$1000. This grant is based on the amount raised over and above what is needed to fund the scholarships. Scholarship information will be announced in both spring and fall semesters so that spring interpretation students will have the opportunity to apply. Deadline for application will still be November 1. The 2002 undergraduate scholarship winners were Christina King from Missouri and Andrea Shipman from Arkansas. The Graduate scholarship winner was Chandra Regier from Kansas.

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## Interpretation & Environmental Education

Tara Tucker, Trail of Tears State Park, Jackson, MO

A seasonal naturalist prepared a program entitled, "Who Wants to be a Missourian?" She led participants to a greater understanding of some of Missouri's natural and cultural resources, such as the Missouri state bird. As a player won the opportunity to sit in the "hot seat," the audience laughingly winked and nodded the correct answers. Following each correct answer given, the naturalist used objects, photographs, stories, and other means to assist the audience with their understanding of the resource. When the visitors left the program that night, they commented on the good time they'd had. Did they remember the Missouri state bird three weeks later? Maybe, maybe not. The only way to find out would be to contact the visitors, and they normally don't leave their addresses or phone numbers. So how do we know if park visitors are being affected by our programs? What exactly is the goal of interpretation? Although I'm still pretty "green" in our profession, I've had time to ponder this question, and I've talked to many others who have done the same.

As we learned from Tilden, *interpretation* is an educational activity that aims to reveal meanings about our cultural and natural resources. The UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) document defines *environmental education* as a model of action "in which individuals and the community gain awareness of their environment and acquire the knowledge, values, experiences, and also the determination which will enable them to act - individually and collectively - to solve present and future environmental problems (1987). That's a lot of words to say that the ultimate goal of environmental education is responsible environmental behavior.

Unlike environmental education, interpretation does not have an established written goal with measurable objectives. But aren't interpreters aiming towards responsible environmental behavior, too?

Whereas the audience of environmental education is usually involuntary in a formal or non-formal setting, the audience of interpretation is voluntary in an informal setting, such as an outdoor amphitheater.

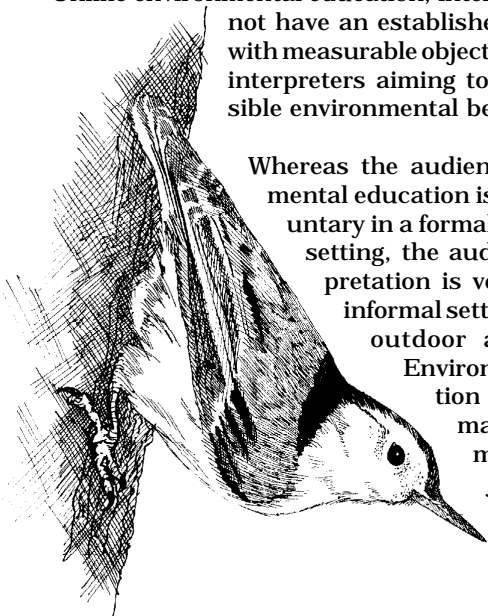
Environmental education has been formalized through measurable objectives that have been tested to determine the

success or failure of a program. Environmental educators use activities to reinforce concepts with a goal of behavior change, and interpreters use methods in engaging and entertaining ways to instill provocation about the outdoors. Just because the written definitions are different, does that mean that interpreters and environmental educators should use different methods to achieve their goal?

While earning my degree, I was confused after discussing the professions of interpretation and environmental education with fellow classmates and some professionals. Some of them made complete distinctions between the professions just based on the definitions, but as time goes by, I see less of a distinction and more of a symbiotic relationship between the two professions. Environmental educators (should) use fun activities to convey understanding of the resource, and interpreters (should) use themes and concepts to relate to their visitors. Although each of us has our own styles when giving a program, we should all use methods of both interpretation and environmental education when conveying our message.

I had the honor of attending the National Association for Interpretation workshop in Des Moines, Iowa in November 2001. It was truly inspirational to be in the company of so many interpreters *and* environmental educators. Especially inspirational was meeting Enda Mills Kiley, daughter of Enos Mills (the father of interpretation). She mirrored her father's philosophy when she told me, "An interpreter helps others understand and experience nature." I believe that environmental educators do the very same thing, and this doesn't just focus on the natural realm, but cultural resources as well. We interpreters and educators should all aim for behavior change, no matter what styles we use to help our audiences better understand the resource.

Consider the required tools formally established in environmental education's Tbilisi document: awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and skills are needed to achieve responsible resource behavior. In interpretation's formal document, *Interpreting our Heritage*, Tilden told us that interpretation is provocation and inspiration. Imagine a carpenter trying to build a bookshelf with wood, a saw, nails, and a hammer. Although the carpenter has all of the tools, the shelf cannot be built without the inspiration to choose the type of wood and the dimensions of the shelf. Interpretation provides the inspiration, and environmental education provides the tools. You cannot have the perfect shelf or the perfect program when you leave out either one.



## Yellowstone in Your Yard

Kevin Lohraff, Runge Conservation Nature Center, Jefferson City, MO

As interpreters, we are called upon to know the big picture, and travel, best of all, gives us this perspective. Travel puts us in different natural systems, and shows us how other people depend on their surroundings. How do people far away regard the animals around them? What have the rivers, trees, and landscape meant to their culture?

It was the next-to-the-last day of our vacation, and I was feeling sullen about coming home. We had just spent six days and nights backpacking at Yellowstone National Park—more than two million acres of uncompromised wilderness. By the minute, we witnessed unimpeded alpine panoramas. The raw beauty repeatedly stopped us in our tracks. It was a glory and a vastness that seemed even more unfathomable after spending so much time in it. I did not want to leave.

How great it would be to be an interpreter here, I often thought during the week. I could take my pick between mountain-building geologic forces, volcanism, Shoshone culture, hydrothermal features, or charismatic megafauna. There were elk, moose, bighorn sheep, bison, timber wolves, and grizzly bears. It must be an interpreter's dream, I thought.

Meanwhile, back in Jefferson City, Missouri, in our small garden next to the house, tiny wasp maggots were eating away at the internal organs of a big, green caterpillar that had been devouring our tomato plants. By the time we returned, all that was left was the evidence—naked tomato plant stems and a comatose tomato hornworm, now a bizarre pin cushion, still wearing the tiny silk empty cocoons left behind by the wasp larvae, which had burrowed through the cater-

pillar, pupated on its back, and had now flown away as adults to begin another cycle.

Next to the tomatoes is a gnarled and woody pipevine which we planted years ago in hopes of attracting pipevine swallowtails. Each year, tiny orange eggs magically appear on the undersides of the leaves. Tiny black caterpillars emerge from the eggs and march all over the plant. By the time they have eaten every shred of pipevine leaf, they have ingested enough toxins to render them and even their adult form immune from most predators. As the pupae hang in their chrysalises, the pipevine grows new leaves. The entire event will happen once again before fall.

I had fallen into the trap again. I had been cajoled into the Interpretive "Grass Is Greener" myth. Interpretation is not better on the other side of the mountain. It's just different. Interpreting Old Faithful is not more valid than interpreting snails; both can be done poorly, or with excellence.

Interpretation is storytelling, and there are stories everywhere. Moving our scope bigger or smaller helps us find new stories, as does travel, but there are plenty of stories in our own yards, and mysteries, too. How does a wasp the size of a pencil point discover a camouflaged tomato hornworm when it needs one? How does a gravid pipevine swallowtail find what's probably the only pipevine plant for miles around? Even the lowly limestone gravel we use for driveways is made of the bodies of ancient sea creatures—yes, in Missouri.

Now there's a story for you.

### *Region Six Meeting Minutes, continued from page 3*

#### **Awards**

Cyndi Evans, awards committee chairman, reported that all but two awards were given at the regional workshop in Oklahoma City, OK in March, 2003. Awards were as follows:

**Meritorius Service Award:** Molly Postlewait, Johnson Co. Parks & Rec; and Fred Christian, Walter Jacobs Nature Park

**Richard Baldauf Award (Outstanding New Interpreter):** Janelle Rieger, Milford Nature Center

**Distinguished Professional Interpreter Award:** Jamin Bray, Missouri

**Outstanding Site Program:** Heritage History Lab, Johnson Co Parks and Rec

**Best Workshop Program:** Chris Pistole, Johnson Co. Parks & Rec

**Great All-American Naturalist Quiz:** Susie Ruby, Oklahoma

**Mini-Grant award of \$1,000:** Heard Natural Science Museum, Texas

#### **Publications and Sales**

Two issues of the newsletter *Visions* have been produced.

Region Six has produced a CD entitled "Whisper on the Wind" as our first attempt to offer an interpretive product. This CD is a collection of cultural and natural history stories and songs from Region VI members. It sells for \$12.00 to members, \$15.00 for non-members and \$9.00 for bulk sales to gift shops, etc.

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## State Report

### Kansas Schanéé Anderson

Exciting spring programs are heating up Kansas!

#### Events

Kansas Fat Tire Festival – **Wilson State Park** – May 3-4. This is a mountain bike race. Yes, Kansas does have hills big enough to mountain bike on.

Ok Kids Day – **Wilson State Park** – Saturday, May 3. Kids can fish to their hearts' content.

Summer 2003 Discovery Day Camp- **Mr. & Mrs. F. L. Schlagle Library**, an environmental learning center. This FREE summer camp will contain nature and outdoor activities, programs and crafts. Day camp runs Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Ark River Water Festival – **Lee Richardson Zoo** - Mar 31 and April 1: Held at Garden Cities two intermediate centers

International Migratory Bird Day--**Lee Richardson Zoo** – April 26: Participate in a Bird Walk.

**Sunset Zoo** – May 10: Guests will participate in interactive games, go bird watching, and make recycled bird feeders.

Wildflower Walk – **Konza Prairie** – June 8 at 7:00 p.m. Take time out to explore the beautiful prairie plants that call Kansas home.

#### Conferences/Meetings/Workshops

- **Kansas Accredited Zoo Educators** – Members from Topeka, Emporia, Wichita, and Manhattan met in March at the Topeka zoo to discuss the development of a conservation license plate. Although it was determined that producing a state-authorized license plate was not cost effective, the organization is going to develop a front vanity plate. The proceeds will go to assist conservation education programs in Kansas.
- The **Kansas Association for Conservation and Environmental Education** will have its spring meeting in Garden City on April 11. Mark your calendars now for the fall conference, which will be held in Manhattan November 6 through 8.
- 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. Sunset Zoo will host it when NAI instructors are available. Please contact **Schanée Anderson** at anderson@ci.manhattan.ks.us or (785) 587-2737 for more information.
- In April, **Konza Prairie** will host a cross-site workshop for participating Schoolyard LTER (Long-Term Ecological Research) programs in the US. The SLTER program gives teachers and students (K-12) access to research sites and the resources available for teaching science. Konza Prairie has been part of the NSF-funded SLTER program since 1999. Students come to Konza as researchers, taking real data and inputting that data into long-term databases which can be accessed on a website ([www.ksu.edu/konza/keep](http://www.ksu.edu/konza/keep)). Last year they hosted 27 science activities for 712 students. A teacher training workshop for this program is given each June. This year the dates are June 16-20.

#### New for the spring

- **Konza Prairie**, Manhattan--This year started off with a bang and the big Docent Round-Up, where some 40 volunteers learned about environmental change from **Dr. Loretta Johnson** of the KSU Biology Department, one of the principal investigators at Konza. They also refreshed on wildflower slides and homemade cookies. A new crop of docents has begun the ten training sessions through the end of May where they learn about the tallgrass prairie and the research on Konza.
- **Sunset Zoo** is going to the birds, tall pink birds that is. The zoo is preparing for the arrival of 20 flamingo eggs. Zoo staff will incubate the eggs and raise the young – can you imagine 20 hungry flamingo chicks coming after you? The zoo plans to open the a new exhibit highlighting the flamingos later this summer. Sunset Zoo will also develop a Chacoan peccary exhibit. Chacoan peccaries are a rare peccary that is only housed in six zoos in the United States.

#### Wonderful staff and volunteers

- **Brad Batdorf**, Curator of Education at **Sedgwick County Zoo**, will be leaving the zoo at the end of May. He has taken a position on the east coast writing textbooks for his alma mater.
- **Kristyn Hayden** was named Director of Education at the **Topeka Zoo**. Congratulations Kristyn! ■■■



## State Report



### LOUISIANA

Kristina Hardwick has stepped down as Louisiana State Coordinator. Who's willing to take her place? Please contact Pat Silovsky at 785-238-5323 or milnat@flintheills.com if you are interested.



## State Report



### MISSOURI

John Miller

Congratulations to **Christina King** from **Missouri State Southern College** (Seasonal Naturalist at Crowder State Park) for winning a 2002 Freeman Tilden Undergraduate Scholarship.

The **Association of Missouri Interpreters** (AMI), a chapter of NAI Region Six, will have the annual AMI Workshop August 26-28 in the Kansas City Area. For more information about giving presentations or registration go to the AMI website at [www.mointerp.net](http://www.mointerp.net).

**Amy Dozier** (Springfield) sends greetings from South Dakota! She has taken an internship with **Wind Cave National Park** in the southern Black Hills. It will be four months of bison, prairie dogs, cave tours, and the National Park Service. Amy will graduate from Southwest MO State University this May. She asks that you think warm thoughts for her (because its cold there!) and take care of those Missouri treasures while she's gone!

**Andrea Putman** (Jefferson City) reports that the **Runge Conservation Nature Center** is proud to announce that **Jan Syrigos** was the recipient of an Emmy award for her role as a composer and choreographer in the music video **CritterRock!** The CritterRock! video won the **2002 Mid-America Emmy** in the category of **Children's Program - Long Form**. We are extremely proud of Jan and her accomplishments! Andrea asks visitors to "Come spread your wings with us!" The coming year holds a very special milestone for the Runge Nature Center. On July 10, 2003 they will officially celebrate their ten-year anniversary! To kick off the celebration, visitors will spread their wings by attending programs or special events and collecting stamps in a passport. When ten stamps are collected, a prize is awarded. The passport is good through the 10<sup>th</sup> month of the year.

**Tiffani Addington** (Leasburg) reports that there is a special event coming up at **Onondaga Cave State Park** on August 8. This date marks the 25th anniversary of the vote that deauthorized the Meramec Dam project (64 percent of voters chose deauthorization). In memory of this very important vote, several special events will be held throughout the summer in parks along the Meramec River. A day of special cave tours will be offered at Onondaga Cave on Saturday, August 9. The event is called "What Could Have Been...Onondaga Cave in the 1970's," and it is part of the bigger picture, "Meramec, Miracles and Milestones - Rebirth of a River." Cave tours will be set in 1978, just prior to the big vote, and guides will be dressed in "period" clothing. For a complete list of events scheduled in association with this anniversary celebration, contact **Dan Drees** in Jeff City ([nrdreed@mail.dnr.state.mo.us](mailto:nrdreed@mail.dnr.state.mo.us)). Anyone wanting more information on our event can contact Tiffani or **Marty Laxton** at (573)245-6576.

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*Missouri State Report, continued from p. 7*

**George Kastler** (Jefferson City) says that someone at the NAI Region Six workshop asked him for the containers that the cherry mash candy came in. If you would remind George at (573) 751-5384 or at nrkastg@mail.dnr.state.mo.us he will get you the information. George also reports that **Dusty Reid** has been hired for Superintendent I at **Sam A. Baker State Park**. He reports that **Tara Tucker**, Interpretive Resource Specialist III at **Trail of Tears State Park**, has moved to Texas to work for the **Houston Zoo**. She will be the Evening and Scout Programs Coordinator at the Zoo. She said she will miss everyone, but thank goodness that Texas and Missouri are in the same NAI region!

**A.J. Hendershott** (Cape Girardeau) reports that the **Cape Girardeau Conservation Campus** groundbreaking is set for April 11, 2003. The Campus will focus on the unique habitats of southeast Missouri and the way people have and will deal with them. A.J. also reports **Ben Russell**, who has been stationed in Cape Girardeau as a Conservation Education Consultant will be enjoying his new status as an Outdoor Skills Supervisor in Clinton, Missouri. His start date is April 1, 2003 - no joke.

**Merle Rogers** and **Tim Smith** (Cassville) report that the new exhibits are installed in the **Ozark Chinquapin Nature Center** at **Roaring River State Park**. They invite you to come by and see the new additions.

**Rhonda Anderson** (St. Charles) reports that **Ben Pursley** was hired on as the new part-time naturalist at the **August A. Busch Conservation Area**.

**Lynn Youngblood** (Blue Springs) reports that Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center has a new Wildlife Viewing Area addition. Next time you're in the Blue Springs area, stop by and see this beautiful room.

**Bo Brown** (Strafford) reports that he and the **First Earth** staff are celebrating their tenth year of presenting the finest in stone-age survival and primitive skills workshops in the Ozarks area. They are offering the Basic Survival Skills workshop April 5-6, May 31-June 1, and September 6-7. Their Advance Skills workshop will be conducted June 13-15 and October 17-19. The Brain Tan Buckskin workshop will be November 1-3. Mark your September 26-28 on your calendars for the biggest skills gathering in the Midwest, the sixth annual Bois D'Arc Primitive Skills & Knap-in! For more information about these workshops, or customized workshops for your group you can contact Bo Brown at (417) 862-5770 or e-mail at bo@firstearth.org or go to [www.firstearth.org](http://www.firstearth.org) .

*Region Six Meeting Minutes, continued from page 5*

#### **Workshops & Activities**

The next regional workshop is scheduled for March 7-10, 2004 in Kansas City, MO. The workshop site will be the Embassy Suites at the Country Club Plaza. Contact information for the conference chair is as follows:

2004 Regional Workshop Chair  
Grady Manus  
Nathan Boone SHS  
7850 State Highway V  
Ash Grove, MO 65604  
417-751-3266  
dspboon@mail.dnr.state.mo.us

Region Six is offering any section the opportunity to present a pre-workshop session in conjunction with our regional meeting in Kansas City, MO in March 2004. Each section can retain any profit from their presentation, and Region Six is agreeing to help with logistics like hotel negotiations as part of our bigger region workshop. Advertising will also be a benefit of tying in with the regional workshop.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pat Silovsky, Director



## State Report



### OKLAHOMA

Steve Black and Neil Garrison

Oklahoma City's **Martin Park Nature Center** was busy this winter. From wildlife habitat projects being completed by the Boy Scouts to a new picnic pavilion going up at the entrance to the center, much is being done by **Neil Garrison** and his staff. Humans aren't the only ones making improvements at Martin Park. Beavers are also getting into the act. For years there have been water erosion problems in the park and when the engineers and surveyors finally figured out where to put a small dam to stop the problem, the beavers built one there.

The **Oxley Nature Center** in Tulsa has been working on their "Natural Art Workshop" series. The park offered four different programs from late January to late February. These programs ranging from building a Double-walled Western Cherokee Basket to making drawings with Sterling Silver are innovative and unique and the Center's staff should be commended.

Not to be outdone by the Natural Art Workshop series, Oxley's Naturalist **Eddie Reese** solved a problem that many of us have, squirrels gnawing into the attic. When the critters found a way into the interpretive center, Eddie sealed up the hole while they weren't there and used a hot pepper solution to keep them away. If you have the similar problems contact Oxley for what they used to solve the problem.

Plans for the new Visitor Center at **Washita Battlefield NHS** are nearing the end of the tunnel. The 4474-square-foot visitor center will not only have imaginative exhibits, but also include two artifacts that were picked up the day of the attack and will be loaned to the NPS by the **Denver Museum of Nature and Science**. If all goes according to schedule, the grand opening for the center will be in late 2004.

**Beavers Bend State Park** has new fund-raising effort under for the renovation of the park's interpretive center. Entitled "Coins for Critters" the project is underway in the Broken Bow area public schools. It is anticipated that this project will be completed in 2006. In addition, two new brochures are in the works! **Kristi Silvey** also reports that the park and its partners, the Friends of Beavers Bend, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife, and others are sponsoring the third annual Kids Fishing Days from March 7-31. This is an effort among the partners to get kids "hooked" on fishing.

The **Southwest Branch of the Entomological Society of America** staffed a booth at Our Kids' World Family Fun Fest at the State Fairgrounds in OKC on Feb 22 and 23. Their display was entitled "Creepy, Crawly" had all kinds of six and eight-legged creatures.

Oklahoma City was the site of the Intermountain Region of the National Park Service - Chief of Interpretation Conference, February 11 - 13. The chiefs got together to discuss the strategic plan for the region in interpretation. The **Oklahoma City National Memorial** sponsored the conference.

In the kudos department we would like to recognize three individuals. First **Jack Moffit** from Mannford, OK. Jack, an eighteen year-old, received the Prudential Sprit of the Community Award as Oklahoma's top youth volunteer. To earn this award, he converted a local dumping area into an outdoor science classroom. This area now has nature trails, picnic tables, bird boxes, bat houses, a gazebo and to top it off, landscaping. 🌳



## State Report



### TEXAS

Brian Barnette

Howdy from Big D! A lot has happened since our last communiqué . . . the National Interpreter's Workshop in Virginia Beach was a big success, good sessions and good times. One thing they accomplished that we need to work on here in Region Six – they had the bad weather during the concurrent sessions, and the sunshine for the field trips. We tend to do 'er the other way around! (Not that anyone's blaming you, Neil . . .). Speaking of our regional workshops, y'all missed a good 'un in OKC (the aforementioned field trip weather notwithstanding). I say y'all missed it with confidence, because except for a rumored sighting of someone from Palo Duro Canyon, **Pam Tooley** and I were the only Texans there. That's a little embarrassing when Texas holds more members than any other state in the region. I know that budgets are tight and there were some conflicts with the schedule, so let me just say I hope to see more of you in Kansas City next year . . . or Reno, if you can swing it!

One of the alternatives to the regional workshop was presented by National in the form of a Certified Interpretive Planner class. The class, put on by **Lisa Brochu**, NAI Associate Director and long-time Six-er, was held at the **Dallas Zoo**, which made it mighty convenient for **KC Rudy**, Education Coordinator for the Zoo's **Lacerte Family Children's Zoo**. Lisa also reports that on March 24–26, NAI and Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPW) will be conducting the first Certified Interpretive Host training course, which is designed for people who work at interpretive sites and have public contact but don't present programs (campground hosts, receptionists, maintenance workers, law enforcement, etc). Also, seven TPW Regional Interpretive Specialists have recently completed their Certified Interpretive Trainer course: **Marti Swanson**, **Dawn Bello**, **Linda Hedges**, **Lupita Barrera**, **Chris Holmes**, **Karen Watson**, and **Barbara Parmley**. Congrats to all you CIT's!

For more from TPW, we turn to the ever-reliable **Julie Coombes**, Interpretive Planner and Editor of the interpretive branch's newsletter *Hands On Texas*. News from its pages: The folks out at **Hueco Tanks SHS** have found that requiring visitors to participate in interpretive programs prior to visiting the park's pictographs has dramatically reduced the incidence of vandalism in the park . . . Certified Interpretive Guide Training, for TWP Parks Division staff only, will be held at **Garner SP** May 13-16 . . . Boy Scouts working on an Eagle Scout service project at **Mission Tejas SP** used period tools (T-handle augers, draw knives, chisels, and gouges) to construct a woodshed for the historic Rice Log Home in the park (now that's hands-on education) . . . **Lupita Barrera** and a team of people representing a number of South Texas state parks are working on an interpretive activity book for their region . . . I introduced Julie Coombes above as Interpretive Planner; well, that's not just her title – she's certified! Julie was the sixth person to complete the CIP process. Way to go, Julie! . . . One more "attagirl" for the TPW crowd – **Deanna Oberheu** has been promoted to Assistant Park Manager out at **Caprock Canyons SP**. Her position as park interpreter has been filled by **Penelope Fouts**, who no doubt finds life on the caprock a little bit different from her previous address - North Carolina!

**Lori Hutson** at the **Houston Arboretum & Nature Center** announces that they have a new weekend naturalist on board. Say "hey" to **Katerina Graham** next time you're down that way. And check out their new bilingual interpretive signs while you're at it . . .


If you've ever traveled I-35 through Texas, you've seen them – the dinosaur billboards advertising **Natural Bridge Caverns**. According to new NAI member **Brian Vauter**, there's a lot more going on down there than cute highway signs. Brian is the Cavern Geologist. He reports that the Caverns are in the process of upgrading their interpretive signage (a process made easier, he says, by NAI's green pages). They are also adding new "adventure tours," including one where visitors are lowered into the cave on a cable, just like its first explorers. And they're considering a "lantern tour" – no artificial lighting, just the lanterns carried by guests. Sounds cool to me, Brian!

Thanks to all of you who took the time to share what's happening at your place with the other folks in the state. Now, if I may, a final thought: We in the interpretive field are generally the first level consumers in the "information food chain." That is, we take the knowledge and insights gained by the producers – the scientists, the inventors, the explorers – and transmit it to the second level consumers – the public. Often we have no direct contact with the producers . . . but sometimes we do.

As I write this, it's been just six weeks since the space shuttle Columbia disintegrated over our state. There's a mission patch pinned to the bulletin board over my desk that was given to me by the son of astronaut **Laurel Clark**. I met Laurel and her family at a weekend gathering near Del Rio devoted to ancient rock art and native lifeways in the Chihuahuan desert 9000 years ago. She was there, not as an astronaut or celebrity, but as a person who wanted to learn more about her world. She was there with her husband, her son, and her parents – a family, sharing, caring, and learning together. Just like the one that visited your facility last week. Or the one that's coming tomorrow.

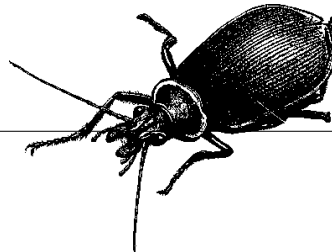
There's a couple of points here, I guess. One is to remind ourselves that the ordinary people who come through our doors every day may go on to do extraordinary things in their lives – perhaps even influenced by what they see, hear, and feel while in our care.

The other is to remember the debt we owe to those who “boldly go” – and the price they too often pay. Knowledge seldom comes easy or cheap – that's partly why it's so valuable. So, whether we interpret a homestead, a battlefield, a marsh, or a mastodon, let's keep a thought for the ones who brought us to where we are . . .

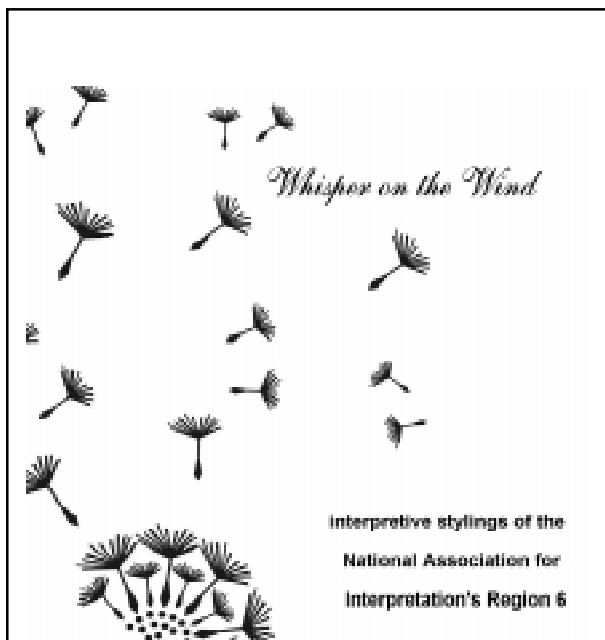
Thanks. 

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*Of all the creatures in the world, 1 out of 5 living species is a beetle.*



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**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:** Schanée Anderson, Sunset Zoo, Manhattan, KS, 785-587-2737, anderson@ci.manhattan.ks.us

**Louisiana:** vacant

**Missouri:** John Miller, Shepherd of the Hills Fish Hatchery Conservation Center, Branson, MO, 417-334-4865, shepherdvc@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:**

**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:**

vacant

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