

ARKANSAS • KANSAS • LOUISIANA • MISSOURI • OKLAHOMA • TEXAS

Death in the Long Grass

Neil Garrison, Martin Park Nature Center, Oklahoma City, OK

I work in an urban park. It's 140 acres of green growing things stuck in amongst the sea of asphalt and the forest of city skyscrapers. My park is a wild enough place; nevertheless, it is never out of earshot of the drone of traffic—automobiles and airplanes.

Lest you think that I'm taking my daily nature hikes in a place that is akin to a country club golf course, I need to fill you in on the wilder components of my workaday world. Imminent peril is always lurking. There!!! In the long grass! Death in its most insidious form! Death in the long grass!

I hesitatingly take a cautious step forward. I want a better look. The ferocious creature turns ever so slightly—all the better to keep a watchful eye pointed in my direction.

Closer. I must get closer.

I inch ahead.

Now I have a much better look at this awesome eater-of-other-creature's-flesh. This killer has jaws equipped to subdue its prey. Its eyes are those of a predator. Its movement is purported to be lightning fast.

Maybe I'll nudge myself forward ever so slightly. The

death in the long grass beckons me closer.

A golden shaft of sunlight penetrates the foliage and suddenly illuminates the killer. A green metallic fire dances from the creature's snout to the nether end. It's a jewel like no other. My breath catches in my throat. I am awestruck by its beauty.

Death in the long grass.

I bend at the waist. I must get a closer look—a better look.

WHOOSH!

In a fraction of an instant, this peril of the animal kingdom surges from its lair and I instinctively rock back on my heels.



Death in the long grass.

A tiger beetle. It's a tiger beetle. It's an iridescent-hued predator with six legs. I marvel at the sight. I realize, however, that creatures much smaller than me must quake in fear at the approach of this sickle-jawed killer.

Death in the long grass.

The Burning Brush (Pile)

Loraine Richmond, Lake Eufaula State Park, Checotah, OK

As I'm reminded quite often, I'm very fortunate to be the naturalist at Lake Eufaula State Park (formerly Fountainhead State Park). Our park manager, who I'm sure most of you know, was the naturalist before me. She had done a wonderful job of developing programs, setting policy and designing exhibits (never hurts to schmooze). She was instrumental in getting the new nature center built about five years ago, so one might say I walked into the ideal job. Of course, I was a volunteer for almost ten years prior to being hired full time and was a seasonal for two, so I'll take a little of the credit for making the nature center what it was when I hired on (thank you very much). All that

being said, I'd like to tell you a little story and keep in mind that our park manager is a major player.

The ice storm that hit on Christmas night 2000 really took a toll on the park. Some of the oldest trees in the park are considerably shorter than they used to be. Fortunately, the nature center fared pretty well. There were no large trees close to the building, so mostly what we had there was small branches that had fallen to the ground, and I planned to use those small branches to build a new brush pile at the very back of our Watchable Wildlife area to use as cover for bob-

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Editors' Corner

Pam Tooley and Lisa Cole

Hey, thanks! Newsletters don't come together without the help of all the people that respond to the state coordinators' pleas (and yes, most of the time it is a plea). Schanée, Brian, Jay, Steve, Neil, and John are going to be joined by David Latona with Louisiana State Parks beginning with the next issue. Jay is thinking of passing the torch on, so if one of you Arkansans would like to keep up with your statesmen, please give us a buzz (or whatever you may do nowadays).

Our electronic media is in need of guidance, so the Webmaster position is open. Seems to me a

wonderful opportunity to work on those web page skills.

And, Don is busy looking for people to fill positions on the board- so if he calls or you have a hankerin' to help the Region continue to be humble and hospitable, give him a warble.

Thanks to Oklahoma for a great issue. We had more words than we could print! If you submitted an article and don't see it hear, don't worry--we've saved it for another issue.

"What's Up Doc?": Animated Characters Spruce Up the Oklahoma City Zoo's Critter Tales

Amy Dee Stephens, Oklahoma City Zoo, OK

"What's Up Doc?" Remember this famous cartoon bunny? Most of us grew up with Bugs and other famous Looney Tunes characters. Next to the Easter Bunny, he's one of the best known rabbits in the world. Cartoons today are very different from what they used to be (I'm showing my age when I admit that I don't like most of the new ones), but they are still just as powerful.

With Cartoon Network being a constant in many young households, we would be remiss in discounting the influence that these shows have on children. In fact, many young children believe that Barney and Pokemon are real! Maybe it is this very phenomenon that has caused schools to focus on the preschool standards of having four- and five-year olds learn the difference between real and make-believe.

And so.....the OKC Zoo has spruced up its Critter Tale program, an interactive storybook and live animal presentation, for preschool students. We now include cartoons!!

Now before you have visions of lugging a TV/VCR into a classroom, let me assure you that it's nothing like that. We have simply created some "Cartoon Cards" that feature pictures of real *and* animated animals. To avoid any copyright infringement, all cartoon pictures were taken from actual products such as books, greeting cards, and cereal boxes (no copies or internet look-alikes), with the source is listed on the back of

the Cartoon Card.

Here's What it Looks Like: We've taken an oversized piece of construction paper, glued on about five animal pictures, then laminated it to make the Cartoon Card. For example, the rabbit card includes a picture of Bugs Bunny, Winnie-the-Pooh's Rabbit, Bambi's Thumper, and two magazine photos of real rabbits.

How to Use the Cartoon Card: The children use reasoning skills to figure out which animals are real and which are make-believe. First, they are asked to point to one of the rabbit pictures that is real. "How can you tell it's real?" When it's time for the children to point to the make-believe animals, leading questions are printed on the back of the card such as, "Which rabbit appears to be talking?" "How do rabbits really sound?" or "What people clothing items are these pretend rabbits wearing?" Yes and no questions are avoided.

The Result has been that interactions have increased during the Critter Tale programs as the children discuss a topic that they know well—their favorite cartoons! In addition, real, cognitive thinking occurs as they compare and contrast the differences between real and make-believe. Preschool teachers are happy to have age-appropriate skills met, and Zoo staff report that Critter Tales are even more fun to teach!

Director's Report

Pat Silovsky

The spring Board meeting of NAI was in Grand Rapids, MI, May 16-18, 2003. This is the site of the 2004 National Interpreters Workshop and what a great hotel! Many things were approved at this meeting and I would like to highlight some of these items for you.

New Headquarters--NAI has outgrown the present office space (many times over). The Board approved Tim Merriman, Executive Director, to move forward with the purchase of the Mason Street North property in the "Old Town" section of Ft. Collins. This piece of property is an excellent opportunity for NAI to relocate and expand its office space to include a conference/training room, NAI library, association store, and much-needed storage space. A \$200,000 Downtown Community Development Grant is available for development of this property and it is still close to Colorado State University for work study students. It is also a chance to revitalize an area and gives NAI the "historic" connection that is important to our organization.

2006 NIW Location--Albuquerque, New Mexico has been chosen as the site of the 2006 NIW. Mark your calendars now for what is sure to be a fantastic NIW.

Board Restructuring--NAI has changed and grown over the last several years and the question has been raised whether our Board structure is the most effective for the organization. Many options were brought before the Board at the Spring Board meeting as a result of a task force put together last fall charged with researching other possible ways to construct the board to better serve the organization. There is a general agreement that changes should be made, but there is also a feeling that not enough details on how this would happen have been worked out. However, we are moving forward in this area and here are a few things that happened: A new task force of Regional Directors and Sections Chairs was formed to further develop options and a Regional Leadership Council was formed (a Sectional Leadership Council already exists) and will meet together at the fall NIW. An entire day will be set aside in May 2004 for working out a new structure for the Board with all the details fleshed out. If you have any suggestions or thoughts on this, please give me a call.

Other News--The "Resource Interpretation and Heitage Tourism" Section has been officially changed to the "Interpretation and Tourism" Section



Region 10 to Lead the Job Fair at the 2003 NIW

Heads up! If you're seeking a job in interpretation, or hoping to hire an interpreter, don't miss the 2003 NIW Job Fair!!!

This year, NAI's Region 10 has agreed to organize and staff the Job Fair to make sure that employers and employees can connect. If you can't make it to the National Workshop, Jane Burks and Lezlie Murray will accept electronic flyers or resumes to their e-mail addresses, which will be made available to all at the job fair. Employers and prospective employees can also bring additional copies of flyers or resumes.

Please send your information to lmurray01@fs.fed.us if you are in Region 1-5, and to Burks-jane@aramark.com if you are in Region 6-10. If you can't e-mail your flyer you may fax it to Lezlie at:

907-783-2688, or to Jane at 907-683-9297. Should you need to speak to Lezlie you may call her at 907-783-2326. Jane can be reached at 907-683-9204. Send your flyer no later than October 1, 2003.

If you'll be attending this year's NIW, plan to stop by and see their team of volunteers under the giant Job Fair banner at the "super booth" in the NAI Exhibit hall, the "InterpExpo." The Job Fair is located across from the Region 10 booth, #54. The exhibit hall's opening event is Tuesday evening at 6:00. The Job Fair will open and available at posted times throughout the exhibit hall on Wednesday and Thursday.

If you'd like to volunteer to help staff the booth, drop Lezlie and Jane an email, or give them a call. They'd love to hear from you and sign you up!

Visitor Center Planned at Chickasaw National Recreation Area

Ron Parker, Chickasaw National Recreation Area, Sulphur, OK

Visitor Center

Chickasaw National Recreation Area (CNRA) is preparing to implement the visitor center component of the 1994 Amendment to the General Management Plan. It consists of the construction of a visitor center on National Park Service property adjacent to Broadway street in Sulphur, Oklahoma. Ground breaking for the visitor center is set for June 19, with construction beginning later this summer, with completion expected in the winter of 2004. The visitor center project includes plans for visitor information and interpretive services including wayside signage and interpretive exhibits.

The visitor center is planned as a 4,000-square foot multi-purpose building housing informational displays, bookstore, orientation video room, and information counter. Here visitors will learn quickly about natural and cultural resources of the region and the State. An adjacent building, linked to the main building with a shaded plaza, will house the public restrooms and outside information panels and brochures. The adjacent historic Flower Park parking lot (National Register Eligible) will be rehabilitated for automobile use and serve a trailhead for the CNRA trail system. The historic Vendome Well area will be rehabilitated and the historic Plunge Pool will be marked and interpreted. Interpretive panels will display trail system maps.

Located along Highway 7, approximately ten miles from Interstate 35, the visitor center will be an ideal location for welcoming park visitors. Approximately 9,000 vehicles per day use Highway 7, and the Chickasaw National Recreation Area is one of the largest destinations in the Arbuckle mountain region. Over 250 bus groups travel to the park each year. The visitor center parking area will efficiently serve large tour buses and school groups and encourage this mode of travel to the park.

Telling the Park Story at the Visitor Center

Interpretive themes provide opportunities for people to connect to park significance. Primary interpretive themes are the key stories through which visitors explore the park's nationally significant resource values. Sixteen interpretive panels will address three primary park interpretive themes:

A — Chickasaw National Recreation Area's 500-million-year record of sedimentary deposition, complex hydrogeological systems, and diverse flora and fauna enriches connections with the dynamic

relationships among geology, water, and life.

B — The attractive and intimate scale of the landscape, the wide range of recreational opportunities, the history of the freshwater and mineral springs, and the comfortable, rustic built environment of Chickasaw National Recreation Area invite an exploration of the concepts of personal and societal health and well-being.

C — The Eastern Woodlands-Western Plains ecotone at Chickasaw National Recreation Area offers outstanding opportunities to appreciate the rich ecological relationships that nurture and sustain our civilization.

It should be noted that the designation of Platt National Park in 1906 and the subsequent re-designation of Chickasaw National Recreation Area in 1976 both began with the recognition of the importance of park water resources, both mineral and freshwater. That recognition does not differ significantly from how man has been using the area the past 7,000 years *as place where water resources provide renewal to the human spirit and the physical body*. It is thought that man once came to this area to find a cool drink of water, shade relief from the hot summer sun, and an abundance of game to hunt. Today visitors come to "take the waters" because they feel the waters "are good for them," or they come to pursue recreation pursuits and/or to spend their leisure time "re-creating" their state of being.

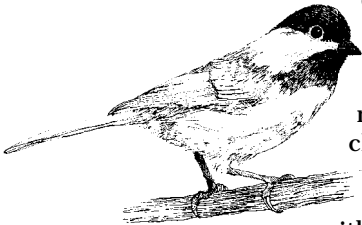
As a result, the principal strategy for the interpretive story will be to highlight the importance of water resources to the park as a source of renewal to the park visitor. This will be done first by providing general information and orientation of the park's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Next, emphasis will be placed on telling the story of the importance of water resources to the park. Sub-interpretative themes that are nested within the importance of water resources at Chickasaw will then be woven into the interpretative messages presented at the visitor center. For example, many cultural and historic resources exist at Chickasaw. Almost in entirety, these resources are connected in some way to the importance of water resources at the park.

Visitors leaving the visitor center will have a sense of general orientation to the park and the immediate area. They should feel that they are now visiting an area that has been aptly called the "Oklahoma Oasis."

The Burning Brush, cont. from page 1

white quail eggs. There is, or should I say was, an established brush pile right next to a small water feature. We've been adding for over four years. It takes a long time to get that perfect brush pile. It slowly decomposes as you add to it and eventually you have an animal habitat. They move in and make burrows to hide from predators in and, if you're lucky, raise their young. I've built entire programs around that brush pile.

However, not everyone can appreciate a brush pile. In the beginning it looks like just a pile of debris thrown on the ground waiting for someone to dispose of. Sue told me once that someone very high up in our department, who shall remain nameless (I'm no dummy), chewed her out royally for piling trash up in the Watchable Wildlife area. Sue (who's no dummy either), had signage made explaining the benefits of a brush pile as habitat. And so it remained until very recently.



Our maintenance crew has been working very hard clearing brush and broken tree limbs in order to make the park safe for our visitors. They trimmed low hanging broken branches just on the outside of the Watchable Wildlife area. The area to be cleared is directly behind what was the old nature center. The branches that had been cut were piled in several neat piles ready to be burnt or hauled away. They would have been chipped, but that's another story. Just last week, Sue (you know Sue), told one of the crew to go

back there and set fire to them. She told him to burn the brush pile behind the old nature center, almost. Actually what she said was "set fire to the brush pile behind the nature center and Loraine (that's me) will tell you which one." Well, as it just so happened I was out in the park running an errand, and out of at least 15 brush piles, he picked the one with the sign in front of it that said "Wildlife Habitat." I drove up just in time to see that wonderful old brush pile that we had been adding to for years blazing up into the canopy of an old oak tree that didn't even have one broken branch. I was mortified. I saw years of birds seeking shelter, opossums burrowing into the dense vegetation below and lizards and toads scurrying deeper into the brush whenever anyone came close, going up in smoke right before my eyes. I think I handled it well. I did have one brief moment when I screamed "not the brush pile!" but then I composed myself and asked why he was burning my brush pile and he told me that Sue told him to do it. Being a former naturalist herself, I knew Sue would never have him burn the very brush pile that she, herself, had started so many years ago. After ferreting out the truth, I resigned myself to building a new brush pile. There is now a brand new brush pile atop that blackened patch of ground. Of course, it is but a skeleton of its former self. But, not ten minutes after we piled those bare branches on the same spot as the old one, the cardinals, juncos and titmice started using it for a place to perch and get away from those pesky, yet perky, blue jays. And so, like the mythical Phoenix rising from the ashes, our old friend the brush pile will once again be revered as a "Wildlife Habitat."

"How Can We Miss You When You Won't Go Away?"

Bob Jennings

Okay, it's a bad line from an old country song, but somehow it seems appropriate. The most common question I get lately is, "So, how's retirement?" My usual answer is "I recommend it...." And I do. After 30-plus years in the field, the change has been nice. The alarm clock went first thing—I'm just not a morning person. (To be honest, I dug it back out, just to be sure I was up by 9:00 a.m.)

And as I expected, you can retire from a job, but not necessarily from what you are. I'll always be an interpreter. Actually, I never planned on giving up interpretation, especially NAI. I plan to stay involved as long as I can, and am still working on some of the NAI Certifications (my third). If things go as planned, you'll see me doing some training here and there.

So what has changed since I put my papers in? Well, here's some things I DON'T miss: Budget meetings, paperwork, being the boss, getting up early, budget meetings, fixing vandalism, 'interim' park directors,

and budget meetings.

But there are lots of things I do miss: Working with the public, answering questions, being around the staff, and especially taking those college kids on tours. I miss that sense of accomplishment that a good program leaves behind. I miss showing a visitor their first Scissortail or Red-headed Woodpecker.

So what does a 'retired' interpreter have to look forward to? Going birding with my friends, seeing some places I've never had time to see before, writing more, reading more, sleeping later. I can go to NAI meetings and visit with friends, just like always, but if I want to stay an extra three days to see the country, no problem.

So when folks ask me about retirement, I'll keep telling them I recommend it. Now I can concentrate on being just an interpreter, which was all I ever wanted anyway. See ya down the trail.



State Report



ARKANSAS

Jay Miller

Arkansas State Parks has completed hiring and training seasonal interpreters. We are blessed with an outstanding group of interpreters from Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas. This will work out very well for some of them because we are anticipating filling five full-time interpreter slots over the next few months and our seasonal interpreters are choice selections.

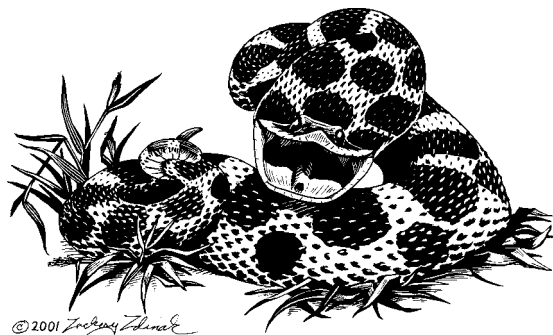
NAI's **CHI workshop** will be held in September 15 through 19 at "The Castle in the Clouds" - the lodge at **Queen Wilhelmina State Park**, high in the Ouachita Mountains in western Arkansas. If Region Six members are looking for a nearby and fine location to begin the Certification process, this is it. The weather and cooling September temperatures on the mountain will be spectacular, as will the CHI workshop.

In April, Arkansas State Park interpreters received a "Letter of Special Commendation" from the Arkansas Historical Association for "raising awareness of Arkansas history through daily activities and special events, and for making Arkansas history informative and entertaining to school children, members of the general public, and visitors to Arkansas." The Arkansas Historical Association is largely made up of scholars and historians. Their recognition is most appreciated.

New interpretive centers in the state parks are moving along. **Jacksonport** and **Mount Magazine** are complete. **Cossatot** and **Bull Shoals** are in planning with **Chase Studios** of Missouri. **Split Rock Studios** from St. Paul, MN is doing a wonderful job planning exhibits at Bull Shoals-White River, and **Taylor Studios** of Illinois is facing a big challenge very well at **Crater of Diamonds State Park**. We are preparing to advertise for an exhibit firm for **Lake Fort Smith**, and will begin planning to revamp exhibits at **Devil's Den** come July. However, first on our minds is the grand opening of the **Lake Dardanelle Visitor Center** at Russellville on June 19. The dramatic building on the edge of the lake is complete. It contains a wonderful classroom, offices, AV area and the largest indoor fresh water aquaria in Arkansas. The theme is the aquatic environment of the lake and its Ozark stream tributaries. Four tanks represent that with water flowing from tank to tank ending in a 7,000-gallon circular tank 8-feet tall. Rather than interpretive panels, we are using five touch-screen computer kiosks. Getting those designed is a huge project, and the deadline is looming.

Chautauqua is in full swing this June in Arkansas. Begun by the **Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources** at Smackover two years ago, Museum Director **Pam Beasley** is taking this grand tent show on the road to three state parks. *Chautauqua* brings scholars as living history characters to the tent each night to discuss events around a selected theme. This year our theme is the Louisiana Purchase, and characters include: Thomas Jefferson, Dinah Dunbar, William Clark, John James Audubon and Sacagawea. One character from the past will make a living history presentation each night, and each does a different program each day. Over the five nights, 25 diverse programs will be presented for audiences for all ages both in the parks and in the local communities.

Brad Holleman, as a result of the CHI training at **DeGray State Park** last winter, has developed a fascinating program called "Waiting for You." He has presented this to both our seasonal training workshops with resounding success. In this program he compares geologic time to a roll of toilet paper. He also uses and explains (interprets) each of Freeman Tilden's six principles of interpretation. In the session at his park, **Queen Wilhelmina**, Brad created a trail walk that both interpreted the large array of wild plants found there plus, each stop in the guided walk was developed as a clear example of Freeman Tilden's principles. He had analyzed his audience and the presentation was excellent, relevant, meaningful, provocative and memorable. ■



State Report

Kansas

Schanée Anderson

Events

- Most Kansas sites are very busy with summer classes and clubs
- **Kauffman Museum** is in the middle of six weeks of summer camps. Five camps have filled to capacity. They are offering nine bus trips (primarily for seniors) throughout the state of Kansas during the 2003-2004 year. The trips are part of the programming for their "K is for Kansas" exhibit that will open in November 2003.

Conference/Meetings/Workshops

- Kansas Accredited Zoo Educators—will meet at 10:00 July 18 at the **Emporia Zoo**.
- **John Scott Foster** at the **Indianapolis Zoo** is asking for our help. He is in the process of writing a grant that will help fund the development of a comprehensive listing of species of animals currently used in educational programming at informal learning institutions and aquariums. This database would also include information regarding care, handling, housing and training of the species in question, as well as provide contact information for people who might provide insight regarding particular species. If you are currently using education animals in your program, please contact John Scott at jfoster@INDYZOO.com for a copy of the form. It is very easy and takes about five minutes.
- **Deb Hiebert (Bear Paw Traders and Botanica, The Wichita Gardens)** is traveling to the Show-Me State to visit **Cyndi Evans (DNR, Prairie State Park)**. It seems Cyndi attended the ethnobotany session Deb did at NAI in OKC, and has rounded up enthusiastic folks in Missouri who want the full two-day workshop. So they will all be grinding corn and slicing squash August 4 - 5. Anyone interested in more information can contact Deb or Cyndi.

New for the spring

Martin and Osa Safari Museum "Hidden Hollywood"

The story of pioneering naturalists **Martin and Osa Johnson**, who are often listed as the inventors of the wildlife documentary genre, will be featured on the History Channel's newest original series entitled "Hidden Hollywood" August 1 (Please check local listings for times). This segment will focus on the Johnsons' 1931 film Congorilla, the earliest sound movie ever filmed entirely in Africa, making it the first time most Americans were able to hear a lion roar or a gorilla beat its chest in their own natural environment!

Topeka Zoo

Outdoor Bornean Orangutan Exhibit opened June 7, 2003. This is modeled after Camp Leakey in Borneo. Groundbreaking for new Education/Office/Gift Shop facility is was June 27, 2003.

Sedgwick County Zoo

Australia and South America exhibits opened in May. These two exhibit areas share a single roof and together form one of the largest walk-through aviaries in the country. Mammals and reptiles are also featured.

Wonderful staff and volunteers

- **Schanée Anderson** is the new curator of education at **Sedgwick County Zoo** in Wichita, Kansas
- **Rachel Soash** is the new curator of education at **Sunset Zoo**. Rachel served as the education assistant for two years and has also served as a ZOO Crew Supervisor, and Program Assistant. Rachel has also worked at Sedgwick County Zoo, Milford Nature Center, and the Great Plains Nature Center. ■■■

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.



State Report



MISSOURI

John Miller

The **Association of Missouri Interpreters** (AMI) will conduct their annual meeting August 26-28 in Kansas City. The theme for this year is "Exploring Interpretation, Science, History, and Culture." If you would like more information about this workshop, go to the AMI web site at www.mointerp.net.

Grady Manus (formerly at Nathan Boone SHS) has resigned his position at Missouri State Parks. He is planning to devote his efforts to developing VOICES FROM THE PAST. He will be available for programs, events, training and planning. He is hoping to focus right now on the Corps of Discovery. You can contact Grady at mrinterpguy@sbcglobal.net.

John Cunning (Jefferson City) reports another Spring Interpreter Training School was conducted May 18-22 at **Dr. Edmund A. Babler Memorial State Park**. This year 108 interpreters from MO Department of Natural Resources, MO Department of Conservation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Louisiana State Parks attended the training. This marked the 64th interpreters' training school offered by Missouri State Parks. Students at this year's school received training in the philosophy and methods of interpretation, the basics of resource management, and advanced work in environmental education. A variety of demonstration programs including an "Owl Prowl," a game of Town Ball (an 1850s version of baseball), and a traditional campfire program were also offered. All first and second year students were also required to present a 15-minute program on an assigned topic. The Missouri Department of Natural Resources offers this training each year during the week before Memorial Day. Although most of the students work for the Division of State Parks, interpreters from other agencies are also welcome to attend to help fill the camp to capacity. If you would like more information on this training please contact **George Kastler**, Chief Park Naturalist at (573) 751-5384 or by e-mail at nrkastg@mail.dnr.state.mo.

Sheri Medlock (Blue Springs) reports that her article "Opening Doors, Environmental Interpretation for the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing" will appear on pages 24 & 25 of the July/August 2003 issue of Legacy. Sheri, who is hearing impaired, provides interpretive programs across the state for the Missouri Department of Conservation.

Tiffani Addington (Leasburg) reports that **Onondaga Cave State Park** now has a new Natural Resource Manager! Maria Potter (formerly of Wappapello Lake State Park) has joined the team at Onondaga Cave.

A. J. Hendershott (Cape Girardeau) reports that **Amy Smith** will depart from MDC July 30, 2003. She is taking a position with a university in Oklahoma. Amy has been the Regional Outreach & Education Supervisor for the Ozark Region for the past two years. We wish her well! A.J. is pleased to announce that **Steve Juhlin**, formerly a Conservation Education Consultant (CEC) in Sullivan, is transferring to Cape Girardeau as the CEC for Southeast Missouri.

Leah Eden (Branson) reports that the 8th annual Family Fishing Fair event was another big success on June 7th. The event drew 400 people who enjoyed hands-on stations to learn about fishing and the aquatic environment.

Bo Brown (Strafford) reports the **Interior Highlands Ancestral Lifeways Association** (IHALA) will present the Ozarks' 6th Annual Bois D'Arc Primitive Skills Gathering and Knap-In September 26-27-28 at Spirit Spring near Goodman, MO. All types of primitive skills and nature-oriented workshops will be offered, featuring some of the Midwest's finest crafts and skills instructors. There will be a FREE public area with Knapper's Camp, Kid's Village, primitive/native arts and crafts vendors, food concessions, skills demonstrations & contests, atlatl & primitive archery competition, evening campfire programs and music. Workshop fees: \$50/day or \$120/ 3-day weekend with pre-registration, some classes may have a small materials fee. For more information go to www.firstearth.org/bdarc.



State Report

OKLAHOMA

Steve Black and Neil Garrison

Julie Tarver from **Lake Thunderbird State Park** in Norman recently joined a club that not too many desire to be in. Julie joined the “White Fang Club.” What is the White Fang Club? It is an elite group of snake handlers that have been bitten by venomous snakes. She was trying to water the park’s Massasauga Rattlesnake. That required putting her hand through the Broad-Banded Copperhead’s part of the cage. She tested the Copperhead, which didn’t do anything, and then reached in to cover the Copperhead. He struck over the water bowl and got Julie right in the knuckle of her index finger. After two and half-hours in the emergency room and two days of rest back home, Julie was back on the job. Julie says that her lesson was learned and although she can’t say that it will never happen again she is going to make sure it doesn’t happen any time soon.

Beavers Bend Nature Center has been very busy and **Kristi Silvey** reports that a wedding has even occurred in the park. For Spring Break the Friends of Beavers Bend, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, local businesses and interested groups sponsored Kids’ Fishing Days. The event, held at the netted swimming area in Beavers Bend, was great success and planning has already begun for next year’s event. The Nature Center was also the scene of an Easter egg hunt on Easter Saturday. Despite the scattered showers, almost 300 people showed up. Kristi also reports that the flying squirrel population is increasing at the park with the birth of two new baby squirrels. Beavers Bend Naturalist **Frank Griffith** got married May 15 on the lawn of the Nature Center. When Frank and his bride April exchanged vows Thursday the park was getting ready to be full of cars for a classic car show on Saturday. Congratulations and good luck.

Washita Battlefield NHS has introduced a new artisan program on weekends to showcase and highlight local and tribal artists. While the program is new, many inquiries have been made about the programs.

Our congratulations go out to **Eddie Reese**. He has been selected as the new Director of Tulsa’s **Oxley Nature Center**.


Claudine Daniels was selected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as the “Interpreter of the Year.” The award was handed out at the National Interpreters Workshop in Virginia Beach, VA last autumn. Claudine is the environmental education specialist at Lawton, Oklahoma’s **Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge**, a unit of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The long-awaited reprinting of the book entitled A Field Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of Oklahoma is scheduled for this summer. The first printing will be of 3,000 copies. These will be given away to educational organizations such as nature centers, state/federal parks, libraries and public schools. In the year 2004, additional copies will be printed and they’ll be for sale at a cost of \$9.00 (\$10?).

The **American Automobile Association** (AAA) publishes a series of “tour books” for every state in the nation. The brand new book for Oklahoma includes a dandy color pic of Oklahoma City’s **Martin Park Nature Center** (including a nice write-up on that facility). Wow! On April 22, the Center manned an information booth at the Earth Day festivities at the **University of Central Oklahoma** (Edmond, OK). This outdoor event coincided with some very pleasant weather...so the attendance at this event was phenomenal!

The “Natural Science Song and Dance Man,” **Billy B.**, was the keynote performer at Oklahoma City’s April 22nd ScienceFest Oklahoma. Approximately 4,600 students were bussed in to this environmental education event. ScienceFest Oklahoma was conducted on the grounds of the Oklahoma City Zoo. **Martin Park Nature Center** manned an air pollution prevention educational exhibit at this event.

Sixty more acres of land have been added to the **Quartz Mountain Nature Park**. The property was acquired by the Access Fund of Boulder, Colorado...and then donated to the state of Oklahoma (for use by the park). This property includes the Cedar Valley area that is east of the mountain peak that is named Baldy Point.

The Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service—U.S. Department of Agriculture initiated a brand new certification program for Oklahoma “Master Naturalists.” The training sessions were conducted in March, April and May. Participants took part in six training sessions...with a cost of \$20.00 per session. More information is available from **Marley Beem** (e-mail: beem@ok.state.edu) 



State Report



TEXAS

Brian Barnette

It's summertime, and the livin' is . . . well, kinda hot and sticky, if you wanna know the truth. But new air conditioners in two of our classrooms here at the **Dallas Museum of Natural History** are making our summer camp classes a lot more bearable. In addition to a full slate of camps, we have several small exhibits up for the summer: "Tick Tock," an exhibit about time originally developed by the Austin Children's Museum; "Darwin's Enchanted Isles," an exhibit of photographs from the Galapagos (did you catch that, Pam?); "Dinomaze," a walk-through maze lined with dino trivia; and "Just a Flutter Away," an exhibit of some of the exquisite watercolor portraits of butterflies painted by Bill Howe of Ottawa, Kansas.

Under Old Business . . . Somehow, in putting together the Spring report, I overlooked a news item that had come in too late for the previous issue. Last December, **Bob Valen**, Chief of Resources Education at **Big Thicket National Preserve**, announced his retirement after 34 years in public service. Bob has been an important part of our region for many years, serving in a variety of official and unofficial capacities. Bob's not exactly hanging up his spurs; he took on the position of Director of the **Edison Museum** in Beaumont. Thanks for all your hard work over the years, Bob, and good luck in your new endeavors. Hope to see around . . .

From old to new . . . a big humble and hospitable Region Six welcome to **Howie Richie** of Austin! As the operator of **Texpert Tours**, Howie has been involved in environmental and historical interpretation for years. Recently, however, Howie discovered NAI, got certified, and joined our ranks. Welcome aboard, Howie!

Nature tourism is an important source of both customers for interpretive programs and jobs for interpretive professionals. **Miles Phillips**, Program Specialist for Ecotourism with the Texas Cooperative Extension in Corpus Christi, reports that the Extension's Nature Tourism Program is alive and kicking in South Texas. They've certified 22 Interpretive Guides through courses in McAllen and Monterrey, Mexico, and delivered numerous short programs on nature and heritage tourism to landowners, communities, and other interested parties. They are using La Copita Ranch, a university-owned ranch, for research and training. For more information, Mike asks that you contact him at mdphillips@ag.tamu.edu.

Speaking of Corpus, **Julie Galbraith**, lead Interpretation Specialist at the **Texas State Aquarium**, invites you to check out their new Dolphin Bay exhibit. The exhibit has three interpretive areas: basic dolphinology, the human-dolphin connection, and the challenges dolphins face. With seven new interpreters (do they all know about NAI, Julie?) added to the team, they should be ready for the summer rush.

Up at the **Heard Natural Science Museum & Wildlife Sanctuary** (or, as we lazy folk like to call it, the Heard) **Lisa Cole** is beaming with pride over their latest accomplishment - "Ratsnakes to Rattlers: A Live Texas Snake Exhibit," the first large, in-house, temporary exhibit they've produced in over 10 years. (If you've ever been in that situation before, you know how good it feels.) The exhibit has almost 50 live native Texas snake species on display, as well as a number of creative interactives. The exhibit will be up until September 14, so if you're in the area, check it out . . .

As usual, there's plenty afoot at **Texas Parks and Wildlife** (thanks to **Julie Coombs**, Interpretive Planner/Editor, for the info): **Eisenhower Birthplace SHS** has been refurbished and refurnished, thanks to \$27,000 in funds from three local foundations. The new (old?) furnishings are more period appropriate for the historic home's 1890's ambience, according to **Kurt Kemp**, site manager . . . **Georgia Davis** informs us that the third annual "MayDay!" Festival at **Sebastopol SHS** was a big success. I'd say - in three years, their attendance has gone from about 200 to over 1200! Visitors enjoyed a climbing wall, kayak tank, laser shot, pottery demonstrations, ice cream making, music, games, and even a May Pole . . . **Mike Wallace** (no, not that one) reports a very productive workday at the **James Daughtrey WMA** in April. TPW staff, Bexar County Master Naturalists, and Ag Science students from Three Rivers High School joined forces to create a nature trail through the South Texas brush. The result: a trail with 25 botanical markers, interpretive displays, two benches, two birdhouses, a viewing blind, and a pond. The cost to the State: less than \$200. Good job!

Finally, from the "who'da thunk it" department: When you join NAI, they tell you that the benefits include newsletters, conferences, and the opportunity to get to know other interpreters. Sometimes that last one can turn out to be more important than you'd ever imagine. Two years ago, at the regional workshop in Manhattan,



I met a young lady from a museum I'd never heard of in a town I'd never heard of in the southeast corner of Kansas, a state I'd never been to. One thing led to another, and as of June 1, **Jackie Borgeson** and I are officially engaged. Now, before anybody starts tying up little bags of birdseed, let me make it clear that, by mutual agreement, this is expected to be an extended engagement. I'm here (Dallas), she's there (Chanute), and neither of us is likely to be going anywhere anytime soon. Meanwhile, we'll keep seeing each other as often as work, money, and the state of Oklahoma will allow (couldn't you guys flip it over once in a while, so the skinny part could be between me and Kansas?). And there's always the miracle of e-mail . . .

Speaking of e-mail: Thanks to all of you who responded to my plea for news. Unfortunately, there were quite a few of you whose e-mail addresses are apparently no longer valid. So, if you see your name on the list, and you're still involved in interpretation in Texas, please send me your new contact information.

I'll be glad you did. The missing: **Barbara Taylor, Juan Rodriguez, Shane Mooneyham, Joanne Murphy, Michael Gaddis, Chris Bishop, Nicole Cumberland, Amylia Williams, Leigh Ann Leonard, Chris Meteu, Shawn Odom, Laronna McGehee, Karen Robinson, Julie Martenson, Julie Svetlik, Lee Wilder, Elva Chavez, David Schafer, Stephen Perrin, Cullen Geiselman, Alfred Davila, Ginger Elliott.** ➔



State Report

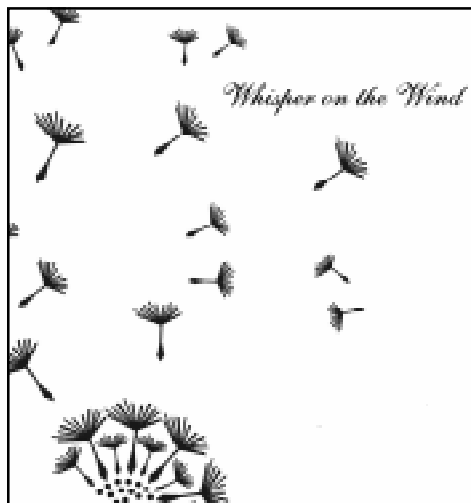


LOUISIANA

David Latona, Interpretive Program Developer/Naturalist, will be the **Louisiana State Coordinator** for NAI Region Six. He has worked closely with the Region Six administration for a number of years, and is an active member of NAI. He can be contacted at: Louisiana Office of State Parks, P.O. Box 44426, Baton Rouge, LA 70804-4426, 225-342-1479, dlatona@crt.state.la.us. Make sure you keep him informed, so he can spread the word!

Stan Richardson, interpretive ranger at **Plaquelock Dam Historic Site**, sent news of their upcoming events. Weekend programs for visitors and school groups are being offered from July to December. July's interactive program presents the problem of coastal erosion. Programs in September discuss south Louisiana's logging industry of the late 1800's and early 1900's. October finds them celebrating "Experience Atchafalaya Days" with Historic Boats of the Bayous. And during December, you can step back in time for a view of the Lock House and grounds decorated for a 1909 Christmas.

In honor of the Louisiana Purchase celebration, **Caffery Gallery** at Mid City Arts District in Baton Rouge, is holding a theme show titled "Fleur de Lys," opening June 25 and running through August 9. The fleur de lys symbol is used extensively in south Louisiana on both commercial and governmental logos. Twenty-two local artists were selected to interpret this theme in their artwork. 🇺🇸



Heard a good story lately?

You need to listen to the *Whisper on the Wind*!!!

Interpretive storytellers from Region Six have assembled an outstanding collection of 13 stories on a new CD, *Whisper on the Wind*. The stories are about prairies, bats, bear wrestling, owls, camping & gigging, bison dogging, Native Indians and even the big bad wolf. Grady Manus, Janet Price, Chris Pistole, and Molly Postlewait are just a few of the wonderful storytellers you will hear. You will want to listen to each story and share them in your programs.

The CD costs \$15 for Non-NAI members and \$12 for NAI members with \$2 for postage.

To get your copy, contact John Miller at 417-334-4865 ext 0 or at millej@mdc.state.mo.us. Proceeds go to Region Six.



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 pntool@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:

vacant

DEADLINES FOR VISIONS ARE:

Spring 2003: February 20

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Fall 2003: August 20

Winter 2003: November 20

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