

W e a l t h o f D i s c o v e r y

Greetings y'all from the Bayou City,
the States' 4th largest, it's hardly itty bitty.
If you've not been to Space City USA,
March 2006 is the time to plan your stay.
The regional workshop will be sure to please,
With spoonbills, alligators, and bald cypress trees
A few trips include where "Texians" became free,
And large Victorian homes down south, beautiful you'll agree.
Seeing animals up close, or eating a ranch-style meal,
There will be many things sure to strike your appeal.
From seining for puffer fish to shuttles in space,
Seeing dolphins will put a smile on your face.
As always, there will be an auction and dance,
Lots of food and a quiz for the smarty pants.
Networking with colleagues, visiting with friends?
Or perhaps presenting a program or learning
the newest trends.
So whatever your reason for
coming to see us down here,
Write down March 25-28,
for it's drawing
near!

**Region VI 2006
Workshop- March 25-
28
University of Houston**

National Association for Interpretation, Region Six Awards Criteria

General information for any award:

- Consider these criteria and provide the information to the best of your knowledge.
- Each nomination will be scored on the criteria for that category.
- Nomination must not exceed two (three for meritorious service) pages in total length including the nomination form.
- Both nominee and nominator must be members of NAI.
- Up to three additional one-page letters of support will be accepted per award.
- Six copies of materials (articles, brochures, posters, etc.) must be sent with the nomination.

Distinguished Professional Interpreter - an individual who has worked for a minimum of five years in the profession and whose duties include front-line interpretation. Should demonstrate a mastery of interpretive techniques, program development, and design of creative projects. May include the ability to pass these skills on to others.

1. Describe the nominee's involvement and achievements, past and present, in front-line interpretation, indicating innovative programs and/or mentoring experience. If the nominee participates in management, indicate facility development, creative fund raising and management techniques.
2. List any key projects or programs developed by the nominee.
3. List activity in NAI at chapter, section, regional or national level. Include offices held, committee work and workshop involvement, as applicable. List other professional memberships, if known.
4. List awards, recognition and honors from NAI or other professional organizations.

Richard Baldauf Award/Outstanding New Interpreter - an individual who has worked no more than five years in the profession, who has demonstrated a recognized potential in interpretation, assumption of leadership roles, creativity in programming or facility development and commitment to the profession and NAI.

1. Describe the nominee's involvement in front-line interpretation, past and present.
2. List outstanding projects or programs developed and describe evidence that the nominee has leadership potential.
3. List activity in NAI at chapter, section, regional or national level. Include offices held, committee work and workshop involvement, if applicable. List other professional memberships, if known.
4. List awards, recognition and honors from NAI or other professional organizations.

Bob Jennings Meritorious Service - An individual who has performed extensive and invaluable service to NAI at the national or regional level and to the field of interpretation.

1. Describe the nominee's performance and service, NAI-related projects and/or overall scope of commitment to NAI and the field of interpretation.

Fellow/Life Time Achievement Award - An honor for a member exemplifying career achievement in guiding the interpretive profession through instruction, mentoring, research, front-line interpretation and management, and strong support for NAI.

1. List evidence of the nominee's contributions to the field of interpretation in any of the above listed areas.
2. List activity in NAI at the chapter, section, regional or national level. Include offices held, committee work, and workshop involvement. List other professional memberships, if known.
3. List awards, recognition, and honors from NAI or other professional organizations.
4. List publications in professional journals, newsletters, books, or research projects. If a detailed listing is not available, provide a general summary.
5. Indicate consultant activities, instructional activities and front-line interpretive experience. If specifics are not known, provide a general summary.

Outstanding Interpretive Site Publication Award - a written publication of excellent interpretive value.

1. Submission must be a written publication such as a site poster, brochure, flyer, newsletter or similar material.
2. Publication must meet the NAI definition of interpretation and demonstrate interpretive principles. The NAI definition of interpretation is: *Interpretation forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource.*

3. The site publication must be aimed at and effectively reach the target audience visiting a particular site(s) in NAI Region Six.
4. The publication will be judged on originality, creativity, clarity and consistent theme or message.
5. The layout, appropriate use of color, text, graphics and organization will also be evaluated.

Outstanding Interpretive Program - a presentation of exceptional standards.

1. The program must be an individual or small group effort resulting in a single presentation.
2. This award is presented for an outstanding interpretive program currently being presented or presented since last year's nominations.
3. The program must meet the NAI definition of interpretation and must demonstrate interpretive principles. The NAI definition of Interpretation is - *Interpretation forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource.*
4. The program will be judged for originality, creativity, consistent theme or message, the ability to reach the target audience, and appropriateness for the site.

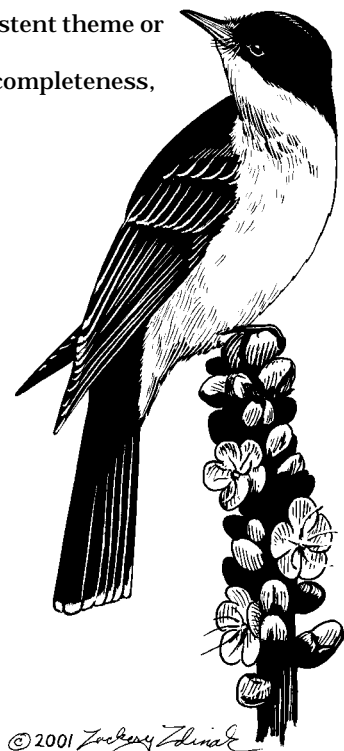
Outstanding Special Event Award - an event of exceptional interpretive quality.

1. Presented for an outstanding interpretive event, such as a special event, day camp, workshop, training, or other activity beyond the scope of a daily program currently being presented or presented since last year's nominations.
2. The program must meet the NAI definition of interpretation and must demonstrate interpretive principles. The NAI definition of Interpretation is - *Interpretation forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource.*
3. The program will be judged for originality, creativity, clarity, consistent theme or message, the ability to reach the target audience, and appropriateness for the site.

Outstanding Written Article Award - a thought-provoking article concerning information appropriate to interpretation.

1. The article must have been printed in *Visions, Legacy*, newsletters, newspapers or other similar medium since last year's nominations.
2. The article must meet the NAI definition of interpretation and demonstrate interpretive principles. The NAI definition is - *Interpretation forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the inherent meanings in the resource.*
3. The publication will be judged on originality, creativity, clarity, and consistent theme or message.
4. The publication will also be judged on content: factual accuracy, completeness, interest, important subject matter and focus.

**Awards nomination form is on page 4.
Please postmark by December 31, 2005.**



National Association for Interpretation Region Six Awards Nomination Form

Nominee _____
 Address _____

 Agency _____
 Title _____

Nominator _____
 Address _____

 Phone _____
 E-mail _____

Note: Both the nominee and nominator must be NAI members. Mark appropriate membership category below for nominator.

Individual _____ Institution _____ Name of Institution: _____

Check the appropriate title for the nomination. Please see awards criteria on pages 2 and 3.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <p>_____ Distinguished Professional Interpreter</p> <p>_____ The Richard Baldauf Award/Outstanding New Interpreter</p> <p>_____ The Bob Jennings Meritorious Service Award</p> <p>_____ The Fellow/Life Time Achievement Award</p> | <p>_____ Outstanding Interpretive Article</p> <p>_____ Outstanding Interpretive Site Publication</p> <p>_____ Outstanding Interpretive Program</p> <p>_____ Outstanding Special Event</p> |
|--|---|

Please see the award criteria and then list relevant information about the nominee. You may use one additional page (two for meritorious service and fellow awards) if needed.

We would like to inform local newspapers and other media of the winners. Below, please include the name and address of media contacts appropriate for the nominee if at all possible.

Signature of nominator _____

To submit by mail:
 Cyndi A. Cogbill
 NAI Region Six Awards Chairperson
 Prairie State Park
 P.O. Box 97
 Liberal, MO 64762
 cyndi.cogbill@dnr.mo.gov

(Electronic forms at www.nairegions.org/6/)

**National Association for Interpretation
Region Six Mini Grants Application**

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____ E-mail _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Description of Project (use one additional sheet if necessary):

Benefits of Project:

Dollar Amount Requested:

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

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

Submit by mail to:

Pat Silovsky
3115 Hatchery Dr.
Junction City, KS 66441

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

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

POSTMARK DEADLINE is January 20, 2006



**NAI
2006 Region VI Workshop
University of Houston Hilton
Houston, TX**

Saturday March 25 - Tuesday March 28, 2006

The Bayou City beckons us on a voyage of discovery.

WORKSHOP SCHEDULE SUMMARY:

SATURDAY, MARCH 25th

Pre-Workshops
3:00 pm - Registration opens; Exhibits and vendors
7:00 pm - appetizers and welcome from our own Texas cowboys

SUNDAY, MARCH 26th

8:00 am - Sit-down breakfast
9:00 am - Keynote speaker
12:00 pm - Business lunch
1:30 pm to end of day - Concurrent Sessions
5-7:00 pm - Travel to Houston Zoo for dinner and tours
7:00 pm - Auction

MONDAY, MARCH 27th

6-8:00 am - Continental breakfast in hospitality room
Field Trips throughout day
7:00 pm - Travel to The Aquarium for light dinner, tours

TUESDAY, MARCH 28th

7:00 am - Sit-down breakfast
8-9:00 am - Brian Barnett Interpreters' Quiz
10:00 am - 12:00 pm - Concurrent Sessions
12:00 pm - Lunch at conference center
1:00 pm to end of day - Special Sessions and events
6:00 pm - Awards Dinner
9:00 pm - Dance

Situated in the heart of the University of Houston campus, the University of Houston Hilton will be the site of the majority of workshop functions.

Room rates: \$79.00 single
\$89.00 double

Rates are exclusive of state and local taxes. (currently 17%)
<http://www.hrm.uh.edu/?PageID=154>

Sessions

- ⇒ Wayside Displays
- ⇒ What Every Interpreter Should Have on the Bookshelf
- ⇒ Interpretive Techniques Training
- ⇒ Butterfly ID and Search
- ⇒ Breaking Barriers to Field Trips
- ⇒ Interpreting to Hispanics
- ⇒ Project Leopold
- ⇒ Seining in Galveston Bay
- ⇒ Museum District Tour

Field Trips

- ⇒ Gators and Ranching
- ⇒ A Barrage of Birds
- ⇒ History Galore in Galveston
- ⇒ Shuttles and Sharks
- ⇒ Texas Tales Re-told and Aqua Adventures

REMINDERS:

Call for papers deadline
extended to: January 30, 2005

Scholarship applications due:
December 12, 2005

Awards nominations due:
December 31, 2006

Small grants applications due:
January 15, 2006

POSTER SESSION: Don't feel you're ready to present a session, but have a great program or idea to share? Present it at the *POSTER SESSION*. Details and application will be available on the web page and in the registration package.

Registration packets will be out in January and available on the Region VI web site:
<http://www.nairegions.org/6/>



ARKANSAS State Report

Jay Miller

Congratulations to the Corps of Engineers at Lake Dardanelle. **Allison Smedley**, interpreter at the Corps of Engineers' **Arkansas River Visitor Center** in Russellville, reports that Reserve America has announced their park award winners for 2005. Bona Dea Trail was listed as a Top 25 Bird Watching Park, Piney Bay Park and Campground was named among the Top Five Park Beaches, and Shoal Bay Park was a Top Five Kid-friendly Park.

Tom Wing has received his CIT certification and is incorporating the CIT program in the curriculum of the Interpretation of Historic Sites degree program at the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith.

Kelly Farrell and I were privileged to join **Tim Merriman**, **Lisa Brochu** and interpreters from Mexico, Panama, Wales, and Canada for 15 days in South Korea in early October. South Korea is a beautiful country. The cities are modern and the people are wonderful. We visited dramatic national parks and remarkable historic sites. Our team made presentations in universities, to city councils and at the National Edutainment Symposium. I hope we were able to leave them with some valuable information about interpretation, but I know we returned with much more than we gave.

In mid-October **Lisa Garvin**, **Gail Sears** and other staff, with **Tom Richter**, regional chief of interpretation, held a public meeting to begin the interpretative planning process for **Hot Springs National Park**.

In the Ouachita Mountains near **Queen Wilhelmina State Park**, **Jeff Flanigan**, park employee, found the first variegated blackgum ever discovered. It has a marbled leaf of white and multiple shades of green. Propagation is under way.

Jay Schneider, interpreter at **Lake Fort Smith State Park**, has received a scholarship to the Leave No Trace Master Educator class. Both he and **James Wilborn** will be in the class and will begin instruction classes in Arkansas soon afterward. James has had great success implementing Leave No Trace tactics on his island camping kayak trips on Lake Ouachita.

Arkansas State Parks welcomes new interpreters **Jessica McFadden** at Lake Chicot, **BT Jones** at Petit Jean, and **Steve Paul** at DeGray.

Linda Goza reports that **Pinnacle Mountain State Park** and **Arkansas Audubon** have joined to begin the Master Naturalist program to better train volunteer interpreters.

Bryan McDade, historian at **Old Washington State Park**, has been elected to the Board of Trustees of the Arkansas Historical Association.

The state park exhibit shop has completed exhibits for **Devil's Den State Park**, and is designing exhibits for **Mount Magazine Lodge**, to open in Spring 2006. They have also completed wayside exhibits for **Crater of Diamonds'** barrier-free River Trail that include touchable sculptures of leaves, bark, animal tracks, bass, and trout. The **ExPlus** firm is fabricating exhibits for **Powhatan Historic State Park**, and **Design and Production Incorporated** has been hired to design exhibits for the **Historic Weapons Museum** at Old Washington Historic State Park. **Split Rock Exhibit Outfitters** is fabricating exhibits for the **Bull Shoals-White River Visitor Center**, and they are designing exhibits for **Lake Fort Smith State Park**, both opening summer, 2006.

CORRECTION

We printed the incorrect e-mail address for the Nicodemus Historical Society Museum (bbb, KS) in the last newsletter--it should be nichis@ruraltel.net.

Our apologies!



KANSAS State Report

Schanée Anderson _____

Events and Brag Bag

Lee Richardson Zoo

- Hosting the Texas Natural History Museum's award winning traveling exhibit, "Playas: Gems of the Plains" Oct 31-Dec 16 at the Finnup Center for Conservation Education. This interactive traveling exhibit features an "in the round" look at this important wetland type that is so critical for the recharge of water to the Ogallala Aquifer, and for local and migrating wildlife.

Council Grove Lake Corps of Engineers

- The first annual Twin Lakes Water Festival was held at the Council Grove Lake in Morris County on September 21. The festival hosted nearly 700 4th and 5th graders from Geary, Chase, Morris, and Wabaunsee Counties. The students rotated through interpretive stations based on natural resources education. Most stations were tied to the Kansas Core Curricular Standards.

Sunset Zoo

- Spooktacular was great. The volunteers at the zoo created an Endangered Species Graveyard to talk about how people can help T & E species. They have an after-school program called Conservation Crew. It's action-oriented for the kids, allowing them to help in the community by setting up recycling stations, planting native plants, etc.

Nicodemus National Historic Site

- A successful National Public Lands Day on September 24 was a highlight of a new collaboration between Nicodemus National Historic Site and the Sunflower Council of the Girl Scouts of America. This past summer, Nicodemus NHS staff and other federal agencies in the region helped the Sunflower Council with a series of four "Linking Girls to the Land" educational day camps held across northwestern Kansas. Girls learned about the significance of Nicodemus National Historic Site and about environmental differences between western Kansas and central Kentucky (the first large group of Nicodemus settlers emigrated from near Lexington in 1877). The park continued this partnership by sponsoring a service project at the park and by helping other town partners arrange service projects for the National Public Lands Day event in Nicodemus.

Martin and Osa Johnson Safari Museum

- American Eagle Outfitters, Inc. has announced MARTIN + OSA (Martin and Osa) as the name of its new casual sportswear retail concept. Targeted to men and women aged 25 to 40, MARTIN + OSA will debut in better shopping centers in the Fall of 2006.

Emporia Zoo

- Zoo Holiday Lights will be turned on the evening of Nov. 24.

Konza Prairie

- September 24 marked the annual Konza Environmental Education Program docent graduation. Twenty-five docent trainees graduated, one of the largest classes in the last nine years. Docent Trainees of the Year include Miles McKee, Veronica Taylor and Martin Pankratz. Jim Morrill and Bob Davis were recognized as experienced Docents of the Year. The Docent Committee initiated a new recognition group this year. Fifteen docents were named Long-term Leaders, defined as those volunteers who consistently guided more than ten groups per year for at least five years.

Sedgwick County Zoo

- The Zoo is proud to announce the births of a reticulated giraffe, squirrel monkey, and tamandua.
- Construction is well underway on the Cargill Learning Center. The grand opening for the Learning Center will be in early March.
- Netzin Seklis from the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund gave a dynamic presentation on the research that is going on with Eastern and Western gorillas.

Wonderful staff and volunteers

- Clemson University awarded Dr. Ted Cable the William C. Everhart Award as part of their George B. Hartzog Environmental Awards Program. The award is for "sustained achievements in interpretation that have illuminated, created insights to, and fostered an appreciation of our cultural and historic heritage." The awards program honors George Hartzog, Director of the National Park Service from 1964-1973.



MISSOURI State Report

John Miller _____

2006 Officers for the Association of Missouri Interpreters:

President = **Eugene Vale** (Eugene.Vale@dnr.mo.gov)

Vice President = **Gladys Rigsby** (Gladys.Rigsby@mdc.mo.gov)

Secretary = **Jeremy Soucy** (Jeremy.Soucy@mdc.mo.gov)


Treasurer = **Leah Eden** (Leah.Eden@mdc.mo.gov)

Grady Manus is now the Director of the **Cave Spring Historic Site & Nature Center** in Kansas City. Grady's extensive career in interpretation spans 25 years and includes working at Fort Osage, serving as AMI President, running his own interpretive business, and volunteering at both Burr Oak Woods CNC in Blue Springs and years ago at Cave Spring. If you would like to know more about volunteer opportunities, special events, programs, or information about the Cave Spring facility contact Grady at **Cavespringkc@aol.com** or visit **www.CaveSpring.org**.

Shanna Raeker (St. Charles) reports that there have been several recent staff changes. **Colleen Scott** was promoted to Naturalist Program Supervisor at Columbia Bottom (St. Louis). At the Busch Conservation Area, **Kylee Brockmann** has left for a full-time job in Sarasota, Florida. She will be sorely missed. **Eileen Diskin** from Pennsylvania is the new part-time naturalist at Busch.

Sheri Medlock (Blue Springs) reports that **Craig Hensley** (past Director of Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary) is now married to Nyta Brown from Texas. They met at last year's NAI conference in Fort Smith, Arkansas. Their wedding took place in the morning as millions of Mexican Free-tailed bats returned to their tunnel. Craig has moved to TX to take an education position. Shari also reports that **Burr Oak Woods Conservation Nature Center** welcomes full-time naturalists **Shalena Tolbert** and **Ben Pursley**. Shalena received her BS degree from SE MO State University. Shalena has worked as a part-time Naturalist at Burr Oak Woods and animal care specialist at Ernie Miller Nature Center in Olathe, KS. Ben Pursley received his BS degree at SW MO State University (now MO State). Prior in joining the Burr Oak Woods staff, he previously worked at Rockwoods Reservation, August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area, and Montauk State Park. Finally, one of Burr Oak Woods' Naturalists, **Diane Neal**, is expecting her second child to come into this world any time!

George Kastler (Jefferson City) reports MO DNR-Division of State Parks just received another award for video production. "Missouri's Native Son — Mark Twain" won a Silver Plaque in the 41st International Communications Film & Video (INTERCOM) Competition. It won in the category of Visitor Center Presentation. The note we got said that the show was "singled-out in a competition filled with hundreds of entrants from around the world." The list of winners will be published in the official program book of the 2005 Chicago International Film Festival. George also reminds everyone that the MO Merit System is now in place to take on-line applications for interpreters, superintendents, site administrators and more. Contact George for hints on how to fill out the applications on line to get the best score. For details about this and summer positions with MO State Parks contact George Kastler at george.kastler@dnr.mo.gov. When requesting application information for summer jobs be certain to include phone numbers (when available to receive calls) and surface mailing addresses in addition to e-mail addresses.

Marian Goodding (Brookfield) reports that the 13th Annual Environmental Day at **Mark Twain Lake** was a huge success. On September 16, 637 students, teachers and parents participated in this event hosted by the Corps of Engineers. Usually held the third Friday in September, the basic objective of Environmental Day is to provide students the opportunity to learn what is currently being done to promote, protect and enhance our precious natural environment. Schools pre-register for the event. Students in grades four through eight visited a variety of hands-on booths and stations presented by local businesses and agencies, large and small. For more information about this event, contact **Mary Ann Heitmeyer**, Park Ranger at the Mark Twain Lake Project Office, Corps of Engineers at (573)735-4097 or mary.a.heimeyer@mvs02.usace.army.mil. 



OKLAHOMA State Report

Neil Garrison _____


Actor Clint Eastwood was at the White House in Washington D.C. in September. So Was Deer Creek Elementary School Principal Debbie Straughn (Oklahoma City). Debbie received the "Take Pride in America Award" from Clint Eastwood in recognition of Deer Creek Elementary School's designation as being the school that best exemplifies creativity and ingenuity in carrying out the goals of the Take Pride in America Program. The award was based on the outstanding work that students, parents and teachers accomplished in transforming a drainage ditch into an outdoor classroom.

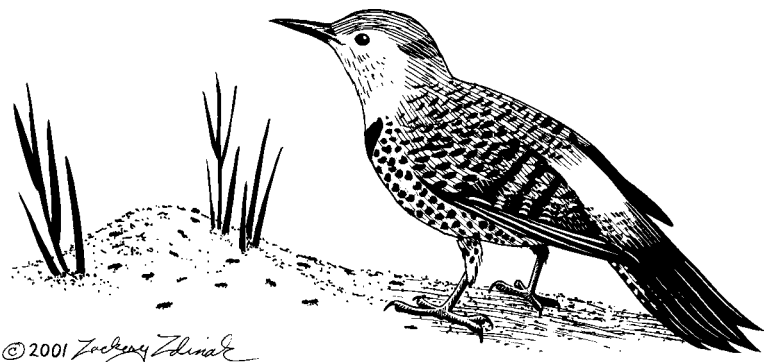
The annual conference of the **Oklahoma Museums Association** was held at Quartz Mountain Nature Park/Conference Center (Lone Wolf, OK) on September 29. **Sue Hokanson** (naturalist) and **Neil Garrison** presented a program entitled "Get Out!... Taking Your Programs Outdoors." The education personnel from the **Oklahoma Museum of Natural History** also presented. The purpose was to attempt to encourage traditional museum educators to do more programming in non-traditional settings.

Oklahoma now has a "Master Naturalist" program. It is modeled after a very successful program by the same name down in Texas. (...funny how it seems that we let all of those innovative people down in Texas do the major brain-storming on new programs & projects... before we "borrow" the ideas for use in our state...). Twenty-six members of the Oklahoma Master Naturalist program recently went out to **Lake Thunderbird State Park** to watch Naturalist **Julie Tarver** do a Dutch Oven cooking demo.

Susie Ruby (naturalist at Tulsa's **Oxley Nature Center**) was invited to the Aldo Leopold Project in Minnesota. She co-instructed a class on Dutch oven cooking. She and staff naturalist **Donna Horton** were guest instructors at the Fort Gibson "Becoming an Outdoors Woman." Director **Eddie Reese** taught a "brain tanning" class at the Heritage Days at Pawnee Bill Ranch. He and his son, Ethan, attended a primitive skills test at a site in Missouri. Eddie is beaming with pride because Ethan won a "second place" prize in this competition. **Vinnie Robinson** (Natural Resources Coordinator) teaches a class on field sketching designed for beginning artists who want to learn to accurately draw plant forms, habitat features or other natural scenes. Susie Ruby photographed the rare attempted mating of a Red-spotted Purple Butterfly and a Viceroy Butterfly. The photograph and article was published in the Lepidopterists' Society News (Volume 47, Number 1).

Loraine Richmond at **Lake Eufaula State Park** (Checotah) says she's gearing up for the Holiday Light Tour that runs from the day after Thanksgiving through the month of December. This will be their seventh year for the light tour. Their Frogatorium is up and running. Loraine says finding the frogs is kind of like "Where's Waldo," but loads of fun. There are several species of turtle, two barred tiger salamanders, gray tree frogs and green tree frogs to see. Even a cute little three toed box turtle. In case you're wondering, the Frogatorium is an indoor wetlands exhibit next to the Deep Fork Nature Center.

Lake Eufaula State Park's Friends group was busy in October. They sponsored a Haunted Hay Maze and a Terror Filled Tram Ride at the Park. Many goblins and ghouls volunteered to scare the living daylight out of visitors...who actually paid to have it happen? The scariest part was perhaps when the good fairy (played by **Sue Hughart**, Park Manager) directed the tram riders down the trail with her magic wand. It was Sue in the florescent yellow and black tights that was the scary part. At any rate, when asked her name by the tram riders, Sue replied: "Citronella." Happy Halloween! 





TEXAS State Report

Tara Tucker

According to Director of Programs **Bryan McAuley**, **George Ranch Historical Park** has one major event left for the year, the annual Campfire Christmas program. This is the only regular nighttime programming at the Park. It includes a dinner and interpretive vignettes at three sites (1830's Jones Stock Farm, 1930's George Ranch House, and cowboy camp). The evenings are December 9, 10, 16 and 17. Reservations are required. (Info at www.georgeranch.org or call 281-545-9212).

The staff of **George Ranch Historical Park** is excited to be entering the final phases of development on the last major site improvement, the **1860's Old Prairie Home**. This restored Greek Revival plantation home will serve as the setting for stories related to the second (of four) generations of the family story at the Park. The family's original home burned down in the late 1880's. The home is expected to open on a limited schedule early next year as outbuildings and other construction are being finished.


Isn't it supposed to be the "off-season?" Not so at the **Houston Zoo!** According to **Amber Pepper**, the Interpretive Programs section has been very busy filming season two of the "**Zooperstars Challenge**," a show televised on the local CBS affiliate. The program features kids from nine through twelve years old competing in a series of educational challenges that involve the animals, exhibits, and zookeepers. Although a tremendous amount of work was put into the program by the Zoo's 300+ staff, much of it was completed by the education department's **Kathy Gaughan**, **Geralyn Warfield**, **Bennett Dones**, **Sarah Fern**, and **Amber Pepper** and public relations guru, **Brian Hill**.

Michelle Pajak, Community Programs Specialist and Certified Interpretive Guide, recently took on another endeavor at the **Houston Zoo**. Pajak and her "**Conservation Crew**," a group of teenagers in grades 9-12, participate in various conservation projects throughout the community on a monthly basis during the school year. These very special teens are committed to making a difference in the environment and were selected based on an application and referral process. In addition to attending monthly meetings including guest speakers from other environmental organizations, they also spend one Saturday a month collaborating with others while working in the field.

Katie Facker reports that the CIG program is thriving at the Zoo! She and **Tara Tucker** completed classes in September and November, and are getting ready to present a CIG class in January 2006 at the **Houston Zoo**. If you are interested in taking this class, please go to www.interpnet.com (certification) for more information, or contact Tara at ttucker@houstonzoo.org.

Barbara Brandt, Community Programs Specialist and Certified Interpretive Guide at the **Houston Zoo**, announced that she will be starting a new program series in January for children from two to five years old called "Natural Beginnings." These children will participate in hands-on learning through singing, stories, and activities to help them learn about animals and the natural world.

The **Valley Nature Center (VNC)** in Weslaco, TX has been a busy place! The VNC's Education Director, **Allie Zamora**, is announcing several new programs. This year the Valley Nature Center (VNC) is partnering with the Weslaco ISD. All 4th grade students will come to the center on field trips between October and December. Besides the regular activities, including nature hikes, nature knowledge hunts, and presentations, they have incorporated their science curriculum and vocabulary words to better prepare them for their TAKS test. The VNC has instituted a new program aiming to draw families to the center. Any student who comes on a school field trip will receive a pass for free admission to use on a later visit when accompanied by an adult. The VNC offers Teacher In-Services to school districts. They consist of a guided tour of the nature park, completing a knowledge hunt using the educational displays in the exhibit hall, and participating in hands-on activities which teachers take back to the classroom and use them with their students.

Recent events for the **Valley Nature Center** include partnering with Frontera Audubon to host a Kids Birding Team with 15 members ages eight to ten. They meet once a month for birdwatching. Each member receives binoculars, a bird field guide, and a team t-shirt. The VNC held its new "Family Nature Day in the Park" on November 19. It included a nature trail walk, talks about spiders and birds, painting a life-like bird and nature ceramics, and making a foam-ball spider. 



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

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, Jay.Miller@mail.state.ar.us

Kansas: Schané Anderson, Sedgwick County Zoo, Wichita, KS, 316-942-2212 ext. 214, sanderson@scz.org

Louisiana: David Latona, Louisiana Office of State Parks, Baton Rouge, LA, 888-677-1400, dlatona@crt.state.la.us

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

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

Texas: Tara Tucker, Houston Zoo, Houston, TX, 713-666-3221, ttucker@houstonzoo.org

REGION VI OFFICERS

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DEADLINES FOR VISIONS ARE::

Winter 05/06: November 20

Spring 2006: February 20

Summer 2006: May 20

Fall 2006: August 20

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