

ARKANSAS • KANSAS • LOUISIANA • MISSOURI • OKLAHOMA • TEXAS

To Interpret Nothing

by Eugene Vale, MO DNR, Jefferson City, MO



There I was at the NAI Region Six Workshop, with my cell phone on my belt, a laser pointer, and my notebook computer. I commented to more than one person that *Star Trek* was off by a couple of centuries. Here we were only 40 years out from the TV show, and there I was with my communicator, phaser, and

tricorder. All we needed was warp drive and a transporter. We had made the trip via George driving the DNR bus, and *boy*, could we use a transporter. Anyway, some of the things which Paul Risk said at the keynote address struck home and reminded me of *Star Trek, the Next Generation*.

Back when I was in college there was in my neighborhood an old guy who was known as the “shouting man.” He would walk up and down the streets yelling at the air. Since the advent of cell phones, this is no longer unusual or a sign of insanity. However, I came to appreciate how far this has come, when the other day, I ran into one of the Borg in the store. The Borg

(short for cyborg) were villains in *The Next Generation*. Half organism / half machine, this race roamed the galaxy and would wipe out, subjugate, or assimilate other races. Here in the store was a guy talking to the air and wearing some metallic device fixed to his head. Yes, he was wearing his cell phone—at least, I hope it wasn't implanted.

There I was, face to face with one of the Borg. The Borg, in addition to mechanical appendages which would make the Six Million Dollar Man jealous, were networked. Each individual was part of the continuum, in constant communication with the whole. They had little use for spoken language when dealing with each other, and they were totally lost and distressed if cut off from the continuum. They also had little individual will. Some network administrator somewhere could take each one over and bend him/her to the will of the continuum. Are we in the process of doing this to ourselves? Prepare to be assimilated.

I've had the experience, and perhaps you have too. I have been working in the nature center when someone came in totally panicked because they couldn't get a cell signal. The pay phone 20 feet away was no

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Discover InterpNet's New Look

NAI's main web site has been redesigned with better organization, better graphics, and many new features. Included in the new InterpNet are specially designated password-protected areas. NAI members will enjoy a members-only section featuring job listings, a message board, downloads, and more. The certified trainers' area features downloads, articles, and other items that trainers can use to enhance their instructional experience.

The “old” established pages—such as the calendar of events, national and international conference information, association store, publications and resources pages, and information about the organization—have been enhanced to allow for easier navigation and a more attractive appearance.

Please send comments or concerns about the new site to NAI at webmaster@interpnet.com or call the national office at 888-900-8283. Visit NAI online at:

www.interpnet.com

Director's Report

Kelly Farrell

"So, I heard NAI is having some kind of international conference in Puerto Rico in May. Do you think anybody will actually go to that?"

This is an actual question posed to me by a Region Six member during our annual workshop last March. I was astonished. Not only did I think lots of people would attend, I was so sure that the first annual NAI *Interpreting World Heritage* conference would be a big deal that I'd submitted a proposal to present, bought airplane tickets, and couldn't wait to get there.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not one of those interpreters who makes so much money I can hop a plane to anywhere when the fancy strikes. (Are there any interpreters like that?) This trip did require careful planning and budgeting. I work for a state agency in which my supervisor and directors are extremely supportive of NAI involvement and often send me on official business to regional and national interpreter workshops. But, I didn't ask the taxpayers of Arkansas to pay my way to Puerto Rico. I began crunching numbers in my personal budget to discern how I could free up some dollars to get myself to IWH. When I sent off my registration, I could hardly wait for the year to pass. Not only would this be an exciting conference, it would be my first trip to Puerto Rico, too.

Now, the inaugural IWH has come and gone and I'm here to report that it was worth every penny.

Many NAI members think of this organization as their extended family and say that our workshops feel like really good family reunions. IWH was no different. On the first morning, still tired and a little nervous, I got a cup of coffee and sat down to people-watch. Two things were immediately obvious: Nearly everyone was smiling and the volume of the collective conversations was quite loud. It felt like any other NAI gathering I've been to; the only difference was that these 160 attendees represented 30 different nations. There was a diversity of faces, colors, styles of dress, and languages, but it seemed that everyone was excited to be there. Everyone was there to build a global network for interpretation. The focus of this conference was "sustainable tourism through interpretation" and participants were serious about problem-solving and idea-sharing.

Many IWH participants came from developing nations with little or no support for interpreters. It prompted me to not take for granted all the support I do have. My agency provides me with a full-time job, an operating budget, training, access to resources, and funding/time for professional development. As NAI members, we have excellent support through our website; national, regional, and/or sectional newslet-

ters; *Legacy* and *The Interpreter* magazines and the *Journal of Interpretation Research*; *Interpretunities* job announcements; the *Green Pages* directory; a member directory; certification opportunities; training workshops; grants and scholarships; association store discounts...the list goes on and on.

As Americans, we in NAI Region Six have a big responsibility. NAI's vision is to be "the recognized voice of interpretation," and guess what? The world is watching. Many non-American interpreters already look to us as models. Just by doing our jobs well, we help establish interpretation as a respected profession worldwide. At the same time, we can learn from those in other countries. For example, most of us know the importance of using visuals in our interpretation, to aid visual learners and those who don't speak our language. Well, we only *think* we have language issues: At IWH I met an interpreter from a part of India where 18 different languages are commonly spoken. *She* understood the value of visuals and had good advice to share.

On the flight home, I studied the map in the back of the airline magazine. As I looked from country to country—Scotland, India, South Africa, Korea, Australia, Canada, Brazil, Mexico, Panama, the United States (including Puerto Rico, of course)—I grinned as I pictured my new colleagues/friends who call those places home. I've already corresponded with several, and look forward to learning and sharing even more.

Are you like the member at the beginning of this article who wondered if anybody would really attend IWH? Do you think of NAI's international opportunities as irrelevant to your work, something that's for "other people" but not you, or perhaps that they're out of your reach? I urge you to reconsider. NAI is your professional organization and these opportunities are for you. Even if you never travel outside your state, you are connected to a global network through NAI.

I don't know if I'll be able to attend IWH next year when it's held in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (March 25-29, 2007), but I will definitely return someday. I hope to see some of you there! Be sure to check out the Puerto Rico conference photos and learn more about next year's IWH at www.interpnet.com/iwh.

By the time this goes to print, I'll have been to the national NAI board meeting in Fort Collins and will share a full report in the next issue of *Visions*. Please feel welcome to contact me anytime you have questions or concerns abo

Over and out.



Connect to Controversy--Create Meaningful, Whole Stories

Kathryn Devany DiFoxfire, Rock Bridge State Park; Columbia, MO

We live today in a world of fear, a fear so great that it buries our greatest stories. That fear steers us away from interpreting dark and dangerous issues. Stories of slavery, minorities, war, death, changing family structures, religion, urbanization, property rights, women's history, and other issues often linger in the shadows and sidelines. Why should we tell such stories? Because connecting to controversy is one of the best ways to tell meaningful, whole stories. By burying difficult details, we tell only partial truths, and our stories lose significance.

Interpreting controversial and sensitive topics takes courage. Too often, we are afraid of the issues, afraid to step on people's toes, and afraid of negative reactions. Yet the path of greatest fear is also the path of greatest growth. If we face our fears, we'll also unearth our courage.

So, how do we successfully connect to controversy?

First, identify stories with drama. "Whole stories" grab people's interest because they contain people making hard choices, people balancing the need to be good with the need to survive, people facing challenges and struggles and achieving success despite the odds. Drama is created by stories with depth, told

with compassion. Research what sensitive issues underlie the topics you wish to interpret. You do not need ALL the pieces of the puzzle. You simply need enough to relate to universal concepts: fear of death, joy of freedom, difficulty of choice, etc.

Next, connect the drama to your audience's personal lives and present concerns to provoke a dialogue (Tilden's principles #1 & #4). Challenge your audience to wonder how or why something happened or how something felt. Ask difficult questions, but be careful not to suggest "right" and "wrong" answers. Instead present a balance of perspectives, be sensitive and respectful, acknowledge disagreements, use accurate language, and keep your agency/supervisors informed so that they can provide support and feedback and help you create strategies ahead of time.

We cannot escape or ignore our darker stories, nor should we try. Now, more than ever, we need to dig deep and find stories demanding to be told. Our telling of them won't be perfect. Yes, we'll make mistakes. We may end up trampling on some people's toes, perhaps even each other's. What is important is that we begin the dialogue. And if you keep connecting to controversy, you may find that you don't want to tell stories without it.

Pride

Janet Price, Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, Middlebrook, MO

I sit here on the porch with my notebooks piled up around me... Plenty of work to be done. But the new NAI newsletter is here, vying for my attention. I've worked six days this week. I can take a break for a few minutes. I pick up the newsletter and start reading.

This entire issue is articles from Louisiana, in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. The cover story is by Dave Latona, a friend of mine. Katrina is obviously still fresh in his mind. He writes about preparing for the storm. "What can I do?" He tells of the aftermath, thankful that his family and home made it through the storm, yet thinking of so many others who were not so lucky. Again, he asks, "What can I do?"

The next article is about Jean Lafitte National Historical Park, a place I called home for many months. I gave tours through the swamp, pointing out the alligators to curious visitors. In my mind, I picture the boardwalks where I jogged daily, lackadaisically sidestepping the numerous baby cottonmouth snakes sunning themselves on the path, and I wonder what is left.

I'm grateful the story mentioned that all the park staff are safe.

I read about Big Bend Marsh, where over 70 percent of the red-cockaded woodpecker trees were downed. I recall one college winter spent searching pine forests for such nesting trees, and I feel that "my" birds are in trouble.

Another friend writes jokingly about her "summer vacation" in New Orleans as part of the National Guard. Drinking only bottled water and resigned to using porta-potties for weeks, she now views flush toilets as a luxury. I can relate to that, having no drinking water or toilets at my workplace for three months now. A planning meeting held at another facility was truly a treat for us... "flushies!"

We lost our "flushies" last December, when a reservoir break flooded Missouri's Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, forever altering the landscape. Hurricane Katrina

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reassurance; they had to be in constant contact (with whom?) at all times, no matter where they were. In our society today, we seem to be addicted to sensory input, and we are so afraid of its lack that we ensure a constant barrage of phone calls, e-mails, text messages, music, videos, and electronic games; cell phones, iPods, Walkmen, Watchmen, DVD players, Gameboys, X-boxes, and Blackberries. Unfortunately, if we keep all of our senses full—nay, overloaded—we block out all other input. Our senses are not open to receive the unexpected and often important messages, such as the ambulance siren or the song of a bird.

It is not just electronics with which we do this to ourselves. My niece and nephews do not know the seasons winter, spring, summer and fall. They know the seasons hockey, volleyball, baseball, and soccer. The family has a popup camper, but don't ask me when they get to use it. Someone always has a game, often played indoors. It is curious that with so much socializing, we are so cut off—from nature, history, and each other.

These things came to my mind as Paul Risk recounted the story of the Chief Interpreter at the Grand Canyon taking the seasonals out on a point and telling them to "Experience the place." What a concept! "Interpretation is not information, but revelation." Speaking of revelation, one of my brother-in-laws is a theologian with a special interest in mysticism. He says that prayer should be two-way communication, but the problem is that we always do the talking. Meditation is making one's mind blank, blocking out the clutter of thoughts and leaving our minds open and receptive. In other words, shutting up and giving God a chance to speak. Many of us have had a spiritual experience with the resources we interpret, usually at a time of quiet and solitude. Not only are such times

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affected hundreds of thousands of people. Our disaster, while on a much smaller scale, has also affected lives, reaching far beyond our small park community.

When I first heard of the flood, my first thought was, "What can I do? Can I help search for the family? Can I start cleaning up the mess?" That very day, I was inundated with phone calls... "Are you all right? What can I do?" For three months, state park staff and visitors have constantly asked, "What can I do?" The outpouring of concern continues today.

Crews have been working diligently to get Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park cleaned up. More than 10,000

rare in our modern society; they are also often feared.

Perhaps in our efforts to help visitors appreciate the resource (natural or cultural) we should spend less time sharing the experience of *something* and more time on sharing the experience of *nothing*. We have often been told that when we stop during a led walk, we should turn and face the group, wait for stragglers to catch up, and make sure everyone can hear. Next time you are on a led walk or tour, check this out. As the interpreter leads the group from one stop to another, see if the s/he doesn't keep up a persistent chatter—often on unrelated subjects. After all, everyone must hear the real program, and so this chatter can't be on topic. I've seen this happen. Indeed, when it doesn't both the interpreter and the visitors seem uncomfortable with the awkward silence. Why should silence be awkward? Give them time to appreciate the resource for itself and themselves.

Most cave tours will at least devote a few seconds (too bad it's not longer) to the experience of total darkness. I knew one particularly creative interpreter who found a spot where you couldn't even hear water dripping. His tours were often treated to total silence. How can we work such things into other programs? Think about it: in order to see the stars and planets of the night sky, you must be willing to experience darkness. In order to hear a lizard rustle through the leaves or the song of a bird on the hill, you must be willing to experience silence. In order to appreciate the life of a settler on the frontier, you must be willing to experience solitude.

The result of revelation is that the visitor is turned on to the experience and motivated to seek out similar experiences. Think about how can you put this into your programs. Perhaps the most valuable thing we have to interpret is really nothing at all.

truckloads of sediment and debris have already been hauled out of the park. Much of the work has been done by hand--very difficult, very labor-intensive work.

One thing that has struck me about these work crews is their strong sense of pride. These people, many of them local, have taken ownership of this park. It's true, Missouri state parks already belong to all Missourians. But these people have a heightened sense of ownership. They've put their blood and their sweat into pulling this park back together. And they are proud of it. "What can I do?" They're doing it.

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Forest Tao of Tree Fallen to Earth

Michelle Neubauer, Route 66 State Park, Eureka, MO

Lichens,
Mossy, gnarled, wet, green,
Enchanted kingdom,
of a giant brought to Earth
Dewy spun Faerie's bower,
home to many.
Wooden Cave,
lifesource of
little plants growing out,
a bridge, an anchor and a lifeline,
pliable and ancient.

Leaf Bed,
quiet decay,
buzzing decomposition,
sculpture of complementary opposites,
flowing, twisted like a stream
golden jewel in gossamer thread
Peace.
Sadness for the life that was,
Happiness at the life that is.

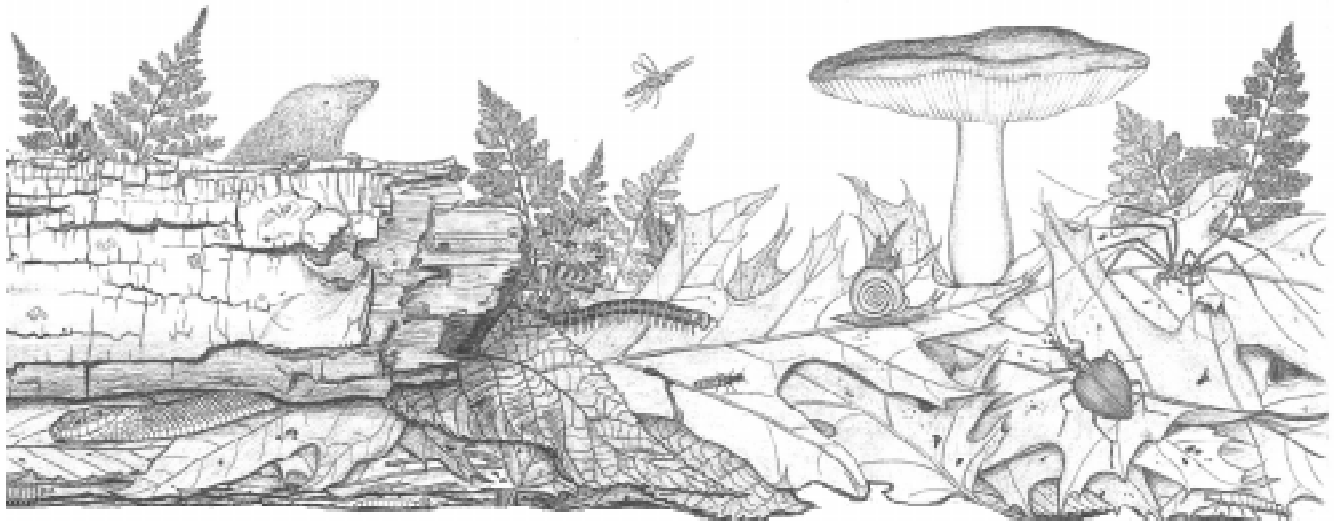


illustration from *The World Beneath Our Feet: A Guide to Life in the Soil* by James B. Nardi

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What can I do? As an interpreter, I can do as Dave Latona suggests - I can continue to do my job. I can continue to tell the story of Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, its history, this event, its people. I can tell of its management and use, its successes and failures. I can tell of this event, the effect it had on the land and the treasures we protect here. And I can tell of the people, their memories ... the visitors who come here year after year, the locals who grew up with the park in their backyard, the workers who stepped up and did what they could to put it all back together.

Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park will never be exactly the same. But it is not the trees, the campground, or the rocks that make this park special. It's the culture, the history, the people. It is the sense of place, the

sense of pride. That hasn't changed.

"What can I do?" Do what you can. If you can't help in New Orleans, or at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, look around your own neighborhood. Ask yourself again... "What can I do?" Spend some time with a lonely neighbor. Tell a story to a child. Take time to play ball with your son.

Do what you can, where you can, when you can ... and be proud.

Editor's Note: You can follow the clean up and recovery efforts at www.mostateparks.com/jshutinsdamage.htm.



ARKANSAS State Report

Jay Miller

The three-story, \$33 million, 60-room lodge and 13 cabins on the edge of the highest point in Arkansas opened with great fanfare in May. The **Lodge at Mount Magazine** is quite a showplace. We look forward to hosting NAI meetings there, though it's not large enough for the Region Six Workshops.

Forty additional state park staff completed State Parks' **Basic Interpretive Skills Training** this year. The "Basic Skills" include NAI's CIG training. Fifteen of the park staff chose to pursue NAI certification and successfully became CIGs.

Arkansas State Parks welcomes these **new full-time interpreters** since the last issue of *Visions*: **Michelle Hunt** at Petit Jean, **Billy Braden** at Logoly, **Julie Tharp** at Lake Catherine, **Donna Rausch** and **Mary Ann Parker** at Parkin, **Jennifer Bassett** at Bull Shoals, and **Elizabeth "Z" Easley** at Pinnacle.

The **Arkansas Museum of Natural Resources** at Smackover successfully hosted the **Arkansas Museum Association meeting this spring**. Located in south Arkansas, the museum is filled with outstanding exhibits telling the story of the Arkansas oil boom era.

Central High National Historic Site broke ground for a **new visitor center**. They have been operating very successfully out of a gas station from the 1950's era they interpret. The new center will provide much-needed office and exhibit space.

The Old Statehouse Museum is continuing a very well-received exhibit: "**Try Us: Arkansas and the U.S. - Mexican War.**" Included are living history events on the impressive statehouse lawn. On May 20, visitors were transported to Saltillo, Mexico, where they found living history performances, traditional Mexican food, music, dance and speeches. **Ian Beard** of the Old Statehouse Museum is working to form a statewide organization of living history performers.

4-H hosted a **conservation careers camp**. Participants toured several parks and heard speakers from Arkansas State Parks, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the Department of Environmental Quality, the USDA Extension Service, the Arkansas Forestry Commission, and others. The Careers Camp was coordinated by **Shannon Caldwell**, Environmental Instructor at the **Ferndale 4-H Center**.

Joey Herron and **Jeff Heitzman** report that the "front country" "Leave No Trace" program is going well at **Hot Springs National Park**.

The **River Trail** that follows along the Arkansas River in both Little Rock and North Little Rock was featured in the July-August 2005 issue of *Legacy*. The loop is now nearing completion with the connection of a massive pedestrian and bicycle bridge across the Murray Lock and Dam.

If you find yourself in Little Rock before October 1, be sure to see the exhibit **Spectacular Achievements: Audubon's Animals** at the **Historic Arkansas Museum**. Through September 10 you can also see a remarkable exhibit of PEZ candy dispensers, invented by Austrian candy executive Eduard Haas in 1927.





KANSAS State Report

Pat Silovsky

Bob Gress at the **Great Plains Nature Center** in Wichita reports that the Friends of the GPNC has just published a new wildlife book which features the works of 224 young artists and authors selected from nearly 1,500 entries. The book is titled, **Kansas Critters: Mammals, A Wildlife**

Book Written and Illustrated By Kansas Kids. Four different awards ceremonies are scheduled for August 26 and over 1,000 authors, artists, family members and teachers are expected to attend.

The Friends also recently published the 6th poster in the “Faces of the Great Plains” series. This poster, entitled “**Wildlife Migrants,**” features the Painted Bunting as the center portrait. It is available free to visitors or can be mailed for \$5 per poster to cover shipping and handling.

Mary Clark at **Dillon Nature Center** would like to thank NAI Region Six for the mini-grant award they received. They are purchasing water testing equipment to become part of the **StreamLink** program. Mary and **Steve Kinser** will be attending a StreamLink workshop this June. Dillon Nature Center would also like to report that **Stephanie Carlson** has been hired as a part-time naturalist to assist with school programs. She has been a wonderful addition to their staff.

The **Kansas Scenic Byways Program** is working on an **interpretive display** for a rest area being designed for the **Frontier Military Scenic Byway** on US 69 near the **Marais des Cygnes National Wildlife Refuge**. There will be an outdoor trail with interpretive panels along the way as well as an indoor display highlighting all of the attractions—scenic, historic, cultural, recreational, and natural—along the 167-mile route. **Deb Devine** reports there are many partners in this effort. They are coordinating this effort with the group trying to establish the **Bleeding Kansas/Freedom Frontier National Heritage Area**.

Cindy Ford at **Pittsburg State University** tells us that **Sarah McCoy**, former director of **Nature Reach**, has taken a position at Neosho Community College to teach. **Delia Lister** will be finishing her Master's Degree this fall and will officially take the directorship in January. Delia has a degree in secondary education and is finishing her Master's in field studies of wetlands in southeast Kansas.

Chris Pistole says everyone is busy at **Ernie Miller Nature Center** in Johnson County. They just finished hosting the **Third Annual Birding Festival** under a forecast of 100 percent rain. With 200 people in attendance they were able to do ALL the birding hikes despite the rain. They used this event as part of the Kansas Wildscape Foundation Outdoor Kids Day. With such sponsorship, they were able to give each participant a free t-shirt and lots of prizes like beginning bird guides and binoculars. Besides the Birding Festival in April, there were several Earth Day festivals and the Interpretive Site Coalition Passport to Adventure Kickoff at Union Station. They also hosted an Open House at the newly completed climbing tower at the Timber Ridge Adventure Center. Chris thinks he should have had on his Batman costume for the rappelling down the tower!

In the northcentral part of the state at the **Milford Nature Center**, we were part of the **Wakefield Birding Festival** at the end of April. This festival was several days with overnight lodging needed, and it attracted people from at least 5 states. We have also been working hard on a new “Nature Playground” area with a “Milk Snake Run” (where you slide through a snake complete with an inside view as you go), a giant spider web, climbing walls, a beaver den, and 4' dinosaur bones in the sandbox!

I also received word of some items for sale in Wyandotte County that folks in NAI might be interested in. The Wyandotte County Fairgrounds will be demolished soon after the August 2006 fair. The 4-H Council will sell by sealed bids several displays that will not be feasible to store until the new fairgrounds is completed in 2008. Bids are due August 7, 2006. **These displays are for sale: Native Fish Display:** built in the 1990's. Two 500-gallon steel fish aquariums, each with three glass observation windows. Includes a dual tank circulation/filtration system and lights; **Duck Pond Display:** 500-gallon U-shaped tank, top enclosed with an attached chain link fence; **Butterfly Display:** L-shaped walls used to enclose a corner of the 4-H building approximately 200 square feet. wall system includes 6 4x8 insulated glass panels with 2 screen doors and screen in ceiling. For more information contact pboyd@oznet.ksu.edu.



LOUISIANA State Report

David Latona

New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park

Things are starting to slow down a little at our visitor center after an invigorating festival season. We experienced nice crowds for the **French Quarter Festival** and **Jazz Fest** which was quite nice to see around this part of the world for a change. April was **Jazz Appreciation Month** so we had live music every day we were open. We now are back to our regular schedule of concerts every Saturday and Wednesday with our musical ranger programs on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Our visitor center in the French Quarter has been open since mid-November and our visitation has slowly been creeping upward. As we like to say here in the birthplace of jazz, "We're rebuilding New Orleans one note at a time!"

Poverty Point Offers Archaeological Mysteries

Northeast Louisiana's **Poverty Point State Historic Site** has always been a place of mystery, owed mostly to the many unknowns associated with the site's origins some 3,000 years ago. In January, two archaeological experts visited the site to conduct a large-area, high-resolution geophysical survey of selected portions of Ridge One at Poverty Point to attempt to clear up some of the site's mysteries. **Dr. Bale Clay**, Supervisory Archaeologist and Geosurvey Specialist of Lexington, Kentucky and **Dr. Michael Hargrave**, Archaeologist, U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center of Champaign, Illinois, wanted to demonstrate that such a survey could detect the ridges and swales, as well as relatively small anomalies, associated with cultural features. While answering some questions, their work also added a new twist. The survey located large 20 to 25-meter, circular anomalies located in the site's main plaza. Dr. Clay and Dr. Hargrave plan to return to Poverty Point later this year for additional surveys of the area, while Louisiana archaeologists **Dr. Joe Saunders** and **Dr. Thurman Allen** will be conducting ongoing investigations of the anomalies by soil coring.

Bayou Segnette SP Celebrates Black History Month, Mardi Gras

Bayou Segnette State Park celebrated Black History Month by showing several videos from the Jefferson Parish Public Library, including "Black Indians, An American Story" and "Black Leaders, Men and Women of Excellence." After the videos, participants designed and made their own personal flag representing the milestones and goals of their lives. On the last Saturday of the month, the site celebrated Mardi Gras by making masks out of paper plates and paint and offering a hayride parade through the park.

The site's first astronomy program was very popular and well attended. A very special thanks goes out to the **Pontchartrain Astronomy Society**, who came out in full force with many different kinds and sizes of telescopes, and who offered participants a fascinating night of beautiful planets, constellations and colorful nebulae.

Bayou Segnette State Park sustained a great blow as Hurricane Katrina made landfall last summer. If it had not been for the tireless efforts of our wonderful employees and volunteers, the park would have remained closed. Great job!

Longfellow-Evangeline SHS Aids in Preserving Acadian History

An article in the January issue of *Southern Living* should help visitors realize that **Longfellow-Evangeline State Historic Site** is open and ready for visitors. The site was mentioned in an article entitled, "Hot Food, Good Times," that covered attractions in St. Martinville, Lafayette and Breau Bridge.

Longfellow-Evangeline SHS has recently collaborated with area schools and other historic sites on several programs. One such program, the "Save Our History" project, was done with the Acadian Memorial and schools from Lafayette, Cecilia and New Iberia. Students visited the Acadian Farmstead, watched a spinning and weaving demonstration, and tried out some chores and games. They will use this experience and research to write stories based on the lives of Acadian children who were exiled with their families during Le Grand Derangement. The stories will be judged and the best ones will get recorded and incorporated into an interactive audio program at the Memorial called "Let the Children Speak." The project was filmed and will be shown on the **History Channel**.





MISSOURI State Report

John Miller _____

The **Association of Missouri Interpreters** (AMI) will conduct their annual conference September 25-28 in Cape Girardeau, MO. The theme for this year's conference is, "**Only through our connection to the resource will we connect visitors to our unique sites.**" For more registration information about this conference and AMI, go to **www.mointerp.net**.

George Kastler (Jefferson City) reports that the **67th DNR Spring Seasonal Training** conducted May 21-25th was another huge success. The award-winning week-long training at **Babler State Park** had a more than 75 staff and seasonals interacting to learn the skill, art, and passion of interpretation. Missouri DNR annually hires around 70 seasonal interpreters for summer positions. If you know of anyone interested in summer seasonal positions with MO State Parks, contact George at (573) 751-5384 or George.Kastler@dnr.mo.gov

John Miller (Branson) would like to thank everyone who helped and attended the **11th Annual Family Fishing Fair** event on June 10. The event drew 655 people and plenty of warm weather. This year's event had the challenge of a slightly new venue due to the on-going Hatchery renovations. The event was held around the **Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center** for the first time. A huge thank you to **Leah Eden** for coordinating this successful event.

Lynn Youngblood & Lisa Lacombe (Blue Springs) report that the March 10 "**Snakes Alive**" program was a huge event. Almost 800 people attended the evening program. In addition to viewing a variety of venomous and non-venomous snakes, seeing snakes eat mice, learning about snake myths, and presentations by herpetologist David Nieves (Omaha Zoo) and John Miller (MDC), participants were escorted like mice that were swallowed by a room sized snake. The mouse-eared audiences were toured through the snake by Rat Guides who pointed out the unique anatomy of the giant snake and were ultimately 'pooped' out. This program was part of the Friday Night Live series.

Connie Grisier (Marshall) is excited to report that not only did she change her name from Connie Winfrey to Mrs. Martin Grisier, but that **Van Meter State Park's newly expanded visitor center** is to have a new name...**Missouri's American Indian Cultural Center**. The new 2,600-square foot addition was completed in April. The new exhibits will not only interpret ancient history of the tribes while residing in Missouri but also the 20th and 21st Century issues tribes deal with today: cultural identity, political sovereignty, and economic development. The center will open in phases starting in fall 2006.

Steve Jacobsen (Kansas City) at the **Discovery Center** welcomes **Chuck Shroyer** and **Kathy Johnson**. Chuck is the newest Education Specialist. Kathy is the new Public Service Assistant, who has been on board for a couple of months now. Congratulations to volunteer **Dana McDaniel** who recently received her 1,000 hours of volunteering award.

Cyndi Cogbill (Liberal) reports that **Prairie State Park** hosted the award-winning program "**Border Disorder**" on June 3. The event was even bigger and better than last year. The event gave visitors the chance to experience the uncertainty of living on Missouri's western border during the American Civil War. The next big event is **Prairie Jubilee** on September 23. This is the premier celebration of the tallgrass prairie.

Carla Fairbanks (Liberty) reports that **Bob Kanwischer** is the new Naturalist at **Martha Lafite Thompson Nature Sanctuary** in Liberty, MO. He has been a part-time naturalist outside of Chicago, Illinois at the Red Oak Nature Center and Tekakwitha Woods Nature Center. Bob is originally from Chicago and is new to both Missouri and NAI Region Six. The staff at MLTNS is excited to have Bob on board and is gearing up for a very busy school and day camp season!

Amanda Vansel (Lawson) reports that she is now the Interpretive Resource Technician at **Watkins Woolen Mill State Park and State Historic Site** in Lawson, MO. Amanda had previously been a seasonal Naturalist at Prairie State Park. You may contact Amanda at Amanda.Vansel@dnr.mo.gov.

Colleen Scott (St. Louis) reports that as of February 21, **Jamaica Duane** is the new Naturalist at MDC's Forest Park office. She has a B.S. in Natural Resources and worked as a seasonal at Meramec State Park. Finally, Senator Jim Talent has introduced national legislation to establish the **Confluence National Heritage Corridor**. This would include Columbia Bottom CA.

AJ Hendershott (Cape Girardeau) reports that **Pat Holloway** is the new MDC Education Consultant in **Poplar Bluff**. Pat replaced the departing Jennifer Ferris.





OKLAHOMA State Report

Neil Garrison _____

Change of plans! Change of plans! Change of plans! The **2008 Region Six Workshop** will be in Oklahoma...not in Louisiana. The "pelican state" will host the regional workshop in 2009. This change was made

so that the NAI leaders in hurricane-ravaged Louisiana can have an extra twelve months to muster their forces ... and make their plans.

Its name is Sue! It is billed as "the LARGEST"...and "the most complete"...and "the best preserved." It is the skeleton of a *Tyrannosaurus rex*. **The Sam Noble Oklahoma Museum of Natural History** (Norman, OK) is hosting Sue through July 30.


NAI member **Amy Stephens** is a published author! Wow! Congrats! Her brand new book ("**Oklahoma City Zoo: 1902-1959**") was released on Memorial Day. It is a historical look at the zoo's beginning ... which focuses largely on the zoo's most popular animal inhabitants over the years.

It sounds like everybody had better address an envelope to **Sue Hughart**. Enclose lots of bandaids and aloe vera lotion in the envelope before you send it on its way. Sue and her family went on vacation to Hawaii -- and they stayed in a place called "The Lava House." Ouch! That sounds very painful! Ha! (Actually it is a lodge smack dab in the heart of Volcano National Monument ... and the key attraction there is the opportunity to sit out on the lodge's back veranda at dusk and watch the red glow in the sky from the nearby active volcano's lava flows.) Wow! (Sue is the Park Manager at **Lake Eufaula State Park**; Checotah, OK.

Kenton Peters was one of the instructors at this year's "**Oklahoma Wildlife and Forestry Youth Camp**." This week-long residency camp for teens was held at **Beaver's Bend State Park** (Broken Bow, OK). (Kenton is the Assistant Naturalist at Oklahoma City's Martin Park Nature Center.)

... and ... on a personal note ... my wife (Becky) and I just celebrated our eleventh wedding anniversary. We celebrated with a vacation trip to St. Louis, MO. The big highlight of the trip was a chance to attend a gathering of stone arrowhead makers ("flintknappers") ... 150 hobbyists who travelled to the event from 19 states. The leader of this event also gave us a personalized tour of nearby Cahokia Mounds State Archaeological Park.

"Some people are beginning to call me 'the Looney Lady!'," says park naturalist **Leann Bunn**. (**Tenkiller State Park**; Tahlequah, OK) This is in reference to the very popular programs that she conducts at Lake Tenkiller: the "Loon Watches." Leann takes park visitors out on the lake to do these birdwatching tours. It has been estimated that no less than 400 common loons over-winter at Lake Tenkiller...plus several dozen Pacific loons ... and several dozen red-throated loons ... and at least one yellow-billed loon! Wow!

The staff at **Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge** purchased a mini-van just so that it can be used for their public tours to take folks out to watch two active bald eagle nests there on the refuge. The refuge partners with Leann Bunn (Lake Tenkiller State Park) for these public tours. 

High Flight

Michelle Neubauer, Route 66 State Park, Eureka, MO

A fleet of cloudy, white dragons
traveling the sky,
swimming the airy lifts of wind.

they hurry on, anxious to see the world
just out of sight, the visions beyond the
horizon.

Through the channels of thermals
they go, to a destination at Earth's end.

Vagrant metamorphs,
do they know their journey
will leave its trace
on their high velocity souls?

Oblivious to the tracks of travelers below,



TEXAS State Report

Tara Tucker

Kristi Payne, the Communications Assistant with the **River Legacy Living Science Center** in Arlington, says that the Center is celebrating all things kids during **National Kids Day** on August 6. The free event is aimed at encouraging families to spend quality time learning and playing together. Activities will include a family bike ride, arts and crafts, refreshments and other fun-filled games that parents and children can both enjoy. The River Legacy Living Science Center is also inviting children from child-care centers, summer camps and other facilities to “play” in the water this summer. Children in grades K-6 will explore the various stages of water, what floats and what sinks in water, how water flows, and what plant and animal life call water home in the **Let’s Explore Water! group programs** offered in July and August at the Living Science Center. Cost is \$5 per child.

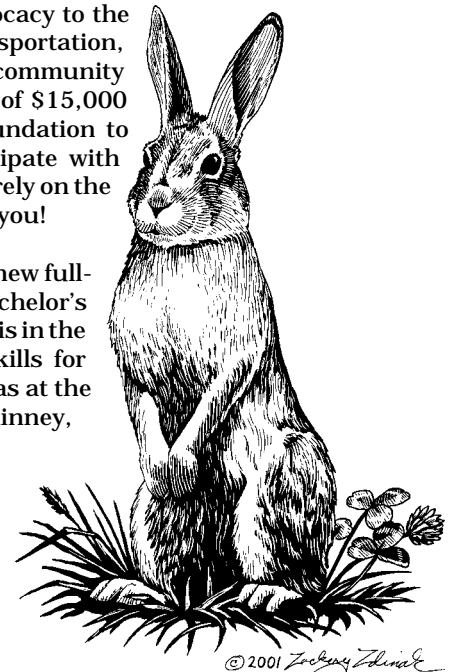
Congratulations to the **Ellen Trout Zoo!** According to **Charlotte Henley**, the Zoo received a grant from the T.L.L. Temple Foundation (Diboll, TX) for \$500,000 to be used toward **construction of a new Education and Administration Center.** The new facility will be composed of two buildings connected by a breezeway. The education building will include an auditorium, two classrooms, offices, restrooms, caterer’s kitchen, biofacts storage and animal holding. Both buildings are approximately 12,700 square feet in size. It’s the goal of the staff to begin construction in the first half of 2007.

Liz Haskins of the San Antonio Zoo Education Department reports that the **San Antonio Zoo** is continuing their Summer Naturalist Program for teens 14-18. This is their third year of interpretive stations and activities where the teens do the interpreting! They’re adding sustainable seafood and vermiculture to this year’s stations. In addition, they will be implementing evaluation methods to determine the success of their program.

There’s a lot blooming at the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center**, and it’s not just the plants! According to **Stephen Brueggerhoff**, Public Programs Manager, The Wildflower Center has expanded their annual evening program (called “Nature Nights”) for the 2006 season. Nature Nights are fun, family learning programs that are diverse in thematic focus; from “The Art of Storytelling” to “If Looks Could Kill: Carnivorous Plants.” From “Backyard Concerto: Frogs” to “Bats In My Belfry,” Nature Nights are enjoyed by a diverse local audience. Scheduled walks & talks, interactive Discovery Stations, and crafts round out the program, creating an atmosphere that engages and delights young and old alike.

Also at the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center**...staff was successful in obtaining a grant which will support the presentation of this robust nature-based program to under-served populations within the greater Austin community. They partnered with **El Bueno Samaritano**, a non-profit organization that provides programs of health care, basic education, and community advocacy to the Hispanic community. The partnership was formed to provide no cost transportation, complimentary admission, and bilingual translation to encourage active community participation in this worthwhile program. Cumulative grants in the amount of \$15,000 were received from the Effie & Wofford Cain Foundation and the Trull Foundation to support the partnership and program expansion. They consult and participate with regional experts (yes, there most definitely is a carnivorous plants expert), and rely on the gracious support of biologists from **Texas Parks & Wildlife**. Kudos to all of you!

The **Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary** is looking for a new full-time **Outreach Education Coordinator**. Qualified applicants will have a Bachelor’s Degree in Biology, Zoology, Wildlife Management, or Education with an emphasis in the natural sciences or equivalent job experience, excellent public speaking skills for audiences of all ages, and animal handling experience. Contact Marissa Atamas at the Heard Natural Science Museum and Wildlife Sanctuary, One Nature Place, McKinney, TX 75069, 972-562-5566 ext. 251, matamas@heardmuseum.org.



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DEADLINES FOR VISIONS ARE::

Fall 2006: August 20

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Summer 2007: May 20

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