



Inside this issue:

Director's Corner	2
We Inspire	3
Place-Based Interpretation	3
Inspiration Move Me Brightly!	4
A Tale of Three Castles...	5
A Tale of Three Castles... (cont)	6
Be a Guardian	7
AR State Report	8
OK State Report	8
TX State Report	9
LA State Report	10
LA State Report (cont)	11
MO State Report	11
KS State Report	12
All About Region 6	13

Good Things Come from Acorns

Robin Grumm-Missouri

All good things come to those who wait.

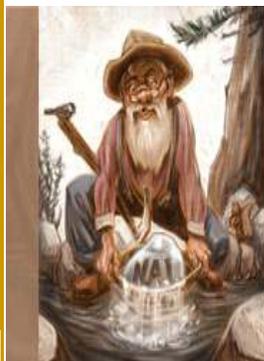
I was thinking about acorns - because they were dropping quite noisily on my back deck - when this saying came to mind. This was often said to me by my father. As I looked into the canopy of the many oaks surrounding my deck and house, I thought how true this was. So many good things were being given to me by these oak trees and it all began with a tiny acorn. I was personally enjoying the shade from the oak trees at this particular moment and I knew my house



was much cooler as well. Not only was I benefiting from the shade and cover, but many other animals and plants were, too. The sweet-smelling spice bush I planted in the shade and cover of the oaks was thriving as were the young dogwood trees. I can't begin to name all of the birds that use these tall oaks, but I get a special kick out of watching the nuthatches traverse the trunks upside down. I dare not forget the curious squirrels that call the oak trees home. And I am grateful for the most of acorns that feed the squirrels, deer and turkey. Not all acorns make it to the oak tree stage, you know.

Most species of oak are not considered fast growing. Once an acorn sprouts, it might take a couple of decades before the oak tree would be large enough to provide the shade I experienced. That is a long time to wait! Given time though, many oak species will grow to be the mighty oaks of legend or at least of family stories. They are long lived and are revered for their magnificent stature. Runge Conservation Nature Center has a number of centennial white oak trees that have proudly stood on this acreage long before we celebrated our 20th anniversary this past summer. 20 years is nothing to these oak trees.

Did someone purposefully plant acorns over one hundred years ago at this spot we call Runge or are these majestic oaks the product of a forgotten squirrel's cache? For that matter, did someone long ago plant the stately oaks at my house, realizing that someone someday would enjoy all their goodness? Regardless of how the saplings sprouted, we know they came from a tiny acorn begun a long, long time ago. That is amazing! Pick one up this fall and imagine all of the good things that come from an oak tree if we only have the patience to wait for it to grow.



NAI National Workshop
Reno, Nevada

NAI 2013

Inspiration is Contagious

John Miller

Contrary to what you might think, when you sit in on a NAI National Board meeting, I know that you will truly be inspired. You will be inspired by the board's passion and drive to make NAI a truly world-class member focused organization. NAI is at a major turning point with new bylaws and a path to strong strategic plan. I was inspired that these board members and officers are looking to a bright future, but they are also conscious of those talented members who blazed the path we know as NAI.

Region 6, like our parent organization, is at a crossroads. This turning point is primarily involves how to align with the new bylaws. For the most part, this will be relatively painless. We will proceed as normal and continue to improve our interpretive service to our members. One thing that you may notice in the next year is that the designation of 'Region' may be replaced by 'Unit'. What inspires me is that our current Region 6 business plan is not much different than the plan being implemented by the new bylaws. Our dedicated leaders will continue to inspire other units across the NAI organization.

Closer to home, I was fortunate to be involved with recent interpretive conferences in Arkansas as well as Missouri. Experiencing the passion of these members of Region 6 was very invigorating. I was particularly inspired to be a part of the recent conference for the Arkansas State Parks at Mount Magazine State Park. Not only were these Arkansas interpreters master innovators, but they also strived to better their interpretive profession. Their love for interpretation was positively contagious.

On the drive back to Branson from Mount Magazine, I could not help but feel that the entire region was my true inspiration: not just the outstanding folks in Arkansas. Despite the new innovations and technique that were shared, our Region 6 members still stay true to their interpretive roots. As our "interpretive giants" like Bob Jennings, Tim Merriman, Lisa Brochu, and Sam Ham have provided insight and mentorship, so to do our current members. This was very comforting to know that the tradition will continue.

I am blessed to be a part of this remarkable organization and Region. I have come to the revelation that inspiration is not the purview of veteran interpreters. Inspiration can and does come from new and seasoned members alike. Inspiration, like passion, is one of the essential ingredients that any interpreter can ever possess. If we all keep communicating with all levels of NAI, we will continue to have the most inspirational of all professions...interpretation. Don't be afraid to be the inspiration for others. Be contagious and be an inspiration.



Region 6 Director John Miller is the Facility Manager at Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center in Branson, Missouri.

“Inspiration, like passion, is one of the essential ingredients that any interpreter can ever possess.”

Keep in Touch with YOUR NAI Board.

Would you like to know what issues your Board is working with? All NAI Board meeting minutes are posted for members to view. To see a complete list of NAI Board Meeting minutes, go to:

www.interpnet.com/nai/Resources/NAI_Administrative_Documents/Meeting_Minutes/nai/resources/Admin_Docs/Board_Meeting_Minutes.aspx?hkey=00ee558f-07da-47e6-ac72-bd3114c542f5

We Inspire

Janet Price-Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park, Missouri

I wrote an article about inspiration for the newsletter. This isn't it.

The first one was griping about me being mopey and unmotivated, waiting for inspiration. I told the coordinator I had an article I didn't send, because it was "uninspired." She sent me an email back: "You are always an inspiration... J" That made me smile. No, that made me feel really good. I don't know why, but it made me feel better.

Sometimes we search for inspiration. Sometimes we sit and wait for it to come hit us over the head. But sometimes, I think, we just need to be reminded of that special thing we interpreters do so well – *we* inspire. Even when we don't know it, apparently.

"You are always an inspiration... J" I can see the little smile on her face when she wrote that. I've always said that real interpreters are a unique bunch. One seasonal said "I finally feel like I'm with people that get me." He was inspired. I've heard other seasonals say "I wasn't sure this was the right career for me. Now I'm sure it is!"

I don't know if I inspired them. Maybe it was more that I gave them the opportunity to discover on their own the magic of being an interpreter. I just put them in the right place at the right time.

Wait... I've heard that before. Isn't that what we're supposed to do with our visitors? Create the opportunity for them to discover, on their own? Not lecture or teach, so much as inspire. Make them feel comfortable, safe, and let the magic happen.

"You are always an inspiration... J" You are an interpreter. You inspire others to discover the wonder around them, whether it's a rare glade flower or a squirrel, a piece of music, a wall of art, the sound of cannon fire... Create the opportunity. Put there just a spark. Let them discover.

Inspire.

Place-Based Inspiration

Bernice Blasingame-Texas



The colors of the canyon walls rejuvenate my soul and urge me to share my passion for interpretation in this beautiful and unexpected canyon on the high plains of Texas. As I drive through it or hike the trails, I never tire of looking at Palo Duro Canyon or the flora and fauna that thrive within it.

What has become routine to me is a source of wonderment to visitors who spend so little time in nature. Inspiration comes from watching the face of a child who, for the first time, notices a spider web covered with dew drops sparkling like diamonds. Seeing the wonderment on their faces when I point out a raccoon track in the river mud, a porcupine's dimpled track in the sand or a deer quietly standing in a grove of trees inspires me to keep on keeping on. Our visitors' lack of connectedness to the natural world inspires me to continue interpreting with the hope that something I say or do will light a spark in them. Maybe, just maybe, there will be at least one in the group who has that "Ah Ha" moment and I will be an inspiration for that person. Maybe, just maybe, there is a budding interpreter in a group of school children who will someday take my place and in turn become an inspiration to another child who is experiencing the natural world for the first time.

Lastly, I have been inspired by Karen Watson, recently retired Regional Interpretive Specialist, who always encouraged me to do my best. She included me in her region when I had little leadership in my own and kept me in the loop. When regions were rearranged she was finally my very own interpretive specialist and worked tirelessly with all of us to do better, learn more, push ourselves to step out of our comfort zone, improve programming and reach for the stars. All interpreters in Region 5 have lost our champion. Her inspiration will continue with us even though she is no longer working for Texas State Parks.



Mark your calendars for the 2014 Region 6 conference in Guthrie, Oklahoma!

And while you're at it...make sure to send the awards committee your nominations for professional awards. Let's recognize the outstanding work in interpretation happening all over our Region! Stay tuned to the Region website for upcoming deadlines.

Inspiration Move Me Brightly!

Clark Hancock- Texas

Words are interesting. Whether written or spoken, they illustrate one of the most intriguing aspects of the human brain, symbolic reasoning. In the case of the spoken word, our minds decode complex sounds. If the word is written then our brain must comprehend abstract images. The results forge connections with knowledge and experiences from our past imbuing these aural and visual symbols with meaning, sometimes universal, all the times personal. For me, the word *inspiration* is a great example. It seems that every time I come across this word, I flash on a particular lyric penned by Robert Hunter:

“Inspiration, move me brightly
light the song with sense and color,
hold away despair”

The invocation quality of this passage is intriguing for it seems that the poet is asking for help from a power outside himself, the power of inspiration. A little research comes up with a juicy tidbit:

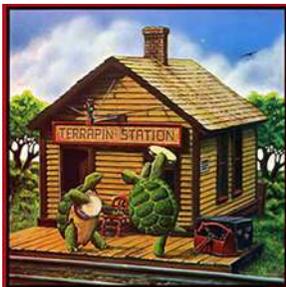
“*Inspiration*’ is from the Latin for ‘breathing in.’

The entry for ‘*Inspiration*’ in ***The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*** states that ‘At least as early as Homer, inspiration holds a central place in Greek poetics, both as invocation to the gods, or, more often, the Muses for the gift of memorable speech, and also as claim that when the god does take possession, the poet enters a state of transcendent ecstasy or frenzy, a ‘poetic madness’ or *furor poeticus*.’”

from *The Annotated Grateful Dead Lyrics*. By David Dodd

Ah, those crazy ancients but the concept applies. When we are inspired we are taking in something from outside ourselves triggering a sense of awe, maybe a view of our world from a different angle or new idea. It comes to us through diverse avenues: our families and close relationships, interactions with co-workers and mentors, at home or on vacation, being quite in the natural world or being part of a large event. No matter what the trigger, inspiration flows into us and we find that we are in that state where, to paraphrase Abraham Maslow, we may more fully use and exploit our talents, capacities, potentialities and the like, the grail of self- actualization.

There is something else implied in this concept of “inspiration” as a flow. Not only does it flow into us as individuals, it can also flow out. Recently on the NAI Facebook page – if you use Facebook it is worth a like – folks were asked to fill in the sentence “Interpretation should_____”. One of the most repeated responses was “inspire”. As interpretive professionals, we are charged with the responsibility of providing opportunities with those whom we interact. You might say, we become the voice of the muse, revealing, provoking, sharing the wonders that we’ve experienced, providing the wind to fill their sails. In other words, we can be the source of their inspiration.



“Counting stars by candlelight
all are dim but one is bright:
the spiral light of Venus
rising first and shining best,
From the northwest corner
of a brand-new crescent moon
crickets and cicadas sing
a rare and different tune”

from *Terrapin Station*, lyrics by Robert Hunter

A Tale of Three Castles and Two Interpreters

William Ray-Missouri

Anybody can give a tour. Putting to memory the facts of a site that can be recited on an hourly or bi-hourly basis is a skill that can be learned in a relatively short amount of time, and for many, that is sufficient. But not for us! We are not content with such mediocrity; for we hold ourselves to a higher plane – where the visitors on our programs walk away wowed, inspired, provoked, and hungry for more. Please allow me to kindly relate a recent experience I had at castle on the English-Welsh Border.

It is always fun to go to another site simply as a tourist as you quite literally get to walk in the footsteps of the visitor, and see things from that perspective. On our way back from the Welsh town of LLangollen, via canal, my wife and I decided to tie up our boat and walk to this old castle. It was about a two-and-a-half-mile walk, but how often does one get to tour a castle in Wales? So we set out, eagerly anticipating some inspiring interpretation. We arrived in high style escorted by a swarm of black flies who were seemingly interested in American tourists in general and my wife's frizzy hair in particular. We paid our money, realized that after a week in country we still couldn't read Welsh, and processed into the courtyard waiting for our guided tour.

At the appointed time, a heavy wooden door opened and all of us fortunate enough to hold tickets for the tour were ushered in and the same heavy wooden door was shut and locked behind us. Our guide fit the description that I would expect for taking a tour through an old castle filled with paintings, tapestries, and other antiquities. He was a well-dressed gentleman in his mid-60s in a suit and tie. To my wife and I, he looked learned – which, considering our ignorance of English and Welsh history, was the best we could hope for.

He started off by introducing himself and his role at the site, and we found out that he had been a volunteer for some time and he quite relished giving tours. He was certainly pleasant enough, but as we went from glorious room to glorious room, the bulk of his interpretive content was concerned with *the stuff*. This painting, that chair, this baluster, that harpsichord, and so on and so on. As a guided program whose chief goal was to provide information about the pieces and opinions about their provenance, and interrupted by brief family stories, it was great.

However, when we were done, I didn't feel connected. I certainly didn't feel I could relate to any of the previous occupants that we had heard about, and if anything it was with some relief that my contractual role of being the tourist had come to an end. As we walked out, our guide reminded the group that the east wing which had recently been restored to how it was in the 1920s was now open for the day and we were welcome to walk through it at our leisure. Now, I hadn't walked two and a half miles (mostly uphill) to a 14th century Welsh castle to see how it was lived in during the twenties, but our guide did mention that there was a library and I found myself unable to resist. We worked our way through the library and on through to the saloon, where everything changed.

The bright and airy room was flush with plush; comfortable couches, divans, and other examples of siphaphanalia greeted us at every turn. Large windows not only let in the light but also looked lovingly on the formal gardens just outside. There were the musical hits from Great Britain during the twenties and thirties playing on an old phonograph. And there was a suit of armor.

But even though the suit of armor stood out like a suit of armor in a refurbished 1920s saloon in an old Welsh castle, it wasn't the armor that was commanding the attention of the visitors. *That* privilege was reserved for what was next to the armor...

He stood about 5'10" and was most likely in his mid-late fifties. While he wasn't dressed as formally as his counterpart, he sported a pair of suspenders and a striped tie in that way that really only the English can pull off. Bespectacled, he exhibited a confidence that would suggest that perhaps he might have taught English and Drama at the high school level in his earlier years. He held all the visitors in the room in the palm of his hand.

So what was it that he had to say that had an entire roomful of people enthralled? It wasn't so much the quantity of verbosity or brevity in his presentation, as it was the quality of his focus. In a room filled with *stuff*, the most of his talk was centered on the *lives* of the people that had lived there. An aristocrat by the name of Lord Howard de Walden, or Thomas Evelyn (as he was known pre-title) and his family occupied the castle in the early twentieth century and by the talent and passion of the interpreter in the room, that family became once again alive.

I could easily see Lord de Walden taking his breakfast in a suit of armor (just to prove that one could function in them) while reading the Sunday *Times*. I turned around and saw Cole Porter entertaining on the Steinway grand piano in the corner. Rudyard Kipling, J.M. Barrie, Queen Mary; they were all there in that room. I could share in their laughter; listen in on their conversations as they talked about the importance of the arts and of the issues of the day.

I saw them all, which was pretty grand considering that none of them had been in that room for close to ninety years.

So how did he do it? It wasn't magic, but it was *magical*. I could go bit by bit through his interpretive program and flag certain markers and techniques that he employed to make his presentation meaningful, but the fact of the matter is that above all else he had a desire to tell *the story*. He was clearly moved by the accomplishments that Lord de Walden had made, ranging from the founding of the Welsh National Library and National Opera Company to his commitment to the surrounding community. In short, he thought Lord de Walden was an

A Tale of Three Castles and Two Interpreters (cont.)

William Ray-Missouri

amazing individual, and did his utmost to ensure that we, the audience, would think likewise. His commitment to that goal made all of the difference.

It is not enough for us to have our facts of the story straight; that is the bare minimum of what is required of us. Our task is to seek out those aspects of the story that we simply cannot wait to tell to our visitors. Of course, the wonderful equation $(Ka + Kr) \times AT = IO$ (knowledge of the audience *plus* knowledge of the resource *times* appropriate technique *equals* interpretive opportunity) spells out the various components that make for successful, meaningful interpretation. But I maintain that without that passion and desire to tell *the story*, we are far less likely to develop a thorough understanding of those components. Without the passion, we are less likely to reach excellence, and less likely to reach the visitor.

So where do you fit in this equation? I hope that at least some part of *the story* resonates with you, and that resonance serves as a springboard for you in your interpretive journey. Not all of us will be moved by the same aspect of *the story*, and this is what makes it such a personal affair. However, it is precisely because of that truth that will make your interpretation personal, powerful, and more relevant for our visitors.

As I look back at our experience in Wales, I see that even though it was only one building, it really was three castles; the medieval castle keeping a watch on the Welsh border, the castle with the Myddelton's four-hundred-year history, and the castle of Lord de Walden in the early twentieth century. A three-storied castle, if you will. It was in this three-storied castle we experienced two flesh-and-blood interpreters, and the one story that seemed the least likely to capture the imagination of American tourists on holiday was the one we found most relevant.



You can invest in the future of NAI and the profession by making a contribution to the Enos Mills Fund. For the past 54 years National Association for Interpretation (NAI) has served as a professional family for people working with parks, historic sites, zoos, aquariums, museums, nature centers, and tour companies.

NAI has grown to more than 5,500 members to date, committed to our mission of "inspiring leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation as a profession." Member services are fundamental to NAI's success, such as:

- Rebates to regions and sections for newsletters
- Regional, national, and international workshops and conferences

- Publication of magazines and books
- Peer-juried Journal of Interpretation Research
- Interpnet.com website with online Member Directory and Member Forum
- On-line Legacy magazine
- Training courses
- 7,000 individuals certified in six categories
- Association store
- Interpretunities – jobs listings
- Standards of Practices – NEW publications on best practices
- Interpretation Roadmap coalition – NEW collaboration to help members find the right professional development and recognition opportunities

Please join us in support of the interpretive profession and insuring the long-term stability of NAI by making a donation or a pledge to the Enos Mills Fund today.

Be a Guardian

Jamie Hubert-Missouri

If you are a parent, you know that one of the universal truths of childhood is that they find something they like and *hyperfocus* on it. That goofy song on that PBS show? Let's listen to it 1,000 times *in a row*. That toy that makes sound? Let's press that button *for the next hour*. That great new movie? Let's watch it *every night until you can recite it word for word*. This behavior is how their brains are wired to learn and we as parents go along with it and try to be as engaged as possible with them even though we know the song/movie by heart. So while indulging my young son with a viewing of the new release *Rise of the Guardians* for the tenth time this week, I began to really think about the message in the movie. Essentially, the characters have a job to do besides their obligatory holiday duties; they protect the children of the world and all that they value: wonder, hopes, dreams and fun. I thought to myself...what a great message. It isn't about the "stuff" and the "things" in life, but what is really important are those intangible ideas that define childhood. As Santa says, "Big eyes, very big, because they are full of wonder. That is my center. It is what I was born with, eyes that have only seen the wonder in everything! Eyes that see lights in the trees and magic in the air. This wonder is what I put into the world, and what I protect in children. It is what makes me a guardian. It is my center, what is yours?" [Did I mention we've watched this movie a lot?]

That idea struck me in a profound way. We interpreters often speak of that sense of wonder for the natural world and for the stories of those who came before us and shaped who we have become as a community or nation. We know the importance of that sense of wonder not just in children, but adults too—it is that priceless ingredient that fuels their connection and creation of a sense of place in the world and at our sites. The connection that we all know leads to a desire to protect and care for those things that we hold dear. Without someone there to facilitate those moments, our parks and sites are just sterile places.

In the movie, the heroes of the story face loss of power and ultimate disappearance if the children do not believe in them and what they stand for. Instead of dreams they have nightmares, instead of hope they find disappointment, instead of wonder there is fear and slowly the characters disappear or lose their magic. I'm watching this movie and suddenly I'm struck with this profound notion that we interpreters...we are also guardians.

Without interpreters to provide experiences that are avenues for those emotional connections, the visitors will lose those essential ingredients needed for protection and stewardship: the wonder, the passion, the beauty and at its core...love. Without visitors believing in our mission and the importance of what we protect, our sites lose their magic and disappear. In a world full of a thousand distractions and stresses that easily overwhelm those intrinsic elements that give a person a sense of place in the world, the interpreter's duty is more important than ever. *You are a guardian*. Of your site, of your mission, of those intangible ideas that go beyond the apparent to the real, beyond the truth to the more important truth (to paraphrase Tilden). You protect the intangibles that are at your center and help facilitate our visitor's emotional connections. Perhaps at your center is wonder, like Santa and me. Maybe yours is passion, reverence, honor or beauty. Your center is what made you want to become an interpreter and what you put into the world. It is the reason you are a guardian.



What is your interpretive center?

For me, it is this. *Wonder*.



This article received an award from the Association of Missouri Interpreters for "Outstanding Interpretive Media" at their workshop this September, and was originally printed as the "President's Corner" article in the Spring edition of their newsletter, the *AMIGO*.

So are you ready, fellow interpreter? To make it official and take the oath to watch over the visitors and the resources of your site? To vow to guard them and guide them with your passion, wonder, and awe, for they are all that we have, all that we are, and all we ever will be?

You will? Congratulations, fellow interpreter. You are now, and forevermore, a Guardian.

Robin Gabe is the new **Field Interpreter** for **Arkansas State Parks**. Robin's dedication to our department, exemplary professionalism, interpretive experience, and earned credentials - along with her kind, patient, and positive attitude - make her an excellent fit for this position.

A native Arkansan, Robin began her ADPT career in 2001 as a seasonal interpreter at Lake Poinsett State Park. There, she discovered her love for park interpretation and soon moved to a full-time job at Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park where she has been for 12 years, most recently as the supervisory Park Interpreter II. Robin is a leader on the successful Toltec team which has numerous accomplishments and deserved accolades.

Prior to her Parks career, Robin was a classroom science teacher for four years. She holds a bachelor's degree in education with a middle school science endorsement from Arkansas State University. She is an active member of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) and is a Certified Heritage Interpreter (CHI) and Trainer (CIT). In 2011, she was honored with the NAI Region 6 Distinguished Professional Interpreter Award. Robin serves on the department's Interpretation Trainer Team and Interpretation Advisory Council, and is also a certified emergency responder. Family is a top priority for Robin and when she is not at work, you can usually find her with her family outdoors - hunting, fishing, or playing golf or baseball.

Shelley Flanary, interpreter at **Cossatot River State Park and Natural Area**, was selected as the 2013 Arkansas Project Learning Tree Outstanding Educator. She will be honored on October 3rd in Little Rock. She will be Arkansas's nominee for the 2014 PLT National Outstanding Educator Award during the International PLT Coordinator's Conference in Traverse City, Michigan.

Ninety Arkansas State Park interpreters and supervisors gathered at **Mount Magazine State Park** for a three-day interpretation workshop in August. It featured our first Interpreter's Resource Challenge (IRC), a version of Region 6's Interpretation Quiz. Region 6 Director, **John Miller**, was our keynote speaker and **Jay Miller** visited to be roasted and toasted.



**ARKANSAS
State Report**
Don Simons



**Congratulations to
Robin Gabe for her
promotion to Field
Interpreter for
Arkansas State
Parks!**

The **NAI Region 6 Workshop Committee** continues to work on planning the regional workshop. The conference theme is "From Grass Roots to Blue Grass" and will be held in **Guthrie, Oklahoma** from February 24-26, 2014.

Matthew Tucker Blythe has been named Superintendent of **Washita National Battlefield Park**. Congratulations Tucker!

The **Stingray Bay** exhibit opened at the **Oklahoma City Zoo** this summer. Stingray Bay is where zoo guests and members have the amazing opportunity to see stingrays up close and touch these majestic creatures! Guests can interact with these beautiful animals as they "fly" and glide through a 16,000 gallon two-foot deep saltwater pool. The exhibit collection of 30 animals includes cownose stingrays, southern stingrays, bonnethead sharks, and white-spotted bamboo sharks.

In accordance with the Healthy Parks, Healthy Living initiative and the National Park Foundation, **Chickasaw National Recreation Area** received a grant for the **Platt Trail Blazers** program. In this program, hikers use an activity log to keep track of their mileage and time. Logging 100 miles will get you a free water bottle. Log 200 miles and you can receive a pedometer.

Kenton Peters, formerly of Oklahoma City's Martin Park Nature Center, announce that he's changed jobs and is now a classroom teacher with the Yukon Public School System.

The **Oklahoma Aquarium** in Jenks, Oklahoma, conducted a unique program on August 2nd called "Sleep with the Sharks." This program was a sleep-over event for children at this facility where the kids slept alongside the big shark tanks. Sweet dreams kiddos!

The **Oklahoma History Center** sponsored a unique educational program on August 31, 2013. The title of the program was "Plains Moccasin Class." The class participants got the opportunity to do a hands-on activity as part of the coursework -- each was supplied with both rawhide and tanned leather. By the end of class, they were able to produce a pair of shoes.

Great news! **Lake Murray State Park**, Oklahoma's first state park, celebrated its 80th anniversary with a new visitor center/nature center. A new building has been constructed at the base of the park's Tucker Tower, and it is this new structure is now the nature center.



**OKLAHOMA
State Report**
Karina Minor



TEXAS State Report
Tara Humphreys

Charlotte Henley shares that the **Ellen Trout Zoo** hosted an “Endangered Species Day” on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2013. This program will focused on about twelve of the exotic endangered species that they work with at the zoo. Also, they will be conducting a “**Growing Up Wild**” workshop for teachers of young learners at the zoo on October 5, 2013 from 9:00am until noon. Advanced registration is required and a fee of \$25.00. Contact Charlotte at chenley@ellentroutzoo.com for more information.

August 17th marked the **100th anniversary of Old Tunnel State Park**. The park hosted a celebration of the 100th anniversary of the first train’s steaming through the only tunnel on the San Antonio Fredericksburg & Northern Railroad’s 24-mile rail line. Approximately 20,000 people visit the state park each year, primarily to view the bats emerging from the abandoned rail tunnel in their nightly search for insects. The tunnel is home to approximately 3,000 cave myotis bats and up to 3 million Mexican free-tailed bats from May through October.

It’s the first ever **Citizens Park Ranger Academy!** Led by **Dinosaur Valley State Park Police Officer Robert Enckhausen**, registered participants are learning the Texas State Parks’ mission and goals while allowing them the opportunity to experience realistic situations and scenarios in state park operations. Beginning in August, participants are meeting 2-3 hours each Saturday for 8 weeks to experience many different hands-on activities.

The **Hill Country Alliance** sponsored a Certified Interpretive Guide workshop in September. Congratulations to all those who participated!

Karen Watson, Regional Interpretive Specialist for Texas State Parks in the Waco area, retired at the end of August. She’s been a long-time member of NAI Region 6, and has attended many regional workshops. We will miss her greatly in Texas State Parks, but she said she will remain active in NAI Region 6. We’re going to hold her to that! In the meantime, help us honor our dear friend and colleague:



Karen Watson will be dearly missed by her TPWD colleagues, but promises to remain active with Region 6.

*It's hard to believe, but Karen has done her due,
After many years in State Parks, she is nearly through.*

*She's given so much - to interpretation and more,
With amazing dedication, she's an interpreter to the core.*

*How many CIG's and trainings has she led through the years?
She paved the way for new interps. as they've overcome their fears.*

*She's mentored oh so many, and a friend she's always been,
Won't you help us honor her by picking up your pen?*

*Send a note or word of thanks for all that she has done,
We will miss dear Karen Watson, for there is only one!*

Send a note to Karen at: watson.karena@gmail.com



Recent CIG graduates: back row: Nano Calderon, Adam Michalski, Ben Eldridge, Christy Muse, Angela England, Elizabeth Bates
front row: Julie Farmer, Angelika Fuller, Cindy Cassidy, Nancy Russell, Greg Harmison
back row: Nano Calderon, Adam Michalski, Ben Eldridge, Christy Muse, Angela England, Elizabeth Bates

Texas Coordinator **Tara Humphreys'** email address has changed! Please send your state updates and pictures to tara.humphreys@tpwd.texas.gov in the future.



LOUISIANA
State Report
 Rusty
 Scarborough

Clair Coco at **Blue Bonnet Swamp Nature Center** reports that they recently brought their successful summer day camp season to a close. Nearly 250 children ages 5 to 15 participated in day camp sessions, including the new Counselor-in-Training program.

It was a busy summer at **Hodges Gardens State Park**, reports **Lori Hopkins**. Programs like "Painting in the Park," geocaching, and outdoor movies provided park visitors with lots to do on weekends. One of the highlights were the park's Sunset Barge Tour, where the park ranger has taken guests around the lake on a Sundancer barge while giving the history of the park. The guests have been enlightened on the unbelievable history of Mr. A.J. Hodges and family. They too get to see his vision that he had so many years ago.

A new exhibit has opened at **Mansfield State Historic Site**, according to **Sharon Broussard**. The new permanent exhibit featuring artifacts, letters, uniforms, and other materials detailing the battle of Mansfield and the Red River Campaign of 1864. Other little-known and important themes relate the impact of the war on the lives of local community members and the roles played by women, enslaved people and free people of color.

Fort Pike State Historic Site has reopened after sustaining damages from Hurricane Isaac in August 2012. Volunteer groups worked during three separate "Save the Fort" days since Hurricane Isaac passed through, clearing debris and preparing the site for reopening to the public.

Kristy Wallisch of **Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Preserve** reports that staff from the park and from **New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park** teamed up with National Geographic and other partners for two days of outdoor fun and learning during BioBlitz 2013 at **Jean Lafitte's Baratavia Preserve** in May. More than 3,000 people, including 1,500 students on field trips and over 100 scientists, inventoried the preserve's plants, insects, animals, birds, and other creatures and enjoyed a Biodiversity Festival with music, local artisans, games, exhibitors, talks, and more. During the 24-hour inventory blitz, 458 species were found and identified, and scientists are still working to ID some of the trickier ones.

The **National Council of La Raza**, America's largest Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization, held its annual convention in New Orleans in July. Park staff, National Park Service officials from Washington, and Student Conservation Association interns showed off local nature and culture to adult and youth leaders with field trips to New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park and to Jean Lafitte's Baratavia Preserve and French Quarter Visitor Center.

Amy Ouchley reports that her husband Kelby's new book ***American Alligator, Ancient Predator in a Modern World*** is due out in September from the University Press of Florida. The wonderful alligator pictures are from local photographer Burg Ransom and were taken at Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Amy has also had a wonderful six months since the publication of ***Swamper, Letters from a Louisiana Swamp Rabbit***. According to Allen Dunn, the president of Friends of Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge, now kids ask about Swamper when they visit the refuge. "When I went to read stories to the day camps at the refuge in June, the kids were excited because they had seen Swamper eating in the field behind the Conservation Learning Center," Amy said. "I am hoping that if kids care about Swamper, they will also care about his habitat, the bottomland hardwood forest."

Educators have also embraced the book. Lisa Bennett Smith, a fifth grade teacher in Alexandria and member of Louisiana Environmental Education Association, is using the book in her life science classes. Diane Wetherbee, naturalist and educator, at Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Center in Texas, used Swamper in her day camp activities. She writes, "We refer often to the Swamper letters while we were hiking through our bottomland hardwood forests. It's great to have something the kids could connect to while teaching them about the area....interpretation at its best."

Kelby and I will both be at the Louisiana Book Festival on Nov.2 in Baton Rouge and Louisiana Reading Association Conference in Monroe on Dec. 6 – 7. The Louisiana Environmental Education Symposium will be in Shreveport on Feb. 21-22, 2014 and the Region 6 NAI Conference, Feb. 24 – 26, 2014 in Oklahoma.

Nathan Hatfield of **Cane River Creole National Historical Park** says that on June 19th, park staff presented a unique program to seventy students from the Natchitoches Parish migrant education program. The program featured a tour of the park with staff and volunteer Elvin Shields. A former plantation resident, Elvin shared his childhood experiences with the students.

Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park has wrapped up a busy summer, with 11 weeks of Earth Camp on site and 32 outreach programs to the Shreve Memorial Library Branches, all in addition to the regular number of programs here on site with summer care and summer camp visits.

The **Louisiana Master Naturalist-Northwest Chapter** is under formation and several of Walter B. Jacobs



LOUISIANA
State Report
Rusty
Scarborough

Memorial Nature Park staff, along with Red River National Wildlife Refuge who is hosting our meetings, is moving along with good promise. A number of local naturalists, educators and retirees have joined the efforts. State coordinator **Rusty Scarborough** is trying to gather interested parties in serving on the committee for the **2015 Region VI NAI Workshop** in Louisiana. Anybody interested in serving on the committee please contact him at rscarborough@caddo.org or (318) 929-2806

Cheyne Matzenbacher of **Roaring River State Park** reports that the park has lots going on this fall: WOW National Outdoor Recreation & Conservation School will take place October 11-13, a five-mile Wild Area Hike on October 26 and Eagle Viewing on December 21. This year has been deemed "The Year of the Trout" so we will continue with our **Troutapalooza** festivities by offering interpretive programming every weekend until November. Each weekend will not only have tours of our Rainbow Trout Hatchery but we will also offer other programs related to fishing, streams, or fish in celebration of "The Year of the Trout." In celebration, the park hosted a successful Free Kids Fishing Day on August 17, handing out 888 tags to kids. The biggest trout of the day was a whopping 6.82 pounds!



MISSOURI State
Report
Michelle
Soenksen

Association of Missouri Interpreters (AMI) Workshop was held in Branson on September 11-14. The theme was "Take Your Interpretation to New Heights in the Depths of the Ozarks." Over 80 interpreters from MO and AR attended this event. In addition to great concurrent sessions and exciting local field sessions, the annual awards and scholarships were presented on the 14th. Keynote speakers included Dr. Larry Quinalty and Dr. Will LaPage. A new feature this year was the first ever AMI Interpreter's Quiz. For more information about AMI or future workshops, go to www.mointerp.net.

John Miller reports that the **Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center** reached a major visitation milestone. On August 13th, they welcomed the Bauer family of Bancroft, Iowa as the **SEVEN MILLIONTH** visitor to their Branson facility. The family as treated to a personalized tour of the Hatchery, a free bucket of fish food, and the chance to touch live reptiles. In an amazing stroke of luck, the Bauer family had just visited the Dewey Short Visitor Center (across Table Rock Dam) where they purchased a copy of the "Show-Me Herps" book. They came to the Hatchery to see the fish AND get the author's autograph (John Miller). Needless to say, they got their personalized autograph.

Dakota Russell of **Nathan Boone SHS** reports on filming a new interpretive multimedia project for the Springfield Art Museum. It's an alternate reality game called "Art Hunters", which will premiere in June 2014. Several Springfield area interpretive sites are involved. More info at www.facebook.com/theearthunters.

George Kastler reports that the 2016 Region 6 Workshop will be somewhere in Southwest Missouri, either Springfield or Joplin as a base with fieldtrips back and forth between both cities. Also an update on grandchildren: Quinn, 8 months and Thather, 3 weeks, are doing great. Based on all birth data, they should all be tall.

Cyndi Cogbill reports that August 15th was her last day working for Missouri Department of Conservation. She has started a new business, Pawpaw Patch Productions. It will be an eclectic bit of whatever works from interpretive programs and consulting, to teaching and creating in polymer clay. She can be reached at pawpawpatch-pro@yahoo.com.

The **Cape Girardeau Conservation Nature Center** is pleased to welcome two new people to the interpretive team. **Jake Hindman** (full-time naturalist) has served with the Conservation Department for several years and recently transferred from the Department's Jay Henges Shooting Range. Jake possesses an array of outdoor skills knowledge and experience that he incorporates into programming. **Michelle Randecker** (hourly naturalist) has provided interpretation at a number of facilities and brings a wealth of experience and energy. Both are already creating new programs and we look forward to all that they'll accomplish for conservation in Southeast Missouri.



The Bauer family were the seven millionth visitor to Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center.

Ted Cable was honored to give the opening keynote address at the **International Interpretation Conference** in Sigtuna, Sweden. This conference was jointly sponsored by NAI and Interpretation Europe. Watch for an article by Ted about Tilden's Priceless Ingredient in the next issue of *Legacy* magazine.

The **Great Plains Nature Center** is pleased to announce they have funding to create the fourth in their *Kansas Critters* book series. *Wet 'n Wild* will feature wetlands and critters, including humans, that depend on wetlands for their survival. Students in K-8th grades are eligible to participate in this project. Art and literature entries from Kansas kids are due no later than Feb 15, 2014. The book will be published in 2014 and distributed free of charge to visitors to the nature center. Visit gpnc.org for more information or to receive your copy of the last publication.

Andrea Johnson reported lots of happenings at **Ernie Miller Nature Center**; however, one of the most exciting things is she married Evan Joslin on August 23rd. Congratulations! **Regina Wasson** is partnering with **Betsy Betros**, author of *A Photographic Field Guide to the Butterflies of the Kansas City Region*, and the **Idalia Society** to present a new special event called Moths in the Moonlight at the nature center.

The magic of stories is the focus of the 2nd Annual **Double Ogg Dare Festival** with Johnson County Park and Recreation. **Molly Postlewait** is partnering with afterschool programs in the area, creating a program called Youth Action Storytelling. The students that are a part of this program will present their stories at the event.

PSU Nature Reach received funding for a fourth year to cover the cost of programs to local schools in the four-state region as well as purchase some much needed computer equipment. **Delia Lister** has hired a new undergraduate student, **Tyler Dubin**, to assist her with the care, training, and maintenance of animals in the program. Nature Reach also hosted two summer day camps and one teacher workshop this summer and, since all three events were a success, they hope to offer more camps and workshops during the summer of 2014.

Pam Martin has many activities from butterflies to cranes to wetlands taking place this fall at the **Kansas Wetlands Education Center**. On September 14, kids and adults armed with nets ventured into the sunflower and goldenrod fields around the KWEC to capture and then tag monarch butterflies with the help of tagging leaders. Each family received a swamp milkweed plant and/or perennial nectar plant to take home. Then, over 350 second graders from Barton County descended on KWEC on September 18 to attend Second Graders Wetlands Education Day. A collaborative effort with the Friends of Cheyenne Bottoms, second graders rotate through seven stations. **The Choreography of Cranes**, another collaborative effort, combines art and biology. The **Barton Community College's Shafer Art Gallery** is hosting the juried art show, with KWEC providing educational workshops on whooping and sandhill cranes and tours through Cheyenne Bottoms to view cranes.

Jenn Rader has been hired as the new director of the **Southeast Kansas Nature Center** at Schermerhorn Park in Galena, Kansas. She takes the reins from **Linda Phipps**, who recently retired to spend more time with her family. Linda was instrumental in creating the SEK Nature Center and worked tirelessly to develop the center into a fine facility. She also helped orchestrate the agreement to turn the facility over to Kansas Department of Wildlife Parks and Tourism. Jenn is the first KDWP employee to take over as the director. We welcome her aboard and wish Linda the best in her retirement!

Milford Nature Center has a full season of **ECO-Meets** scheduled for the fall of 2013 with nine regionals occurring across the state. Shortgrass prairie and mammals are the topics this year. New projects in the works or soon to be started include a new exhibit case for the amphibians, a new boardwalk on the trail, a living willow tunnel in the playground, and new landscaping around the building.



KANSAS
State Report
Pat Silovosky



PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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

Katie Raney, CIG, P.O. Box 186, Smithville, TX 78957, 512-936-4682, katie.raney@gmail.com

Jamie Hubert, CIT, St. Francois State Park, 8920 U.S. Highway 67 North, Bonne Terre MO 63628, 573-358-2173, jamie.hubert@dnr.mo.gov

DEADLINES FOR VISIONS ARE:

Spring 2012: February 20 Summer 2012: May 20

Fall 2012: August 20 Winter 2012: November 20

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

Arkansas: Don R. Simons, Mount Magazine State Park, Paris, AR, 479-963-8502, don.simons@arkansas.gov

Kansas: Pat Silovsky, CIG, Milford Nature Center, Junction City, KS, 785-238-5323, pat.silovsky@ksoutdoors.com

Louisiana: Rusty Scarborough, Walter Jacobs Memorial Nature Park, Shreveport, LA, 318-929-2806, rscarborough@caddo.org

Missouri: Michelle Soenksen, CIT, Sam A. Baker State Park, Patterson, MO, 573-856-4514, michelle.soenksen@dnr.mo.gov

Oklahoma: Karena Minor, CIG, Oklahoma City National Memorial, Oklahoma City, OK, 405-609-8854, karena_minor@nps.gov

Texas: Tara Humphreys, CIT, TX Parks & Wildlife, Bastrop, TX, 512-308-1475 ext. 29, tara.humphreys@tpwd.tx.gov

REGION SIX OFFICERS

John Miller, CIT, CIG, Director: Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery, Branson, MO, 417-334-4865, john.miller@mdc.mo.gov

Clark Hancock, CIT, Deputy Director: Exhibit Coordinator, Austin Nature and Science Center, Austin, TX, 512-507-1627, clark.hancock@austintexas.gov

Lisa Cole, Secretary: Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area, Lewisville, TX, 972-219-3930, lisacole@unt.edu

Andrea Johnson, Treasurer: Ernie Miller Park Nature Center, Olathe, KS, 913-764-8580, andrea.johnson@jocogov.org

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Scholarship: Heather Runyon, Crowley's Ridge State Park, Paragould, AR, 870-573-6751, heather.runyon@arkansas.gov

Awards: Laura Motley, Oklahoma City, OK, 405-760-5667, laura.motley@us.army.mil

Elections: Kelly Farrell, CIT, CHI, CIG, Arkansas State Parks, Little Rock, AR, 501-682-2187, kelly.c.farrell@gmail.com

Membership: Rachel Demascal, CHI, Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park, Shreveport, LA, 318-929-3718, rdemascal@caddo.org

REGION SIX WEB MASTER

Dakota Russell, Nathan Boone Homestead State Historic Site, Ash Grove, MO, 417-751-3266, dakota.russell@dnr.mo.gov

NAI National Office:

P.O. Box 2246

Fort Collins, CO 80522

Phone: 970-484-8283 Toll free @888-900-8283

Fax: 970-484-8179