



Inside this issue:

Highpoints (cont.)	2
Director's Corner	3
Get High!	4
High Points and Denouement	5
Wild Walk	6
A Real Ranger	7
How to help...Sandy	7
Reaching New	8
Region 6 National Award winners/finalists	9
Region 6 National Award winners/finalists	10
AR State Report	11
KS State Report	12
MO State Report	13
OK/TX/LA State Report	14
All About Region 6	15

Highpoints in Region 6

Don Simons-Mount Magazine State Park, Arkansas

When I moved to Mount Magazine State Park in 2000 it was part of my lifelong ambition, after growing up in southern Louisiana, to live on a mountain. At 2,753 feet above mean sea level, it is the highest point in Arkansas. As I read propaganda printed by Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism and other sources I was misled to believe it was "the highest point between the Rockies and the Alleghenies." I was guilty of repeating that factoid to the public. The earliest record I can find for this myth is a newspaper clipping from 1915. Once it gets in the media it is hard to make people believe the truth. A newspaperman in the John Wayne/Jimmy Stewart movie *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* said "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend."

Then some people began to challenge me on that point. We tried unsuccessfully to use semantics to justify our claim. That was a mistake repeated by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1938 during a whistle stop at Booneville, Arkansas. Information given to him suggested that "if you include the Black Hills of Dakota as part of the Rockies, Mount Magazine" Who was going to argue with FDR? The Black Hills are not part of the Rockies. Members of the Highpointers Club were first to point out our mistake. As it turns out every state from North Dakota to Texas has higher mean sea level points than Arkansas, even Kansas. Mount Sunflower in western Kansas is just a bump on a prairie but is 4,039 feet above sea level. Ever since I learned the truth, I have tried to bust that myth, much to the disappointment of our local chambers of commerce and our department of parks and tourism. Still the myth persists. Just last year our illustrious highway department printed a nice scenic drive brochure repeating that misinformation. AARGH!

Highpointers club members love to hike. Many of them have ascended the highest points in all fifty states. They tick them off like birds on a checklist. I have two lists. One includes the ten state highpoints I have ascended. Knowing my limitation the other list includes those I have seen but never will attempt, like Denali.

My first list includes all of Region 6. At 535' Driskill Mountain in northern Louisiana does not qualify as a mountain but its steep trail is just as challenging as our Signal Hill trail leading up to our highpoint here on Mount Magazine. One interesting bit of local history is that Bonnie and Clyde were killed not far from Driskill Mountain. Missouri's Taum Sauk Mountain is at 1,772 feet but is an easy walk on a fully accessible paved path. Mentioned above, Sunflower Mountain can be driven to on dusty farm roads. A tall sunflower, made of railroad spikes welded tip to tip, marked the site. Unfortunately, vandals recently destroyed it. Oklahoma's Black Mesa (4,973 feet) is way out in the panhandle. Watch for thorns and rattlers if you hike over eight miles round trip to see its monument.

The highest point of land in Region 6 is 8,749 feet above sea level on top of Guadalupe Peak in Texas. When Lori and I arrived at the national park visitor center the first thing I asked a ranger was "Are the Guadalupe Mountains part of the Rockies?" The answer is no. But they are south of the Rockies and therefore do not qualify to settle the myth. Guide books suggest it is a moderate round trip hike of only eight and a half miles and could be done in four hours. Climbing around 3,000 feet in elevation through several life zones we took eight hours.

The answer to the myth is South Dakota's Harney Peak, at 7,242 feet as the highest point east of the Rockies. Overlooking Mount Rushmore some interesting CCC buildings at the summit back up that



Don Simons and his wife Lori at the Region 6 high point at Guadalupe Peak in Texas (8,749 feet).

Highpoints in Region 6 (cont.)

fact with a bronze plaque. If they have a plaque, it must be true; right?

So we have settled with the fact that Mount Magazine is simply the highest point in Arkansas. But wait. When we study maps we can state that it is the highest point between the Canada/Minnesota border and the Gulf of Mexico.

There are other high points in NAI's Region 6. They include its members. We are a diverse, talented, caring group with many interests and specialties. When we get together at regional and national workshops we share our knowledge, enthusiasm, and experience with everyone. Region 6 stands out like a mountain rising out of a river valley or a desert plain. I am proud to be a member.

Reference: *Highpoints of the United States* by Don W. Holmes



Louisiana boasts the lowest high point in the region at 535 feet.



Surprisingly, the second highest high point in the region is in *Kansas!* Mount Sunflower, at 4,039 feet, is but a bump on the prairie near the Colorado border.

Photo courtesy of www.northwestkansas.org



Don's home base at Mount Magazine State Park boasts Arkansas' high point at 2,753 feet.



Missouri's high point at Taum Sauk Mountain (1,772 feet) is easily accessed by a short paved trail at Taum Sauk Mountain State Park.



Visitors can find Oklahoma's highest point in the panhandle at Black Mesa, which rises to 4,973 feet.

Director's Corner: NAI's A-C members

John Miller

If you are reading this story, then the Mayans were WRONG and all is right with the world. Or is it? NAI, like other organizations, is only as good as its members. Members are what make the difference. While we are gaining some new leaders in our Officer Corps who will do wonderful things during their tenure, they need still need you to be an A-C member of NAI. A-C is my notation for "Active" and "Communicating" member.

Active members don't just pay their membership fees. They take the time to read their newsletters, make time to vote in elections (hopefully you did), encourage others to participate in local, regional, or national workshops, and most importantly, share their passion of NAI with fellow interpreters. While levels of activity can vary depending on location, employment, and agency support, your personal support ensures that NAI continues "to strive to inspire leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation as a profession."

Communication is a huge part of being active members. National and regional leaders need to hear from you about ways to keep NAI relevant and connected to you. Good, bad, or anywhere in between, please contact me, an officer, or your state coordinator on how keep NAI moving in a positive direction that meets your needs. Communication is indeed an exchange between two or more individuals. Members need to continually hear from their leaders and leaders need to hear from members. This is now more true in our social media society.

Region 6 has had a history of good A-C members and I hope that continues. While Region 6 has had its fair share of struggles in the past couple of years (Joplin tornado, fires, and droughts) we see that other regions are experiencing tremendous difficulties. With the recovery of Hurricane Sandy and the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, it would appear that there is a feeling of dread or helplessness. Despite the horrors that they experienced the "silver lining" is something that we have also seen across Region 6 -- that despite the horrors of tragic events, there will always be a strong sense of community where people help each other in times of need. You will learn later in this newsletter how to help fellow interpreters with the areas devastated by Hurricane Sandy. Citizens across the Northeast US are coming together to forge constructive communication to rebuild and prevent events like this from happening in the future. For now, what can you do?

It is interesting that the public trusts information provided by interpretive sites over information by news media and even the government. That trust is an amazing yet well deserved burden. What you can do is to not shy away from the difficult or uncomfortable topics of these events. Using Tilden's principles, you can help those in your own communities to understand that we can build upon tragedies to make things better in the future. You can help to interpret that while we may not fully understand the specific moments of Sandy or Sandy Hook, we know that the humans across time are resilient and are made stronger by their community. The negative actions of one individual or a natural disaster, while equally devastating, will ultimately strengthen the community that they have impacted.



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

"NAI...is only as good as its members. Members are what make the difference."



Registration online now! EARTH, WIND, AND FIRE is more than the answer to the question, "Which rock group had the 1970s hits *Shining Star* and *Boogie Wonderland*"? Earth, Wind, and Fire are the forces that shaped the Flint Hills of Kansas and it is the theme of the 2013 NAI Region 6 Workshop to be held in Manhattan, KS. As the gateway to the Flint Hills and the world's largest remaining track of tallgrass prairie, Manhattan might not be a boogie wonderland (although after this workshop it may be known as that!), but you certainly will see many shining stars in the brilliant Kansas night sky as well as your colleagues who are the shining stars of interpretation. For more information or to register, visit the Region 6 website at <http://www.nairegions.org/6/workshops/>

Get High!

Janet Price-Middlebrook, MO

When I hear the words “high point”, I first think of Taum Sauk Mountain, the highest point in Missouri. I am its “keeper.” Taum Sauk Mountain is 1,772 feet above sea level. Pretty high -- for Missouri.

So, you park and walk on a level sidewalk to the high point, stand on the rock in the woods and take a picture. But just a little way down the mountain are some of the *real* high points – the things that make this difficult hike worth the trip. It’s all about the journey, what’s along the way. Like:

The glades, painted in purple blazing stars, or sunny yellow coreopsis. Like the bright green collared lizard that runs across the glade on its back legs like a miniature T-Rex. Like the hickory nuts still hanging from the almost-leafless tree, looking like ornaments on a Charlie Brown Christmas tree.

Like the view across Taum Sauk valley, with no human disturbance in sight. Oh, look – there’s a vulture flying in the valley. Funny thing ... I’m higher than he is. The high points are often the small things.

My mind moves on to other high points, more emotional things that made me say “Wow!” Like the fireball that lit up the Big Sky over Montana – and I happened to be looking right at it. Or the night the Aurora Borealis turned the whole sky red, with white lasers dancing through it. Then there was the time the rattlesnake slithered two feet away from my face, and all I could think was – cool!

Then there are those totally unexpected awesome moments – those quiet but powerful connections that make me whisper under my breath, *wow*. I found the *wow*. I was just sitting by the river at a quiet little spot when two young teenagers came up. “Have you seen anything neat?” “Yeah,” they said. And without another word, those girls sat down next to me. When they spoke, it was in muffled voices, respectful of the silence. “Look,” one whispered, “there’s a turtle.” She was excited. “What’s that?” the other whispered. “That’s a muskrat”. I handed over my binoculars. “See the tail? It’s scaly like a rat tail, only squashed flat.”

We sat there for a long time. Just sat there, together, quietly sharing in the excitement of the little things, the high points – turtles, crawdads, the little sand boils at the spring.

I’ve been involved in interpretation for 25 years, long enough to call it a career. When I look back, recalling the high points, I always come back to the same thing. My greatest achievement, the thing I’m most proud of, is other interpreters. So many awesome interpreters! But a few of you awesome interpreters (and you know who you are) make me especially proud. I knew you when you were young, budding interpreters. Some of you worked for me, or with me. Some I “corrupted” through NAI or AMI workshops. I like to think that in some small way that I played a part in that greatness. I see what you are doing with so many others, both interpreters and visitors.

You’re doing great things. You’re making a difference. And if I had a part in making that happen, then I’ve had a successful career. I’m fortunate to have too many high points in my life to list here. How about you? Next time you feel down, or wonder why you do this, think back to the high points in your life. May they be too numerous to count.



Two hikers (Region 6 member Andy Senters at right) stand upon Taum Sauk Mountain, Missouri’s highest point.

“My greatest achievement, the thing I’m most proud of, is other interpreters.”



Many interpreters have found themselves inspired by the creative mind of Janet Price.

High Points and Denouement

John Miller-Branson, MO

Few things are more satisfying than creating an interpretive program in which you bring your audience to a climactic high point. We live for moments like that. But how do you or your audience really know when that high point has been reached? Understanding the mechanics of that moment is something that is often overlooked. It is at that point that you can PROVOKE your audience into a call for action or give them a reason to share the meanings of your presentation with others.

Would the following stories be as meaningful if they had ended at their high points?

- in the third Lord of the Rings book/movie, *Return of the King* the story ends as the “one ring” melts into the lava fire of Mount Doom. We would miss the return of the king, the scouring of the shire, and the ring bearers destiny.
- the book/movie *A Christmas Carol* ends with a jubilant Ebenezer Scrooge opening the window on Christmas morning to realize that he has a second chance on life. We would miss Tiny Tim’s most famous quote, “God bless us everyone.”
- a trout angler removes the hook from a 25-pound rainbow trout she has just landed in an alpine stream in the rocky mountains. Was it released, mounted, or eaten?
- a desperate Civil War unit from Maine, with no support and running out of ammunition, chooses to rush the enemy with bayonets during the July 1863 Battle of Gettysburg. Would we know their fate or that this unit during this battle helped turn the momentum of the entire Civil War?

In literature, this resolution following the high point is called the *dénouement* (pronounced Day-new-Ma). Translated from Old French as “untie the knot,” the *dénouement* is your opportunity to steer your audience into truly comprehending what they just experienced. This point immediately after the climax not only defines the peak of the high point, but also gives your audience to frame their experience into a call for action -- provocation. If done with care, your *dénouement* adds meaning to both the high point as well as the direction of thought you want the audience to remember. Without this resolution the audience may feel confused even cheated.

The best way to guarantee that you have achieved the maximum vivid emotion that will stay with your audience is to create BOTH the highpoint and the *dénouement*. Both should be planned to fit together much like what spice (*dénouement*) should be used on any given entre (high point) to create that ultimate interpretive program (taste). The high point without the resolution achieves less success than if both are intertwined. Finally, like movies with “alternate endings,” programs that are often repeated can have slightly different resolutions. Subtle differences such as sea salt, iodized salt, kosher salt, or table salt all make for slightly difference outcome...even on the same entrée. These subtle substitutions can provide the ability to keep from giving stale programs. Each of these spices or *dénouements* may also allow you to match a specific need for your site or agency.

So continue to create your quality high point or climax into your presentations. In doing so, make the effort to include a corresponding and meaningful *dénouement*. You will be positively amazed at how your audiences respond to these messages. The *dénouement* ensures an opportunity for action and long term appreciation of your presentation. Thank you Miss Rea!

*(author’s note: This article is an apology to my high school English teacher, Miss Rea, whom I told in front of our English class that, “I will never see the need to use the word *dénouement* outside of this class.” I stand corrected).*

Wild Walk

David Owens-Mineral Wells, TX

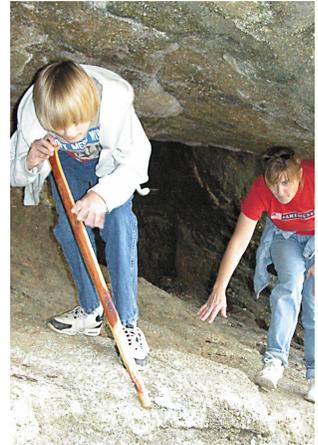
On a cool misty Saturday in December, I was at Penitentiary Hollow in Lake Mineral Wells State Park waiting for visitors to arrive for the Wild Walk event. The Wild Walk is a hike through areas of Penitentiary Hollow. But, this is not just a regular hike. I guide visitors to some of the most remote areas of the Hollow, where we squeeze through small crevasses, crawl through small caves, and even scoot through a small hole too small for crawling on hands and knees. This is a rugged, strenuous hike that is not for everyone.

A father and son arrived for the hike and then a father and daughter walked up to participate. When I saw the man's daughter, I was very concerned. She was about 13 years old and was obviously physically and mentally impaired. I pulled the father to the side and explained the nature of the walk to make sure he knew that this was a rugged, strenuous hike in remote places in the park. He said that he understood my concern, but wanted his daughter to try. He said that if there was an obstacle that she couldn't do, they would go around it. Well, I talked with the father and son that would be hiking with us about the situation and they said that they did not mind and even said they would help if needed.

So, the five of us started the hike. The girl struggled down the rock steps as we ascended into Penitentiary Hollow. She had difficulty walking even on level ground, but she made it down the steps and seemed very excited to be out in nature with her dad. As we hiked, I would look back and see her dad carrying her piggy-back style on the level ground, and then he would put her down and help her over and through the obstacles. She struggled through the entire hike, but her face was beaming with excitement and determination with every obstacle she encountered. With the help of her dad, she was able to squeeze through, crawl over and under every crevasse and tunnel on the hike. She would communicate to her dad in one word phrases that I could rarely understand, but he seemed to know what she meant.

On our way back to the trailhead, after going through all of the obstacles, she startled me a bit by yelling out in a clear, strong voice, "Treatment!" I was relieved when her father chuckled and said, "Yeah, we will need to have an extra breathing treatment today." Then he explained to me that his daughter was born with these impairments. Their family was very protective of her and would not let her try to do anything on her own. He said that she could not walk and had been in a wheel chair all of her life until she was 10 years old. He said that he could tell that she wanted to get out of the wheel chair and move around, but they were too protective to let her. Then one day, she became so restless that they decided put her on the floor and let her do whatever she wanted. Over time her muscles developed, she became more coordinated and within a year she was walking on her own. "From that time on," he said, "we have let her try to do anything she wants to try and even encouraged her to try challenging things."

I was glad to be able to give this girl a chance to experience nature in a way she might never had thought possible. This is one of my best memories and career highlights as a park interpreter.



Intrepid hikers explore Penitentiary Hollow at Lake Mineral Wells State Park, even when it requires them to bend, scoot, squeeze or crawl.

"I was glad to be able to give this girl a chance to experience nature in a way she might never had thought possible."

A Real Ranger

John Cuning-Jefferson City, MO

On a morning in late May 1984, I put my Corps of Engineers uniform with extra care. That same day many of my college friends walked across a stage in their caps and gowns to receive their diplomas. I had graduated the previous December, but if I wanted to go through the ceremony, I would have to return in May. After discussing the issue with my father, I decided that the best graduation ceremony I could have would be to go to work.

After patrolling the campground and collecting camp fees, I presented a program. While I do not recall what the slide show that night was about, I do recall that it was shown on the back wall of the shower house because the campground did not have an amphitheater. Campers brought lawn chairs or blankets, passed around bowls of popcorn and enjoyed the program.

When I got home, I found a small package waiting in my mailbox. Inside was a key ring on a spring-loaded chain that allowed you to pull the keys out to lock or unlock a door without taking the keys off your belt. My father had carried one exactly like it when he worked in the National Park Service. A short note attached to the key ring read, "Every real ranger has one".

During his first summer in Grand Canyon National Park, Dad had seen the district ranger using such a key ring and asked where he could get one. The following January he received a letter announcing his reappointment to Grand Canyon and a spring-loaded key ring with a note that read, "Every real ranger has one." My father had just welcomed me into the profession with graduation gift that brought many childhood memories flooding back.

Throughout my time in the field, first with the Corps of Engineers as a seasonal naturalist and then with Missouri State Parks as a historic site manager, I carried that key ring. I still have it, but today, working in the central office, I carry such a small ring of keys that I simply put them in my pocket. Opening that package in 1984 was the first of many highs in my experiences to preserve and interpret the natural and cultural resources of Missouri.

How To Help Interpretive Sites Damaged by Hurricane Sandy

Tom Mullin-Unity, ME and John Miller-Branson, MO

On October 29, Hurricane Sandy moved ashore near Atlantic City, New Jersey, as a post-tropical cyclone with sustained winds of 80 miles per hour. Sandy affected 24 states, set high water records in New York City and Philadelphia, and was the second costliest storm in dollars -- second only to Hurricane Katrina. The tragic loss of life and property damage hits home for many of our colleagues who work at natural and cultural sites in the mid-Atlantic and southern New England regions. In many cases, it will take months, if not years, for interpretive sites to recover from the storm.

At the recent NAI National Workshop in Virginia, the question popped up, How can NAI help? During its November meeting, the NAI Board of Directors discussed this question and proposed starting a Hurricane Sandy Interpretive Relief Exchange Project. Once their basic needs are firmly back on track, many of our colleagues will be starting from scratch reestablishing their programs and operations.

There is little doubt that most of the facilities damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Sandy will be repaired or replaced. The Relief Exchange Project will help to match the needs of programmatic items to sites in need. While the Project is not yet been established, NAI hopes to allow you to provide items such as posters, skulls, used equipment, exhibits, books/magazines, artifacts, craft supplies, and more. The program will allow interpreters across the US, Canada, & Mexico to loan, donate, or exchange items to help these interpretive sites get back up and running. NAI will strive to jumpstart this recovery by seeking to match to needs of these deserving interpreters and their recovering sites.

If you are interested in this project, please contact NAI board member John Miller (john.miller@mdc.mo.gov) or Tom Mullin (tmullin@unity.edu). Keep watching the NAI web site (www.interpnet.com) for more details on how you can help.



Every real ranger has tools he or she consider inherent to the trade, like this key ring that belongs to John Cuning.



On October 29, numerous interpretive sites were left damaged after Hurricane Sandy came ashore.

Reaching New Heights at Franklin Mountains State Park

Reaching a new audience can be a high point for any interpreter, and Adrianna Weickhardt and the staff at Franklin Mountains State Park are working hard to achieve that goal with several innovative programs.

Franklin Mountains State Park recently partnered with Texas Mountain Trail Region, Geobetty, and Guadalupe Mountains National Park to develop a first-of-its-kind program called Peak Fitness Challenge. The Peak Fitness Challenge is “designed to help you get to the top... of Texas and other peaks in your life.” As of December 14, 965 miles have been logged through the website (<http://beta.geobetty.com/peak/>). Franklin Mountains has offered a Peak Fitness Challenge Hike each month to help motivate more individuals to come out and reach their goals together with park staff, and promote increased support and visitation of state and national parks in Texas.

The park also offered its first Happy Tails n’ Happy Trails Adopt-a-Dog Hike. Franklin Mountains partnered with the Animal Rescue League of El Paso and Pets Barn to present this very special event. Six adoptable *and* adorable dogs were brought to the park. Participants walked the dogs while many others brought their own. Special guest speakers included Veterinarian Dr. Freund, park volunteer and avid hiker Abby Austin, Animal Rescue League of El Paso founder Loretta Hyde and Pet Barn manager Jonathon. They provided information on healthy and safe hikes and tips for hikers and their pooches while out in the park. Free treats were even provided thanks to Pets Barn’s generosity! We had about 50 participants and about the same number of dogs. It was great to see so many dog lovers and sweet pups, with barking dogs left and right, waggin’ tails, belly scratches, and a great little hike down the Lower Sunset Trail.

Other new and successful programs that the park has offered this year are the Women’s Only Hikes, Mysteries of the Night – Discovering the Nocturnal Side of the Park, and astronomy programs that involved partnerships with the McDonald Observatory, the Las Cruces Astronomical Society, the El Paso Sun City Astronomy Club, and musicians from New Mexico.

Park staff has filmed six episodes with of *Blast Beyond*, a show airing on the El Paso PBS station that covers educational topics geared towards elementary-aged children. One recent show taught viewers how to become a junior ranger at their local Texas state park. Now there’s a topic that can help kids reach new heights!



Tails were wagging after a great hike at Franklin Mountains State Park in El Paso, Texas.

Photo credit: Sherri Bryant



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.

Region 6 National Award Winners and Nominees in Hampton Virginia

National Award Winner for the US Army Corps of Engineers

Kathy A. Dickson

Park Ranger, Wapapello Lake, St. Louis District
Awarded the National Hiram M. Chittenden Award

(the following was taken from the winner's packet at the "Excellence in Interpretation" ceremony) Kathy Dickson's exemplary achievements in the field of outdoor education and environmental education have led to numerous achievements. A talented artist, Kathy paints striking wildlife scenes that showcase her appreciation for the natural world. This combination of natural talent, sincerity, passion, and dedication is what makes Kathy so good at increasing the public's awareness of the Corps' interpretive and environmental education goals. Ms Dickson uses her artistic talent to design graphics for Corps mission goals at all levels. She has served as a vital member of the Southeast Missouri Regional Water Safety Products Committee, where her exceptional creative talent always brings forth a top-quality product. She staffs and manages the Bill Emerson Memorial Visitor Center, where she planned and designed a complete remodel of the building, which had not been improved since it was opened in 1996. She used a local partnership to leverage resources in gathering interpretive displays that were no longer needed from other visitor centers. Using her natural artistic talent, she was able to transform the existing displays into fresh exhibits including a small cabin that she created with beautiful "views" from the windows that display vivid realistic wildlife scenes. With her artistic touch and passion she has ensured there is not another visitor center like it.

Her professional artwork is displayed in several galleries in the surrounding communities and she works with the mentally and physically challenged folks at nursing homes and is a guest teacher at a local high school where she helps students fine-tune their wildlife art for competition. Her work is the definition of excellence and she truly deserves the honor of receiving the national Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence in recognition of her accomplishments this past year.

(NOTE: Kathy is third winner of this award from Region 6 and the St. Louis District) in the past 5 years.)



Kathy Dickson was awarded the US Army Corps of Engineers' Hiram M. Chittenden award.

National Finalist for the National Park Service, Freeman Tilden Award

Jeff Wolin

Lead Interpreter, Florissant Fossil Beds National Monument (CO)

(following information taken from the "Excellence in Interpretation" ceremony flyer) Jeff was nominated while at the **New Orleans Jazz National Park** (New Orleans) for composing, performing, and coordinating the production of the first-ever Junior Ranger album containing 19 original songs, highlighting a variety of national park themes and resources. The songs that Jeff has written and performed were created with diverse youth audiences in mind, and focus on a variety of tangibles from a broad spectrum of NPS areas – from the formation of Yellowstone to sea turtles, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, elk, and the Tuskegee Airmen – and connect them to universal concepts such as wonder, exploration, struggle, loss, and triumph.



Jeff Wolin, of the National Park Service, was a finalist for the Freeman Tilden award.

Region 6 National Award Winners and Nominees in Hampton Virginia

National Finalist for the US Forest Service – Gifford Pinchot Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education Award

Thomas Phillipps

Forest Botanist, National Forests and Grasslands in Texas (Austin)

(following information taken from the “Excellence in Interpretation” ceremony flyer)

Thomas was nominated for his effective community-based workshops and partnership with the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas, resulting in a network of informed and action-ready citizen-scientist volunteers who monitor rare plants and report invasive species.



Thomas Phillipps (USFS) was a finalist for the Gifford Pinchot Excellence in Interpretation and Conservation Education award.

National Finalist for the US Fish & Wildlife Service – Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Recognition.

Jennifer Owen-White

Refuge Manager, Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Texas (Hidalgo)

(following information taken from the “Excellence in Interpretation” ceremony flyer)

Jennifer was nominated for local, regional, and national leadership in interpretation program development and implementation. As the visitor services manager for three national wildlife refuges, in a short time has been particularly successful in providing interpretation opportunities for local communities. Through her efforts, local resident visitation and awareness levels have increased at the South Texas Refuge Complex.



Jennifer Owen-White (USFWS) was a finalist for the Rachel Carson Sense of Wonder Recognition

Congratulations to the winners and finalists! Keep up the good work! Nominations for national awards are due in May. To nominate a deserving interpreter for an award, go to <http://www.interpnet.com/workshop/category/awards/nai-professional-awards/>





Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Prairie Grove in December.

Superintendent **Jessee Cox** and Interpreter **Holly Houser** are pleased to announce a record-breaking event at **Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park**. The site hosted 1,047 reenactors and numerous coordinating volunteers and park staff as they commemorated the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Prairie Grove. The number of reenactors was a record as were the 25,000 spectators that came to see the two-day event. The reenactment scenario that took place for an hour and a half was based on actual attacks and counter attacks that took place that same time and place 150 years ago. The event also included opportunities experience an 1860s lifestyle: visitors tasted authentic fireplace cooking recipes such as chicken and dumplings, perused reproduction Civil War era equipment and goods at sutler tents and toured camps for interpretive discussions and demonstrations. They even had a chance to participate in a real wedding that took place at the Latta Kitchen.



ARKANSAS State Report
Jay Miller

Jeremy Lynch reports that **Fort Smith National Historic Site** hosted Christmas festivities on December 15, commemorating the years of 1817 and 1889. Christmas holds special significance for this city because the soldiers who established Fort Smith arrived on Christmas Day 1817. Additionally, 1889 was a particularly special year for Fort Smith because of two notable accomplishments: Garrison Avenue was paved with brick and the first lending library opened for public school students.

Mary Anne Stansbury says **Pinnacle Mountain State Park** will be partnering with the extension office to offer classes in beekeeping, and will provide the materials and a location where the young beekeepers can keep their bees. Students will assemble standard beehives from kits, learning about the structure, function, and importance of each component. They will maintain their own bee colonies, harvest honey, and keep their hives healthy and productive. Learning how to keep bees also allows them to study the life cycle of honeybees and how it relates to the seasonal cycle.

Donna Bentley and **Erica Hurst** report that the **Jacksonport State Park** staff spent much time readying the courthouse for their annual Christmas Gala Ball: "We decorated the sidelights on the courtroom walls and the chandeliers with handmade Christmas bows. We hung pine garland with pinecones and bows on the staircases. The defendant and prosecutor tables were adorned with cedar, candles, glass ornaments and magnolia. The judge's bench was covered with candles, pine garland, cedar, magnolia blossoms and glass ornaments. The coal buckets are filled with pinecones and we dressed the stoves with magnolia blossoms and candles and hung Christmas wreaths on all the doors."



Jacksonport State Park's Christmas Gala Ball .

Mary Gillihan notes that for the first time the **Ozark Folk Center Crafts Village** was open through November with all artisans and musicians present. Young Pioneers' had good attendance. The Friday concert was Folk Center musicians performing holiday music and the second half was excerpts from the Nutcracker performed by the local Stone County Ballet Company.

Interpreter **Rachel Diersen** reports from **Hobbs State Park** that the month started off with a trip to the University of Arkansas to talk with their CIG class. Rachel says: "I presented two programs so they could get some ideas for their presenting their programs. It was great to share with them and see them get more excited about their upcoming programs. Scattered throughout the month were visits from our partnership schools. It is always great to have them visiting the park, and to see how comfortable and excited they are when they get off the bus. The best part is hearing them beg to stay at the end of the day, even though they come every month and will be back again. Several said they were going to ask their parents to bring them out over the holiday break. Along with the more academic programs, eagle cruises began again and the eagles have not disappointed! We've seen several, and the visitors have been very excited to see them soaring."

Park Superintendent **Paul Butler** notes that the keelboat reenactment expedition on the Ouachita River (Thomas Jefferson's Hunter and Dunbar expedition) departed **Moro Bay State Park** this morning. As of a result of ice and snow conditions and power outages throughout the state only only a handful of visitors came out to see them. That's the way it goes sometimes with outdoor activities. Still, it was really neat to see.



ARKANSAS State Report (continued) Jay Miller

To follow up a very successful woven shoe-making workshop, the staff at **Toltec Mounds Archeological State Park** worked with the station archeologist to develop an authentic basked weaving program. **Laura Lawrence** and **Amy Griffin** co-taught the workshop. "Everyone finished their baskets and they turned out great! It was neat to witness how differently people learn from each other. That is a challenge in teaching these types of workshops; you have to figure out multiple ways of explaining steps and processes. Everyone made a basket and lasting memories."



Staff at Toltec Mounds help visitors discover how historic items like these woven shoes were created by the people who inhabited their site.

John Miller reports that the current Arkansas State Coordinator, Jay Miller, is planning to step down from this position to take on other responsibilities...mostly retirement from AR State Parks. Jay has done an outstanding job at this position for several years, but we do not want to leave it vacant for very long. Any NAI member residing in Arkansas is eligible for this appointed position. This state coordinator position helps to coordinate information from the state for reports and region newsletters, helps organize the Region Workshop when in the state, and serves on the Region 6 Board of Directors. If you are interested in this position please contact Region 6 Director John Miller at (417) 334-4865 ext 0 or john.miller@mdc.mo.gov. Nominations for the AR State Coordinator position will be taken until February 28, 2013



KANSAS State Report Pat Silvosky

EARTH, WIND & FIRE

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION for INTERPRETATION

MANHATTAN, KANSAS

REGION 6 2013 WORKSHOP
FEBRUARY 24-27

Registration for the NAI Region 6 Workshop is now open! Early Registration Deadline January 24.

Link to Register online: http://www.naimembers.com/store/acatalog/NAI_Region_6.html

Hotel Reservations: www.manhattankshgi.com
Hilton Garden Inn and Conference Center (785)532-9116
When calling ask for the group rate for the National Association for Interpretation. Online code for room rate: NAIN

For questions about Registration email Andrea Johnson at andrea.johnson@jocogov.org

EARTH, WIND, AND FIRE is more than the answer to the question, "Which rock group had the 1970s hits *Shining Star* and *Boogie Wonderland*". Earth, Wind, and Fire are the forces that shaped the Flint Hills of Kansas and it is the theme of the 2013 NAI Region 6 Workshop to be held in Manhattan, KS. As the gateway to the Flint Hills and the world's largest remaining track of tallgrass prairie, Manhattan might not be a boogie wonderland (although after this workshop it may be known as that!), but you certainly will see many shining stars in the brilliant Kansas night sky as well as your colleagues who are the shining stars of interpretation.

John Miller from **Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center** reports that they are half way through their Visitor Use Survey to gain detailed information on visitation, public use, and enjoyment of our resources. The survey was put together by MDC's Resource Science Division and consists of six one-hour surveys selected at random between July 2012 and June 2013. The beauty of the survey is that results can be tabulated and analyzed on a monthly basis. The results have blown the socks off of the administration and management! For example, during the month of July 2012 (one month period) the building saw 37,000 visitors and the site had a visitation of 67,000 people. With the results of this survey being shared with the MDC Administrators, discussion about building expansion is now taking place.

Shepherd of the Hills Conservation Center is also hosting the 18th Annual **Vulture Venture**, set for Saturday, February 16 from 12pm– 5pm. This event features hourly presentations with Socrates, a live Turkey Vulture from Springfield's WOW Museum. In addition to indoor activities and games, there are outdoor viewing opportunities to see one of Missouri's largest winter roost of vultures. For more information about the Vulture Venture event go to www.mdc.mo.gov/2853.

A **Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG)** class is being set for January 28-29 and February 4-5 at the **Springfield Nature Center**. The four-day class is being set up on two days over two weeks to help get more volunteers involved. If you would like more information contact, John Miller at john.miller@mdc.mo.gov or (417) 334-4865 ext 0.

John Miller also reports that the **DNR Spring Interpreter's Training** is set for May 19-22nd at **Roaring River State Park**. Please contact John Cunning or Kendra Swee for more information. The CIG certification will also be offered during the week, and anyone is welcome to attend. For information about earning your CIG certification during this training, contact Jamie Hubert at Jamie.hubert@dnr.mo.gov.

Janet Price announces with sadness the passing of **Michelle Soenksen's** husband, Kevin Gene White. Michelle, of Sam A. Baker State Park, and Kevin had just celebrated their fourth wedding anniversary and his sudden death at age 48 from an aortic dissection was a shock to all. Kevin's love and dedication to his family were evident every day. Michelle found her soul mate in Kevin. The depth of their love knew no bounds. Spending as much time as he could with his children Tyler (14) and Ashley (11), Kevin opened up the world to them. They shared a life of fishing, hunting, soccer games and dance recitals. He never hesitated to tell them how much he loved them. An avid outdoorsman, Kevin lived life to the fullest. His long list of interests included kayaking, bicycling and, in purest fashion, traditional bowhunting. Kevin lived his life with intense passion, compassion and love for all he shared his life with. We would all do well to live our lives with as much heart as he did. Those who wish may contribute to a trust fund set up for Kevin's children, Tyler and Ashley White.

John Cunning is proud to announce that **Kendra Swee** has accepted the position of Interpretive Resource Coordinator in the Resource Management and Interpretation Program in Missouri State Parks. Kendra will assume her new duties in February.

The new year is starting off big for **Kendra Swee**! Congratulations on her new position AND for welcoming her second son, Colin Jacob Swee on December 7, 2012. Colin weighed in at 7lbs 15 oz. and was 20 inches long. She reports, "Everyone is doing well and happy he is here...even Oliver who has been a GREAT big brother so far. On Christmas after holding Collin, Oliver walked over to Wes and said, "I love him (Collin)"...best Christmas present for me ever." Congratulations to the Swee family on their new arrival!



MISSOURI State Report
Michelle Soenksen



Missouri will offer two CIG classes: One at Springfield Nature Center and the other at Spring Interpreter Training School at Roaring River State Park.



Missouri State Parks welcomes its newest interpreter to their family. Kendra Swee welcomed little Colin to the world on December 7, 2012.



OKLAHOMA State Report
Kenton Peters

Edmond's **Arcadia Lake** hosted the annual **Eagle Watch** in the beginning of January where families can go to spot Bald Eagles that are taking a break on their way through the metro area. Visitors can also visit an education area with information regarding raptors and other birds that frequent the area.

Towards the end of last year, the youth of **Oklahoma City's Boys and Girls Club** completed a two-week **Parks in Focus** pilot program. Children were introduced to photography, nature and the outdoors -- which led them to a transformation from thinking of insects and bugs as scary to seeing them as art subjects. What a great program!

Education coordinator **Kenton Peters** at the **Myriad Botanical Garden** had some success with a fun program, Gingerbread Dreams, in December. Families came and learned, via a tour of the Crystal Bridge tropical conservatory, about the spicy ingredients found in gingerbread. They got to pick some ginger and allspice leaves to smell and take home, as well as some very small pieces of bark from the cinnamon tree. Then, they got to work building their own gingerbread house to take home. Staff at the gardens were not too happy with having the smell of fresh baked gingerbread house parts wafting through their offices but could not touch! One class was not enough, so it was brought back twice more!



TEXAS State Report
Tara Humphreys

Kristi Payne reports that the staff at **River Legacy Living Science Center** is busy as ever. River Legacy staff and volunteers recently attended core and advanced trainings to become Texas Stream Team Certified Water Quality Monitors. Participants completed over 10 hours of training in measuring water quality indicators such as water clarity, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, E. coli, nitrates, and phosphates. Thanks to a generous grant from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the newly-trained monitors will be measuring the quality of the Trinity River in River Legacy Parks on a monthly basis. Data will be reported to The Meadows Center for Water and the Environment and posted to their website (<https://aqua.meadowscenter.txstate.edu/>) where it will be available to scientists and citizens alike.

After more than 16 years of public wear and tear, **River Legacy Living Science Center** is in need of an extreme makeover - nature edition! River Legacy Foundation is currently raising money to match a \$70,000 Arlington Tomorrow Foundation grant to renovate the Science Center's animal exhibits and habitats. In Phase One of the exhibit renovation, they will contract with the same firm that created the Museum of Living Art at the Fort Worth Zoo to design, larger, natural and authentic habitat features for the native animals. Donations can be made online at www.riverlegacy.org - click on Donate Now and write Exhibit Renovation in comments section.

Still going strong! According to **Rob Owen** with **Texas State Parks**, novice families are as excited as ever to get outside and enjoy state parks and natural spaces. The Texas Outdoor Family Program introduces its audience to an overnight adventure in state parks and has had their busiest fall season to date. Compared to last year's numbers, an additional 25% more families attended the fall workshops in 2012 than the year before.

Ky Harkey shares that **Texas State Parks** is beginning a Youth Ambassador Program to support increased visitation by "millennials" in state parks. The program gives selected college students tools to promote their local state parks with their peers. More information about Youth Ambassadors in America's State Parks can be found at <http://www.americasstateparks.org/Ambassadors>.

No report submitted.



LOUISIANA State Report
Rusty Scarborough



PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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

Katie Raney, Buescher State Park, P.O. Box 75, Smithville, TX 78957, 512-237-2241,
katie.raney@tpwd.state.tx.us

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: Jay Miller, CIP, CIT, Arkansas State Parks, Little Rock, AR, 501-682-2187,
jay.miller@arkansas.gov

Kansas: Pat Silovsky, CIG, Milford Nature Center, Junction City, KS, 785-238-5323,
pats@wp.state.ks.us

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

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

Oklahoma: Kenton Peters, Myriad Botanical Gardens, Oklahoma City, OK, 405-297-3624, ken-
ton.peters@okc.gov

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

REGION SIX OFFICERS

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

Don Simons, CHI, Deputy Director: Mt. Magazine State Park, Paris, AR, 479-963-8502,
don.simons@arkansas.gov

Andrea Putnam, CIG, Secretary: Missouri State Parks, Jefferson City, MO, 573-751-5384, an-
drea.putnam@dnr.mo.gov

Andrea Johnson, Treasurer: Ernie Miller Park Nature Center, Olathe, KS, 913-764-8580, An-
drea.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, da-
kota.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