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“With great power comes great responsibility” License to Steal

by John Miller, Missouri

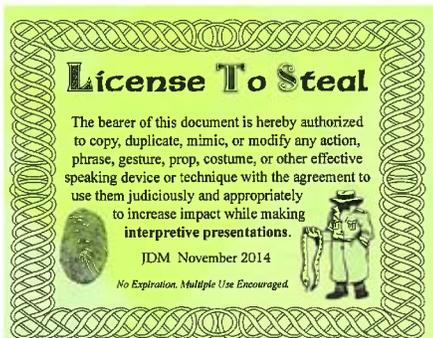
For many years, I have perpetuated the use of a “License to Steal.” This special power has allowed interpreters across the country to try something new, exciting, and meaningful. We have heard that “imitation is the most sincere form of flattery.”

Interpretive Guide training, this was a week-long intense training. During that training our mentor gave us a card the night before our final 20-minute presentation. The card was my first ever “License to Steal” card. It really helped to break the tension of our final presentation which was to be graded and evaluated by the mentor AND fellow students. I was so impressed with the power of the card, that I vowed to share this card and its power.

had asked for kids to volunteer to hold snake cages or bags during the presentation. Before handing any cages or bags out, she gave them the following instructions during her introduction:

“First everyone gets to be a part of the display today...”

(See License to Steal, page 3)



So where did it the original idea of a “license to steal” come from? Truthfully I don’t know who the originator was, but I am so glad they shared it. I got the idea from a training that I took in February 1991. The training was sponsored by the MO Department of Conservation (MDC) and was called Instructors Training Course or ITC. This class is required of all full-time MDC staff to teach concepts of public speaking and was modified (or stolen) from the US Army. Much like NAI’s Certified

“With great power comes great responsibility” quote by Stan Lee (creator of the “Spiderman” comic books)

My first use of my “License to Steal” came that summer while giving school and scout hikes at the August A. Busch Memorial Conservation Area (St. Charles). Just before giving one of our morning hikes, I happened across my “license to steal” card and realized that I had not yet used it. My thoughts quickly took me back to several years earlier at the MO State Fair. I had watched with wonder a naturalist named Betty Chmielniak giving a reptile program to an audience of kids. She

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The theme of this issue is
License to Steal.

Using My License to Steal Brought Out the Best

By Cyndi A. Cogbill, Pawpaw Patch Productions, LLC, Missouri

The very best program that we ever presented at Prairie State Park came from a concept that I stole. Quite a few years ago at a conference I learned about a program called *Follow the North Star*.



Connor Prairie in Indiana developed the program *Follow the North Star* as a way for people to better understand slavery and the Underground Railroad. To do that, they immersed the audience in a very intense presentation where they became slaves.

I loved the idea of an interactive program and let it ruminate in the back of my brain for a few years. I knew the program had to work at my park and nothing within *Follow the North Star* matched Prairie State Park's mission.

This meant a lot of research with no guarantee it would be used. Eventually, my staff and I offered

a day camp on the American Civil War in southwest Missouri. Although the day camp was well received, it was the research that led to an immersive program known as *Border Disorder*.

Instead of watching a program or a reenactment, we asked the audience to suspend reality for a time. Other than the introduction and required debriefing, the entire program was held on the prairie. They learned the year was 1862, they were residents of Barton County, and their life on the western border of Missouri was so difficult, they were attempting to flee to a safer area.

To accomplish those goals we made the program as interactive as possible:

- Participants carried supplies and lanterns.
- Staff and volunteers, dressed in period clothing, visited with them and shared stories as they traveled across the prairie.
- Federal soldiers stopped them, quizzed them, and demanded oaths of loyalty from the men.
- After being stopped by the soldiers, they were encouraged to discuss their safety and make

plans.

- They witnessed a confrontation between neighbors pointing fingers and blaming each other for the current situation.
- Irregular troops surprised them and took them to their camp. Bags were searched, people were questioned, suspected supporters and a spy were pulled aside, and when shots were fired, everyone fled across the prairie in the near darkness by lantern light.

Although we currently lack the ability to transport people back in time, this program did generate a greater understanding of life on the prairie during the American Civil War. Not only did the audience become totally immersed, the staff and volunteers did as well.



We were moved, some of us to tears, by the conflict, fear, and uncertainty. The stolen idea of using intense interaction contributed to the success of a powerful program known as *Border Disorder*.

(See *Border Disorder* page 6)

Thumb Ball: borrowed from *Legacy*

I stole the idea for "Thumb Ball" from *Legacy* Magazine last year. I adapted it for my CIG "Active Verbs Activity." I bought a large plastic bouncy ball and wrote

active verbs all over it with a Sharpie.

We take turns tossing the ball around a circle. Whichever word your THUMB is on when you

by Amber Pepper, Texas catch the ball, you have to sound out (voice modulation) or act out that word. It's "Active Verbs Thumb Ball", and it's a blast!



Director's Corner

with Jay Schneider, Arkansas

Jay Schneider

My favorite season of the year is upon us: fall. The changing of the seasons, migrating birds and butterflies, the changing of the visitation at the park and the changing temperatures all seem to recharge me and inspire me to look for new challenges and opportunities.

Some of you will be attending the National Conference in Corpus Christi in November, what a great opportunity. Meet new people, learn new skills, share ideas and see all the wonderful happenings in interpretation. When at training

or new places take in all the knowledge and experiences you can.

“Whoever invented the word ‘grace’ must have seen the wing-folding of the plover.” Aldo Leopold

Changes on your Board

Welcome to our new member for taking on new responsibilities Rebecca Sellers, Chair of Scholarship and Professional Development

Thanks to Awards Committee Chair Laura Motley, for her many years of service to the region. She has decided to step down to pursue

other interests. If you are interested in being the next Awards Committee Chair, please e-mail me.

2016 NAI National Conference

Corpus Christi, Texas,
November 8-12, 2016,

Registration ends October 17

Reminder: Election Day is during the National Conference; please make arrangements before you travel to Corpus Christi.

I look forward to seeing some of you at the Region Six Meeting That’s all I got (ask me about this story)

Jay

Upcoming Certification in Region 6:

Certified Interpretive Guide Courses:

October 7-10, 2016,
Little Rock, AR,

Witt Stephens, Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center

October 17-20, 2016,

Tulsa, OK, Oxley Nature Center

January 6 - February 24, 2017,
St. Louis, MO,

Forest Park Forever Visitor Center

License to Steal, from Page 1)

Second, if you have a question just raise your hand...

Third, and this is the most important thing of all; if you don’t do this, I will send you back to your seat; you... have got... to have...FUN!”

I thought that was the coolest introduction ever. Now, years later, holding my license in my hand at the Busch Area, I told myself that today is the day to steal her introduction. It worked like a charm and I have since used it for hike introductions for many years. My alteration, however, was to exchange her first instruction to a new one of

“First, everyone stays together...”. The result is that the kids listen better and are more at ease.

Over the years, I sparingly handed out these cards at conferences and trainings especially to new attendees have fun and interact more. The size and content of the cards have changed ever so slightly. The cards have been a variety of colors and have ranged from half-page size to quarter-page size. Recently I have added information on the back side of the card to reinforce the definition of interpretation. The result, however, was always positive. It has been a delight to watch people use a new technique or skill in their

presentations. I love the fact that you have a tremendous resource of fellow interpreters who welcome you to take their techniques and tips and use them to their full potential.

So keep on stealing ideas and techniques, but don’t forget to offer others the chance to steal from you. You will score big points by telling everyone whom you stole the idea/technique from too. Great ideas are best when shared and everyone wins if we support the outstanding work of other interpreters. If you don’t have your own copy of a “License to Steal” please e-mail me at john.miller@mdc.mo.gov.

We Are Visitors Too – A Road-Trip Experience

by Jerrel Geisler, Texas

Recently I had the opportunity to visit a number of historical and cultural sites in Region 6 during a 1,850 mile road trip with wife and her Aunt (Shirley).

Our destinations were Dallas and Denton, Texas; Salina and Abilene, Kansas, Kansas City and Independence, Missouri and Oklahoma City. Aunt Shirley loves to visit Presidential Libraries and my nephew plays football for a small University in Salina.

Stops in Texas included the Bush “43” Museum, Dealey Plaza and the 6th Floor Museum and Eisenhower’s Birthplace. In Missouri it was the Harry Truman home, museum and the Arabia Steamboat Museum in KC. Kansas stops included the Eisenhower home and museum. In Oklahoma City we saw the National Memorial, the Will Rogers Museum and the National Cowboy Museum. There were several interpretive interactions that I will share.

The Bush Museum has modern features like touch screen monitors, an interactive theater and the standard signs and artifacts.



It was a great look in the life of the 43rd president. Interpretive guides inside the museum provided additional information

not found on signs or in videos. I was impressed with information

one guide provided in the 9/11 memorial section. A fire fighter’s badge had been presented to Bush following 9/11. He carried it with him the remainder of his term as a reminder. A personal connection is as important as technology.

At Ike’s birthplace, a lady from the Texas Historical Commission provided our tour. She gave a good interpretation about Ike and his birth home, providing information from her youth as perspective. Future generations might not be able to share personal experiences like current interpreters. It is up to us to learn from these people in order to continue history. So many people are simply forgetting.

The highlight of our trip was a visit to the *Arabia* Steamboat museum in Kansas City, MO, opened in 1991. *Arabia* sank in the Missouri



River in 1856 and was excavated in 1988.

The initial part was a typical guided tour. A guide led us down a ramp to a lower floor, passed the “oldest” steam engine in the world. It was not from *Arabia*, but another other boat in Missouri.

We saw a video of how “treasure hunters” researched, located, and excavated *Arabia* and her cargo. We then met a member of the fam-

ily who found the “treasure”. He described how he, as a young boy, was tasked with cleaning artifacts.

Mud, sand and water covered the boat for 135 years. These “brand new” artifacts: dishes, clothing, shoes, tools, beads and buttons, gave an unvoiced, unwritten interpretation of what life was like in the 1850’s. With exhibits of written and visual histories, artifacts, meeting members of the excavation team, and having a preservationist as a guide, was a great interpretive experience.

At the OKC Memorial, Aunt Shirley and I entered the park. A National Park Ranger was speaking with a group of Lebanese visitors. They had many questions. The Ranger said he could not offer an answer, “while in uniform”, to one question he was asked. He was asked, “Why would someone do this?”

After the group left we spoke with him (Ranger Washington). Aunt Shirley, not one to mince words, stated “I know why “someone” did this – they were EVIL!” Washington did not acknowledge his thoughts, but you could see from his expression that it crossed his mind.



Photographs (left to right) - World Trade Center beam from New York - Bush Library; China artifacts from Arabia Museum; panoramic view of Oklahoma City Memorial reflection pool - by Jerrel Geisler

See A Roadtrip Experience, page 4

The Best Idea I Ever Stole...

The best program I stole is “Owl Power” by Josh Crawford at Mission Tejas State Park. He came to my park to help teach me the program after I went to his park to teach him my “Fire is Living History” program. It was a 20-30 minute presentation about owls followed by a 30-45 minute night hike to look and listen for owls in the woods here at my park. It went very well and I will be leading my own Owl Power program in October.

by Joel Janssen, Lake Livingston State Park, Texas

Sharing ideas with fellow interpreters saves a lot of development time and testing of new programs. You do not have to start from scratch to develop a program and can learn tips, tricks, what works, and what doesn't for a program without having to come up with all of that on your own.

I believe that the newly-developed Interpreters' Forum created by Texas State Park interpreters will allow us to network and share ideas for programs at an entirely new level and look forward to interpret-

ers sharing ideas and outlines on it over the next year. Josh and I share ideas regularly and we go to each other's park to demonstrate and teach each other new programs we have developed. I find this kind of inter-park cooperation extremely useful. I have also worked with Kelsey Johnson at Sheldon Lake State Park and the staff at Battleship/San Jacinto to go present programs at their parks and they have come out to my park to assist with projects in return.

“Own your Camp” - a Day Camp Idea

by Mary Gillihan, Arkansas

Of the many ideas that Park Interpreters have shared over the years, one that I now use and build on each time I have a day camp, is about having campers “own” their week. I have them say out loud how they think the camp could run smoothly. They usually suggest actions like, help one another or no running or pushing. We usually end up with about six or eight ideas by the end of the five days of camp. Each morning we check in to see

how the day before went.

Before camp is through, I will ask who would like to make a poster with one of these statements or talk about what one of the ideas meant to them. Sometimes there are quite a few artists in the group and they love the drawing way. Other times there are those that like to speak up. And, if more than one person wants to take on the task, they are welcome to work together.



These Day Camp Ideas are then shared with the family and friends who come to the last afternoon of camp for the party, “Sharing with Family and Friends.” This easy but effective tool is a visual reminder and quite the conversation piece for the Day Camp. And it sure beats starting off with “the rules!”

A Road-Trip Experience (from page 4)

As we interpret our sites, perhaps there is a “company line” or message we have to share. But, we can't always express our personal opinions. There are various cultural, political, ethnic, or personal perspectives. A visitor's perspective may be very different. I will borrow from Ranger Washington's candidness and his resolve. One cannot always relay an opinion when it does not suit the message at hand.

The museum is an impressive and

comforting place. The most moving to me was a room where pictures of those killed are each enclosed in a clear box. Family members and friends have placed items in each box for that person as a remembrance. All I could think was “what if this was my box?” “What would someone place for me?” No matter what we do in our personal or professional lives, think about what we mean to our families and our or-

ganization. How do you want your life “interpreted”? What would be in your “box”?

How do we interpret? Do we use signs and artifacts, videos and technological interactive devices, passionate insightful people, or a combination? We do what we feel is best, but need to understand our audience as well. They are what keeps the lights turned on – both in the building and in our minds!

Interpreting New Zealand

By John Miller, Missouri



Author's Note: This story is not intended to get you to buy a ticket to New Zealand, but rather to get you to pursue your 'bucket list' and learn how interpretation is promoted worldwide.

My wife Kathy and I had been talking about traveling to other countries for years and when the opportunity to go to on the NAI International Conference in New Zealand, we knew that the wishing had to end. The International Conference was warm, friendly, and exotic.

Just like AMI and NAI Region 6, everyone was helpful and wanting to know how to improve their interpretive skills. These interac-



tions this took the form of a young man from Russia wanting to learn to market interpretive opportunities in Siberia (Lake Baikal), a woman from India trying to bring interpretation to remote locations, a professor in Korea understanding the importance of the variety of public use of national forests, and the near extinction of the Maori (pronounced "Maw-ree") culture in New Zealand.

One of the most powerful and emotional parts of the conference was the traditional Maori greeting which included elaborate and aggressive displays that ended with the touching of forehead and nose of each individual. One of the

Maori representatives, Joe Harawira, used the song "Welcome to my World" by Jim Reeves to impress upon us the power of inclusiveness and wonder.

As we all sang the song, he let us know the 3-part 'message' in the song was:

*"Knock and the door will open
Seek and you will find
Ask and you'll be given
The key to this world of mine"*

All of us were touched by the fact that we had heard and even sang this song before, but had never heard the message. That was one of the final messages Joe gave to us that as he spoke in his native Maori, it was not important that we did not understand word for word what he was saying, but we could feel the passion, the rhythm, and the connection of the talk. This was indeed a powerful interaction.

We were struck by the tremendous appreciation New Zealanders had for nature, culture, and history. It was refreshing when you asked someone if they were from New Zealand, that they typically respond by saying "Yes, I'm a Kiwi."

Unlike citizens of the US and the Bald Eagle, all New Zealanders have a special personal connection to their national bird, the flightless Kiwi. Another refreshing apprecia-

tion for New Zealand is their inclusion of the native peoples.

There are three official languages in New Zealand: English, Maori, and New Zealand sign language.

Nearly all signs, especially those in museums and zoos are written in both English and Maori. With the 100th anniversary of World War I, New Zealanders are very active in honoring their veterans. One example is a very large and powerful new exhibit at the Te Papa National Museum about the battle of Gallipoli in Turkey. In this WWI battle,

***"The world is a book,
and those who do
not travel read only a
page."
-Saint Augustine***

the Turkish casualties were 48%, but the New Zealand casualty rate was 93%. They honor these veterans and their sacrifice by proudly wearing red poppy lapel pins.

(See Kiwi interpretation, page 7)

Border Disorder, from page 2

Almost Unrelated Side Note:

As many of you know, I now use polymer clay to help connect people to nature and history. I was so surprised to see that many polymer clay artists jealously guard their techniques and methods of working

in polymer clay. It is all so weird to me, because I come from the interpretive world where we share. So keep up the good work to make better interpretation by sharing and stealing ideas, and making them your own!

Alex Trebeck and the Definition of Onomatopoeia

by Neil Garrison, Oklahoma

The Editors of *VI*sions sent out a challenge:
“Put on your thinking cap ... and ... write us an article on the subject of ‘License to Steal’ .”

The “fall back” person that most naturally comes to mind is Oscar Wilde; he’s the guy that’s credited with the quote: “*Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.*”

My hands-down favorite quote, however, still has to be:
“*Time flies; and Fruit flies love a banana.*” Anon.

And then, James Gunn said this:
“*I don’t know if there is any one secret to successful [heritage interpretation,] but one important step is to move beyond imitation and discover what you can [do] that*

no one else can -- that is, find out who you are and [do that in your own personal/original/appropriate] style.”

(PLEASE NOTE: I took the liberty of somewhat paraphrasing what he originally wrote -- which, after all, is what Mr. Gunn so expressly encouraged me to do.)

Even Dr. Joyce Brothers couldn’t resist the temptation to weigh in on the subject at hand: “*Listening, not imitation, may be the sincerest form of flattery.*”

Voltaire quipped: “*Originality is nothing but judicious imitation, the most original writers borrowed one from another.*”

On the other hand, the author of the classic tale *Moby Dick*, Herman

Melville, was of the opinion that: “*It is better to fail in originality than imitation.*”

The eminent and ancient sage, Confucius, left us this:

“*By three methods we may learn wisdom:*

First, by reflection; which is noblest;

Second, by imitation, which is easiest;

and third by experience, which is the bitterest.”

Yes? No? Maybe? Is it stealing? Is it flattery? James Fenton weighs in with this:

“*Imitation, if it is not forgery, is a fine thing.*”



New Zealand Tuatara, John Miller

My personal bucket list included the opportunity to see a Tuatara. Found nowhere else in the world, the Tuatara of New Zealand is the only living member of the Order Rhynchocephalia. Tuatara, when born, have a functional 3rd eye that is complete with rods and cones. The eye is used for only the first two years before it becomes covered by scales. Through wonderful interpretive programs and naturalists we learned that like the Kiwi,

Kiwi interpretation, from page 6

Tuatara were almost exterminated by introduced species such as cats, rats, dogs, and opossums. We learned at several facilities across the country the extraordinary efforts to re-establish both Tuatara and Kiwi to both islands. My 30-year wait was well worth it to see these incredibly interesting and beautiful reptiles.

We were glad that there was a national interpretation organization in New Zealand called INNZ, or Interpretation New Zealand. Like AMI, they strive to be a source of information, training, and inspiration for the interpretive profession. But just like in Missouri, not all interpretive facilities knew there was a professional organization to support them. It was inspiring to

know that there are others across the globe who share the same passion for interpretation and are members of wonderful organizations. No matter where we go and what we do, it is great to know that we all make connections that last a lifetime.

Kia Ora (Maori for “be well”)



from thevoiceofthezamorin.blogspot.com



Arkansas state report

Compiled by Don Simons

Arkansas State Parks held its annual interpretation workshop at **DeGray Lake Resort State Park** in August. Judy Fort Brenneman conducted two half-day interpretive writing workshops. We all got to know **Grady Spann**, director of ASP, who attended the whole conference. To have someone in that position taking an interest in interpretation is one reason Arkansas State Parks are so successful.

Kelly Farrell reports that Arkansas State Parks issued its first specialty license plate--and continues to do so today--under the authority of Act 292 of the Regular Legislative Session of 2011. One of the purposes of these funds collected is providing funding for field trips to students K-12. Starting this year, these grants will be offered to schools (K-12) that have difficulty securing travel funds to visit their local state parks. The grants focus on a classroom visiting the park during the school year. Priority will be given to field trips that align with the school curriculum and are between September and April. Arkansas State Parks has entered an agreement with the Arkansas Humanities Council (AHC), in which AHC staff will help promote the grants via their networks, as well as receive/process applications from schools and administer the grant funds.



Lauren Marshall reports that the **Arkansas Game and Fish Commission** has had a busy summer! All of the Nature Centers and the Education Centers have had strong attendance in their weekend programs and special events. Some highlights include:

- The **Governor Mike Huckabee Delta River's Nature Center** celebrating its 15th Anniversary.
- Hummingbird Banding throughout the summer at the **Conservation Education Center at Cook's Lake**.
- **Cook's Lake** also hosted its first annual Butterfly Garden workshop with Region VI's own, Lori Spencer.
- Canoeing, fishing, archery, BB gun, nature related crafts and daily summer programs were also something visitors could experience at one or more of the nature and education centers during the summer.

The **Witt Stephens Jr. Central Arkansas Nature Center** had a summer full of strong interpretive programming throughout the week and on the weekends. With the help of two interns and an amazing support team the educational staff facilitated two successful four-day camps for teens and pre-teens. Special Friday programs included "Find Your Natural State" and "AR Animal Olympics," families enjoyed learning about the unique animals who call AR home and got to see if they could compete with animals who lift, jump, swim and fly in order to survive and thrive. In July the **Antique Tackle Roadshow** (spin off the Antiques Roadshow) attracted fishing enthusiasts curious about the old fishing lures in their tackle boxes. Currently, the nature center enjoys teaching and learning alongside our youngest naturalist (18mo-3yrs) during **Wild Tales Story Time**. Each week has a new theme and they always try to go outside and see what's changed along the Arkansas River Trail. Pokémon Go has brought new and unique visitors to the center and the staff has been busy incorporating Pokémon characters into presentations, the social media page and other outreach venues to make these visitors feel comfortable and interested in the site.

Our **Region 6, 2017 Workshop** in **Rogers, Arkansas** is taking shape. Save the dates February 26 to March 1, 2017. It will be held at the Embassy Suites Hotel located right off Interstate 49 near the Pinnacle Promenade and close to Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art. Our theme is "**Interpreting Bridges Connecting Art, Nature, and History.**" Keep watching the newsletter, website, and Facebook for more information from workshop chair **Lori Spencer**.



Kansas state report

Compiled by Pat Silovsky

Dillon Nature Center has been blessed once again with a donor's generosity! They recently unveiled the new Taylor Shady Lane Cabin. The new building and the courtyard attached to it will be used for additional class-



room space, camp programs, public programs, weddings, reunions, retreats, concerts, and other rentals. The project started out as an idea from a donor who wanted to remodel an old building on our grounds. This building had been the original nature center, built in the 1950's and remodeled in the 1970's. After initial discussions with the builder, several unforeseen problems arose and in end it made more sense to tear down and start over. The donor graciously wanted to proceed with the project. On the side of the building is a Chimney Swift nest box. It will have a camera in there so we can video stream any activity inside.

Ted Cable has been invited to speak about interpretation at the **AGATA International Tourism Congress** in Mexico in November and also reports that he and **Larry Beck** are working on a new totally revised edition of the textbook *Interpretation of Cultural and Natural Resources*. It will be released in 2017.

Kansas State University interpretation student **Anastasia Slough** received one of the NAI scholarships to attend the NAI National Workshop in Corpus Christi. Congrats!

The **ECO-Meet** season is about to begin in Kansas with the first ECO-Meet being offered at the end of September. Another 8 ECO-Meets will take place throughout the state culminating in the State ECO-Meet the first week of November. This annual high school competition sees over 500 youth participating in wildlife related challenges and even includes an interpretive event! Scholarships are awarded at many of the ECO-Meets. Check out kansasecomeets.org for more information.



Louisiana State report

Compiled by
Rusty Scarborough

Sorry, there was no Louisiana report this issue:

Laissez les bons temps rouler! - till next time



Texas State report

Compiled by
Tara Humphreys

Lisa Cole from **Lewisville Lake Environmental Learning Area (LLELA)** announces a staffing change. LLELA Nature Programs Supervisor **Erin Taylor** brought her new little naturalist, Sagan, into the world on April



29. After much deliberation, she has decided to leave her position at LLELA to give her full attention to motherhood. Field Instructor **Diane Wetherbee** is stepping into Erin's position, so although they'll miss Erin, their programs are in great hands.

Erin and Sagan (left)

Planning for the **2018 Workshop in Texas** is underway! Want to help or have ideas? Please contact one of the Co-Chairs, **Lisa Cole** (lcole@cityoflewisville.com) or **Eliza-**

beth Bittner (elizabeth.bittner@fortworthtexas.gov).

Tanya Zastrow, Director of Programs at the **Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center**, is excited to announce the first ever Texas Pollinator BioBlitz October 7-16, 2016! Organizing partners including Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, National Wildlife Federation, Katy Prairie Conservancy, National Butterfly Center and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are working together to bring attention to the critical habitat needs of monarchs and other pollinators across the state. During this week, participants will look for pollinators of all types in yards, gardens, nature and community centers and natural areas through special events, programs and designated observation areas.

Texas State Parks is thrilled to congratulate the new **Interpretive Services Program Director, Ky Harkey**. Ky began his conservation career maintaining trails and greeting campers as a Student Conservation Association Intern in New Hampshire. He was later introduced to interpretation while leading snowshoe tours in Durango Colorado. Since then, Ky has instructed with the National Outdoor Leadership School, the Wilderness Medicine Institute and the National Children in Nature Network. Ky has served as the Outdoor Education and Outreach Manager since 2012, supervising the Texas Outdoor Family Program, Buffalo Soldiers, Ambassadors and other outreach initiatives.



Ky Harkey and Susan (right)



Great job to the 21 **Texas State Park** students who went through **Certified Interpretive Guide** training led by the TX State Park training team! It will be exciting to see how these students take interpretation back to their primary jobs, which include park management, maintenance, law enforcement and office management.

Newest Texas CIG Class (left)



Missouri State report

Compiled by
Michelle Soenksen

15 years of service to the Missouri Department of Conservation. Catherine says she is ready to spend more time enjoying her family, especially her grandchildren, and hopefully do some traveling. Her friendship, knowledge, leadership, and guidance will be greatly missed!

Missouri State Parks participated in the 2016 Missouri State Fair in August by providing interpretive booths at the Missouri Department of Natural Resource's building. **Missouri State Park staff** provided interpretation of pollinators, black bears, Civil War cannon crews, prescribed fire, historic toys and games, bats, fly-fishing, prehistoric hunters, mountain lions, historic mills, geocaching, solar astronomy, and camping or park-related family fun. Overall, these interpretive messages reached approximately 2,484 people!

Tamie Yegge reports that **Catherine McGrane**, Assistant Nature Center Manager at **Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center**, is retiring on October 31 after



Prairie State Park has a couple of exciting special events coming up. The **Prairie Jubilee** celebrates the tall-grass prairie and **National Bison Day** acknowledges an iconic animal of the west and prairies – the bison, and its recent elevation in status.

Linda Chorce of the **Springfield Conservation Nature Center** reports on Insect-o-Rama: "Beetles were just part of the celebration which attracted more than 550 people of all ages for the 3-hour insect extravaganza in Springfield, Missouri in August 2016. While seeing live specimens and sampling edible insects were the biggest attractions, other activities—as diverse as the insects themselves—were also popular. Participants compared their abilities to those of insects in "Insect-O-lympic" games, created unique beetle species out of painted rocks, listened to insect communication on guided hikes, categorized insects into orders through a "Walking Insect Key," and learned how important insects are in decomposition including their value to forensic scientists. They also

saw them as a source of artistic expression through the eyes of Chinese artist Hing Wah Hatch and the photography of entomologists Tom R. Riley and Donna Brunet. Special guests included foresters diagnosing tree pests, members of the Missouri Trout Fishermen's Association tying flies, and Beekeepers Association of the Ozarks members demonstrating how honey is made. Dr. Chris Barnhart (Missouri State University) and a team of folks from Friends of the Garden and the Roston Butterfly House gave away Luna and cecropia moth caterpillars and leaves to program participants so they can observe the life cycle through to completion."

Photos above from Missouri Insect O-Rama, credit Jessica Pearson

"Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery that mediocrity can pay to greatness." - Oscar Wilde

Oklahoma state report

Compiled by Donna Horton



Fast food chain **Braum's** has teamed up with the **National Wildlife Federation** to promote nature education in Oklahoma. With each and every purchase of a kid's meal, a Ranger Rick magazine (or DVD) is included. So cool!

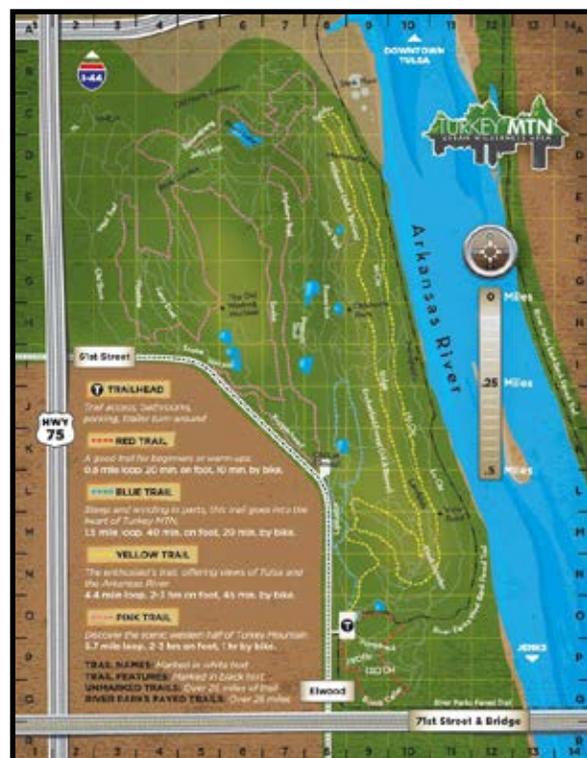
Opening August 28, ledger art will be on display at **Washita Battlefield National Historic Site**. The exhibition installation, a cultural event celebrating 100 years of the National Park Service, will feature many artists including the work of Cheyenne master artist, George Levi. The exhibition will display contemporary ledger art work depicting the Sand Creek Massacre and the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

The **Arcadia Lake Conservation Education Center** hosted one of **Neil Garrison's** nature hikes on June 11th. Neil was one of the instructors at the Women in the Outdoors event. He did a "Birding by Ear" excursion.

"First of its kind." That is the description that has been used to personify **The Nature Conservancy's** program that is entitled the **Oklahoma City Leadership Academy**. Cody Pepper is the TNC employee that is heading up this effort. In a recent news article, he was quoted as saying: "Nature is everywhere. We hope to open people's eyes to opportunities to do conservation on a large scale out in our urban areas." It sounds exciting!

Construction began on July 1 for the \$15-million **Sanctuary Asia** exhibit at the **OKC Zoo**. The source of this funding is a special sales tax that is specifically dedicated to paying for improvements to the Zoo.

Exciting news in Tulsa: the **Turkey Mountain Urban Wilderness Area** is the site of a new designation as a **National Recreation Trail**. This 7-mile trail offers spectacular views of the Arkansas River. It is even more exciting when you consider that only two years ago a developer had announced plans to build a 52-acre outlet mall on private property across some of these trails. Over the years, the park's trails had gradually extended onto land that did not officially belong to RiverParks. Even though the development was perfectly legal, it rapidly became clear that far more people in Tulsa preferred to hike, bike, and ride horses on that site than shop. The sentiment surfaced, loudly and often, in rallies and blogs and meetings: build an outlet mall if you like, but not on our trails. The new designation helps, but Turkey Mountain's supporters continue to work toward making sure the area remains a park.



Remember the March 31 tornado at **Oxley Nature Center** in Tulsa? Volunteer trail work crew member **Dennis Hiebert** and Natural Resources Coordinator **Vinnie Robinson** counted the fallen trees they cut to clear several miles of trails. There were 72 old-growth cottonwoods, sycamores, oaks, and other species twisted out of the

ground or snapped off to block the trails through the climax flood-plain forest! In June, the Friends of Oxley recognized Dennis as Volunteer of the Year at Oxley's spring awards banquet. Well done, Dennis!

Oxley Nature Center held its summer **Butterfly Count** on July 6 this year. Much like the National Audubon Society's Christmas Bird Count, the North American Butterfly Association's 4th of July Count calls on citizen scientists to join with professionals in gathering long-term data on population trends. The Oxley count's numbers for 2016 were down from previous years. Some were down just a little (22 people counting) while other numbers were down quite a bit (72-97 degree weather and only 482 butterflies in 29 species were found). On positive side, the counters did not find a single Cabbage White (an invasive Eurasian species) and did find a Gorgone Checkerspot (rarely observed.)



July was the Month of the Monarch at **Oxley Nature Center**. All month long an active Monarch Nursery invited visitors to view the different stages of Monarch development. Twice a week Monarch Watch Patrol participants became citizen scientists, monitoring areas for Monarch activity. Data they collected will be submitted to the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project. The final event was a Monarch Celebration on July 30. The Pollinator Garden that flanks the front walk-way was the site of several hands-on activities and up-close encounters with many species, in between rain showers. Folks also gathered inside for butterfly crafts and programs throughout the day.

On August 11, **Oxley Nature Center** held a volunteer roundup in preparation for the start of fall activities. As volunteer training begins, four of the Oxley volunteer staff joined three out-of-state participants in Certified Interpretive Host training on August 30-31.



The NAI National Conference in Corpus Christi, Texas starts November 8, 2016.

U.S. Election Day is also November 8. If you plan to vote, and we hope you do, please make arrangements prior to your trip.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS*:

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