

Region 6 Spring Board Meeting

Monday, February 28, 2011

Eureka Springs, Arkansas

ACTION AGENDA

Approval of Fall Board Meeting Minutes

Workshop Chair Report – Jay Schneider (2 minutes) Floating to best available Time.

Director Report - John Miller (2 minutes)

Deputy Director Report - Don Simons (2 minutes)

The Texas crew seems to have their act together for the 2012 Region 6 Interpretive Workshop (RIW). I'll let Tara give details in her report.

We (John and I) contacted Pat Silovsky to encourage her to start putting together a committee for the 2013 RIW in Kansas if she has not already begun to do so. This hard winter makes me want to suggest that we try to move our workshops to April if that does not reduce our attendance too much. For Arkansas interpreters, we have to avoid March because we have three weeks of spring break visitors filling our parks from surrounding states.

There are lots of issues to consider when planning an RIW.

- Timing: we have to consider work demands from our agencies, room rates, weather
- Host location: city and facilities
- Committee chair
- Time requirements
- Etc, etc, etc

John has a Region 6 Workshop Planning Guide that can answer a lot of questions and be a blueprint to many wheels that have already been created.

Secretary Report - Andrea Putnam (2 minutes)

Treasurer Report - Andrea Johnson (2 minutes)

Current Assets in Cash/Cash Equivalents as of Dec. 31, 2010 = \$30, 297.33

2010 Net Income = \$2,441.46

2011 Workshop Registrations= ??? I will announce that day when I have all the numbers.

2011 Workshop Expenses as of that day= ??? (more will come after the workshop)

Discussion about a Refund Policy for the Workshops (Suggestion by Beth at National)

Discussion about Early Bird and Unpaid Registrations.

(I would just like to get some opinions on the refund policy and maybe some policies on unpaid and late registrations. This wouldn't be implemented until next year maybe.)

Elections Chair Report- Kelly Farrell (2 minutes)

Membership Chair Report -Rachel Demascal (2 minutes)

Scholarship Chair Report - Leigh Whitted (2 minutes)
(report submitted by Amy Stephens)

The 2010 Scholarship Committee selected three winners for the Freeman Tilden Scholarship for Region IV. Kala Berg from Texas State Univeristy; John Withers, Oklahoma State University; Mary Tucker, Kansas State University. The applicant pool was small, with only 6 students applying, but 6 to 8 applicants has been typical all five years I have served as chairman.

Thank you to the board members who have served as judges over the years. They have been timely in returning their scores, and have taken the process seriously. I am pleased that many of our scholarship winners have returned to become involved members of NAI.

I have enjoyed serving as Scholarship Chairman, but feel it is time to give someone else an opportunity to be involved. I am excited to turn my board position over to a fresh, eager member, Leigh Whitted. She and I met at Texas conference years ago, and she will be a wonderful addition to the board.

Newsletter Report - Pam Tooley & Lisa Cole (2 minutes)

Over the last two years, the Region has successfully moved to an e-newsletter without much difficulty. During the 2010 year, over 680 newsletters were emailed seasonally with only about 10-12 returns. Most of these are to agency addresses where the folks have moved on, or on occasion, will not accept what might be considered a bulk mailing (which it is). On the average, about 50-75 paper newsletters are dispersed to those who do not have email address listed at national, or their emails addresses are not functioning properly. We also send to one University Librarys for archival purposes.

There is little problem with getting news from the masses. Our state people are excellent in rounding up the most recent and interesting news, and are not hesitant to find articles as requested. On many an occasion, the membership sends "extras" which are placed in the hold pile to be used at the proper time. Suggestions as to topics are always welcome.

This is the first year that the email "post office" has been used to disperse other news of interest or necessity, and there is no reason that it cannot be used so if not overly inundated. It is not the intention of the newsletter editors to fill up the boxes of our members. National does a good job of keeping us informed. If the state coordinators would like to have the listings to use to request or find out who their members are, they are more than welcome to ask for those lists. Sometimes National can be a bit slow in sending those requests out, and the Google account may be a bit quicker.

The listings are revised each season according to the lists that National sends; but members do not disappear off the Region's lists just because someone does not reappear at the next publishing date. All workshop attendees are placed in the listings in the volume that appears after the workshop.

The co-editors are happy to continue working on the newsletter in the future, but are also quite willing to give someone else the opportunity. It has been 10 years.

Awards Chair Report - Judy Sneed (2 minutes)

Awards Designate for Laura Motley

Judy graciously stepped up to be the Awards Chair Designate while Laura Motley is deployed overseas with the OK National Guard. The Awards Committee received only seven (7) nominations for 2010. Fortunately these were spread over several categories, so we will award plaques for five (5) different fields. That leaves another five categories with no nominations or awards for this year.

Region Web Master Report - Dakota Russell (2 minutes)

TX Report - Tara Humphreys (2 minutes)

OK Report - Kenton Peters (2 minutes)

-- The University of Oklahoma has a unique program that is sort of a "college for seniors" kind of thing (i.e., it is designed for mature individuals 50+ years of age). The program participants attend the college courses for the pure fun of learning. There are no tests. No grades are assigned at the completion of the courses. The title of the educational program is the "Osher Lifelong Learning Institute." Oklahoma City's Neil Garrison will be teaching an OLLI course this coming June. It is entitled "Stone Arrowheads" and will give the program participants a "hands-on" look at flintknapping.

-- "Pooper Bowl Party" -- That was the humorous title of an educational program at the OKC Zoo on January 29th. Here is their description of that event: "This interactive program will give families the 'scoop on poop' through games, crafts, songs and treks."

--The OKC Zoo began a new program in February "Nature Explorers Mothers Day Out." It is for 3 and 4 year olds, twice a week for 4 hours. <http://www.zoofieldtrips.com/explorers>

--They have also begun some new programs for earning Scout badges (girls and boys). Their programs range from 90 minutes to overnight stays! <http://www.zoofieldtrips.com/scouts>

--Some exciting news!! The new elephant habitat at the OKC Zoo is going to open March 11th. It has been under construction since 2009. For some awesome pictures and more information see the link. <http://www.okczoo.com/animals-plants/asia-exhibit>

-- We will be getting a bunch of new currency this year. One of the new quarters (i.e., the 25-cent coin) will feature a depiction of a historic bridge that is located on a National Park Service site here in Oklahoma. In 1909, a bridge was built in this NPS site in order to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. The bridge is in the Chickasaw National Recreation Area (Sulphur, OK). (Back in 1909, this area was designated Platt National Park ... the smallest national park in the entire U.S.) For more information: <http://www.nps.gov/chic>

-- Did someone mention that the economy is in a slump? Did someone say that there is no money to do anything nowadays? Don't tell that to the dynamic community leaders up in Enid, OK. Although it took five years to complete and it cost \$9.8 million to finish it all up, the Cherokee Strip Regional Heritage Center is now double its original size. The museum was highlighted in the January-February issue of True West magazine; the museum was listed in the magazine's "Towns to Watch" feature. Congrats!

--The Myriad Botanical Gardens construction is coming along. The last of the scaffolding was taken out of Crystal Bridge in January and the new pavers have almost all been placed. As soon as the pavers are laid down we can start moving in new plants, remove debris and clean up the stream system and get things running properly again. On the outside grounds things are coming together. Lots of trees and shrubs have been planted and the main pond is starting to fill with water again. We will reopen April 26th.

-- The Grey Snow Eagle House is situated near Perkins, OK. It is federally-sanctioned facility for injured and disabled eagles. A Native American entity (i.e., the Iowa Tribe) runs the site. The facility has been open for five years now. Tribal members are allowed to use the eagles' naturally-molted feathers for their tribe's religious ceremonies. It is a unique "win-win" situation for the birds that are in need of some help ... and for the members of the Iowa Tribe.

-- The OK Aquarium gave away a free field trip to some lucky Oklahoma school. They conducted a "Think Blue to go Green" poster contest in late February of this year. The major newspaper in Oklahoma City cooperated in this venture.

MO Report - Jeremy Soucy (2 minutes)

I regret to inform you that I will not be at this year's NAI Conference. I hate that I will miss this awesome event in a state that is dear to me but I guess it happens.

This past year has been extremely busy and a lot has happened. To begin with, in August of 2010, I was promoted to Conservation Education Specialist in the Kansas City Region. To some extent, this has removed me from being a front line interpreter yet I still manage to do as many programs as possible. It has become continually more difficult to keep in touch with all of Missouri's fine interpreters but I haven't lost all contacts and by switching to a new region, I have made many new contacts.

The best and most exciting news is the success of this year's Association of Missouri Interpreters Conference held in the Northeast or Northwest Region. I am still confused about that. As a member of the board, I saw firsthand just how difficult decisions became and how hard the committee worked to pull off an amazing event. With the financial situation of the past couple years and the dismissal of many interpreters, we debated on canceling the conference. However, our members would not have that. So, we went back to basics and used state park dorm style cabins to reduce cost and trimmed a lot in other areas. One of the highlights was the banquet where administration from DNR and MDC spoke followed by a wonderful keynote from Wren Smith.

LA Report - Gay Brantley (2 minutes)

Walter Jacobs Nature has had some exciting programs recently. Owl Night Open House was a smashing success! 377 visitors turned out to explore the nighttime forest and have close encounters with captive owls. The park celebrated the 40th Anniversary of World Wetlands Day by offering an afternoon of live animal talks, wetlands trail walks, and fun crafts. And, Valentine's for Wildlife adapted to the snowy conditions by including animal tracks

identification along with the festive feeder crafts. Walter Jacobs Nature now offers 45 curriculum-based programs for Pre-Kindergarten through High School groups. Programs include field experiences in the nature park as well as on-campus presentations such as Schoolyard Nature Walks. A complete list of programs is available online at <http://www.caddoparks.com/memorial.cfm>

Black Bayou Lake National Wildlife Refuge has just printed its first full color trail brochure. To celebrate the 108th anniversary of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the refuge is hosting its second annual trails event, “Walk Where the Wildlife Walks”, on March 12 from 1:00 – 4:00. An extension to our canoe trail has been marked and mapped with GPS coordinates and canoes will be available during our event for those who would prefer paddling to walking. The visitor center construction at **Red River National Wildlife Refuge** is well underway. Lisa Shook, the visitor services staff person at Red River refuge will attend the workshop in Eureka Springs. The **Catahoula refuge** participated in the Jena Christmas parade on December 10. The Blue Goose and TR Bear costume characters preceded the decorated hunting truck. The 12 young refuge visitors who rode and walked the night time parade route were dressed as hunters, fishermen, hikers, and bird watchers.

This year, thanks to a Learn and Serve America grant, students from Staring Education Center and Istrouma High School will be participating in the Louisiana Outdoors Outreach Program (LOOP). The service learning project created for these students involves clearing a mile long trail to Oxbow Point on the Tickfaw River at **Tickfaw State Park**. On January 7 - 8, members of Many High School band came to **Ft. Jesup State Historic Site**. Being immersed in the past, they learned: how to set up a 1830s military camp, how to cook chicken, and toast bread. Late evening and night were spent listening to period stories and the next day they learned period crafts. The **Plaquemine Lock State Historic Site** re-opened its’ doors on Wednesday, January 5 and a grand re-opening ceremony was held on Friday, January 21.

KS Report - Pat Silovsky (2 minutes)

Dillon Nature Center won the award KRPA Branch award for GEO Month.

The Lee Richardson Zoo’s Education Division is starting off 2011 with reorganization. They now have three Managers of Education who are each equally responsible for the division but also have specific areas of oversight. Tarra Tyson has moved into the position of Manager of Educational Outreach and Camps, Misty Ayers will now be the Manager of Onsite Programs and Special Events, and Whitney Buchman joined the team in January as Manager of Distance Learning and Technology. Their EarthDay celebration will be Party for the Planet – April 20th 9:00 – 2:30

Brian Underwood reports a new part-time naturalist --Pat Brooks--and she has hit the ground running heading up our Jr Explorers program. This past year we had a maximum enrollment in Jr Explorers and expect another great year. A new program that we launched this past year was the Salina Parks Geo-Cache Challenge. We gave away prizes for the lucky few that visited all 26 city parks and found the hidden cache and brought back a picture token from each one.

Jared at Sunset Zoo has a staff change to report. Courtani Pineau has replaced Gina Brisby as our Education Assistant. Courtani comes to Sunset Zoo from Oregon where she has a broad range of experiences, including vet tech, horse therapy with special needs audiences, and as a university ambassador. Last summer they launched a new program, Sunset Zoo's Nature Swap. It is designed to build off the natural desire children have to collect things like rocks and shells through a trading system that educates them on the laws with regard to collecting natural items and on the items themselves. Sunset Zoo is also building a new education center and entryway. The over 11,000 square foot building will house the education animal collection and significantly increase their programming capacity. They will add a full-day, nature-based daycare and an interactive distance learning program at the zoo with the opening of this new building in the spring of 2012.

Bob Gress at GPNC reports a new poster on Kansas Symbols in the Great Plains series to celebrate Kansas's 150-years.

AR Report - Jay Miller (2 minutes)

BREAK (10 minutes)

Some, but not all of these items may need to be voted on and follow Roberts Rules of Order
News from National Office (3 minutes)

Two free NAI Memberships (3 minutes)

Implementation of selling of "Whisper on the Wind" CD to fund Regional and National Registrations (5 minutes)

Scholarship Proposal to make a slight change in Scholarships (I will send that too you soon) (3 minutes)

Proposed by Amy Stephens. For the last three years, an awkward situation has arisen regarding the scholarship winners. As it stands, two winners are undergraduate students and one is a graduate student. It is designed that way to introduce new people to NAI and inspire them to enter the field. However, the last three years, I have only had 2 undergraduates apply--which basically guarantees both of them a spot. In all cases, the second undergraduate has had the lowest score across the board, and sometimes barely qualified for the scholarship. Granted, a grad student usually present him or herself with more poise and knowledge than a new student, but some really great graduate students are getting passed over, and everyone's last choice gets the money. For this reason, I would like to modify the rules.

I move that the Scholarship award be modified as such:

Three scholarships will be awarded, with at least one undergraduate and one graduate being selected. For the third scholarship, an undergraduate student is given preference to receive the scholarship, unless the committee has compelling reason to offer it to a graduate student instead.

(Note: If this passes, I suggest that applicants continue to be graded in separate categories so that it is clear which are grads and which are undergrads. There is definitely a difference in the material they submit)

Review and updating of Region Strategic Plans (I will send out a file soon that has these items in detail) (10 Minutes)

Other Items for Business Meeting agenda

Selection of Fall Board Meeting Date (teleconference is an option) (3 Minutes)

Adjourn