

VISIONS



Fall 2018

Volume 32, Issue 1

Strengthening the Future of Interpretation

By Amanda Alessi, CIG

Greetings amazing Region 6 interpreters! Thank you for valuing conference experiences by providing opportunities for students to attend. I am grateful to have been a part of NAI 2017 in Spokane, Washington through your generosity. NAI workshops and conferences offer more than professional development. They provide inspiration with “licenses to steal”, relationships of encouragement and growth and the opportunity to challenge myself to step up as an interpreter.

The menu of concurrent sessions had a variety of programming ideas. At Great Plains Nature Center, we have been looking to develop engaging programs for adults. The session, Lifelong Learners May Be Your Perfect Audience, provided inspiration not only for adult programming but with possibilities to expand our volunteer and member base. Kevin Van Dien from the Florida Aquarium shared how partnering with lifelong learning groups such as Osher Lifelong Learning Institute has helped the aquarium fulfill their mission. I am certainly exercising my “license to steal” this program design and helpful tips to reach lifelong learners.

Relationships are the thread that weaves together interpreters from one NAI gathering to the next. The most lasting impact the conference will have on me is the time spent with other interpreters. I spent time with experienced naturalists, absorbing wisdom and insight gained from their time in the field. At other times I was the experienced naturalist offering encouragement to a new interpreter. It is heartening to gather with others who do what I do, to be surrounded by interpreters of many fields. Though we serve in all parts of the world, we are connected through our mission to interpret our resources with excellence. NAI gatherings provide the loom for interpreters to connect with one another, to build the relationships that weave us together, naturalists, historians, old and new.

As a master’s degree student in public administration, I experienced this conference through a new lens. Not only did I ask “How will this benefit me as an interpreter?” but I also asked, “How will this help me strengthen the future of interpretation?”

See *Strengthening the Future*
(Page 2)

Inside This Issue

Strengthening the Future of Interpretation	1
Voices of the People	2
Volunteers needed	3
Spokane Diaries	3
Region VI Directors Report	4
Interpretation, Love and Slugs	6
Arkansas Report	7
Oklahoma Report	8
Texas Report	10
Continuing Learning Hours for Interpreters	11

The theme of this issue is
Summer 2018.

Have an idea for a theme for a future issue? We’d love to hear it! Send your ideas to nai6.visions@gmail.com

Voices of the People: an editorial by Ken Forman

We members of NAI's Region VI are the humblest, of that there is no doubt. However, it's time to dial back the humble just a bit and spend more time bragging on ourselves. Okay, okay, maybe not bragging, per se. I know that we here in the South eschew self-promotion. It's just not done, not appropriate. Mad props to all of us for our collective self-restraint.

Visions is your newsletter, about you, by you, and for you. We, the editors know it's been a while since this was a regular newsletter, and we're working to return to regularity. We're working hard to get back on a quarterly schedule, and have even tossed around the idea of trying a monthly schedule.

"But, Ken," I can hear your voice in my head, "how can we help?" Your state coordinators are there to act as your representative to go

between your state, Region VI, and the national NAI board of directors. They're also there to collect information on what you all are doing within your state. They share word of your good deeds with Ft. Collins, and with the newsletter editors. We take their reports, compile them into the State Reports part of this newsletter, and send it back out to you all.

But your state representative needs your input. Here's where you are allowed – nay, encouraged to brag a little bit about yourself. Send updates to your state representative and they'll send them on to us.

"But, Ken," your voices are still there, "when do we need to get that information to our state representatives?" Fair question.

The deadlines for each quarter are:

- February 20 – Spring Issue

- May 20 – Summer Issue

- September 1 – Fall Issue

- December 1 – Winter Issue

If you can get updates to your representatives at least a week before these dates that will give them time to compile them and send them off to the newsletter.

"But, Ken," your voices are persistent, "what shall we write about?" What's new in your neck of the state? What challenges have you faced, and overcome? What should the rest of us know about your site? Your help will make this newsletter something to anticipate each quarter. With your input we can all be a bigger voice.

Otherwise you just might find these pages filled with stories about origami, smallmouth bass fishing, string figures, and the life of a tortoise wrangler. Don't let it come to that.

Visions Newsletter back after short hiatus

After a short hiatus, *Visions*, the newsletter for NAI Region 6 is back. After a long, busy Summer and a change in staff *Visions* has returned.

Katie Raney (Texas), has stepped down as editor and we wish to thank her for her service. Ken Forman (Arkansas) has come forward to take her place. Jerrel Geisler (Texas) continues as coeditor with Ken.

We apologize for any problems our absence has caused. Please send any questions or future ideas to Ken Forman.

Strengthening the Future of Interpretation (from page 1)

So much of what we do as interpreters is advanced or limited by the decisions of administrators and policy makers. My education in public administration and involvement with NAI gives me the knowledge, skills and resources to advocate the importance of interpretation and urban nature centers. While attending the concurrent session, Nature Center Issues & Solutions: A Roundtable of Ideas & Answers, I met an invaluable resource, Dr. Rob Bixler. He offered not only resources but also per-

spective and wisdom for many in the session who were experiencing incredibly challenging situations. It was not until the awards banquet that I realized the experience, authority and humility with which he spoke. Dr. Rob Bixler received the 2017 NAI Fellow award for his massive influence on interpretation through connecting research with practice.

NAI National Conference and regional events offer interpreters an opportunity to improve the best parts of their professional experi-

ence. By embracing this opportunity afforded to me by your generosity, I am increasingly implementing lifelong learning at the Great Plains Nature Center and fostering partnerships across a spectrum of interpretive organizations. As I now transition into a position of more leadership and responsibility at the Great Plains Nature Center, because of you, I am more thoroughly equipped. What could you do right now, even in a small way, to strengthen the future of interpretation?

Volunteers needed for NOLA booth

Region 6ers!
Hey there! I'd like to introduce myself, Lari Jo W. Edwards, as your Region 6 representative for the Interpretive Naturalist Section of NAI. My first order of business as your rep is to help Lori Spencer man the Interpretive Naturalist booth for the National Conference

in New Orleans. If you are going and want to volunteer 1 or 2



hours of your time, please let me know via e-mail at ljedwards@cb-bep.org. ALSO if you have Region 6 Interpretive Naturalist news, I'm your girl! Send it my way for newsletters and distribution. I'm looking forward to getting to know what you are doing in our field.

Spokane Diaries - NAI 2017

By Ken Forman, Arkansas

When traveling to the NAI National Conference, it's hard to take anything lightly. It felt like my luggage took this perspective to heart. The checked bag weighed in at a measly 36 lbs. Considering the list of "recommended" items to bring, I found that quite surprising. My carry-on and messenger bag were more densely packed. Clothes for the '70's Theme reception? Check. Auction Items? Shipped earlier, so – check. Other incidentals like camera, boots, items for the Region 6 Basket? Check, check, check. For me, of course, origami paper and diagrams are as much an essential for travel as my ID and boarding pass. Check, check, and check. Waiting at the gate for my flight out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, I'm faced with a myriad of options to keep my mind occupied. There's an NFL football game on the screen at the bar across the way, I could fold something, or lose myself in the collection of Aldo Leopold essays I brought (Round River). Instead, I chose to people-watch. The shapes, sizes, and attitudes of passers-by amuses me. Everyone here is on their way somewhere else; no one hangs out at an airport for fun. Some are happy to be here; going to their there. Some, based on their facial expressions, seem miserable. I can't help but wonder

how many travelers stop to marvel at the beautiful huge bronze statue adorning this part of the terminal? Interpretation is everywhere. I stopped to admire the pair of scissor-tailed flycatchers (Oklahoma's state bird) bursting out of their pedestal. The artist's efforts capture the birds' joy of flight and pride over their tails. I feel the same way – joy at making this trip to be with my "tribe" and pride at being honored as this year's NAI Region 6 Professional Scholarship recipient. First impressions of the conference hotel were carefully managed by the hotel designers and staff. But that's hardly a surprise. Even without knowing the precise term for what they do, hospitality designers and workers all practice interpretation. They're marketing a story. For that marketing to be at all effective the story needs to be compelling. This year's conference hotel achieved their flair with panache and grace. Interpretation is everywhere.

"Coffee!" was the first thought that intruded on my mind when the alarm sang out its morning tune. Fortunately, there was a coffee maker in the room, so I knew I wouldn't be subjected to any decaffeinating.

I'd arrived a couple days early to take advantage of the NAI/

NCA Interpreters Road Show. With promised stops at a variety of facilities, I felt sure there would be no end to the opportunities. Kudos go to Brian Thill for arranging such an assortment of stops for us. We visited sites ranging from a completely outdoor education experience hiking the Dishman Hills Conservancy to a completely urban experience at the ultra-modern Spokane County Water Resource Education Center. The second morning of the Road Show found us visiting the Mobius Children's Museum and Science Center. Who knew moving a pile of colored lentils around or creating a complicated water maze would end up being such fun? Clearly the people who designed Mobius knew. Their craft room wall is adorned with M.C. Escher art, Fibonacci sequences and spirals, and biological ratios compared to music harmonics. This is some pretty advanced stuff for a center whose target audience age range is measured in single digits. A quote attributed to Dr. Seuss and painted on the exit perfectly summed up the experience, "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened."

See Spokane Diaries

(Page 5)

NAI Region Six Directors Report



I hope this newsletter finds all of our members safe and sound and ready for fall.

Our region continues to grow from 881 members last fall to 951 members at the time of this report; this is amazing news keep up the

great work and welcome to our new members!
Like many of you I enjoy to travel. This summer my wife, my 14 year old son and I went on a little road trip to the Pacific Ocean: 15 days, 5029 miles, seven states, three Historic Highways, 12 NPS units, about a dozen private operations, an aquarium and the Blue Man Group. Traveling inspires us, recharges our batteries, and gives us new ideas to honor others by recreating it at our sites back home. I learned so many things about our country and have a deeper appreciation for it. Now back at my site, I have many new ideas and new directions to take my site, after our experiences.

Speaking of travel, The National

Workshop in New Orleans, Louisiana will be here before we know it; I hope to see many of you soon. Please stop by the Region Six booth and meet your board members.

The Regional Workshop in Wichita, Kansas in February is looking to be a great investment in our members. Please look for the call for papers soon.

Enjoy the seasons, take time to enjoy your resource, reinvest in yourself and travel to other interpretive sites.

Do Today Well

--- Jay Schneider

Upcoming Certification Opportunities in Region 6

Certified Interpretive Guide Courses

October 2-5, 2018 Tulsa, OK
Oxley Nature Center

October 2-5, 2018 Austin, TX
Austin Zoo

April 1-4, 2019 Tulsa, OK
Oxley Nature Center

Certified Interpretive Host Courses

March 1-2, 2019 Tulsa, OK
Oxley Nature Center

Spokane Diaries

(from Page 3)

The short walk from the Children's Museum to the Science Center gave us a chance to enjoy the air and sunlight for a few minutes before immersing ourselves once again into the play of science.

Turning a bunch of science nerds (and let's face it, we're all science nerds) loose in a science museum is a practice in controlled chaos. Judging from the number of straws with teeth marks, hair flying in a hurricane, paper cones cut into spirals, or sand volcanoes with virtual water flowing down the sides, the museum made quite an impression on us all. (By the way, if these seem too cryptic, I encourage a visit to the museum to satisfy that curiosity.)

Our collective selves were whipped with the change in venue at our next stop. The Northwest Museum of Arts and Culture (NMAC) is as far removed from a science museum as possible while still being included in the definition of museum. Focusing on anything that has to do with art and culture of the Pacific Northwest region, the NMAC runs the gamut from housing traveling displays such as a beautifully curated display of artifacts from the HMS Titanic to culturally important Spokane families like the Campbells (whose restored home was the beginning of the NMAC back in the 1920's). Being greeted by a mural depicting the Native American legend of Rainbow Crow bringing fire was a fine point to start such a delightful tour. Interpretation is everywhere.

Rounding out the second day of the Roadshow, we found ourselves at the Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge (TNWR). Again, our lashes were whipped as we shifted our thinking from colorful crows, sinking cruise ships, or early 20th Century life to a more natural perspective. The rangers and manager at the TNWR welcomed us with a nice overview of the refuge and its natural residents. Like excited schoolchildren we were turned loose to hike nearby trails and observe wildlife. Geese, ducks, swans (two kinds), herons, and widgeons all put on a show for us to enjoy. The naturalist nerd-squees from my fellow interpreters didn't seem to affect any of the wildlife. This was a good thing since there were many squees emanating from our group. Gathering a pack of intertypes at a wildlife refuge, giving them some background, and then turning them loose for exploration in an area quite different from their own home range is a sure recipe for eliciting such noises.

The next morning was the proper start of the conference. All the information and experiences roiling around in my mind meant I wasn't sure I would be able to concentrate on the main reason for my attendance: namely that I was there to improve my interpretive skills through new learning experiences and making connections with other interpreters. I needn't have worried. True to useful interpretive methods, NAI President Jay Miller

and Executive Director Margo Carlock gave opening remarks that focused everyone's attention on the next few days' plans. Watching master interpreters using their craft is a joy; even if it's gathering the attention of over 700 enthused attendees. Interpretation is everywhere.

With three very full days of workshop left to attend, it was easy to feel overwhelmed by the immensity of it all. I'd already spent many hours over the past couple days being thoroughly focused on interpretation. Then I reminded myself that anyone who regularly faces dozens of Kindergartners or who has hosted over a thousand excited girl scouts at a centennial celebration can surely immerse himself in the excited trappings of a national workshop. Thus emboldened, I strode purposefully into the rest of the conference.

Trying to synopsise three-days of concurrent sessions, luncheons, and evening programs would take far longer than is entertaining, so I'll limit myself to some things I experienced or learned:

- Interpretation on the water is much more effective than on the shore – must create a program for guided float trips in my area,
- People are spending more money on experiences than on items – this means the perceived value of experience is increasing,
- Applying Tilden's sixth principle of interpretation to "Leave No Trace" workshops proves to be effective,

Spokane Diaries continued
(Page 6)

Spokane Diaries

(from Page 5)

- Current NAI certification standards should be updated, but trying to nail down the appropriate standards is as hard as defining “art” – I’ll know ‘em when I see ‘em,
- Women are superheroes – they make babies AND beer,
- In interpretation the story is the thing – answering “Will it help me? Will it hurt me?” is the goal,
- Electric lemons are cool.

Flying home my mind was awhirl with the ideas, sights, and people

I’d encountered. Settling down into my aisle seat I opened my copy of Aldo Leopold’s Round River and let the wise man’s words wash over me.

“Excuse me,” came a tap at my shoulder, “but is that Aldo Leopold’s Sand County Almanac you’re reading? I recognize the artwork.” I explained to the young gentleman seated directly behind me that it was indeed Leopold, but not his most famous book. He told me he’d received Sand County Almanac as a gift but hadn’t started it yet. “Do you think I’ll enjoy reading it?”

he asked with sincerity and hope. Over the next 90 minutes we talked about Leopold’s writing and how it helps connect people to nature.

“You sure have an interesting profession,” he admitted. “I’m just finishing my military service. Are there any groups or organizations that can help me find my way into that career?”

My smile broadened knowing I had just the right answer for him, “There is a national organization specifically for this career. They can help people newly entering the field.” I gave him some contact information as well as the website for NAI.

Interpretation is everywhere.

Interpretation, Love and Slugs

-Ky Harkey, Director of Interpretation, Texas State Parks

At first, I wanted nothing to do with Banana Slugs. I was helping to conduct a leadership training to a diverse group of young environmental leaders from across the country. Big, slimy, yellow slugs dotted the beautiful campus where we stayed outside of Seattle.

On our second day of the leadership training, a fellow instructor brought us together for a brief interpretive experience. In small groups, she asked us to each find a natural object near us. Against my gentle protests, my group selected a Banana Slug. “Okay, on the first of three rounds, I want you to spend two minutes noticing different things about your object,” our trainer yelled. We began. I notice the slime trail behind it... gross. I notice

the yellow of its skin... gross. I notice the way the texture of its back changed from rough up front, to smooth behind... that’s kind



Interpreters are poets and scientists; emotional and intellectual stimulators. Interpreters tell the story of a natural or cultural resource. I like to say that it’s helping someone fall in love with our surroundings. I fell in love with a slug once.

of interesting. My friends noticed more about its length, movements, and every other tangible feature we

could observe.

“Now spend two minutes wondering as much as you can about your object!” “I wonder how old it is.” “I wonder where it woke up this morning.” “I wonder if it’s a boy or a girl.” “I wonder if it notices us.” “Do you think it’s ever fallen in love?” We all laugh at that. Despite every instinct, I was beginning to care about this stupid, little, slug. “Final round! You have two minutes to list all of the things which your object reminds you of!” A snail. The textured back of a Rhino. The slime trail could be the contrails of a jet. I’m reminded of the slow, deliberate movements of a turtle. I remember the time I poured rock salt on a slug as a child – and the guilt that followed that little experiment.

State reports

compiled by State Coordinators



Arkansas - Don R. Simons
Louisiana - Rusty Scarborough
Kansas - Pat Silovsky
Missouri - Michelle Soenksen
Oklahoma - Donna Horton
Texas - Tara Humphreys

Arkansas

Fort Smith, Arkansas is celebrating its bicentennial with events and activities of all kinds throughout 2018. **Cody Faber** at **Fort Smith National Historic Site** reports they are planning a diverse living history event for October. “We wanted to start it on Fort Smith’s 200th anniversary. We will have living history demonstrations for War of 1812, Mexican War and California Gold Rush, Civil War, and the court system at Fort Smith including the U.S. Deputy Marshals. This event will be coordinated with other events taking place throughout the down town area and is a family friendly event.”

The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) broke ground on a new nature center in Springdale in northwestern Arkansas. The 36,000 square foot building will be surrounded by 61 acres. It will include a state-of-the-art educational building, indoor and outdoor classrooms, educational pavilions, archery ranges, watchable wildlife walking trails, wildlife habitat areas, a creek boardwalk and overlook, native plant gardens, wildlife viewing blinds, and other amenities. Construction will take about three years.

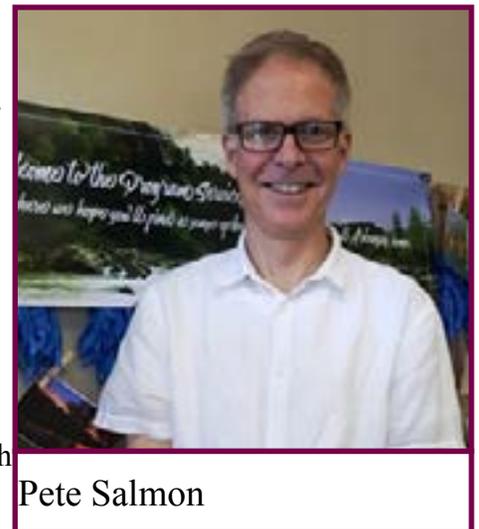
Lauren Marshall reports: “The AGFC’s Education Division welcomes **Tabbi Kinion** as our new Education Chief. She hales from Colorado but hasn’t let the heat or humidity slow her down! She jumped right into her position and brings to the division an appreciation for interpretation and a love for the outdoors.

Hollie Sanders is the new Director of the **Central Arkansas Nature Center**, **Neil Curry** retired in July with 30+ years with the state of AR alone! They’ve both worked hard to get where they are today so if you see them, tell them congratulations.

The most recent addition to the Arkansas State Parks/Program Services section, **Pete Salmon**, is the new **Creative Services Coordinator**, which is a new working title for the position formerly known as Exhibits Coordinator. He brings valuable experience in interpretive planning and exhibit project management to the state parks team, having worked 15 years for Taylor Studios in Illinois, one of the leading interpretive design/build firms in the country. Further, Pete holds the Certified Interpretive Planner (CIP) credential from the NAI.

Hobbs SP-Conservation Area has full-time interpretive position open.

Several parks are planning linked events in 2018-2019 to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the explorations of both Thomas Nuttall and Henry Rowe Schoolcraft.



Pete Salmon

All Arkansas State Park Interpreters gathered at Mount Magazine State Park in August for an interpretation workshop. Eighty something interpreters and supervisors enjoyed cooler than usual weather, sessions and networking. It served as a great retirement party for **Mary Gillihan**.

Oklahoma

Naturalist **Amy Nickel** left her job as naturalist at **Sequoyah State Park** this summer to join the education staff of **The Gathering Place**, a unique urban mega-park due to open in Tulsa Sept. 8th. If you have not heard of **The Gathering Place**, check out this New York Times article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/10/arts/design/tulsa-park-gathering-place.html>

The next CIG workshop at **Oxley Nature Center** in Tulsa will be held Tuesday-Friday, October 2-5, 2018.

An unusual collection of life-size, trompe l'œil paper costumes made its debut at the **Oklahoma City Museum of Art** this summer, in "Isabelle de Borchgrave: Fashioning Art From Paper". It runs from June 16 - September 9, 2018. See the museum's website (www.okcmoa.com).



Our congratulations go out to **Greg Miller**. He has a new job: **Science Museum Oklahoma's** Director of Education and Training. The Science Museum Oklahoma is adjacent to the **Oklahoma City Zoo**.

After a career spanning 38 years as a curator at **OKC's National Cowboy Museum**, **Don Reeves** has embarked on a new endeavor: retirement. Congratulations, Don!

An update from the National Park Service in OKC offices - longtime interpreter **John Withers** has resigned his position there, due to some issues with his position and offices miles and miles away. We look forward to hearing what John will pursue next, with his thoughtful and solid interpretive skills. **Athena Gonzalez** is on a detail at **Chickasaw National Recreation Area** for the next month or so and should be back to OKC around the time of the bombing anniversary. **Dan McKee** and **Ian Harvey** are still floating around, sharing their knowledge with three new staff in the office. **Mary Collins** attended the Oklahoma CIHT workshop, and after finishing her own certification, will begin Certified Interpretive Host training for the NPS in Oklahoma.

In what must be the perfect marriage between computer technology and the outdoor world, the **Oklahoma Biological Survey** launched a unique event on Sunday, April 1, 2018. It was dubbed a "virtual" census of flora and fauna in the state of Oklahoma. Arrangements were made to award prizes to the top-performing observers in this spring season "BioBlitz." The event was coordinated through iNaturalist.org.

Donna Horton reviewed *The Invention of Nature, Alexander von Humboldt's New World* by Andrea Wulf for the Tulsa City-County Public Library's "Books Sandwiched In" series on March 25, 2018.

Donna recommends we put Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) into the history of interpretation. Interpreters and environmental educators owe as much, or perhaps more, to Humboldt than to Tilden. She also recommends this extensively researched biography. Keep a notebook handy; you will want to jot down things to research as you go along (i.e. Who was Mary Somerville, the foremost woman scientist of the early 1800's?)

Oklahoma (cont.)

The **National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum** in Oklahoma City hosted our state's first ever Train-the-Trainer workshop for CIHTs in February 2018. No report yet on how many attended or completed the workshop, and of course, the participants have a year to finish their essays and assemble their portfolios of work for evaluation. It will be good to have the excellent Certified Interpretive Host training going on at more locations around the state!

January 20, 2018 was the re-opening celebration of the **Citizen Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center** in Shawnee, Oklahoma. One of the interpretive exhibits in this facility was a display of 86 moccasins that were handmade by Citizen Potawatomi Nation members. Each pair represents 10 people who walked the "Trail of Death" during the tribe's move to reservation lands.

"YEEEEEEOW!" A comment somewhat like that escaped naturalist **Neil Garrison's** mouth as he was mid-way through a birding field trip that he was leading. (Explanation: he jumped across a small ditch that was alongside the nature trail, and landed wrong on his foot.) The injury was on January 9th. Surgery to repair the tear was on January 25th. Neil says: "I do not know what is worse -- the pain of the original injury, or the pain from the current Physical Therapy sessions as the repaired tendon is stretched back into proper shape."



Planning continues for the 2020 regional workshop. It will be held February 23-26, 2020 in Bartlesville, Oklahoma at the versatile Bartlesville Community Center, located next to the Price Tower and walking distance from Bartlesville's downtown area. The theme is "Interpretation Connects Nature, Culture, Art." Start thinking now about making a workshop presentation in 2020! The "Best Workshop Presentation" plaque would look great hanging on your wall!

Foss State Park, 100 miles west of Oklahoma City, put their entire herd of bison up for sale. All 67 of the animals were sold off. Part of the rationale for this action was the brutal drought. Another reason was the budget limitations that impacted purchases of supplemental food for the herd. The state park declined to say if bison may be reintroduced to that state park at a future date.

The good news is that the bison will remain in Oklahoma, and the new owners view themselves as caretakers of a resource with historical as well as biological significance. The **Cheyenne** and **Arapaho Tribes** beat out nearly 110 competitors for the herd with the winning bid of \$88,002.01, or a little more than \$1,350 per head. Some of the Foss herd will go to a tribal nutrition program for senior citizens, in a program that addresses concerns of diabetes. Others will improve the genetic diversity of the tribes' established herd of 250 animals.

It's been billed as "the original food truck", the cattle drive's chuck wagon. The last weekend of May 2018, The **National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum** hosted an event called "The Chuck wagon Gathering." Retired Naturalist **Neil Garrison** did a flint knapping demonstration at this celebration of Oklahoma's western culture.



Photo by Nate Billings,
The Oklahoman Archives

A big, hearty WELCOME!!! goes out to **Jason Harris**, who is the

Oklahoma (cont.)

new Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society's **Chisholm Trail Museum** (Kingfisher, OK).

Neil Garrison reported today that **Emily Hiatt**, the director of **Martin Park Nature Center** in Oklahoma City, has submitted her resignation and two weeks notice. No word on what she will be doing next, or when the position will be opened for applicants.

Texas

Thirteen Texas State Park interpreters participated in Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) training in June. Texas State Parks holds at least 2 CIG trainings per year – one for full-time interpreters and one for staff who would like to gain more experience in interpretation. There has been an increase in programs and roving interpretation opportunities offered as more staff are empowered with interpretive skills.

The Texas State Parks Interpreter's Advisory Group (IAG) is finishing up its first year. This group of 18 staff members, including managers, maintenance rangers, park police officers and interpreters are putting together a list of interpretive best practices to share with all Texas State Parks. This "for the field by the field" approach is to increase communication and ensure all have a voice, which is a challenge in this huge state!



Pictured L-R: Bonnie Wallace, Daniel Kellogg, Angela Rojas, Shawn Garver, Shaylee Burns, Emily Byrd, Tyler Priest, Terri Wilson, Daniel Stauffer, Danielle Hatch, Zachary Riggs, Kelly Cummins and Jared Shamburger

Continuing Learning Hours for Interpreters

Kristin Evans

Education Coordinator

University of Texas-Austin, Marine Science Institute

Mission-Aransas National Estuarine Research Research (NERR)

Would you like to improve your educational practice, build a community of practice and nurture a long-term professional learning program with your team? We've got what you need!

The *Reflecting on Practice (RoP)* program is a professional learning program for informal science educators. It is designed for institutions to adopt and implement with their own staff so that all educators in the organization can participate and learn together. The goal of the program is to advance the informal science education field by cultivating communities of learners among its professionals.

The RoP Coaching workshop will take place October 23-25, 2018 at the Audubon Nature Institute's Louisiana Nature Center in New Orleans, LA.

To register please visit our web page: <http://missionaransas.org/reflection-practice> or complete the registration form, <https://goo.gl/forms/tXY9f6HbcCf0CXWF3>

The RoP program is a learning partner with NAI. Interpreters fulfilling continuing learning hours for their NAI certifications can use participation in RoP workshops and sessions towards their requirements!

The Coaching Workshop introduces the ideas, activities and philosophy of the program, and of course model the teaching practices underlying the program. Workshop participants continue their learning by implementing/teaching the program with their staff at their home institutions.

For more information about Reflecting on Practice and the RoP network, please visit: <http://reflectingonpractice.org/>

Please feel free to contact me with questions or concerns. If funding is limited, we do have a limited amount of scholarships to offer.

361-749-3152, klevans@utexas.edu

Interpretation, Love and Slugs (from Page 6)

“That’s it! Everyone circle up and we’ll discuss!” Without much thought, I picked up our new friend. I’ve never touched a slug, not to mention held one. And yet, here I was, cradling a Banana Slug in the palm of my hand... and only mildly freaking out.

This vivid memory has stuck with

me for years. In six minutes, the provocation of this informal interpreter created an emotional tie between me and something in which I had no interest, and in fact, actively disliked. Through careful observation, deliberate inquiry, and making connections to my life, I had fallen in love with a Banana Slug.

These days I serve as the Director of Interpretation for Texas State Parks where I have the privilege of getting to work among the best interpreters in the country - each of whom helps our visitors fall in love with Texas State Parks every day.

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS* ARE:

Spring: March 20 • Summer: June 20 • Fall: September 1 • Winter: December 1

Articles submitted for publication in *Visions* should be sent to :

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Information can also be sent to any of the Region 6 State Coordinators:

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