

# VISIONS

NAI REGION 6 - SOUTH CENTRAL

Winter 2019/2020 • VOLUME 33, ISSUE 4

## Here's to seeing clearly in 2020

- *A World Beyond the Horizon*
- *Requiem for Dusty*
- *Meet Erin Holley, new Texas State Representative*



**State Reports:  
pages 6-11**

**Registration  
open for  
Bartlesville, OK  
Conference**

# VISIONS

Newsletter for  
NAI REGION 6 - SOUTH CENTRAL

Winter 2019/2020 • VOLUME 33, ISSUE 4

## IN THIS ISSUE

PG 2

- Region 6 Director's Report
- Financial Aid Available for Bartlesville, OK conference

PG 3

- A World Beyond the Horizon

PG 4

- Top 10 Tips for Writing Award Nominations

PG 5

- Requiem for Dusty



PG 6-11

### State Reports & NAI National Conference Highlights

- Page 6 - Arkansas
- Page 7 - Louisiana
- Page 7 - Kansas
- Page 8 - Missouri
- Page 9 - Oklahoma
- Page 11 - Texas



PG 11

- Meet Erin Holley, new Texas State Representative

PG 12

- Registration open for Bartlesville, OK Regional Conference





# NAI Region Six Director's Report - Winter 2019/2020

I hope this newsletter finds all our members enjoying some cooler weather.

The 2020 Region 6 Workshop in February in Bartlesville, Oklahoma is looking to be a great investment in our members, I hope to many familiar faces and welcome new members into our family. See you in Oklahoma soon! If you need financial assistance, please check the website as we have a way to help our members attend. *[Editor's note: See information below]*

NAI Region Six Director  
- Jay Schneider,  
Arkansas

## Top of the list

Every January many of us make a list of goals or resolutions for the New Year. I have a long list of personal, professional and region six goals.

Here is something to ponder:

You can live up to three days without it, and then you die. It makes up most of our planet and our bodies. It has dictated where every city, town and village has been built all over the world. It is one of the four basic needs of life. It is water.

As interpreters we all connect visitors emotionally and intellectually with our resources. We can all list many resources that make our site special, relevant and worthy of interpretation. Is water the first thing you think of when you list your resources?

If your hope for the future of our planet and its children is to grow and prosper, we must use this precious resource wisely. We must overcome many sacrifices large and small to take this resource to the top of our list.

What's on the top of your list?

Jay

## Financial Aid Stipends still Available for the 2020 Workshop Registration!

Thanks to generous donors and funding from the members of NAI Region 6, financial assistance for the Region 6 Workshop is available in the form of a Free Workshop Registration. These stipends are open to any current NAI Region 6 member (not just students and volunteers, but also professionals, seasonals, and vendors) demonstrating need and service to the field of interpretation. Stipends are only available to those who are NAI members at the time of application.

There are 6 stipends available this year for 100% of the workshop registration fee (does not include field trips, or travel costs). Stipend recipients are responsible for covering their own travel and lodging costs.

Selections will be made by a board committee in a blind review (names, states, and site names removed), and all applications will remain confidential.

Priority will be based on:

- Financial Need
- Service to NAI and the profession
- Responses questions on page 2 of this application.

Applicants who do not adhere to these instructions will not be considered.

Applications for financial assistance must be received no later than January 10, 2020 to be considered. You may send your application via email (preferred), or snailmail. So that you may register properly for the conference, you will be notified whether you are receiving financial assistance by January 25, 2020.

Applications can be submitted by email, or mailed to:

Jay Schneider, Region 6 Director  
2020 NAI Region 6 Financial Aid  
1230 Countrywood Circle  
Rogers, AR 72756  
[jayinterp@yahoo.com](mailto:jayinterp@yahoo.com)

Questions? Contact Region 6 Director Jay Schneider at (479) 899-4573 or [jayinterp@yahoo.com](mailto:jayinterp@yahoo.com).

# A World Beyond the Horizon

article and photos by Rachel Roth

I made my first serious internet friend when I was 16, but it's probably more accurate to call her my virtual pen pal. "Don't trust strangers on the Internet," my parents told me (like many digital natives), and I didn't. But some of those strangers became my friends, and I did trust my



friends, staying up late to chat online, sending letters, gifts, curating music for each other, playing games, live streaming together. Alex in Georgia, Erin in New York, Chrissy in Tennessee, Holland in California, Hannah in Norfolk, Rae in Ohio—they were my friends.

Those online friendships have outlived most others.

The impacts of growing up a digital native, for me, don't stop with technology. Technology expanded my world. It con-

## *Interpreting our Personal Lives*

### A Celebration of Us

nected me with people I never would have met in my corner of the "real world" (read: Kansas). Today some of my best friends live in England and Iceland, and those circles include people from Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands, Finland, South Korea, and Peru. We've memorized timezones, founded digital communities, and even traveled abroad to meet face-to-face for the first, second, third time.

The craziest thing about having friends that span continents? It shaped my worldview.

I face the confused horror of our non-American friends every single time the Americans have health troubles, and the reverse when our 27-year-old English friend developed cancer and didn't foot a life-ruining bill

for her misfortune. I'm challenged to explain the normalcy of another American experiencing a mass shooting on their campus or in their mall. I've felt the helpless fear of our lesbian Saudi friend when her student visa ran out and she faced being sent home to a society hostile toward gay women. I stayed up with my Utah friend listening to police scanners while they searched for an active shooter in the building next to hers. I'm still holding my breath for my friends in England struggling through Brexit and the mess of English politics. The morning after the 2016 elections, I woke up to a message from Sævar in Iceland expressing his condolences.

Knowing people who live through headlines has a funny way of making those headlines real.

These global online friendships have shaped my ideals, my politics, and the way I view the world. They add a whole new context to what we might find normal. Digital spaces make

## A World Beyond

see page 4

# A World Beyond

from page 3

those connections easier to find, but they're happening in person too. Our sites, our cities, our campuses, are more diverse

than ever before, so diverse ideas, experiences, and views are flowing across borders more and more.

Introduce yourself to internet strangers. They could become your most important friends.



The world is small. And that can be such a wonderful thing. I'm far from the only digital native or digital immigrant whose world has found new context because of digital connections.



## *Top 10 Tips for Writing Award Nominations*

(Not a fan of top 10? Just read the last one, I dare ya!)

*by Lauren Marshall*

- 1) **K.I.S.S.** –The old acronym “Keep it Simple Stupid” applies. Note: None of you are stupid, KIS just doesn't look right. Stick to the facts and avoid rabbit trails to ensure you cover what is needed.
- 2) **Set the scene** – Odds are the Awards Committee has a scale ranging from little to basic knowledge about your site so let them in. Set the scene, showcase the hidden gem you have, just remember to keep the appropriate scope.
- 3) **Write it out, read it aloud, write again.** It takes time and practice to get the written piece where you want.
- 4) **Know thyself!** Do what works for you: comfy place, coffee, grungy sweater, favorite pen, snacks, etc. Confession: My recipe for success includes Cheeze-Its, lemonade and New Radicals.
- 5) **Going it alone is a myth!** You can have as much help as you need or want, groups of people come together to nominate one event or program all the time.
- 6) **Get nomination letters as soon as the event is over!** Strike while the iron is hot! Avoid stress about not having enough time by not letting time slip by.
- 7) **Nomination letters and the nomination itself need to be objective.** Just like writing in high school, college or a professional level, “I think...” “I feel...” “I believe...” are counted as opinion, not fact, and more often than not discounted.
- 8) **Lauren does not scare easily.** She's seen the good, the bad and the ugly and won't shy away from whatever needs to be done. Lauren will also try her hardest not to create any more anxiety or negative feelings. It is her job to make sure you have what you need.
- 9) **Use consistent voice or tense.** You aren't writing an obituary, don't use passive past tense.
- 10) **Use P.O.E.T.R.Y.** Be purposeful! Organized. Engaging. Thematic. Relevant and You! Writing a nomination has many parallels with crafting a program outline. Use the skills you already have as an interpreter to become a super nominator!

# Requiem for Dusty

by John Miller, Missouri

The passing of this gentle giant was not without surprise, Because he had recently exhibited a tumor of immense size. This native of Strafford, MO was an ambassador beyond compare, Having met millions of visitors at his home as well as the fair.

Living in Branson with an albino roommate for nearly 15 years, He contributed mightily to alleviating concerns and fears. A favorite guest of boy and girl scout troops, He made a career of being touched and finding belt loops.

Although he could never close his eyes except in his mind, Dusty opened eyes for thousands of visitors to the importance of his kind. His color and markings allowed for beauty beyond compare, As a Copperhead look-a-like he caused everyone to stare.

For tens of thousands Dusty may have been the first they would ever touch, Hundreds of thousands more would delight in his ability to share so much. The tireless Ambassador of his spe-



cies he played with grace, We were glad each morning to see his loveable eager face.

For most people, losing a critter is no big deal, After all, "the only good one was a dead one" is how they might feel. This December his battle with age and pain came to an end, More than an exhibit or prop, Dusty the Prairie kingsnake was our friend.



The NAI National Board met during the 2019 National Conference in Denver, CO. The phone being held up represents Region 6 Director Jay Schneider who was unable to make the conference and was communicating over the phone during the board meeting.



**NAI Region 6 members** met during the NAI National Conference in Denver.

Tara Humphreys, Texas State Rep, facilitated the meeting.

(Photos by John Miller, MO)

## State reports



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

*Editor's note: Due to limited information available for State Reports, some of the following information contains awards, happenings and photos from the NAI National Conference in Denver. Denver photos by John Miller (MO)*



*US Army Corps of Engineers – Hiram M. Chittenden Award Finalist*  
**Aaron Boswell** – Little Rock District, Arkansas

...for his energetic steadfast commitment and passion for educating visitors and students in a variety of venues. Aaron completed a five-year project of signing the Trails of Tears Water Route and preparing interpretive panes that now clearly identifies the route and the significance of the Cherokee Nation. He partnered with Domino's Pizza to place water safety messages on pizza boxes, showing his unique way of thinking "outside the box" to help reduce public fatalities.



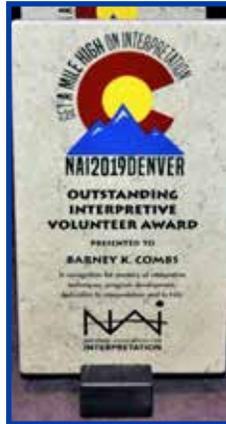
**Brady McKellar** and **Melanie Harrington** present a session, "Adding Another Piece to the Engagement Puzzle: Creating Sensory Friendly Museum Opportunities", at the NAI National Conference in Denver, CO.



A state representative for Kansas is still being sought. Please contact **Pat Silovsky** if you are a Kansas member and interested in serving as Kansas Representative.

***Region 6 is seeking a new State Representative for Kansas***

# MISSOURI REPORT



**Barney Combes** was awarded the **Outstanding Interpretive Volunteer Award**. He accepted his award in St. Charles because he was not able to attend the Denver Conference.

Barney has volunteered for over three decades at The Historic Daniel Boone Home at Lindenwood Park in Missouri, providing a firstperson interpretation of Daniel Boone. Barney has been a tireless volunteer, donating thousands of hours to serve as an advocate for historical and cultural preservation. He donates approximately 140 hours of volunteer, on-site, first-person interpretation a year, and he also contributes approximately 800 hours a year assisting staff with maintaining The Historic Daniel Boone Home Facebook page. Barney has been a member of NAI since 2008 and is a lifetime member of The Association of Missouri Interpreters. In 2008, Barney completed the first CIG class offered at The Historic Daniel Boone Home site. Barney K. Combs truly makes a difference for his site, his community, and our profession. Barney inspires others through his passion, caring, and the example he sets to be a better interpreter. —Shirley Pecoraro (from the NAI National Conference program)



< **John and Kathy Miller** “whooping” it up during the Western Wear Contest at the NAI National Conference exhibit hall.



> **Robert and Shirley Pecoraro** present a session on “Storytellers: Explorers of Interpretation”, at the NAI National Conference in Denver.

**Theresa Coble** is awarded the **NAI Fellow Award** by **Margo Carlock** and **Jay Miller** at the NAI National Conference in Denver.



Theresa Coble’s exposure to front-line interpretation began as a canoe guide while studying biology at Concordia College. In graduate school at University of Minnesota, she switched to Chinese for her masters! At the same institution, she then prepared for her career in academia by focusing on forest resources for her doctorate. After five years on the faculty at West Virginia University, she moved on to Stephen F. Austin in Texas to develop and lead a groundbreaking, NAI-awardwinning online master’s degree. Building upon that success, a dozen years later she took her talent to University of Missouri-St. Louis to direct a largely online doctorate. Since late last century, she has taught an extensive array of interpretation-related courses in which thousands of students at three levels built foundations for their futures. In addition, she managed numerous projects and investigations and published the results. That Dr. Coble is committed to NAI is quite the understatement. She served on myriad committees, two terms as treasurer, and is completing her term as vice president for administration. In addition, she presented dozens of concurrent sessions and introduced her students to NAI by helping to secure memberships and conference attendance. —Ray Novotny (from the NAI National Conference program)





Oklahoma interpreters are revving into high gear for the **South Central 2020 Regional Workshop in Bartlesville February 23-26**. If you are driving in from anywhere but the nearby states of Kansas or Missouri, you may want to stop by one of these places on your way to or from the workshop:

**National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum** in Oklahoma City will offer one-hour Signature Tours in January and February. Albert Bierstadt's glowing landscape *Emigrants Crossing the Plains* to pieces by Frederic Remington and Charles Russell, see some of the finest Western art in the country. View ethnographic material from Native Americans and mountain men, and learn about frontier military life. Round out the tour with a look at the evolution of the working cowboy, from the range to their portrayal in film and pop culture. Walk away with a better understanding of the diverse cultures that have shaped the West. Saturdays and Sundays from January 4 – February 23, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. Free to Museum members or with Museum admission.

**Medicine Park Aquarium and Natural Sciences Center** (Lawton, OK) is now in winter hours, but still open 7 days/week with Critter Chats at noon and 2 p.m., and a bullfrog feeding daily at 3 p.m. The Center opened in June 2017. It features a comprehensive collection of vertebrate aquatic life native to Oklahoma, as well as a room of selected exotic species. Outside, a paved and landscaped wildflower trail wanders back and forth across part of the 8-acre site. Perched on a hill, the Center's balcony offers a spectacular view of the town of Medicine Park. (see included photos on page 10)

**Red Slough Wildlife Management Area** is a 5,814-acre wetland project designed to restore hydrology and re-establish bottomland hardwoods. It is cooperatively managed by the U.S.D.A. Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation. Red Slough is a very popular recreational destination located in southeastern Oklahoma and is a premier bird-watching and waterfowl hunting area. Winter duck hunting hours go from half an hour before sunrise to 1:00 p.m. Although summer and fall are better seasons to look for the Slough's alligators or wildflowers or dragonflies, winter still provides opportunities to spot many kinds of birds and possibly a river otter or swamp rabbit.

Directions:

From Idabel: 18 miles south on U.S. Hwy 259, 3 miles east on State Hwy 87, north on Mudline Rd. (by the big Getty sign) into area.

**Sequoyah National Wildlife Refuge** is a stopping point or winter home for thousands of waterfowl and other migrating birds. The headquarters are closed on the weekend, but 2 one-mile hiking trails and 2 auto-tour routes are open from sunrise to sundown. The paved walking trails offer opportunities for glimpses of Bald Eagles, bobcats, armadillos, and deer. Buses and recreational vehicles have easy access to the 6-mile Sandtown Bottom auto route but might find the 2-mile Webbers Bottom challenging.

Directions:

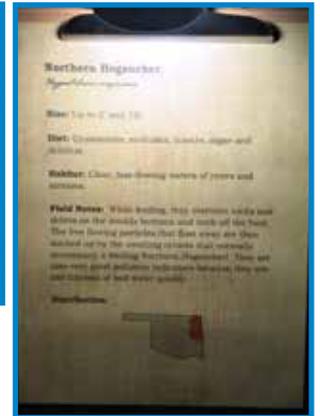
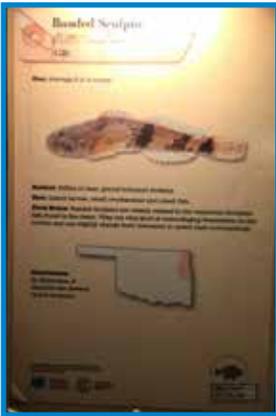
The refuge is approximately 150 miles east of Oklahoma City, and 35 miles west of Fort Smith, Arkansas, off of Interstate 40. Take the Vian exit (# 297) from I-40, follow county road three miles south to refuge headquarters (follow the signs).

The latitude and longitude to the headquarters are: 35.447281, -94.972601.

**OKLAHOMA REPORT  
(CONTINUED PAGE 10)**

# OKLAHOMA REPORT

CONTINUED



And looking forward into the future:  
The **Edmond Historical Society & Museum** will present spring and summer exhibits on the 1950's, cooking, historical aprons, and Darci Lynn Farmer from America's Got Talent.

**Oxley Nature Center** in Tulsa will host a CIH workshop April 17 & 18, 2020. A CIG workshop is scheduled for April 27-30, 2020.



**Kyle Thoreson** (Oklahoma) struts his stuff and then takes 2nd place in the Western Wear competition at the NAI National Conference. According to bystanders, Kyle wore the T-shirt pictured because he did not want his real abs and pecs to distract from his outfit.





Gig'Em! **Rick Harwell**, Texas A & M University Assistant Professor, would like to share that the **Recreation, Park and Tourism Sciences Program** is hosting a CIG January 3-6, 2020. More details may be found on the NAI certification website.

After 15 years as NAI Region 6 Texas State Coordinator, it's time to pass the torch. I'm pleased that **Erin Holley**, Sr. Park Program Coordinator at Lower Colorado River Authority, will be taking the reins as your new Texas State Coordinator on January 1, 2020. Many thanks to all of you for sharing your news and inspiration over the years, and I'm excited for you to do the same with Erin.

Thanks, Tara

## *Meet Erin Holley, new Texas State Coordinator*

The path to my career has been a circuitous journey. As a child growing up in a Houston suburb, I enjoyed exploring outdoors, playing in a backyard fort, camping with my family, and sailing. A compulsive teacher, my friends inevitably ended up as either students in my "class" or characters in my plays. As a young adult, I wandered from that path to study journalism at the University of Houston, considering a career in public relations.

After graduating college, I met my husband, had my son, and settled into working at the family photography business in Houston. I would share the natural world with my young child by wandering around the Arboretum in my spare time. It was a swampy, protected pine tree oasis in the middle of the concrete jungle. I'd walk past the tiny offices attached to the Visitor's Center and think, "Someone actually gets to work here! This is what they see out of their window each day. I want to work in a place like this." We soon moved to a small rural town in central Texas where I found just such a place -- a nature park that allowed me to bring together my two passions -- teaching children and the



the capacities of park naturalist, lead camp counselor, and then park program coordinator. As a coordinator, I designed programs and supervised a team of naturalists to provide education and recreation activities for resort guests. In my current role as education program coordinator and summer camp director, I have the distinct pleasure of creating, delivering, and training staff to provide a variety of natural science and recreation programs to thousands of children and adults each year. In addition to teaching water conservation and land stewardship

programs, I guide people on raft and kayak trips to help them discover the beauty and importance of the Texas Colorado River. I am also an ACCT-certified challenge course facilitator and strive to help youth and adults develop their leadership skills in an outdoor setting. In 2017 I completed an MS in Environmental Studies from Green Mountain College through their wonderfully collaborative online graduate program.

The realization that my formative nature experiences might not be shared by today's youth has been the primary motivator for me up to provide those outdoor experiences for others. I feel like I've found a home with NAI. I am proud to get involved in an organization that has such creative and passionate interpreters working to connect people to place. I'm happy to serve as coordinator for Texas to further the mission of advancing heritage interpretation through leadership and excellence.

Erin Holley,  
Park Program Coordinator, Sr.  
LCRA Parks  
erin.holley@lcra.org  
(512) 730-8013



**Kathy Miller (MO) and Jerrel Geisler (TX)** styling during the Denver conference.



**Ky Harkey and Tara Humphreys** presents “Organizational Change to Reach New Heights” in Denver.

**Danielle Bradley and Cassie Cox** present “Take Your Astronomy Training to New Heights”, along with **Katie Raney** (not pictured) at the Denver conference.



**Tara Humphreys and Ky Harkey** from Texas State Parks, take a break during the Denver conference.

## **Registration open for Bartlesville 2020**

**Early Bird Registration closes January 31  
Regular Registration closes February 14**



**COME SEE US IN BARTLESVILLE, OK**

## **REGION 6 STATE COORDINATOR NEEDED**

As mentioned in the State Reports, the current State Representative for Kansas is wishing to step down.

Please contact Pat Silovsky for Kansas or Region 6 Director Jay Schneider if you or someone you know might be interested.

## NAI REGION 6 VISIONS

# PUBLICATION INFORMATION



**Visions** Newsletter is the newsletter for Region 6 of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Region 6 includes states of Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas. For Region 6 information go to [www.nairegion6.wordpress.com](http://www.nairegion6.wordpress.com). The national office for NAI is located in Ft. Collins, Colorado. Their website is [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com).

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## DEADLINES FOR *VISIONS* ARE:

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