

# Interpretation



This issue explores a range of subjects from prophecies of futuristic applications to programs designed to relieve the tedium of bureaucratic mumbo-jumbo. We strived to include a diversity of approaches and applications, as well as views from computer advocates and critics alike.

My conclusion is that computers, like gypsy moths, are here to stay; so we may as well learn to live with those pesky little devils.

**Michael Paskowsky**  
Interpretive Planner  
Harpers Ferry Center

## Contributors

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Things change fast in eight years! During the first Instructor's Workshop in Interpretive Skills at Mather Employee Development Center in 1983, the first set of lesson plans were created. As the program manager for the course, I cajoled Harpers Ferry Center into lending us typists and typewriters. Combined with Mather's staff, I remember seven or eight persons in the building typing and retyping lesson plans nonstop. By staying up late at night at an antiquated Xerox in Mather's basement, all thirty new skills instructors carried several inches of lesson plans back to their parks to begin the Regional Interpretive Skills Programs.

When the 1986 Instructor's Workshop was held, Mather had purchased a couple of computers, and began experimenting with lesson plans on the MultiMate word processing program. Some of the lesson plans were actually printed by computers, and the new highspeed Xerox copied revised lesson plans for nearly 75 skills instructors. (One footnote: a set of lesson plans was auctioned off at a regional AIN workshop that year for \$40.)

By the 1988 Instructor's Workshop, an entire room at Mather housed 15 computers and everyone participating was given training on the use of the computers and the WordPerfect word processing system. The lesson plans began to be converted from MultiMate to WordPerfect. Xeroxed copies still existed, but radical change was again stirring.

This January, the fifth Instructor's Workshop was completed at Mather. A few copies of handouts were carried back by the participants, but lesson plans in Wordperfect were taken home on computer disks, not in notebooks.

A revolution of some sort has taken place over these eight years, and the Instructor's Workshop reflects it. This issue of *Interpretation* considers some of that revolution. (Second footnote: as this year's highly successful Instructor's Workshop ended, I witnessed a new ritual—the participants spent 15 minutes exchanging FAX numbers before departing.) Look out NPS Interpretation.....

**Michael D Watson**  
Chief, Division of Interpretation, WASO

# Regional Information Survey

## Alaska

Tessy Shirakawa is the interpretive specialist for the Alaska Region. Her work entails a variety of tasks that benefit the NPS field areas in Alaska. She serves as a coordinator for the Volunteer program, special populations, and visitors statistics. Conducting field training for seasonal interpreters and program audits is another of her most important duties that offers her the opportunity to share the 16 years of experience she has accumulated as a field interpreter in Shenandoah NP, Sequoia & Kings Canyon NP, and Pinnacles NM. The Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services in the Alaska Region assists the parks in hands-on design of new area exhibits and audio visual programs that are contracted for production by Harpers Ferry Center after their review. Tessy places great importance on field assistance because of her past assignments and desire to improve visitor experience. The Alaska Region applauds her efforts.

## Western

Within recent years there has been increasing scientific concern about the apparent decline of Neotropical migratory birds such as certain warblers, vireos, tanagers, thrushes, flycatchers, etc. Dr Ted Simons (Gulf Islands), Dr John Peine (Great Smoky Mountains), and Dick Cunningham (Western Regional Office) have developed a project called "Migratory Bird Watch." It includes population monitoring, habitat assessment, international cooperation, and interpretation/education.

The National Park System plays a critical role in preserving habitat on breeding grounds and on stopover areas during migration. But the greatest role NPS can play is through our interpretive/educational programs. Please consider getting your park involved. Dick Cunningham (415-556-3184) is coordinating the interpretive portion of this project. Contact him for a copy of his "North American Migratory Birds and the National Park System: Some Interpretive Thoughts." He would be happy to discuss how your park can help with this important project.

## Pacific Northwest

The Regional Division of Interpretation and Visitor Service has put together a large traveling exhibit to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Wilderness Bill. Presently it is in the bank lobby of the First Interstate Center building, Seattle, WA. The exhibit is scheduled to appear in bank lobbies in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. An exhibit celebrating the 1990 Idaho Centennial began circulating in August 1989. A series of centennial exhibits is in the planning stage, to travel through Washington, Oregon, Idaho, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, and Wyoming. A "National Parks in Idaho" coffee table book has been offered by a publisher, using National Park Service copy and photographs. The Pacific Institute of Natural Science has invited PNR to construct upwards of \$300,000 worth of resource management related exhibitry for their museum of natural history.

The PNR welcomed Maureen Finnerty to Olympic National Park. She is the **first** female superintendent of a major park in the National Park System.

## Rocky Mountain

By mid-January, the Regional Division of Interpretation will be back to full strength. Peggy Dolinich, who coordinated all regional interpretive projects under production at Harpers Ferry Center, moved to the Seattle area in August, where her husband has gone into private medical practice. Thea Nordling, the Needles District Interpreter, Canyonlands National Park, was selected to fill Peggy's position as interpretive planner, and will begin her new duties beginning January 16. Thea's extensive field experience will serve her well as she coordinates interpretive planning and funding for the Region.

Bill Sontag, Regional Chief of Interpretation, has been serving as the Acting Superintendent for Theodore Roosevelt National Park during November and December. With the selection of a new superintendent, Bill will return to his regional responsibilities in January. In the meantime, Dave Dunatchik and Doug Caldwell have taken turns serving as the regional chief of interpretation.

## Midwest

Interpretive training has been in the spotlight lately. The Midwest Chief Interpreters attended the National Workshop of the National Association of Interpretation in St Paul and followed that with two days of Regional business. The "Surly Surveyor" paid a visit and provoked us in a delightful way. (Now if you don't know what/who this Surveyor is, just ask a Midwest Chief; any one will be glad to tell you, and you might want him to visit your park soon!) Besides experiencing creative interpretive techniques, we heard from Mike Watson about what's going on at the top, and indeed a lot is. We discussed VIPs, upcoming training, the skills team, IPs, and Statements for Interpretation. The NAI sessions were exciting and educational. One of the highlights of the week was the Freeman Tilden Award ceremony. For most Interpreters, this was the first opportunity to meet Director Ridenour and it proved to be a truly positive experience. All in all, an uplifting, educational workshop.

## Southwest

The Southwest Region is using the "Age of Information" to build information bases and foster fresh insights about park resources. Through the services of government, public, state, or local college librarians, comprehensive bibliographies are generated for as little as \$30. The SWRO library has an account with DIALOG SERVICES which makes available hundreds of special subject databases for online searching. Materials indexed include technical reports, dissertations, newspaper and journal articles, proceedings, books, etc. The cost of an individual search depends on access time and the number and format of citations printed offline. Many libraries subsidize part or all of the search cost.

Titles retrieved may be borrowed and reviewed through the Interlibrary Loan Service offered by most libraries. Journal articles are usually xeroxed and sent free of charge from the lending library. Bibliographies may be updated periodically for much less than the original investment.

# Service Center Report

## North Atlantic

Computers are used by every member of the Division to communicate with other Divisions in the Regional Office, parks in the Region and WASO via CompuServe, etc. The Division has taken a leading role in promoting computer use and proper hardware and software training for interpreters. Courses that have been sponsored for field interpreters include PC Fundamentals and NPS Computing Services.

The Division's Audio-Visual Production Specialist uses desktop publishing software such as PageMaker and Designer to help parks produce flyers, site bulletins, invitations, educational packages, and a variety of other camera-ready artwork. All of the Division's informational material, such as reports, recruitment brochures and region information updates are done in-house with the desktop publishing system.

## Southeast

Special exhibits, refreshments, and extra hospitality were featured throughout the Southeast Region on the occasion of the Service's 73rd birthday, August 25.

A sample of the events: Carl Sandburg NHS held poetry readings, performed a biography of Sandburg, and presented a special abbreviated version of the Broadway play, "The World of Carl Sandburg." Russell Cave NM debuted a new permanent exhibit, "The First Alabamians," a painting of the ancient Alabama Indians living in the cave.

A special brochure and a National Park Service trivia quiz were available at visitor centers, guided walks and campfire programs throughout the Great Smoky Mountains NP.

De Soto NMem promoted volunteerism and job opportunities and Fort Pulaski NM offered visitors a 15% discount on its 200 sales items.

## Mid-Atlantic

Assateague Island's "New Wave" puppet theater put together a summertime production incorporating biological diversity as its theme. A "hip" migrating bird called "Moonbeam Woodstock," and other assorted creatures, highlight environmental ills such as ocean pollution and loss of tropical rain forests.

The protection of biodiversity at Jamestown Island and Colonial NHP is emphasized through a special site bulletin, a Young Settlers program, and an exhibit developed by Park Ranger Beverly Albrecht, explaining the use of natural resources by English settlers and native Americans.

A new book, *Venerable Relic: The Story of the Liberty Bell*, is available from Eastern National Park & Monument Association. Based upon recent NPS research, written by retired NPS historian David Kimball, and published by Eastern, the 84-page book sells for \$5.50.

## National Capitol

Prince William Forest Park has been selected as the winner of the 1989 Potomac Heritage Award. The award which recognizes the most creative interpretive program in the National Capital Region provides FTE and dollars to fund an extra interpretive seasonal position at the winning park in the summer of 1990.

Prince William Forest's program was "Sharing Nature with Children." This program teaches parents how to teach their children about the natural world. Parents are first taught how to feel comfortable in the natural environment, then they are taught interpretive "tricks" that they can use to interest and instruct their children on family outings. While the parents are gaining a new parental bag of tricks, their children are in another part of the park receiving environmental education in a format different than that shown the parents. After all we don't want to steal the parents new thunder.

Honorable Mentions went to interpretive programs at Wolf Trap Farm Park and Rock Creek Park.

## Denver

The HFC Interpretive Planning staff duty stationed at the DSC is now a "staff" instead of just a one person coordinating office. Forty-one applicants applied for the two newly created positions. There were many, many good people, but unfortunately we could only pick two. They are Sam Vaughn, an interpretive specialist in the National Capitol Regional Office; and Paul Lee, the Chief of Interpretation at Harpers Ferry National Historical Park. Both have completed their first assignment—the Interpretive Planning training course held at the Mather Training Center (it seemed like a good place to start). Sam is now en route, while Paul is taking some year-end leave and will be in Denver shortly after the Holiday Season. Lots of good skiing and interpretive planning jobs await their arrival. I (Dave Dame) welcome both of them and wish to thank all the other applicants who took the time to apply.

## Harpers Ferry

One of the ways computers can enhance our world is to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities. We recently learned of a blind interpreter who routinely uses a personal computer with an optical scanner and a voice synthesizer to read his mail. We now supply him computer disks of *Interpretation* to make the task easier.

We would like to know of other examples of disabled employees using computer assistance in their jobs. If there are other ways we can assist employees by making this journal more accessible to our readers, feel free to contact the editors.



# Letters

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**Jerry L Rogers**  
Associate Director,  
Cultural Resources

Congratulations on the highly professional appearance and substance of *Interpretation*. The new *Interpretation*, *Park Science*, and the *CRM Bulletin* can stand proudly together.

I write to support the central thesis of Bill Brown's "Interpretation and Reintegration: A Personal View" in the Summer, 1989 issue. Good history has a small market without good communication. Good communication without good history (or science, etc.) is shallow and even insulting.

Coalescence among factions that used to fight one another is one of the healthiest trends in the National Park Service today. I am glad it is happening among interpreters and cultural resource people as well as among others.

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**Anne Castellina**  
Superintendent,  
Kenai Fjords

Love the new *Interpretation!* The look is wonderful & the articles well worth reading! The lessons learned at Yellowstone can be applied to any park before, during, and in the aftermath of "significant resource events."

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**Beth Wright**  
Frontier Culture Museum of  
Virginia  
Staunton, Virginia

I recently ended a 10 year employment with the NPS, first as a VIP, then as a seasonal ranger. Never becoming bored with the subject matter at hand, my work throughout the 10 years concentrated on interpreting the Appalachian Mt. culture at a restored farmstead (Humpback Rocks) on the Blue Ridge Parkway. ...

This month, I began work in a supervisory position with the up and coming Museum of American Frontier Culture in Staunton, VA. ...

In my efforts to train staff in interpretation, I am already referring to back copies of the publication *Interpretation*. I thought you might be interested to know a seasonal ranger's impression of that publication. Feeling rather isolated at the northernmost end of the Parkway where there is a very small staff and a necessary emphasis on law enforcement, I was thrilled to discover a sense of kindred spirit when our district's copy of *Interpretation* was channelled to my duty station. I must admit, too, to a sense of relief that interpretation is indeed alive and well in the NPS. I applaud the efforts of those responsible for producing the quality, thought-provoking issues; and especially, I am grateful that something of such value found its way to those who can benefit from it the most: those on the front line. ...

Servicewide Cooperating  
Association Coordinator  
Division of Interpretation,  
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For your training calendars: The 1990 Biennial Convention of the Conference of National Park Cooperating Associations will be held October 13-19, 1990, in Hawaii. The convention is being hosted by Arizona Memorial Association and Hawaii Natural History Association and will be held at the Pacific Beach Hotel. The Conference reports that they have obtained guaranteed room rates of "\$90 per night single or double occupancy." Once again the National Park Service sponsored Publications Competition for association publications, posters, and videos will be held. Look for the competition call sometime in early Spring of 1990, with entries due usually by early August. Publication competition award winners will be announced at the convention's closing banquet.

**Robert Huggins**  
Natural Resources & Urban In-  
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Division of Interpretation,  
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The National Park education Task Force convened in San Francisco in January and began formulating a Servicewide Environmental/Heritage Education Program. Members included: Co-chairs Bob Huggins and Sandy Weber from WASO; Martha Aikens from Mather Employee Development Center; Glenn Clark, Alaska Regional Office; Kathleen Hunter, National Trust; Vince Gleason and Julia Holmaas, Harpers Ferry Center; Cquvator Gatson, Lake Mead; Sandy Dayhoff, Everglades; George Price and Kathy Tevyaw from Lowell; Holly Robinson, NPS Advisory Board; and Marti Leicester, Golden Gate. A complete report on the Task Force findings will appear in the Summer edition of *Interpretation*.

**Michael D Watson**  
Chief, Division of Interpretation  
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A very successful National Interpreters Workshop was held in November in St Paul by the National Association for Interpretation. Out of around 700 participants, over 150 NPS Interpreters attended; of approximately 120 formal presentations, 25 were by NPS employees. This is a fine turnout and participation by the NPS. The 1990 Workshop is scheduled for November 26-30, 1990, in Charleston, SC. The theme, "What's Past is Prologue: Our Legacy—Our Future" is the first time NAI has addressed cultural and historical interpretation at its National Workshop. If you are interested in presenting a paper at this workshop, the deadline for submitting an abstract is an early February 15, 1990. An NPS training opportunity will be routed in early Summer announcing the Workshop.