

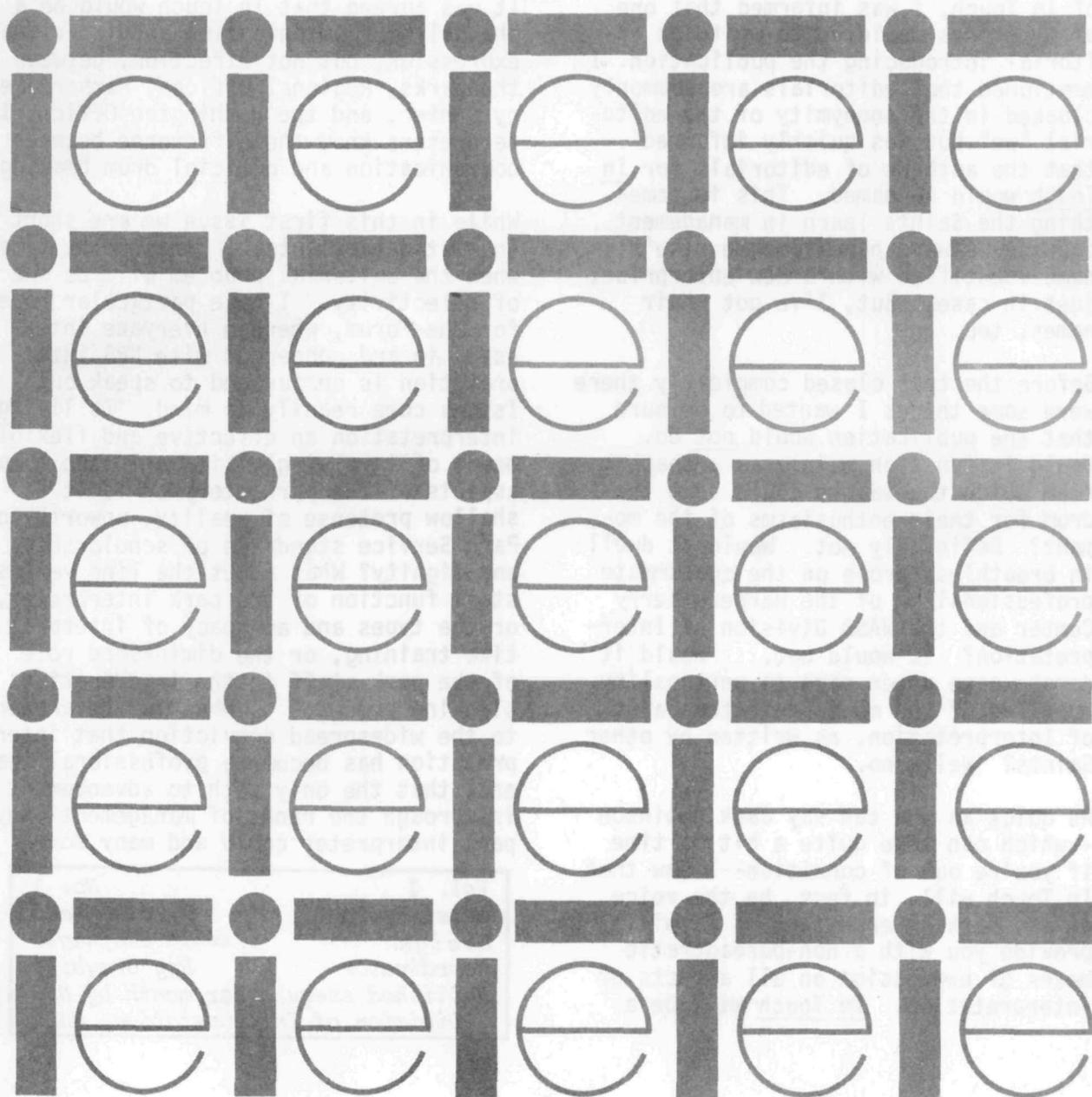
interpreters
information
exchange

IN TOUCH

produced
by and for
nps people
concerned with
interpretive
and visitor
services

Number 1

April 15, 1974



IN TOUCH AGAIN

Welcome to the first issue of In Touch. Director Walker's green light for this publication by and for NPS interpreters is a clear signal of better days ahead for interpretation, just as a few years ago the demise of the Interpreters' Newsletter proved to be a sign of bad times to come.

After accepting an invitation from the Venerated Saints of Interpretation to serve as "guest editor" for this issue of In Touch, I was informed that one of my chores would be to write an editorial introducing the publication. I mentioned that editorials are commonly cloaked in the anonymity of the editorial "we" but was quickly informed that the authors of editorials for In Touch would be named. This is something the Saints learn in management courses--always have someone else's name identified with a new enterprise, just in case. But, I've got their names, too.

Before the trap closed completely there were some things I wanted to be sure that the publication would not do. Would it function mainly as a soapbox from which the Saints could beat the drum for their enthusiasms of the moment? Definitely not. Would it dwell in breathless prose on the consummate professionalism of the Harpers Ferry Center and the WASO Division of Interpretation? It would not. Would it devote page after page to personality profiles of the most Venerated Saints of Interpretation, as written by other Saints? Well--no.

As quick as you can say Jack Robinson --which can take quite a bit of time if you're out of condition--I saw that In Touch will, in fact, be the voice of the park interpreter. It will provide you with a non-bureaucratic means of expression on all aspects of interpretation. In Touch will be a

medium for the examination of interpretive concepts and directions in the Service, as well as for the dissemination of practical solutions to interpretive problems, with information on techniques, tools, training, and sources of help. It will cover interpretation outside the Service, significant matters affecting cooperating associations, and a variety of other material on the state of the interpretive art.

It was agreed that In Touch would be a channel for communication and individual expression, but not direction, between the parks, Regional Offices, Harpers Ferry Center, and the Washington Office. Interpreters know the difference between communication and official drum beating.

While in this first issue we are short in most departments, I foresee the time when the editorial problem will be one of selectivity. I have particular hopes for the Forum, wherein everyone interested in and concerned with NPS interpretation is encouraged to speak out. Issues come readily to mind. Is living interpretation an effective and flexible means of involving visitors in the human aspects of the park story or is it a shallow pretense of reality, unworthy of Park Service standards of scholarship and dignity? What about the line versus staff function of the park interpreter, or the types and adequacy of interpretive training, or the diminished role of the park staff in the interpretive planning process? What is the answer to the widespread conviction that interpretation has become a professional dead end; that the only path to advancement is through the ranks of management? Any park interpreter could add many more

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<i>Guest Editor</i>	<i>Pete Shedd</i>
<i>Design</i>	<i>Keith Hoofnagle</i>
<i>Coordinator</i>	<i>Roy Graybill</i>
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<i>Division of Interpretation, WASO.</i>	

topics that need open and constructive discussion for the improvement of interpretation.

Interpreters, like other members of the Service, are guided by the organization's policies and the decisions of management, but this does not preclude fair discussion which can assist in the reassessment of policies and management decisions if it will result in better interpretation.

Better interpretation is what In Touch is all about, which brings us to what you've been expecting all along. More work for you.

In Touch is first and foremost for interpreters in the parks, permanent and seasonal, but it will be only as useful as you make it. If the editorial staff doesn't hear from you, you will get, by default, a product reflecting only the views, interests and experience of the people who put it together. It will not be responsive to and representative of the park interpreter. You may look on this as another Outrageous Demand on your time. If so, place it in your Outrageous Demands file. Of course, you won't be able to kick if In Touch seems to be out of touch with your interests and concerns. But if you believe that a publication by and for interpreters can play a vital role in bringing us together on common ground where we can share, debate and just talk, come on and get In Touch.

And when you are "guest editor" keep an eye on those Saints.

Pete Shedd

RESTORING IDENTIFY OF INTERPRETERS

Not long ago Jim Corson, now Chief of Interpretation for the North Atlantic Region, helped the Interpretation Division on a project, the objective of which was to identify those parks that had permanent interpretive positions assigned to their staffs. Jim's findings confirmed what many of us had long suspected: the present system of coding personnel forms and organization charts simply does not provide this information.

One of the goals of the newly established Interpretation Division is to work with our counterparts in Personnel in identifying disciplines by subtitle for internal NPS use in the 025 and 026 series, and cranking these breakdowns into the Career Development and Placement forms and the DIPS roster printouts. Among other benefits, this should help the Service get a better handle on interpretive personnel trends compared with park visitor loads over the years.

A further objective of the Division is to develop solid professional and technical qualification standards for progressive levels of career development--apprentice, journeyman, and master interpreter positions. Qualification elements to be considered for each level might include academic experience, job experience--both NPS and external, training and associations with professional organizations.

Our ultimate aim is to help revitalize the profession of park interpretation, providing more incentive for those who grow individually as their careers advance, and not to lose so many along the way as has happened too often in the past.

Bill Dunmire

A couple of old friends of Freeman Tilden had lunch with him last month, to tell him about In Touch, and to ask if the first issue might be dedicated to him. Somewhere between an excellent beef stew and coffee after, with many a choice anecdote to illustrate his point, he ventured a comment on interpretation for use in this first issue. (The editors apologize for the inadequacy of the below account; they tried to remember it just as Freeman said it.)

"In Touch . . . Yes, I like that. Doesn't sound quite so bureaucratic, does it. Maybe that name will help remind your readers of the ever constant need for dialogue. It's absolutely essential to the profession, you know.

"With people today so frustrated, questioning and even panicky, more than ever our park people, especially the interpreters, will have to bear down even harder on the point that it is not a question of man and nature; but rather that man is nature in his special form. And that man cannot continue without recognizing his interdependence with all other forms.

"Perhaps with man just now recognizing some of his limitations the task of the interpreter may become easier rather than harder. When the Devil is sick, they say, he will listen to good medical advice.

"Sometimes Park Service interpreters in their zeal try to reach everyone alike. But it can't be done. Shouldn't be, either . . . too much like playing a numbers game.

"I think it's about time that the Park Service accepts the fact that all people aren't the same, that everybody in the world has a different intelligence from everybody else. Some people are smarter than others.

"You speak of personalized interpretation. I'm all for that. I remember years ago when they wanted to put an audio station along a nature trail through a swamp down in Florida.

"Imagine--all the wonderful sounds and smells of that living swamp, and they wanted to mechanize it. I wondered if even a naturalist there on the spot wouldn't have been an intrusion. It was perfect without any help from us.

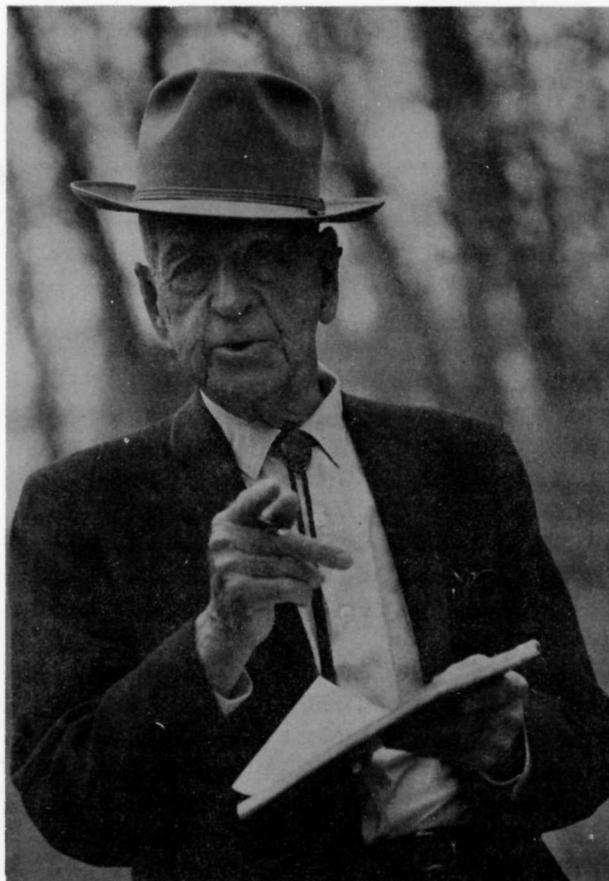
"I said something 25 years ago and I'm positive that it's as true today as it was then. Truer. What I said was that if I thought that even 3% of the visitors to our programs took home a clear conception, or even a fuller one, of their true relationship with nature, I would consider that the interpreter had done a fine job, and that our interpretive program had richly justified itself.

"It's the other 97% that give our interpreters periodic fits of despondency . . . particularly when a couple of people walk out on their programs. They shouldn't be disappointed, but of course they are.

"They are because Park Service interpreters are about as deeply committed as any group of people in government.

"Most institutions end up pursuing programs which further the interests of the agency, forgetting what their original purpose was. But I don't think Park Service interpreters are guilty of this.

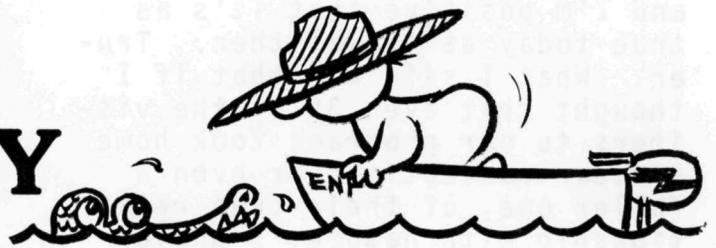
"Probably you won't accept my 3% figure--and maybe I don't either. But I do know that the people in the parks won't stop trying to find ways to improve my 3% estimate, or whatever the figure really is. That's what I admire their keenness for their work.



"And you know something? I'm just as keen about it myself as I ever was.

"I guess the Park Service was the only other wife I ever had."

EVERGLADES SERENDIPITY



The hole in my sneaker was now large enough to let the water come in. It was a warm January day. The gentle breezes rustled the sawgrass. On the horizon a flock of white birds reeled, soared and circled. As always, I was impressed by the bigness of the sky here in the Everglades.

Behind me I could hear the happy voices of the group. My group. They were playing like children in the water and the muck.

I saw their happy expressions. Young and old seemed to like this experience. I stopped. And waited for the stragglers to catch up. Everyone was glad for the break. Slough slogging is hard work.

We caught our breath. We became a group. We became friends. We shared. We discovered. We recalled the marvelous feelings of our youth when we'd felt the mud squishing up between our toes and around our feet and didn't care if we got dirty. I passed around a handful of muck for everyone to squeeze and smell. Muck is that curious combination of plants and animals which covers the Everglades between every blade of sawgrass. It rests on the bottom in layer upon layer, filling in the holes in the underlying limestone. We wiggled our toes in it. Tasted

the water that flows across the top of it. We munched the tender white ends of the sawgrass . . . felt the cutting edge of the sawgrass. By now we were clustered closer together--knee deep in the muck and water--examining the tiny snails.

Seemingly without leadership, we continued our voyage together, eventually reaching the destination . . . a quiet clump of cypress trees called a cypress dome. As we approached this dense forest, the water became deeper, wetting us above our knees. Orchids and airplants covered the tree limbs and bark. We were startled by the bold hooting of a friendly barred owl. Carefully we peered into a dark pool, searching for its tiny reptilian inhabitants. Across the pond we could hear the soft crying of baby alligators. Overhead we hear the shrill call of the red shouldered hawk who lived in the neighborhood. There were many other things which we saw and smelled and touched in this intimate place.

It was hard to speak above a whisper. We had become a part of the place. Such wild beauty calls up special feelings in each of us. The wet feet, the swamp smells, and the sounds of the birds and other creatures make this a special experience. We shared our feelings with one

another and went away much richer.

This is my type of interpretation. Perhaps we should call it "serendipity." On that trip we discovered many things we had not set out to find. To some of you it may seem to lack substance. It stresses sensory awareness. I unconsciously use the strands from the environmental education approach. These concepts give me a frame to enclose my group activity. They are now so natural to me that I don't know how I ever got along without them. This, in fact, joins environmental education and interpretation into one continuous effort in my mind.

My groups also appear leaderless, by careful design, I might add. I would rather gently prod them to the brink of discovery so that they feel more involved personally, than to lead them on a walk which is simply a moving lecture. This sort of serendipity approach is very difficult and yet, by adding a genuine dash of enthusiasm, this is the kind of interpretation which I call "MY STYLE."

Style is important to us in Everglades. We encourage each interpreter, and there are over forty, to develop his/her own style. We do this in many ways. We may use traditional activities such as campfire programs, nature walks, or hikes. By changing the evening talk to a "rap session," and a hike to a "slough slog"

or "swamp tromp", and nature walks to "serendipity walks", we add a dimension which was not there before. It doesn't stop there, for by encouraging style, we encourage even more variety in activities. We build in variety and style by allowing the talk titles to change at random throughout the season. This makes the rap session very personal for the individual putting it together. Frequently it is not a slide talk, but is done without illustrations, using sounds, or some device. Hikes, too, encourage style, for each interpreter is asked to select the areas he enjoys, and can best interpret. Add demonstrations-- everything from snakes, to Indian crafts, and more. All of these activities here in the Everglades are calculated to promote individual styles.

By promoting style, we are promoting freedom of choice. By promoting freedom, we promote visitor involvement. We try to motivate our staff into a position of involvement with their audience. Such freedom is difficult to supervise, sometimes. But then the rewards are greater than the risk. This has given us new direction in the Everglades.

Where did all this change in direction come from? And when did it start? As any good interpreter knows, it didn't happen by accident. The objectives and goals were well written. The time frame was two or three years ago. In writing the objectives, we purposely left a lot of latitude

for experimentation and development. This experimentation and development was encouraged and supported strongly by our Superintendent. Like the rest of us, he was vitally interested in seeking involvement of the visitors in the park. I suspect that the objectives, as they were written, now need rewriting, and perhaps this is only right, for objectives change as we experiment and do things with people. Probably the most important thing about objectives is they at least point us in the direction of rediscovery and involvement.

The most important resource an interpreter has may not be the park--the most important resource is probably the "troops" as I call them, those dedicated seasonal employees who really carry the message to the park visitor. Over the years, I have probably spent more time in the careful selection of a seasonal employee than I would in the selection of any permanent employee. Out of necessity, when selecting employees from lists maintained in the park, I begin to screen carefully. In a telephone interview procedure I ask certain standard questions which get a character profile of a given employee from her/his former employer. It is a pretty cheap investment--a long distance phone call to a former employer asking questions such as: Is s/he artistic? innovative? Does s/he work well with others? like people? Is s/he happy working with other people?

fascinated by the world around her/him? Questions which don't appear on the standard Civil Service form.

Armed with profiles like this, and with applications for employment and by sifting and sorting, and by using the tools available, we are able to pick top-quality interpreters to do the job.

What we do for seasonals before they arrive is more important in some respects than what we do after they arrive. We start our training early . . . in fact, we try to stay in touch year round. It helps a great deal if you can arm employees with information which gets them thinking about what they are going to be doing over the coming season. It is also very important to settle in their mind where they are going to live and all the physical aspects of their job: Where will they be working? living? It is important, I think, for the supervisors to write early, and in our case, we try to keep in touch by sending articles, clippings, and books, so that they will have materials to study . . . to think on . . . to reflect on. The reading list sent to new interpreters includes books which deal largely in motivating thought--that deal with the philosophy of communicating ideas. Very little is given the new interpreters on how to do it . . . a great deal is given to them on why we are doing it. Somewhat later on, as the program begins to develop, we send out duty schedules so that they will know what they are doing right off.

Throughout all of this, the permanent staff holds things together at the Visitor Center desk. Everglades may have two seasons . . . a rainy season and a dry season, or summer and winter. . . but we have visitors all year long. We are also involved in a continuous cooperative environmental education program with the surrounding counties. More than 30,000 students use this park as their outdoor classroom, and this takes a good deal of planning and coordination. In fact, our environmental education program is inseparably part of our interpretive program.

Training for the employees, permanent and seasonal, is very important and we devote our first week to this. It is the platform from which all of the program is really built. By careful design, we were able to work out their training needs. In fact, the very first session of the training course, we wrote their personal objectives into the training, which we then attempted to meet. Training did not stop, though, with the first week. It continued on the job. It also continued formally throughout the season--every other Wednesday night. Many things were brought forth in training: How to do it programs on slides and conducted walks; programs on the research aspects of the South Florida studies--the birds, the alligators, the crocodiles--by the research biologists in the park; forums on controlled burning in the park; and even forums deal-

ing with ecopolitics and how to deal with environmental concerns in the area. Our seasonals were thus armed with very valuable information. I look upon the training opportunities throughout the season as a team-building activity, vital to the concerted effort of the interpretive force in Everglades.

At last, it was time to don the uniform and meet the visitors, and here in the Everglades, the visitors show up in great numbers the week after Christmas. This was sort of a shakedown run for the program, and to be certain, some things went haywire--a projector failed--the movie in the auditorium didn't work--something wasn't completed yet--someone at Flamingo still couldn't find the right slides and had to give a talk on Friday--all sorts of little problems needed solving during these first few days. And, I might add, a lot of what I do is solving those problems and supporting the people in the front lines.

The satisfaction, the payoff, comes in the smiles on the faces of the visitors. Slowly, the visitors to Everglades have become accustomed now to some of our strange terminology--like slough slogs and swamp tromps. They not only have become accustomed to them, they are participating in them in greater numbers. This is exactly what we had in mind in our goals, maybe two years before. Comments by visitors indicate that they didn't really know it was this

way because they had never been out of their car. They didn't know it was possible to walk right out through the sawgrass to one of the hammocks. They found new surprises waiting for them--new things to enjoy--new beauty to be found.

As in any program, we found some things here that didn't work. Our "Bike Hike" of the year before was scrapped for lack of interest. Some things did work, though, and new things that we experimented with in mid-season seemed to have promise of working even better next year. There is always a lot of pruning, cultivating, and weeding to be done in an interpretive program, and these are the exciting times--the times when we experiment with things like overnight canoe trips to Cape Sable, or sketch walks at Flamingo, or guest nights at the campfire programs with such notable guests as the Park Superintendent.

There are many special aspects of the interpretive program here. The contribution made by Volunteers-in-the-Park would be difficult to measure. An artist leading a sketch walk . . . a retired man over 80 years old; a young girl working with school groups in the campground at Flamingo; a park wife spending long and tedious hours in the slide collection to make it work; a young airline flight engineer and his wife who take people in canoes to the most exotic beach in South Florida--Cape Sable. Without this volunteer force,

it would be very difficult for the Everglades interpretive program, indeed.

Shark Valley is one of the most interesting areas of Everglades National Park. Its experimental program using motorized trams is unique in the Service. The quality of interpretation is outstanding. Esprit de corps is something to behold. The visitor goes away awed by the wildlife and the stories which are told in this fifteen mile round trip into the heart of the Everglades. Here is one of the true success stories of the Everglades. One which sprang from the goals and dreams of several years ago. One crafted in the homework done by a number of people along the way. One of the new programs, the new directions, worthy of some special note.

We have many things to look forward to next year. We are now working on some of the demonstrations which combine man and nature--that is, history and the geography, or natural history, of the area.

Now the birds and the people of Everglades are migrating northward again as we near the end of our season. We hope that we return both the birds and the people in good condition to you. We've had a ball with these people. We're sending back some of your seasonals to do their things in your park, with some of the people they talked to here in the Everglades this season, pointing out to them some of the very birds

that they saw while they were here. This annual migration--winter/summer, north/south--is part of what interpretation is all about. We hope your program flowers and blooms as ours did this year. We hope that it bears fruit as ours did, and we wish you all the luck for the coming season . . . Serendipity.

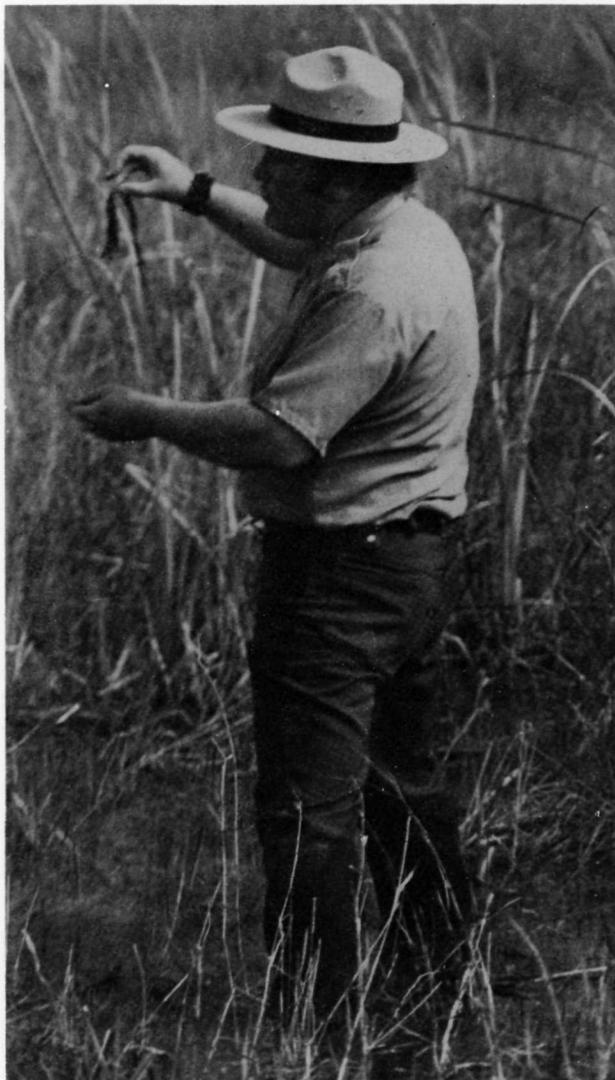
Bruce McHenry
Assistant Chief Interpreter
Everglades National Park

JACK SAYS

I am pleased that the interpretive program of Everglades National Park has been selected to be the subject of the first publication of the Interpreters' Information Exchange. At Everglades we do have an innovative program sparked by a team effort.

I attribute this success to a general attitude of "let's try something new" --if it does not work we can discard that particular idea and try something else. Our people have experienced successes as well as failures--the important thing is a willingness to experiment--and adjust the program depending upon acceptance by the public. Another item I have observed here that is a part of the successful program is an outstanding seasonal training program and the involvement of our seasonal personnel in the overall program. In summary, all our interpretive personnel are concerned with the success of their programs. They work hard at presenting the proper "face" to the public. These items, I believe, are the ingredients of a successful interpretive program.

Jack E. Stark
Superintendent
Everglades National Park



Bruce McHenry is presently the Assistant Chief Interpreter of Everglades National Park. He came to Everglades in 1972 with a background of interpretive experience gained in areas such as Shenandoah, Big Bend, Grand Canyon, National Capital Parks, and Yorktown Battlefield. He and George Robinson, Chief of Interpretation for the Park, are continually searching for and testing innovative ways of assisting park visitors to "Discover Everglades." Their present interpretive program illustrates their success.

FORUM



In general, materials for In Touch are to be forwarded from the parks through the Regional Offices. However, if the contributor prefers, items for the FORUM--letters, comments, brickbats and bouquets--may be sent directly to In Touch, Division of Interpretation, WASO. Please be as concise as possible so more contributors can be heard from. Contributions must be signed but names will be withheld from publication upon request.

INTERPRETATION AND CONTROVERSY

In recent times Park Service interpreters have found their authoritative image and message challenged by visitors who disagree. Especially is this so in historical areas--most particularly in areas whose themes revolve around ethnic groups, political happenings and personages, and such historical movements as, say, Westward Expansion. Expansion for whom? An Indian might speak of Westward Contraction. A Spanish-speaking citizen might view the Mexican War as something other than a manifestation of Manifest Destiny. And so on.

Our visitor constituency has changed. Traditional modes of viewing history (as an Anglo-American initiative--both in the event and in the writing of it) have also changed.

Interpreters, faced with this time of

controversy, this time of assertive identification by groups left out of national history--or treated as footnotes--are, in the main, unprepared to cope with challengers. Passive agreement with unhistorical assertions is no answer. Nor is hard-line "official" history, delivered counter-aggressively.

What is needed is a special kind of training for interpreters--starting with cadre staffs at obvious flash-point areas (e.g., Custer Battlefield, Lyndon B. Johnson, Frederick Douglass, Chamizal, etc.).

Such training would explore the phenomenon of ethnocentricity--Anglo and otherwise--to discover the flash points and buttons that disturb various components of our clientele. It would seek out new sources of history and of historical viewpoint so interpreters could better balance area themes and emphasis. It would teach techniques of personal interaction in the crucible of controversy so interpreters could respond forcefully, honestly, and effectively to challenge.

Personally, then, interpreters could handle themselves with facility, and with that self-confidence, evaluate challenge not as a threat, but as an opportunity to expand and balance interpretation in their areas.

Who is going to initiate such training? And when?

William E. Brown
Regional Historian
SWRO

The National Park Service is spending over \$3,000,000 a year in developing and operating public transportation services within the national parks, historic areas, and recreation areas.

These systems are the destination link in the chain of public transit services that are needed to provide public transit to parks. Several concessioners provide access from nearby towns, airports, and other interstate transit services, commercial tours are operated to several of the parks with regional origins, and in a few areas scheduled interstate transit services are available to parks or the service passes by the entrance to parks.

The success of any of these access or in-park systems depends on informing the public that the transit services are available. The services will improve as more demand increases the frequency.

Part of the interpretive program for every park should include public transit information and every Park Service employee who has public contact should be able to give public transit information regarding access and circulation for the park. This information should be developed by the park and made a part of new employee's training.

Dick Bowser
Transportation Coordinator
WASO

How about a column, written by those involved with the Bicentennial, where they can communicate with their fellow interpreters. This column would also inform other interpreters of what is going on in Bicentennial areas.

With the approaching Bicentennial it is necessary for interpreters to know what is working and what is not working in Bicentennial programs. This column should be separate from Rap-Up. There are many topics that could be covered. How do other Bicentennial interpreters feel about this?

Terry Maze
Park Historian
Moore's Creek National
Military Park

I would like to suggest that one way of increasing professionalism among NPS interpreters would be to encourage them to claim authorship for their writings. Recognition is one of the necessary psychological rewards all people seek. Signing one's own work can bring just recognition, fulfill the psychological need, increase job satisfaction, and probably improve morale.

For instance, the leaflet "Battle Road Auto Tour" from Minuteman National Historic Park, was written by the "National Park Service." It is an outstanding example of environmental history communication. The real author should take full credit for the excellence of the writing and, at the same time, full responsibility for any factual or other errors. Multiple authorship, credit for previous work and all possible complications to a person authoring a work are adequately handled today in the private and educational fields and can as easily be handled in government.

Barbara A. Lund
Urban Program Specialist
National Capital Parks

THE TECHNICIAN VS THE PROFESSIONAL INTERPRETER

In many National Park Service areas works an ill-defined employee titled "Technician." One dictionary defines a technician as one who ". . . is skilled in the performance of tasks requiring specialized training."

To many of the technicians employed in interpretation there is a degree of frustration. The degree of this frustration varies among individuals and is based on their background and their individual employment goals. Too many "overqualified" technicians are employed--where lies the blame?

Many division chiefs and technicians understand the prime reasoning behind technician positions--qualified people from the local area who will remain for long periods of time and who have no need for government housing. Excellent idea.

But, many technicians have college degrees and several seasons behind them and they want into the NPS on a professional level. We can't get the high superscores (100 plus) on the FSEE. We feel we're qualified; our supervisors concur--but we're technicians and conversion to professional status is difficult.

Many of us are frustrated by the fact we are performing many

tasks expected of professionals in other areas. Technicians find it difficult to transfer to other areas to gain additional experience and responsibility. Many professional interpreters obtained through regular intake procedures advance too quickly into management positions. This quick advancement does not allow the "manager" to gain the expertise and knowledge to instruct and supervise permanent and seasonal interpreters. This leads to poor programming and less than quality interpretive programs.

Our present intake program is undergoing study at this writing. I believe additional effort ought to be made in obtaining interpreters from within our ranks. Let's draw on people we have knowledge of, who have experience, and who understand the principles and policies of the National Park Service. It's through this type of program we can bring experienced people into the ranks in a time when interpretation needs new ideas and new people for the professional staff.

Steven K. Sandell
Division of Interpretation
Everglades National Park

We seem to have reached a certain maturity in presenting environmental interpretation as a man-nature-man synthesis. The written materials are good; and experience has leavened our idealism into a workable program at many areas. It is perhaps time to add a new dimension to environmental education--HUMANISM--the "attitudes of thought or action centering on distinctively human interests or ideals." Let us begin to change the emphasis from man-nature-man to man-man-man. Without some understanding of ourselves and our interpersonal relations, there seems no real purpose in conserving the natural environment. Even if we accept the fact that "nature" would be better off without people, we must also accept the fact of our presence on the earth. It is of overriding importance that people begin the process of learning about themselves and the universal values that make up the essence of humanity. Environmental awareness becomes less than a complete discipline without the presence of the "family of man." We are, after all, in the people business--past, present, and future. In what better way could we serve the National Park Service, the visitor and ourselves, than by infusing a humanistic approach to environmental awareness that will maybe help people to understand themselves and their world.

George Strock
Chief of Interpretation
Cumberland Gap National
Historical Park

From a memo to the Division of Interpretation, WASO, written by Ed Trout, Historian at Fort Pulaski National Monument.

While we hope that the second "Interpreters' Newsletter" is a success, some sinister vibrations do emanate from the subject memo. If the FORUM ". . . will accept and print criticisms . . . which will not reflect adversely on the National Park Service," who will make that decision? Are we willing to discuss ourselves openly or not? That "The Division of Interpretation, WASO, will have primary responsibility for editing . . .," and "Regional Interpreters will perform a basic screening function . . ." may well dampen the interest of interpreters from the very outset.

FORUM is meant to be the place for uncensored opinion on policy, directions and other matters relating to NPS interpretation--a place to stimulate dialogue among interpreters. Individual contributions to FORUM will be printed as is, not subject to editing; however, the Interpretation Division must reserve the right to return material, unpublished, that does not meet the test of being impersonal and within the bounds of propriety. Let the vibes be charitable until experience proves otherwise.

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS



COORDINATOR'S OFFICE

The new office of Cooperating Association Coordinator is located at the Harpers Ferry Center in the Anthony Library Building. Office hours are 8:30 - 5:00 and you are cordially invited to come by whenever you are at HFC or Mather. The telephone number is (304) 535-6371 or 6261 on FTS. Permanent association files as well as a library of association publications will be maintained here and are open for your inspection. The new Coordinator is Jim Murfin, formerly of the Division of Publications.

ASSOCIATION TRAINING SESSIONS

Two training sessions for new and/or inexperienced business managers and executive secretaries have been tentatively scheduled for Albright (October 7 - 11) and Mather (October 21 - 25). These will be full-week workshops covering every phase of association management, from guidelines and bookkeeping to the fundamental of selling and publishing. Details on this will be announced at a later date.

CONFERENCE OF EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES

Too early? Not on your life! Hotels are booking now for late '74 conventions and we got in just under the wire. The biennial Conference of Cooperating Association Executive Secretaries is now set for November 11 - 15, Denver Hilton Hotel, Denver, Colorado. This will be the biggest and most important conference yet and you are urged to put the date on your calendar. Denny Davies (Cabrillo) and Jim Richardson (PNW), along with the Coordinator, are making arrangements and working on the agenda. Your suggestions, even this early, will be welcome.

Note that the dates are for five days. In the past this conference has been scheduled for three days and nearly always we have needed additional time. With a full week we can cut back if necessary as the agenda progresses.

Incidentally, rates at the Hilton are \$14, single, and \$19, double.



YOUR ASSOCIATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section Officers and Election of Chapter 5, Management Procedures, of your Management Guidelines states that "The (Cooperating Association) Board (of Directors) shall include the park superintendent as (an) ex officio (member). Except for the larger associations where the business is managed by association-paid employees, the Executive Secretary is usually an employee charged with interpretive responsibility."

It goes without saying that the National Park Service encourages the park superintendent and the park interpretive officer to become involved in association activities and to sit on the board of directors. Indeed, it is the superintendent who has the responsibility of selecting and/or approving all association sales items, and the chief naturalist or chief historian is usually designated as the manager of association activities. The key "guideline" term, however, is "ex officio" and herein lies a problem with many associations.

The Department of Justice in a memorandum dated January 28, 1963, summarized the major provisions of conflict of interest laws as they apply to Government employees as follows:

"He may not, except in the discharge of his official duties, represent anyone else before a court or Government agency in a matter in which the United States is a party or has an interest and in which he has at any time participated personally and substantially for the Government (18 U.S.C. 203 and 205)."

There are occasions in which a cooperating association may enter into negotiations of some sort with the National Park Service over and beyond the normal everyday activities of selling interpretive items within the park boundaries. It is on such occasions that the term "ex officio" becomes of paramount importance. A cooperating association cannot and should not in any way risk the legal ramifications of negotiations with any Government agency in which the superintendent or interpretive officer, representing the association, has voted or signed documents. Voting on such matters and the signature on such legal documents must always be the responsibility of a non-NPS member of the board of directors. The "ex officio" status of NPS board members should be strictly observed at this time.

This does not imply in any manner that the National Park Service desires to curtail the participation of NPS officials on association boards.

It does suggest, however, that where park officials are active and not "ex officio" members, such members should assume a non-voting status for the specific occasion and refrain from becoming involved in any capacity in the negotiations. In no way should a superintendent or interpretive officer represent the cooperating association in any negotiations or contractual agreements with the National Park Service. This very clearly means signing a contract with yourself and can easily be interpreted as a conflict of interest. If your present constitution and by-laws do not provide for such instances, it should be amended at the earliest possible date.

The revision of your Management Guidelines, now in progress, will reflect this stronger interpretation of the now prevalent "conflict of interest" thinking. Until the guidelines are revised and published, you are urged to consider this in all of your association activities. Please direct any questions on this matter to the office of Cooperating Association Coordinator.

REGIONAL COORDINATORS

As a part of their regular duties, the Regional Chiefs of Interpretation, or a designated official, will be coordinating cooperating association affairs. Copies of all major association correspondence to the Coordinator's office should be routed through these offices. The same will hold true for correspondence from HFC.

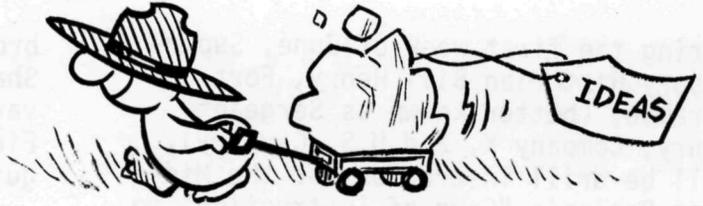
Northeast - Jim Corson
 Mid-Atlantic - Frank Barnes
 Southeast - Ben Davis
 Midwest - Jim Schaack
 Rocky Mountain - Jean Bullard
 Southwest - Al Schroeder
 Western - Bob Barbee
 Pacific Northwest - Jim Richardson
 National Capital Parks - Rock Comstock



COOPERATING ASSOCIATION EVENTS

May 3 - 4	SWPMA Board of Directors
June, first week	Booksellers Association convention and trade show; Shoreham Hotel, Washington, DC
October 7 - 11	Probable cooperating association training session, Albright
October 21 - 25	Probable cooperating association training session, Mather
November 11 - 15	Conference of Cooperating Association Executive Secretaries, Denver

RAP UP



This is the Bits and Pieces or Miscellaneous Department. Are you looking for a left-handed petard or a firm that embalms cave crickets? Have you found a better way to clean slides than by rubbing them smartly on your sleeve? Have you read a book or article you believe would be of interest to your colleagues? Would you like to see more interpretive training for the trainers who train interpretive trainers? If you have a contribution--idea or information--that doesn't seem to fit the other departments of In Touch, send it to RAP UP. It's hard to set a maximum on this one, so--



A NOTE TO CONTRIBUTORS

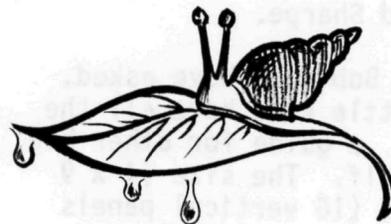
Please send all contributions for In Touch in final form, typed on one side of the page. We will edit as necessary but will appreciate your help in keeping that task to a minimum. Write as if a few thousand folks are going to read your contribution--they are.

I walk alone
Surrounded by multitudes
I walk confined
In an unbounded eternity
I speak
Not to communicate
But to leave the print of my voice
On an unhearing land.

I see
In a land absolutely flat
White, billowing mountains
Invade the sky
And canyons so small
They are dwarfed by my shadow
Yet canyons
Filled with insect eagles
Soaring over life-laden streams
That flow through what to them
Is the greatest abyss.

And I wonder
That the hungers of man's body
May destroy
This fullness of his soul.

Keith Bennett
Everglades



During the first week of June, Supervisory Historian Bill Henry, Fort Laramie, (better known as Sergeant Henry, Company K, 2nd U.S. Cavalry), will be drill instructor for the Midwest Region's "Camp of Instruction" to be held at Fort Laramie. About 30 Living History interpreters from National Park Service areas in the west and southwest will attend this five-day training course on frontier military arts, also described as "History in the Raw." Participants will prepare their own authentic army meals, sleep on the ground in field tents, and in other ways live the life of the frontier soldier of the 1870's. Sergeant Henry will be there to issue the orders of the day, to bark and growl, to instruct, and to enforce lights (candles) out at an early hour. (And to keep the recruits from wandering off to the three-mile Hog Ranch.)

* * * * *

An admirer of Bob Huggins' trail guide keyed to an environmental study area, signs herself as president of the Robert A. Huggins fan club.

"First came 'A Guide for Youth - Ox-bow Bend N.E.S.A. Trail' in Grand Teton National Park. In flowing, questioning, gently leading prose a child is asked to investigate and reason about what he can see along an abandoned roadway. Without the formal terminology, strand concepts and ecological ideas like food chains are woven into the text--and the line drawings by Ted Sharpe.

"At some point Bob must have asked, 'Why should little kids have all the fun?' Result: a guide for other big kids like himself. The size (4 x 9 inches), format (16 vertical panels center stapled), color (shades of

brown) and sketches (again by Ted Sharpe) are similar but the text is varied. As a bonus, Bob's poem 'The Field Trip' is included in the adult guide.

"Quality, class, feeling, caring--the guides have this and more. Grand Teton Natural History Association publishes them for 15¢. 'The Field Trip' alone is worth twice that. Order c/o Grand Teton National Park, P.O. Box 67, Moose, WY 83012."

* * * * *

Be sure to drop by the lobby of the Interpretive Design Center if you are attending a course at Mather, and take a look at a first rate exhibit on Freeman Tilden, down to his favorite bolo tie. Freeman's reaction to the exhibit indicated his recent 90th birthday was a meaningless statistic. "Why," he exclaimed, "would anyone spend this much time and effort on me?" After studying the exhibit quietly for a few minutes, he mused (with a straight face), "Yes, I can see I'm really worth it."

* * * * *

Many parks have been visited by the two personable University of Arizona undergraduates, Rita Cantu and Susanna Baker, who took off in a pick-up camper last year to make a survey of interpretation (their major at Arizona) at a couple of hundred sites in the U.S. and Canada with primary, although not exclusive, emphasis on the National Park Service.

They have a contract to survey the state of NPS interpretation, with special concern for the impact of our programs on minorities and on young people. Their advance summary was excellent; the final report is due this spring.

The Seasonal Interpretation Training Kit project, to which many of you contributed taped interpretive programs over the past year, is on schedule. The 25 examples chosen to make up the kit, are presently being duplicated in quantity, a packaging unit has been developed, and the training guide for the kit is almost completed. Each field area should receive a kit by no later than May 1, 1974.



* * * * *

Bob Utley, who began his NPS career as a Custer Battlefield seasonal, recently published a book on his favorite subject, Frontier Regulars, an account of the long struggle between the United States Army and the Plains Indians (a volume in the highly regarded Macmillan series "The Wars of the United States"). From the Washington Post review: "The result is the best overview of the conquest of the Plains now available. In short, this is a definitive work on the subject, and is likely to remain so for decades to come."

* * * * *

For interpreters who have had trouble finding a source for good cotton cards to use in carding and spinning demonstrations, Gene Cox, Natchez Trace Parkway has found a source for good #10 cotton cards at a reasonable \$7.50 per set (including postage). He orders them from: Redman Card Clothing Co., Red Spring Road, Andover, Massachusetts 01810. They will ship on approval.

Art Allen, new Chief of the HFC Division of Museum Services, notes that historic objects and museum collections are as worthy of care and protection as redwoods and grizzlies. He offers the assistance of his preservation staff to all field interpreters who have technical problems.

"Our services are just a phone call away (FTS (304) 535-6371, X352); and we can offer you, for example, professional assistance in preservation treatment for your historic objects, information concerning storage of your collection, and instructions in regard to proper record keeping for your collection. We also provide similar services for management of natural history collections."

* * * * *

Some weeks ago, after reviewing park plans for Bicentennial activities, "In Touch" Pete Shedd commented, and it was during the worst of the gasoline shortage period.

"It seemed to me that all of the emphasis was still on in-park programs or on some generalized and vague platitudes of 'cooperating with local communities in appropriate programs.' If we are simply looking for new programs to jazz up in-park interpretation, that is one thing. But, if we are genuinely looking for ways to make our interpretive programs responsive to new and rapidly changing conditions in our way of life, then I think a rethinking of our approach to off-site interpretation, particularly for school children, is overdue. I say this despite the fact that over the years we have paid a lot of lip service to our school group programs through traditional interpretation, NESAs, NEED, etc., all of which were primarily park oriented. Most

parks with which I am familiar have a sort of hit-or-miss attitude toward off-site programs--talks to the Garden Club, UDC, and DAR, but only on an invitational basis, in which our response often is to send whoever is available to make a stock talk, show a film, or handle snakes. I submit that we should be thinking about, and preparing to carry out, a very definite outreach program of interpretation in which we assert the initiative on taking the mountain to Mohammed if he can't get to the mountain."

Dick Cunningham, Cape Cod, responded to Pete's memo:

"I was intrigued by your January 15 memo to Bill Everhart concerning our responsibility in presenting the 'park story' to school children during the energy crisis.

"I'd like to share with you some of our plans for doing this at Cape Cod. We are in the process of developing five or six slide/tape programs concerning various aspects of our 'park story.' These slide/tape programs will be made available on a mail-away loan basis to schools. The tape, of course, will contain the narration keyed to the slides.

"One program, 'Touch the Earth, Love the Earth,' is near completion. I made it up for one of our seasonals who gave it last summer. It received a fine response, especially by teachers who liked it not only for its environmental message but also for use in English and language arts. The program consists of comments from the writing of Thoreau, Henry Beston, Wyman Richardson, and John Hay. It is

an environmental story of Cape Cod--from Thoreau to Hay.

"These slide/tape programs, after development, are meant in no way to replace a 'live' interpreter at the school. Nothing can replace him--or the uniform. But we feel these programs will have value in honoring those requests (often from 100 miles away or farther) from schools so far distant that regardless of an energy crisis, we would have had to decline. Also, the programs can be used on those dates when we could not furnish an interpreter.

"These programs will not be limited to schools, but will be made available to adult groups. Even though we have an extremely active NEED/NESA program, we intend to renew our efforts in contacting those schools on Cape Cod to which we can still take ourselves and our story."

* * * * *

Up against the present tight personnel ceilings, many seasonals have been trying for several years to get a permanent appointment. A young couple who have elected to remain in the seasonal ranks may change your mind about choosing security and joining the Establishment. And it's possible some veteran interpreters, nostalgic about their seasonal days, might wish for a second chance. Everyone can profit from the Shives' plea that they--and their colleagues--not be regarded as "just seasonals."

TURN PROFESSIONAL! GO SEASONAL!

There was a time when we wanted to work permanently with the National Park Service. There was a time when we felt that being a permanent was the only way.

Perhaps we will feel that way again. But not now. Now we have found another way. It's a way that gives no great financial gain. It clashes with our society's dictates on how to lead a life by rejecting the normal idea of security--family, job, and home. It is a way, however, that offers opportunities to live in, work in, and experience some of the national parks. And most important of all, working as seasonal ranger naturalists year round gives us a feeling of freedom that we love . . . a feeling that few people understand.

For three years now we have been working as seasonal ranger naturalists year round. Our summers have been divided between Jewel Cave National Monument, Wind Cave National Park, and Shenandoah National Park. Our winters have been spent in the Everglades. In each of these areas we have worked with people who see one light ahead of them--becoming a permanent employee with the N.P.S., a goal which seems to be very difficult to achieve. For many people working as a seasonal is a means to an end. But is it possible that working seasonally year round might be an end in itself? Let's examine the pros and cons. Cons first.

Working as a seasonal for the N.P.S. is not a way to become wealthy, but neither is working as a permanent. In addition to the low pay while on the job, there are usually two to three months of unemployment each year.

Seasonals cannot participate in the government retirement program, nor can we take advantage of the government's health insurance plan. And, of course, with each move, every time we vacate an apartment, the oven must

be cleaned. That's two oven scrubbin's a year. A distinct disadvantage!

All we have to do is explain to others how we make our living, and we know that we are not living a normal life. The looks on their faces tell us that! Society has said that security in the form of money, job, family, and home should be prerequisites for a successful life. They are not prerequisites for us. And that difference in itself is sometimes hard to cope with. People have a hard time understanding why we are not interested in "settling down." It seems that we are marching to a different beat. But what can we do when that is the only beat we hear and feel? Certainly we do get disgusted with our work. Perhaps our biggest frustration comes from being considered "just seasonals" rather than professional people working alongside permanents. There are other frustrations, too, as is testified by our regularly scheduled complaining sessions. But, after the complaining is over, we again realize that we have found the way of life that best suits our desires.

We love the mobility and the opportunity to pick up and move on after a few months. We welcome the chance to work in new areas and to experience new people and places. We feel that with each season our knowledge increases and the we become better individuals because of it. Working seasonally gives us the opportunity to affect many lives in a personal way rather than through policy statements and memorandums. And professional field interpreters can play a big role in the public's ideas concerning the N.P.S. and the value of saving wild lands and wilderness. So the challenge is there.

People are always asking us how long we plan to continue living this life. Our reply is always the same: until we no longer enjoy it or until the challenge disappears. Perhaps we will decide someday to try for the permanent ranks, or perhaps we'll leave the N.P.S. completely. But for now our work allows us to live the kind of life we've always wanted; a life that blends frustrations and difficulties with unlimited opportunities and experience.

We hope that others who feel the way we do and who are willing to dedicate themselves to quality field interpretation might consider this kind of life. Certainly the Park Service needs as many skilled and field interpreters as it can get. So turn professional! Try the year round seasonal route!

Jim and Nancy Shives

