

interpreters
information
exchange

IN TOUCH

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

Number 22

November 1977

Children's Interpretation



AN OVERVIEW

The response for the special In Touch issue on Children's Interpretation was overwhelming. Over 140 individual park areas responded and four regions compiled impressive, comprehensive reports from their parks of ongoing programs designed to address this special population--children. I can assure you that each piece received by us by October 1 was read by a minimum of three persons before a publication design was even attempted. All "goods."

A few "not-so-goods." In no way could the volume of received material be treated with a single In Touch issue--even a special issue. Consequently, total program effort like environmental education and the Environmental Living Program are not even represented. These programs deserve special consideration and will receive such in subsequent issues of In Touch and through the regular forum on environmental education in each issue. Interestingly enough, the oldest children's programs in the Park Service--the Junior/Senior Ranger Program at Yosemite and Yellowstone--also represent some of the newer programs in many areas. Junior Naturalist, Junior Historian, and Junior Ranger programs may have new covers, badges, and task requirements, but still serve to instill in a young person a sense of special belonging to the Park Service.

Publications and exhibits designed for the younger audience were the two most identified interpretive needs in our park responses. Significant space is devoted to writing for children; adapting exhibits and waysides for children is the least treated area in this issue. Why? Simply, our resources for the published word were more readily available. The latter topic remains a challenge for all interpretive managers--to meet the needs of children in our visitor centers and museum-type facilities without sacrificing the needs of our other audiences.

Evaluating the effectiveness of our programs represents another challenge. Our "cards and letters" and drawings from satisfied children seem to be our most widely used evaluation technique. Interpretive managers, we will have to better that.

Our outside contributors represent a sampling of the resource persons for the October course at Harpers Ferry in Interpretation: Children's Programs. Their double input to the course and to In Touch reflects their special commitment to us.

Slides, photos, video tapes, and interpretive lesson plans submitted were called and compiled as teaching resources for participants attending the October training session. We never could have known the richness and variety of park programs for children had we not the material for this issue to choose from--Lincoln Boyhood National Memorial pioneer farm and Zion's nature school are just examples.

And so, many of these materials will be put into sample interpretive teaching kits available as training tools to park areas in the near future. Many materials will be included in an expanded monograph on children's interpretation to be published with the assistance of cooperating associations. Your feedback to this issue will help design that publication as a working tool for interpreters.

Thank you again for taking your time to respond to the call to share. Each contributor will receive acknowledgment.

Pat Stanek, Cowpens National Battlefield



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CHILDREN AS TOURISTS

Like other visitors, children bring to the national parks a variety of backgrounds, personalities, and values. What all children share is that, again like other visitors, they arrive with expectations and patterns of behavior that influence their "tourist experience." Interpretive efforts aimed at youngsters may benefit from a perspective that considers children to be legitimate tourists.

As a first step, interpreters should remain keenly aware of the great diversity among young visitors. Some factors may seem obvious, such as height, sex, or age. Others may not be so obvious, yet are important to interpretation.

For example, the life-cycle process of leaving home and gaining independence from parents varies greatly from child to child. Interpretive programs present opportunities for such growth, and many children find parks good places to experiment with independence. These may be tentative independencies, such as sitting in front during an evening program or running ahead to a display, vista or roving interpreter. Nevertheless, they are important social contacts, as well as interpretive contacts. Since emancipation varies widely, children within a single group may react quite differently to such prospects.

An interpreter waits at the trailhead, ready to begin a children's walk. Children disengage from their parents with varying degrees of anticipation, some excited, others apprehensive. The interpreter is careful to explain for the non-so-adventuresome children exactly where they are going, how long the hike will take, what activities are planned, and when they shall return. The anxiety decreases, and the hike begins.

A tourist arrives at a park or a museum, or a zoo, and has some kind of purpose and organization to his/her visit. The plan may simply be a vague interest in "seeing the sights" or it may be a specific and highly organized itinerary. It would seem that knowing these expectations might aid in planning interpretive programs. For children, interpreters could try programs that are organized to meet a diversity of children's interests, experimenting with new locations, new forms of leadership, and

different times. Teenagers, for example, might appreciate a late evening program, and an interpretive session during the noon hour, at a large campground, might prove a popular lunch time event.

Considering children as legitimate tourists may require a sustained effort at learning more about how children use parks and interpretive programs. Educational principles, studies in child development, and research into the dynamics of children's groups will all need to be clarified and their application to interpretation carefully considered. Interpreters should be encouraged in their efforts at reaching this very special kind of tourist.

Gary Machlis, Research Graduate
Sociology Studies Program
Cooperative Park Studies Unit
University of Washington, Seattle



Park Interpreter Bob Huggins leads an adventure hike through the Desert Botanical Garden at Lake Mead NRA.

INVOLVING CHILDREN IN PARK PROGRAMS

Children come with their families and so the park program ought to match their interests and needs as well as the adults. There are a number of ways to increase the interface between child and features of your park. I'd like to share a few pointers that have helped me a lot.

Give kids something to do.

At the campfire, offer three country store sulfur matches and have three kids light the fire simultaneously. Kids like to help the Ranger with his chores, too, and they like to douse the fire. Give kids front center stage whenever you can.

On the trail have kids locate features you want people to examine. Ask a child to select a tree and go and touch it. Now we'll look at Kenny's tree. A child can point out poison ivy with a stick and tell you how he knows. Kids can find where mountain rocks are peeling, chipping, weathering. A five-year old can move the big beam that opens a canal lock and soon grownups are snapping pictures.

Watch what good parents do.

Some parents do a good job to make park features interesting and understandable for kids. A relaxed good humor, patience, and absence of scolding and nagging do wonders. Sad to say, too many parents act like a combination of policeman, ordering kids about, and warden in a mental hospital, smothering them with anxious protection. The adventure of crossing the river on a high foot bridge is gone when parents seem to fear that their youngsters will plunge to instant death the minute they let a hand go. Good parents know how to talk with kids and not down to them. We can learn a lot from them.

Tune in to what interests kids.

A sure-fire attraction is any kind of animal. Have children find cliff swallows nests on bridge piers, fish in the tawny water, a tufted caterpillar or a mahogany millipede, tracks of deer or beaver. Investigate why animals are here and what they are doing at this time of the year. On a mountain walk, look for caves and dark crevices in the rocks. Trace an ancient Indian trail or the faint but distinct paths of animals in the woods.

Listen to kids.

A little girl was not really into human or natural history which are the features of the park. But she liked to tell the Ranger in detail about her visit to her aunt--names and all details about three cats. I don't believe she ever got acquainted with the aunt. Children enjoy having an adult who listens and does not judge them or put them down.

Foster curiosity and imagination.

Be ready to shift quickly to any question, discovery, wonderment of a child. A girl located a snail 1/4 inch in diameter, something worth stopping for. Be alert for whispered or half-audible words of kids and pick them up when you can. Often you can help clarify jumbled ideas and half-notions. "Which way will the rabbit hop when we get closer? You sneak ahead of us and we'll watch!" A child complained, "Why don't they get rid of the bees up here." That led to investigating what made the bees so excited--brand new flowers opening up.

Dramatize and get kids into the action.

Children often dramatize. An older child directs the action. This method works well for me, too. A child and

his parents have to find the right size trees to cut down to make a settler's cabin. And the rest of us on the trail help. The trick is to find a tree the three can roll or carry to the building site. Or you can send a child to hunt for a medicine plant--her dad is sick. She is told what color the flower is. Then we go over how the medicine worked in olden times. Or you may ask kids to act out what a wasp does to a spider.

Have fun.

Kids usually do not come to be educated or do any concentrated learning in the way adults might do. They want fun and adventure and have their own methods of learning which to an adult look like fooling around. A grandmother sensed this and brought her grandson just to explore the round boulders in the campground creek. Fishing, climbing, exploring, biking around, picking berries --these are ways to engage kids in the park.

Fun elements built into family-oriented programs can appeal to kids. An ordinary feature on your guided walk can be changed into a fun thing by rousing anticipation. "At the end of the trail we're going to look for a giant tree." Appoint a child to be the advance scout. Or, "When you step out of the forest into the sunshine, look for 'witches hair'. It's orange and stringy." (Dodder)

Don't dawdle.

Start action immediately and keep things moving at a brisk pace. Reduce verbiage and try to limit your comments to one idea at a stop. You don't need an open faucet for pouring out information people have not asked for. Walk briskly --kids won't want to lose you around the bend.

If your walk or campfire or program catches the kids, it is likely to be all the more interesting to their elders.

Gus Wiencke
Seasonal Park Technician
Blue Ridge Parkway



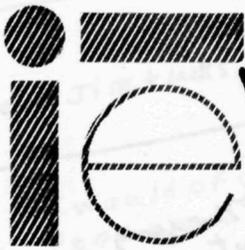
STAGES IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Developmental Stages	Pre-school	Elementary School	Pre-adolescent	Adolescent
Age	2-5	5-9	9-12	12-17
Physical Development	Growth rapid. Abundant energy. Active movements with rough muscular coordination. Males and females develop at slightly different rates--equalize at about 5.	Growth more gradual. Finer muscle coordination. Active movements still required.	Desires activities requiring fine muscle coordination. Strives to attain specific skills. Wide variation in development.	Onset of puberty. Rapid growth and development and lack of fine motor coordination. Awkwardness due to growth. Girls developing faster than boys.
Mental Process	Primarily learns through the senses. Developing memory and vocabulary. Making associations of cause and effect.	Interest span increases. Comparison with peer group becomes important.	Concerned with things rather than ideas. Ability to verbalize curiosity.	Interested in ideas. Seeks specific and authentic information. Desire for intellectual freedom.
Social Process	Self centered. Bases relationships on what he/she can "get" from others.	Strong group loyalties. Pair relationships very important.	Learning to cooperate and enjoy group activities.	Needs peer group support. Testing tentative adult relationships.
Relationships with adults.	Primarily with the caring person, usually the mother.	First break from home. Begins relationship with other adults.	Need to find parent substitutes in teachers and group leaders.	Conflict with adults. Desire for independence.

Visitor feedback idea from Elaine Gurian, Boston Children's Museum: Station yourself beside one busy exhibit in your visitor center for ten minutes. Unobtrusively, record number and kind of visitors, all their comments, and length of time (clocked time) spent at the exhibit site. What's happening?



Mount Rainier National Park



KEEP

IN TOUCH

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MAY 25, 1977

Hi Ho,
guess who, I is Daniel
Elmore again, sorry I
haven't written for so
long but I have been
busy. I will be coming
to see Dinosaur National
Monument this year
on our way to Iowa
I will also pass your
museum and those huge
statuse of yours, I will
also go through wall drug
radium hot spring and
a lot more. My lattes
intret is space 1999
the new show.

Yours truly Daniel Elmore
MAY 25 1977
P.S. I like your Ele-
vator that goes all
over the big rock in
your quarry.

Dear Jim

(Nov. 3 1975)

I Like you very much ever sense I knew you. you have been very nice to me because I got money from you because I didn't have no lunch and tell that lady ranger thank you for taking us to the store and I like you so much and I like your singing to.

Love Gina Sanders

P.S. Thank you for the lovely certificate

XX OO XX OO



Here's a certificate from me to you

John Muir's National
Parks. Greatest
Ranger.
Mr. Jim Tuck

Dear Mr. Mayor,
I liked it Especially
Because my family are
wildlife freaks! And I liked
snakes Especially shermen!

Love,
Mark

John Muir School
Martinez, Calif.
February 16, 1977

Dear Mr. Ranger,

Thank you for showing me through the John Muir House. I thought it was so pretty that I told my mother all about it. When I first saw you I thought you were kind of cute. My mother thought you were cute, when I told her all about you.

Sincerely, Deanna E.
Miss Swamoto thought you were kind of cute her self!

Dear Mr. Blake
I liked Turkey Run Farm
because the pigs were acting
funny and the horses were beautiful.
I really like Turkey Run Farm.
It was exciting. Thank You.
Yours truly, Bonnie MacNay

Dear Jim tucks,

I would of came but I had to write
sentense ^{no} because I left the room
whitout permission

Sincer Paul Whitbey

January 9, 1974
1000 Alameda de las Pulgas
Belmont, California

Dear Jim, Thank you very
much for taking us around
Alcatraz and telling us
about Alcatraz.
I tried talking down the
toilet but it doesn't work.

NOTE: Folklore surrounding
prisoner life in Alcatraz
includes the story about
talking down the toilets and
the water then carrying the
voices from cell to cell.
Although it may be doubtful,
it gave the children a feel-
ing of isolation problems
and the need to communicate.

Sincerely
you,
Laura
Demars

Dear park Rangers,
I like the fild trip. Thank you
for telling us about the
beach. I like the tide pools.
thake you for taking us
you or wonder full
FRAM



Letters: Dinosaur National Monument; Corky Mayo; Jim Tuck.

HOW DID LIBRARIANS GET INTO THIS, ANYWAY?

Because librarians are curious about everything, compulsively collect information, organize and analyze it, and positively delight in retrieving it--for you. Helpfulness is the outstanding professional characteristic. The professional has a degree as master of library (and/or information) science, signifying special training in the techniques of collecting and organizing materials, and in the use of hundreds of reference sources. Materials are not only the familiar books, periodicals, records and films, but manuscripts, posters, games, photographs--any information source that may be of continuing interest and can be stored and retrieved. Many librarians have specialized in particular fields like law, medicine, technology, or children's literature.

The person who checks your books in and out is not usually the librarian. The larger the library the more likely it is that this will be the case. Many small libraries are extremely well run by people without professional training (although more and more state library experts offer in-service training in the field.) Today, however, the regional library concept is putting professional expertise and access to vastly larger information sources



within your reach with only slight delay in even the more sparsely populated states. Regional systems are cooperative associations of local or county libraries formed to pool budget resources, to make savings in purchasing and processing of materials, to cover salaries of professional library specialists, and otherwise share costs in the interest of better service. Expect good service, and if you do not get it, ask some questions.

Librarians can be found not only in public libraries, schools and universities, but in such unlikely places as business firms, museums, union headquarters, newspapers, offices of national organizations, and so on. Many of you have already found archivists or librarians in your field of expertise. You can confidently ask for them in other places, but do not be surprised if a designated "librarian" is an untrained secretary barely coping with the staff periodical collection. This is all some small places can afford. Even then, if you know what to look for, the raw information has at least been gathered in one place, and may even be roughly organized, if you are lucky.

An excellent librarian in any setting will anticipate demand with subject lists and reference files and will be able to draw information from unlikely sources through an agile memory constantly being stimulated by an astonishing variety of requests--such

as yours. Beyond that, however, the active, involved librarian gets to know her community, be it town, faculty and students, or scholars. She knows expert sources of information not yet in print: writers, illustrators, scientists, history buffs, hobbyists, amateur magicians, puppeteers--all of whom are askers of those astounding questions. Be prepared, however, to become another expert in your turn, to be entered into a little reference file as a source of information in the community, a lecturer or an advisor. Oh, well, for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.

If you do not have a large or useful library collection nearby, or access through a regional structure, most states have interlibrary loan arrangements by way of the state library that will provide entry to many resources that you could not draw on in person.

Special needs have attracted special librarians. Each state has a Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, headed by a librarian. He or she will not only distribute braille and talking books, but will have a wide acquaintance with organizations and individuals knowledgeable about the special demands of the handicapped. For example, there are many people who need print materials in large, open type; and others suffering from dyslexia cannot learn to read at all, but can use recorded books and information.

Children's and school librarians have daily exposure to the endless explorations of students who range from the don't-read-yets, through omnivores and specialists in sports, horses and mysteries, to the 8th graders reading at third grade level. The excellent children's librarian will know not only books and reference tools, but also folklore, films, filmstrips, and other media. She will know curriculum demands and trends--a great help if you are planning materials aimed at the school-age child. In fact, school librarians are often involved in curriculum planning, and can bring information sources to the attention of teachers. These specialists in children's service will often know local children's authors and aspiring illustrators who may be willing to help you in your publication program.

So--ask your librarian and expect help. She will generally enjoy answering or working with you to find the answer. Use her. Put her on a committee. Bring her a flower. A little appreciation goes a long way with a librarian.

Kathleen Roedder
Children's Librarian
Public Library of the District of Columbia



Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park

THE CHILDREN JUST
AREN'T BUYING OUR
TINY TOTS DOLLS, MODEL
TRAINS AND RUBBER
ALLIGATORS ANYMORE.
THEY'RE BUYING
BOOKS!!

BOOKS?



WRITING FOR CHILDREN

In the old days, or perhaps I should say in my day, there was on report cards a place beside each subject for the teacher's comment, and if beside Reading, she wrote "Reads with expression," you knew you had done well. What you did not know was that you had actually hammed it up, because the more dramatic you became, the more understanding and appreciation you were supposed to be displaying. A friend of mine, brought up in this school of thought, was a great believer in reading aloud to her children. One evening her daughter gave her a story to read. "This time, Mom," the little girl said, "don't read sad, don't read glad. Just read."

Just as this friend had a special voice reserved for reading, many adults have special voices reserved for children, the I-am-talking-to-a-child tone. And writers also, unfortunately, can slip into a special I-am-writing-for-children style, particularly in nonfiction where the writer speaks directly to the reader. The result is a kind of self-conscious sterile simplicity, often further weakened by the dragging in of morals. When it comes to history, this can be not only deadly dull, but distorting as well. And many children do find it dull. In a survey I conducted this year in a number of both elementary and secondary schools in Westchester County, over 90% of the children said they did not like history; it was boring. Now if the past, when it is put through the hands of educators, comes out boring, then it must seem to children that educators find life itself boring. When I read some textbooks, I certainly find myself reaching that conclusion.

In the last few years I have been working particularly with biographies. As a whole, children's literature, particularly fiction, has become much more realistic and open, less didactic, but biography and history have lagged behind. Many courses of study and some of the most respected textbooks in children's literature still believe that a biography should be something like a Sunday School lesson. Time and again it is stated that biographies should be written only about those subjects whose lives are worthy of emulation. Now in the first place, it is hard for me to visualize how a 4th grader is going to emulate George Washington; in the second place, the obvious inference is that all qualities that are not worthy of emulation should be omitted. With this kind of censorship, history becomes pretty bloodless. Isn't it really an under cover attempt to manipulate children's behaviour? Don't children sense this? This kind of history fits into what you might call the "vase theory" of education. Rabelais once said, "Children are not vases to be filled, but fires to be lit." And certainly the material of history abounds with fuel for fires. I have tried to use this fuel, selecting what is within the understanding and interest level of children and giving children credit for being able to accept the fact that people in history, just as people in their own experience, are not all good or bad but instead rather complicated. Esther Forbes, an historian whom I admire, said something once with which I have to disagree. "It is easy to remember Sam Adams' trickery," she said, "King Hancock's vanities, James Otis' craziness. But should they not be judged (even as the author is judged) not by personal shortcomings but 'by their works ye shall know them'?"

I say, why judge at all? Why not accept the man along with his works? I have written a biography about John Hancock and if I had left out his vanity, there would be little

left. It was the very mainspring of his actions and often served his country well. It was a childlike kind of vanity that may have irritated some of his contemporaries but was not essentially dangerous; it wasn't power he wanted. He just wanted to be liked. And as a matter of fact, he was likeable and it would be a pity to represent him as anything different than he was or to miss out on him altogether.

Along this same vein, the Nebraska Course of Study in Children's Literature makes the statement that it is not important for young children to think about motivation in biography; all they need to know are the deeds a man performs. Well, I think children read for the same reasons that adults read, and one of these reasons is to help them understand human behavior. It is, after all, a life-long preoccupation and it is too bad if children do not discover at an early age that books are one path to such a study. History books too.

Let me tell you a little about the form I have used in my biographies. I do not follow the traditional, strictly chronological pattern. I don't feel that I need to plod along from one event to another; and this happened and then that happened; then this child was born, then that child; first this accomplishment, then that accomplishment. I linger over interesting scenes; I don't hesitate to pull facts together from different parts of a life in order to make a point; I skip over some periods, then nail down the time and catch up quickly with events. For instance, in my book on Patrick Henry:

"On May 29th, 1765, Patrick became 29 years old. He and Sarah had four children and were living in a four-room house on the top of a hill in Louisa County. And on the 29th of May, what was he doing?

Well, he was bawling out the king again."

I want the text to be direct and to the point. I want it to sound well when it's read aloud. Simple, declarative sentences do not have to be Dick-and-Jane simple; they can be, and indeed they should be, punchy. The material should be concrete, specific. When I describe Boston in Paul Revere's time, I say:

"In 1735 there were in Boston 42 streets, 36 lanes, 22 alleys, 1000 brick houses, 200 wooden houses, 12 churches, 4 schools, 418 horses (at the last count)." Now this is accurate. History should be just as authentic when told to children as it is when told to adults. I don't quote conversations unless I have a record of them, although not everyone appreciates this. Using Paul Revere's own account as my source, I quote the British officer who stopped him on his Big Ride. "Damn you stop!" the British officer shouted. "If you go an inch farther, you are a dead man." I've had complaints from teachers about that damn. (I just remind them that the word was used by the enemy.) Children don't complain. One boy remarked that he could believe this book simple because he knew that's the way men really would talk in a war.

I reserve a page or two at the end of my books which I call "Notes from the Author." I have a chance this way to quote sources when I think it's appropriate, to show different opinions, to elaborate on the material.

The records are full of scraps of information of particular interest to children. I want them to know the names of Washington's hound dogs, to see a sample of Paul Revere's doodling, to watch Samuel Adams' Newfoundland dog go after a redcoat, to attend the electrical picnic that Benjamin Franklin gave. I want to include humor when I can; children are astonished to find that anything funny happened in the past. In short, what I hope to do is to take young readers by surprise and convince them that the past was once the present. And I would like them to confront the past, prepared to use all the emotions that they invest in their own lives.

Jean Fritz

Author of:

Why don't you get a horse, Sam Adams?

Will you sign here, John Hancock?

And then what happened, Paul Revere?

Can't you make them behave, King George?

What's the big idea, Ben Franklin?

Where was Patrick Henry on the 29th of May?

Who's that stepping on Plymouth Rock?

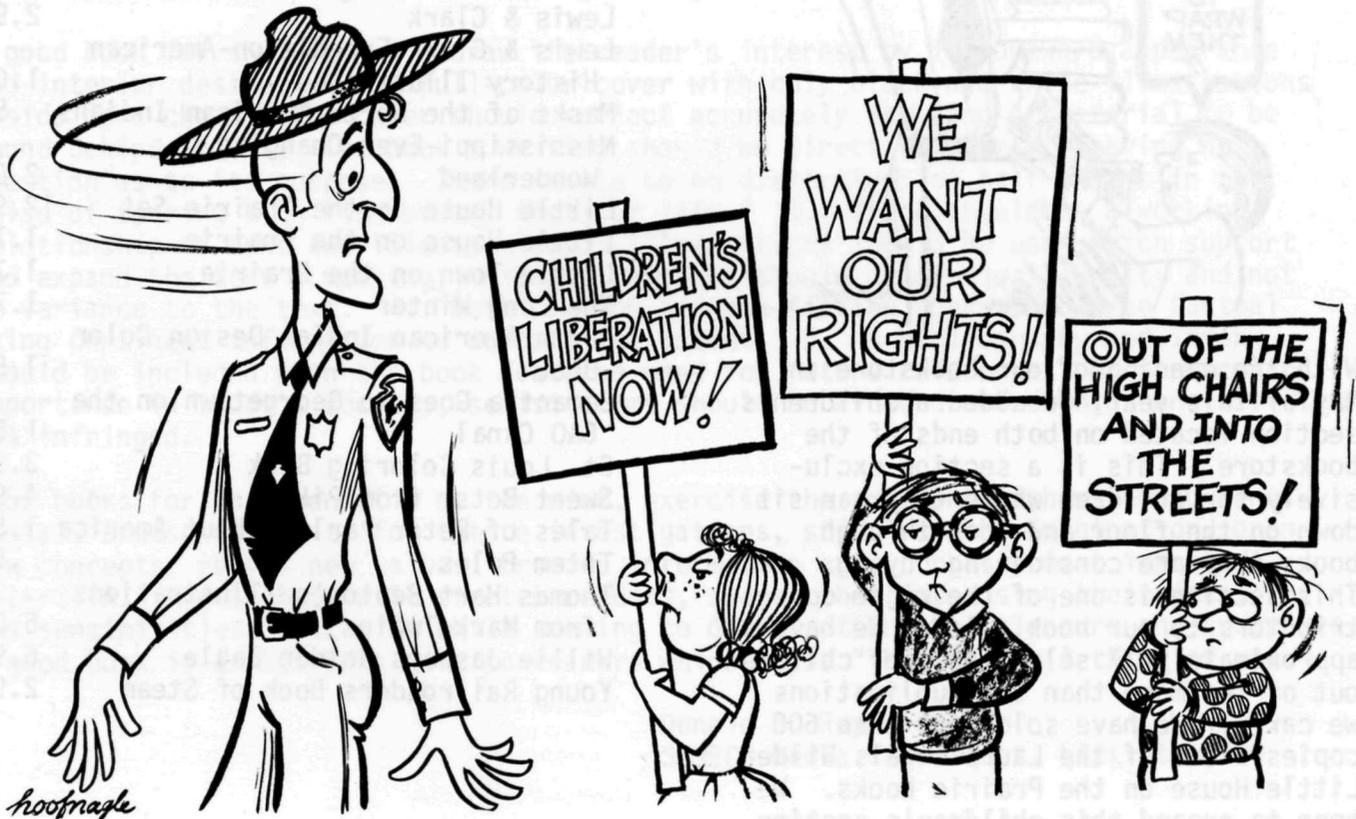
George Washington's breakfast.

The Cabin Faced West (westward movement)

Brady (slavery in pre-Civil War days)

Early Thunder (Massachusetts in 1775)

(all published by Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc.)



Marc Hyman, Padre Island National Seashore

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS

[A great part of the burden of publishing and selling children's books is in the hands of Cooperating Associations. Pat Ziehl, the new business manager of the Jefferson National Expansion Historical Association, set out early to tackle the problem. Here is her report and a bibliography of what she found.]



With the opening of our bookstore in May of this year, we added a children's section located on both ends of the bookstore. This is a section exclusively for children where they can sit down on the floor and look through books they are considering buying. This section is one of the major contributors to our book sales. We have approximately 37 selections for children out of the more than 300 publications we carry. We have sold more than 600 copies alone of the Laura Ingalls Wilder Little House on the Prairie books. We hope to expand this children's section to include more publications and other related items.

America Is Having A Party	\$1.95
The Boy's Book of Backyard Camping	4.00
The Boy's Book of Hiking	4.50
The Boy's Book of Outdoor Discovery	4.50
Camping & Vacationing with the First Americans	4.95
Coloring Book of American Indians	1.95
Cowboy Roping & Rope Tricks	1.50
Cowboy Slang	5.95
Discovering Plains Indians of North America	1.25
Discovering Plains Indians of North America/Poster	2.95
Enjoying St. Louis with Children	3.95
Enjoying St. Louis with Children Color Book	1.50
Gateway Arch Color Book	1.00
Fun Time for Campers Only	2.95
Indian Boyhood	2.50
Indian Cradles	.50
Indian Crafts	3.50
Indians of the Southwest	1.00
Kachina Dolls	1.00
Lewis & Clark	2.95
Lewis & Clark Expedition-American History Illustrated	1.00
Masks of the North American Indians	.50
Mississippi-Ever Changing Wonderland	2.00
Little House on the Prairie Set	12.95
Little House on the Prairie	1.75
Little Town on the Prairie	1.75
The Long Winter	1.75
North American Indian Design Color Book	1.50
Samantha Goes to Georgetown on the C&O Canal	1.50
St. Louis Coloring Book	3.95
Sweet Betsy from Pike	4.95
Tales of Peter Parley About America	1.50
Totem Poles	.50
Thomas Hart Benton's Illustrations from Mark Twain	5.00
Willie Jaspers Golden Eagle	6.95
Young Railroaders Book of Steam	2.95

EVALUATING CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Writing is a form of communication by which people tell us who they are, what they know, in such a way that we can use this to measure our thoughts and questions about who we are and what we need to know. But how do we determine what is good writing for children?

In her book, From Childhood To Childhood (John Day, 1970), Jean Karl, a distinguished children's book editor, answers this question by saying: "No one can know for sure. Though there are many who would find them convenient, there are no firm standards for literature, no hard-and-fast rules. Good is too elusive for that. Books are too personal, to authors and readers both, to lend themselves to one pattern of judgment."

Charlotte Huck has written in Children's Literature in the Elementary School (Holt, 1968) that, "Children's reactions to books are important, however, for a book that is not read by children cannot be considered a good children's book."

So, you may be asking yourself, how do we as interpreters evaluate books and publications which are intended for children? The first step is to consider the audience. For what age level is the material written? What kind of experiences have children had by this age? The Fry Graph (described elsewhere in this issue) is one device for determining approximate grade level. The second step is to consider the author's intent. What is the author trying to say in this material? Is the point clearly obvious and understandable? The third step in this process is to consider ourselves. Are we reading this material fairly or are we letting our own beliefs and interests intrude, thereby keeping us from making an objective evaluation?

A good book for children will draw the reader's interest by its outward appearance and interior design. 1. A full-color cover with only black-and-white illustrations inside is a cheat. The cover should reflect accurately the kind of material to be found behind it. 2. The book's writing should be direct and clear, leaving no question as to its purpose. There should be no distortions or half-truths in the guise of sparing kids "the brutal facts of life." 3. There should be a working relationship of text and illustrations. Illustrations should be used which support and expand the text's meaning. Picture captions should be of equal quality and not at variance to the text. 4. Both fiction and non-fiction books should be factual using pertinent information to support the intent. 5. A bibliography and index should be included when the book could be used for future reference. Of particular importance in today's society, sexist terms should be avoided and ethnic sensitivities not infringed.

Good books for children stir up the mind, exercise the emotions without being sentimental, arouse curiosity for future investigations, stimulate the imagination, open new concepts, reveal new values, provide information and, probably most important, entertain. A good book will stretch readers, seduce them into using their faculties and sensibilities, educating while seeming to offer nothing but pleasure and surprises. A good book is an author's gift to readers which says, "This is how I think of you."

Donald B. Reynolds, Jr.
SEMBCS Media Consultant, Littleton, CO

ESTIMATING READABILITY

THE FRY GRAPH -- ITS IMPORTANCE AND HOW TO USE IT

The best technique for determining the readability level is a very controversial subject. It is even difficult to determine whether or not the knowledge of the readability level is of any value. Teachers, librarians, and others working directly with children, find it extremely useful to know for what basic grade level the material they use has been prepared. It is also helpful to the researchers and writers working on a project to have an understanding of the readability formula that will be applied to the final manuscript.

Through the various comparative studies of the readability formulas you can see that the methods of estimation tend to show some reasonable agreement. You can approach the readability level by both quantitative and subjective means. Both expensive and lengthy formulas are available. The formulas will help you write material for a prescribed grade level.

When using formulas with lists of familiar words, much of the writing becomes static with short, choppy sentences. The material is so dull and dry that it lacks any excitement to carry the reader to the end. By using the Fry Graph the writer or researcher is able to produce highly enjoyable, but readable material. As a writer it allows you to be as creative and imaginative as you need to be to present your ideas and details. Once you are familiar with the Fry Graph you will find that your projects will have a readability level that flows constantly throughout the material.

The instructions that follow will give you a brief introduction to the Fry Graph pictured on the opposite page.

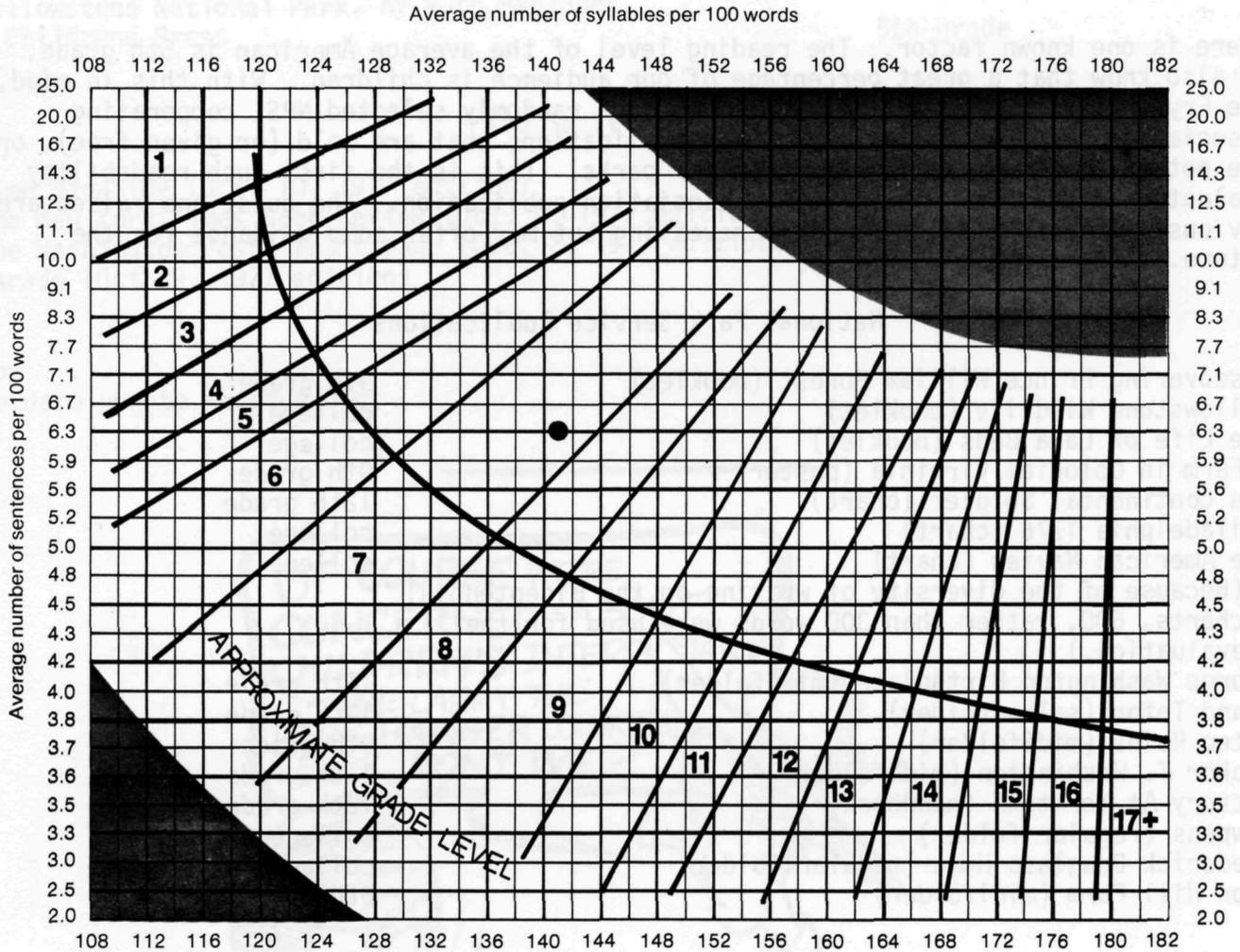
1. Randomly select three passages and count out exactly 100 words beginning with the beginning of a sentence. Count numerals and proper nouns.
2. Count the number of sentences in each 100 words, estimating length of the fraction of the last sentence to the nearest 1/10th.
3. Count the total number of syllables in each 100-word passage. If a hand counter is not available, an easy way is to put a mark above every syllable beyond one in each word; then, when you get to the end of the passage, count the number of marks and add 100. Average the findings from the three samples.
4. Find the average number of syllables across the top of the graph. In the column of numbers on the left, find the approximate number of sentences. The approximate reading grade level of the passage appears in the window opposite the sentence count.
5. If a great deal of variability is found, putting more sample counts into the average is recommended.

Jamestown Publishers (Order Dept., P.O. Box 6743, Providence, Rhode Island 02940) has produced a Fry Readability Scale (\$2.00). This is an easy to use version of the readability formula developed by Dr. Edward Fry, Director of the Reading Center at Rutgers University.

Jean Pedersen
Creative Education
Mankato, Minnesota

GRAPH FOR ESTIMATING READABILITY — EXTENDED

by Edward Fry, Rutgers University Reading Center, New Brunswick, N.J. 08904



DIRECTIONS: Randomly select 3 one hundred word passages from a book or an article. Plot average number of syllables and average number of sentences per 100 words on graph to determine the grade level of the material. Choose more passages per book if great variability is observed and conclude that the book has uneven readability. Few books will fall in gray area but when they do grade level scores are invalid.

Count proper nouns, numerals and initializations as words. Count a syllable for each symbol. For example, "1945" is 1 word and 4 syllables and "IRA" is 1 word and 3 syllables.

EXAMPLE:

	<u>SYLLABLES</u>	<u>SENTENCES</u>
1st Hundred Words	124	6.6
2nd Hundred Words	141	5.5
3rd Hundred Words	158	6.8
AVERAGE	141	6.3

READABILITY 7th GRADE (see dot plotted on graph)

APPLYING THE FRY GRAPH

Are we writing, publishing, or buying (for resale) the kind of literature that meets the needs of park visitors? Is this even a fair question when virtually no study has been done on the readability level of those who are buying from Cooperating Associations?

There is one known factor. The reading level of the average American is 5th grade. We also know that a great percentage of our audience is children. With this in mind, the Fry Graph has been applied to a number of randomly selected NPS, cooperating association, and commercially-produced publications that are sold (or given free), or are potential sales items in some of our parks. This is the first such readability evaluation given to any NPS and/or association publication. The questions raised are obvious. The results are not only revealing but may offer some guidance for the future.

National Park Service Publications

Discovering Prince William Forest (booklet)	9th grade
Yellowstone Wildlife (booklet)	college
The Life of Lava Beds (booklet)	college
A Farm in Colonial Virginia (poster)	9th grade
The Continental Soldier (chart)	12th grade
Philadelphia 1776 (chart)	college
The American Navies (chart)	college
(Because of the diversity of writing on the Bicentennial charts, 600, rather than 300 words were used for the evaluation.)	
George Washington Birthplace (midifolder)	10th grade
Grand Teton (sales folder)	10th grade
Aztec Ruins (midifolder)	9th grade
Booker T. Washington (midifolder)	11th grade
Victory At Yorktown (handbook)	12th grade
Cowpens (regular folder)	college
Frederick Douglass Home (regular folder)	college
Oxon Hill Farm (minifolder)	6th-7th grade

Cooperating Association Publications

Drummer Boy At Gettysburg	7th grade
Fort Frederica Coloring Book	7th grade

Commercial Children's Magazines

Ranger Rick, October 1976	5th grade
World, August 1977	5th grade

Commercial Children's Books

Colonial Farm (Turkey Run Farm), by June Behrens and Pauline Brower, Childrens Press	6th grade
Why don't you get a horse, Sam Adams?, by Jean Fritz, Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc.	9th grade
Yellowstone National Park, by Ruth Radlauer, Childrens Press	5th grade

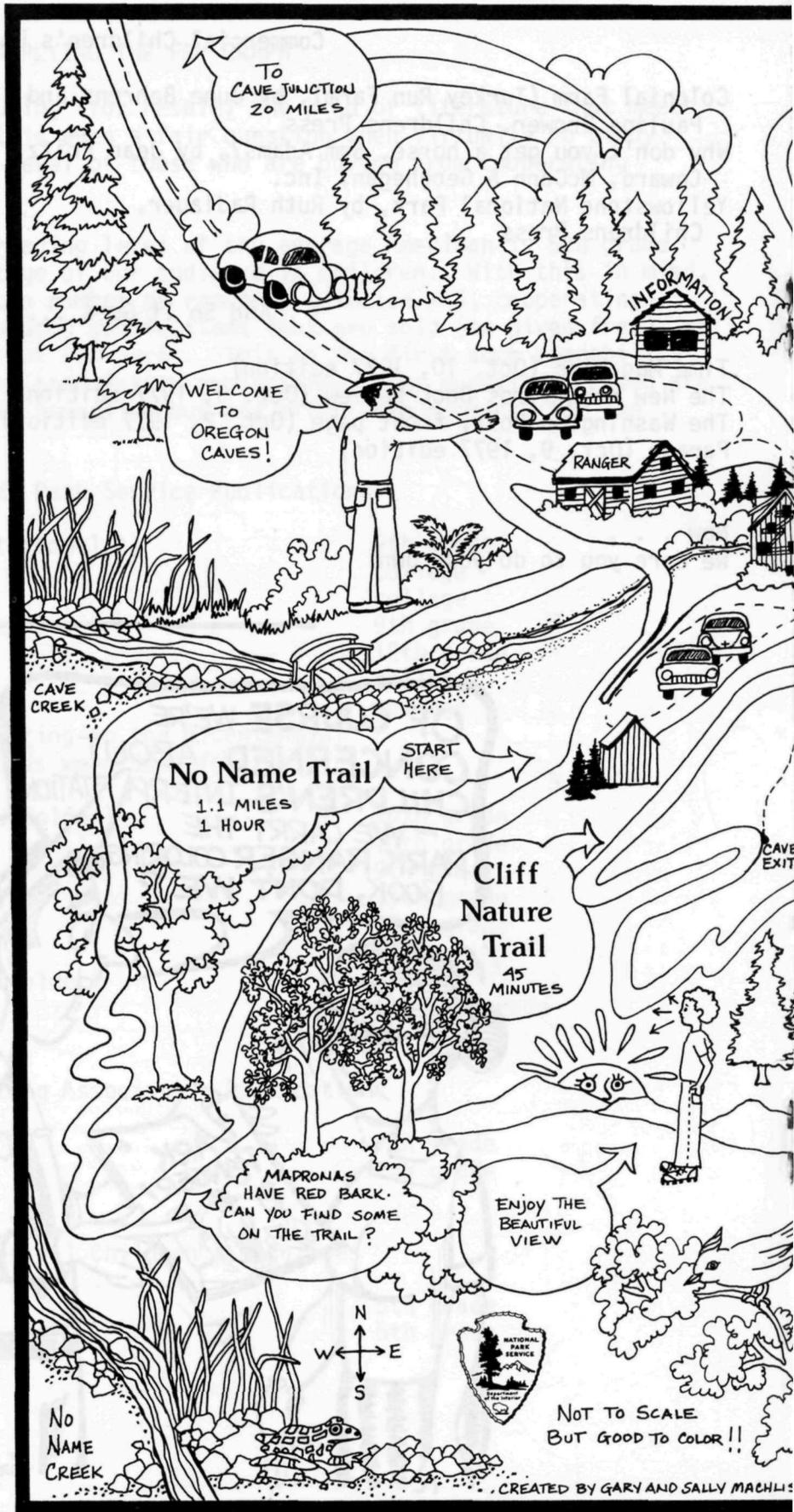
And So It Goes....

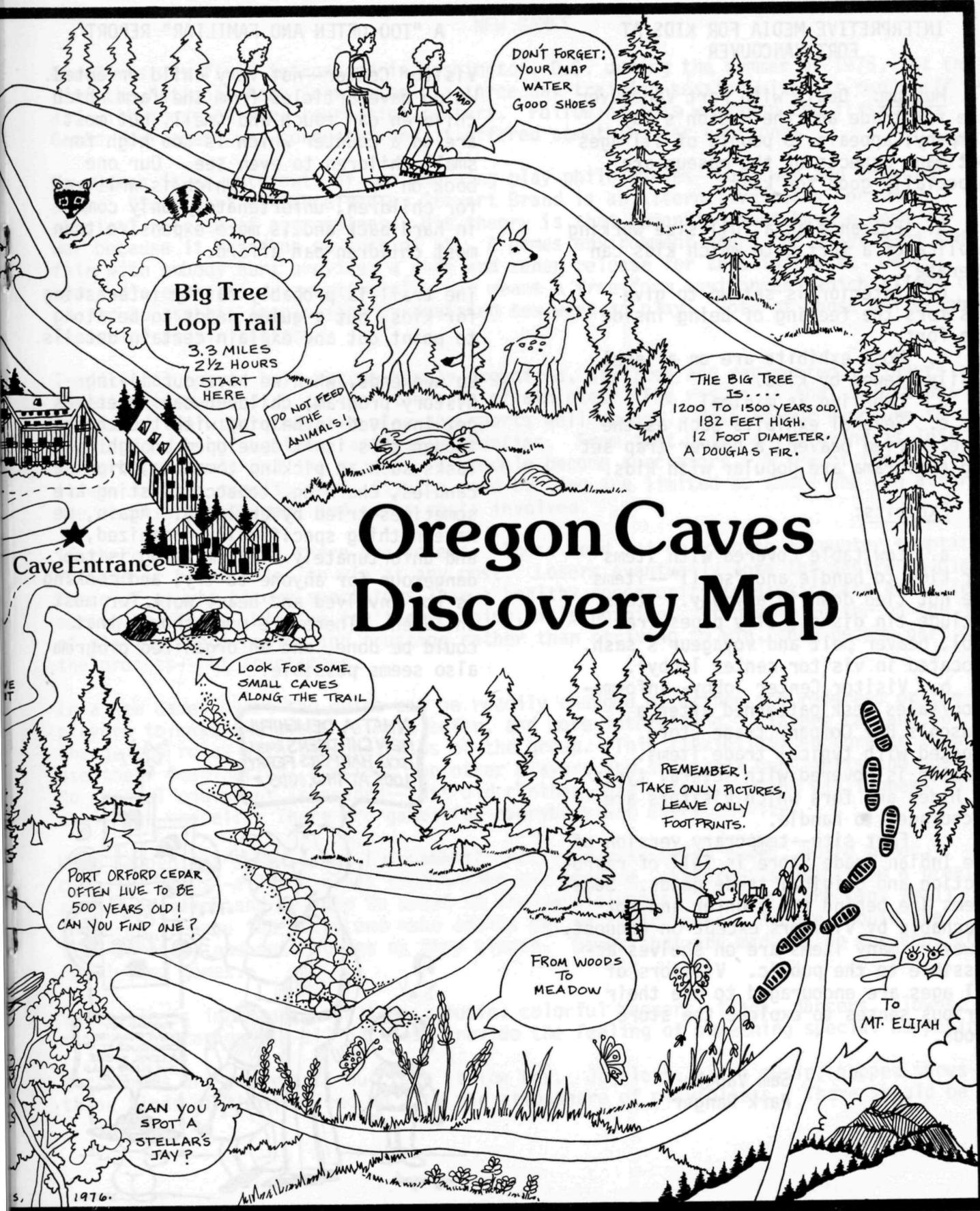
Time Magazine (Oct. 10, 1977 edition)	12th grade
The New York Times Book Review (Oct. 9, 1977 edition)	college
The Washington Post, front page (Oct. 2, 1977 edition)	9th grade
Parade (Oct. 9, 1977 edition)	12th grade

Now . . .
We dare you to do your own!



The Oregon Caves Discovery Map was designed by Gary and Sally Machlis for the NPS Pacific Northwest Region Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Washington. It details park features for the children--not to scale. Steller's jays, Port Orford cedar, trails, the Big Tree and other park features are presented in a busy and fanciful manner. Questions (such as "Can you spot a Steller's jay?") and information (such as the age and dimensions of the Big Tree) involve the children with the real world of the park around them. The children enjoy being given something meant especially for them, and even those who may not be interested in coloring are stimulated by the idea of discovery inherent in a trail map.





DON'T FORGET:
YOUR MAP
WATER
GOOD SHOES

Big Tree Loop Trail

3.3 MILES
2 1/2 HOURS
START HERE

DO NOT FEED
THE
ANIMALS!

THE BIG TREE
IS...
1200 TO 1500 YEARS OLD.
182 FEET HIGH.
12 FOOT DIAMETER.
A DOUGLAS FIR.

Oregon Caves Discovery Map

Cave Entrance

LOOK FOR SOME
SMALL CAVES
ALONG THE TRAIL

REMEMBER!
TAKE ONLY PICTURES,
LEAVE ONLY
FOOTPRINTS.

PORT ORFORD CEDAR
OFTEN LIVE TO BE
500 YEARS OLD!
CAN YOU FIND ONE?

FROM WOODS
TO
MEADOW

CAN YOU
SPOT A
STELLAR'S
JAY?

To
MT. ELIJAH

INTERPRETIVE MEDIA FOR KIDS AT FORT VANCOUVER

1. Museum: Deals with Fort Vancouver, the fur trade and the Hudson's Bay Company; appeals to people of all ages but many aspects of the museum are especially good for kids.

a. Entrance is a full-size working replica of a fort gate which kids can operate.

b. Interior is set up to give visitors the feeling of being inside the fort.

c. Most exhibits are on a level easily viewed by kids.

d. Labeling is minimal.

e. Several exhibits such as the freeze-dried beaver, a beaver trap set and a diorama are popular with kids.

2. Exhibits:

a. Low table covered with items for kids to handle and "smell"--items are not tied down in any way. Items include tin dishes, clay pipes, raw wool, beaver pelt and voyageur's sash. (Located in visitor center lobby).

b. Visitor Center lobby--information/sales desk patterned after a Hudson's Bay Company trade store. Stocked with typical trade items. Counter is covered with several types of hides and furs which visitors are encouraged to handle.

c. Fort site--temporary version of the Indian Trade Store is full of reproduction and original trade goods. Some items are behind the counter and not reachable by visitors except on request. However, many items are on shelves accessible to the public. Visitors of all ages are encouraged to use their various senses to explore the store goods.

Sam Vaughn
Park Ranger

A "TOO-OFTEN AND FAMILIAR" REPORT

Visitor Center--not very child oriented. We do have articles from the farm which children can touch and smell, but most are on a counter which is too high for small children to even see. Our one book on _____ which is written for children, unfortunately only comes in hard back and is more expensive than most children can afford.

The trail is probably fairly interesting for kids, but a guide needs to be along to point out and explain certain details.

On weekends, when we have our living history program, children can sometimes get involved in helping with the chores, though this isn't developed enough. Tasks such as picking tomatoes, dipping candles, churning, tobacco twisting are sometimes tried by children. Again, we have nothing specifically organized, and unfortunately blacksmithing is too dangerous for anyone to try, and cooking is too involved and heavy work for most children. There are more chores that could be done, and an organized program also seems possible.



NEW GAMES

New Games was first introduced in Washington, D.C. during the summer of 1975. At that time the National Park Service held a three day training session with its own staff and with those of area recreation centers. Following this workshop the first New Games Tournament was conducted and it offered something for everyone!

New Games is an outgrowth of two emerging play philosophies--soft war and creative play. "Soft war" as conceived by Stewart Brand is an alternative means for the physical release of aggressions. His theory is that humankind must have a need for war because it has done so much of it. A games environment where one plays hard and fair with nobody hurt provides a safe and saner release for this instinct. George Leonard's emphasis on creative play has meant a free-form environment which allows the player to use his imagination by devising new ways to play. Both of these philosophies encourage participation.

Traditional sports have become highly organized, stylized and regimented. Players are expected to measure up to the standards of athletes. The result is that only alpha specimens feel that they can play the sports well enough. Most of our exposure to sports is during the teens and early twenties. From that point on, playing is left to the professionals and the majority of people become spectators. A few of these activities, such as tennis, golf, fishing, and boating are limited to those who can afford the necessary equipment and other costs involved.

If there are winners, there are losers. Those dead set on winning encounter temptation to bend or break rules to win at any cost. Losers eventually lose the desire to play. Those of us who become spectators lose a healthy opportunity to participate and release our aggressions. Winning isn't everything, it's nothing. If people center on the joy of playing, cooperating and trusting rather than striving to win, they become part of the process--not spectators.

In a New Games event the rules can be readily changed by either the referees or the players to make the event fairer, safer, and more interesting. Players can and do change the rules with the consensus of the group. This flexibility encourages them to use their imagination, consider the other players and set their own limits and goals. No special equipment is needed--just old clothes, new enthusiasm and willingness to challenge oneself. There are games for everybody and every ability.

What happens at a New Games Tournament? Active games, quiet games, board games, computer games--all the games that anyone can imagine. Referees should know a great number of games and be able to adapt to the participants. If there are many small children, change the rules and make adults get on their knees. People should feel free to leave and enter games as they please. Games that are made up on the spot are really new games.

Spectacle is important. Balloons, music, colorful banners, flags, dancers, clowns, mimes, theater games--all of these provide the feeling of something special happening.

Performers are important, but keep it low key. Jugglers, quiet music, puppet shows--these kinds of things blend in with the atmosphere of playfulness. There should be no

amplified music, as it tends to dominate the activities. New Games Tournaments have many energy centers--not just one.

A New Games Equipment Bank:

FACE PAINTING: Rainbows, flowers, the Lone Ranger, clowns, etc.

Color make-up sticks	36 sticks (many different colors)
Clown White	6 jars
Cold cream	3 large jars
Tissues	8 boxes
Mirror	2 or 3

CARDBOARD CITY: Castles, tunnels, spires, mazes. Too big for one person to handle alone; the object is to find the group fantasy.

Refrigerator boxes	as many as possible
Construction knives	5 - 10
White glue	1 quart
Brushes	several sizes

Parachute Games: Many of the popular low organized games can be readily adapted for use with the parachute. Using the parachute provides a novel approach to presenting games and makes them even more exciting for participants.

TUG-OF-WAR: The parachute is first of all rolled into one long unit similar to a rope. Two teams are selected, and one team lines up along each half of the parachute. The activity is then conducted as a regular tug-of-war with the students pulling on a given signal to begin. The nylon chute is extremely strong and can be used safely for this activity.

BALL SHAKE: The class is divided into two equal teams with one team gripping each half of the canopy at the edges. A number of light balls are placed on top of the canopy (rubber balls, volleyballs, beach balls, etc.). On a signal to begin, each team attempts to shake the balls off on the other team's side of the chute. Participants may not use their hands to keep the balls from leaving the canopy. One point is awarded each time a ball leaves the chute and touches the ground.

NUMBERS RACE: The class is divided into two equal teams. Each team counts off consecutively. The parachute is inflated and the teacher calls a number. The person on each team whose number is called must travel around the outside of the parachute and return to his place before the center of the chute touches the ground. The teacher should vary the type of locomotor skill used in moving around the chute. Teacher may wish to award one point to first player returning to his own position.

Berne Teeple
Branch of Community Programs-Klingde
National Capital Region

Children's Interpretation: A Discovery Book For Interpreters will be published by Don Field and the National Park Service Cooperative Studies Unit, University of Washington, Seattle. Available from GPO, January 1978.

OVERVIEW FROM CAPE COD

All exhibits, all wayside signs, all trail folders, all personal services can easily have children's interpretation characteristics attributed to them. There are, however, several attributes I would venture to identify as elements which make some things more appropriate for children than others.

1. Is fantasy or imagination involved? Children learn to grow by trying on the role of other people, or other objects. They want to make believe.
2. Can children be themselves? Are they free to handle objects? (We have "Please Touch" signs on our beach flotsam exhibits.) Are they free to move, to try to master skills of physical coordination?
3. Can children have fun? Or is there a determination to cram information into them? Are diversions possible? Is there a sense of discovery?
4. Are the interpreters comfortable with children? Can they talk with them? Are they interested in them?
5. Are the concepts presented appropriate for the ages involved?
6. Do the programs end while children still want more--or are they given more than they ever wanted?

Here is an example:

CHILDREN'S SEA RESCUE WALK (1 - 1 1/4 hours)

A. Purpose/Objectives. Introduce children to life-saving service that existed at site 100 years ago. Familiarize children with sea rescue equipment (surfboat and breeches buoy) and help them understand the procedure used.

B. Group size: 10 - 50 children accompanied by parents.

C. Description. Children gather by side of Coast Guard Station. Interpreter introduces walk briefly commenting on life-saving service and shipwrecks off Cape Cod.

The children are led through an imaginary training session where they pretend to be lifesavers. The interpreter is the station keeper. Part of their training consists of running in place, practicing first aid techniques, and warming victims, discussing what to wear for a uniform, and pretending to dress.

The children walk to the garage-museum to view the lifesaving equipment. After the equipment is examined and explained, they volunteer to become one of the parts of the breeches buoy (e.g. horse, cart, cannon, breeches buoy, rope puller, crotch, sand anchor, etc.).

The group walks down to the beach and there sets up a simulated shipwreck using parents and babies as the victims out in an imaginary ship.

The children act out a rescue using the breeches buoy, saving women and children first and finally the captain (we haven't lost anyone all summer!). After congratulating the lifesavers, the children are all given a chance to be fired-off simultaneously as cannons.

The walk ends at this point, or the children are led back to the Coast Guard Station and pretend to undress and return their uniforms.

Glen Kaye
Chief of Interpretation
Cape Cod National Seashore



WHO'S COMING TO YOUR PARK AND WHEN?

Larry Wiese, Cabrillo National Monument, shares this idea. Post in a prominent visitor contact area a U.S. map, a local area map, and perhaps a world map. Ask visitors to place a pin on the appropriate map(s) to indicate home. Removing maps weekly, monthly, and/or seasonally will tell you something about your visitors.

BOOK REVIEW

HELPING YOUR CHILD LEARN RIGHT FROM WRONG: A FAMILY GUIDE TO ESTABLISHING VALUES THAT CHILDREN CAN LIVE WITH NOW AND AS ADULTS, by Dr. Sidney B. Simon and Sally Wendkos Olds. 223 pp. New York: Simon and Schuster. 1976. \$7.95.

This book--possessor of a long title that might make parents want to respond out loud either, "Ho, ho, ho! Who are they kidding?" or, "It's about time!"--actually does present activities that will help accomplish what its authors say they set out to accomplish, in this reviewer's opinion.

As long as the title is, however, it has a subtitle as well: A GUIDE TO VALUES CLARIFICATION. Perhaps this is to reassure those of us who must feel the authors we read are "in the know" concerning the latest theories, techniques, or jargon. Regardless, it, too, says exactly what the book is. And these two facts make the book well worth the price if you're interested in children or the values held by our country's future citizens.

The link to children's interpretation is there, too: very explicitly stated in the brief chapter called "Society Strategies," but also evident on most other pages, although less obviously.

If you find yourself objecting mentally at this point, that interpreters have no right to deal with values in their communicating with the public, I would make a counterpoint. The argument would be that there's no possible way for you to avoid communicating at least some of your values to those you interact with in any form. Therefore, it probably would be to both you and your visitors' advantage if you became consciously aware of how values take root within us and how they grow up to

become our personal system of ethics and all the actions that result from this vital part of ourselves.

The book's authors present their material by first laying down seven steps they consider the foundation for values clarification. Upon this foundation they build a structure out of 84 exercises which they call "strategies." These deal with one or more steps in the valuing process. They seem like games . . . and so they are, but not the kind you laugh over and forget by tonight. They raise relevant, important issues in a way that can't easily be forgotten. And the issues can be anything or everything that relates humans to humans and humans to everything else--in other words, the world. Fortunately, the book doesn't overlook strategies that help validate one's self either--whether you are a child or an adult.

The book is based upon the premise that children are continually faced with the need to make decisions, as are adults. Some of these may seem unimportant, maybe even trivial, to adults, but they are very important for they are the spade work for the children's later decision-making. It is the authors' belief that the way children learn to make decisions sets the pattern for their decision-making the rest of their lives. Therefore, children need to be aware of alternatives--as adults do. They must learn that values run along a spectrum, and that the large issues of life are dealt with according to the frameworks our real values construct.

A number of the book's activities among the 84 were familiar ones to me. But so many of them were brand new, so interesting, so filled with possibilities for motivating actions and changing one's thinking (including my own), that

I kept putting the book down so I could tell somebody what I'd just read.

I could give you some examples from the book's strategies, explain "clarifying responses" and other of Dr. Simon's and Mrs. Olds' concepts, or list more generalities. Instead, I'd like to suggest that you read the book. I think you're likely to learn something of value for your own life and will be much better prepared to be an interpreter with children because of it.

Audrey Dixon

PARTICIPATION IN "CANNON DRILL" AT FORT POINT NHS has proven to be extremely popular. Visitors of all ages take part in a simulated firing of our 12-pounder napoleon cannon, following the regulation Civil War drill procedures. Upon completion of the drill, participants are awarded the Fort Point Cannon-
eer Certificate.

MEET A RANGER

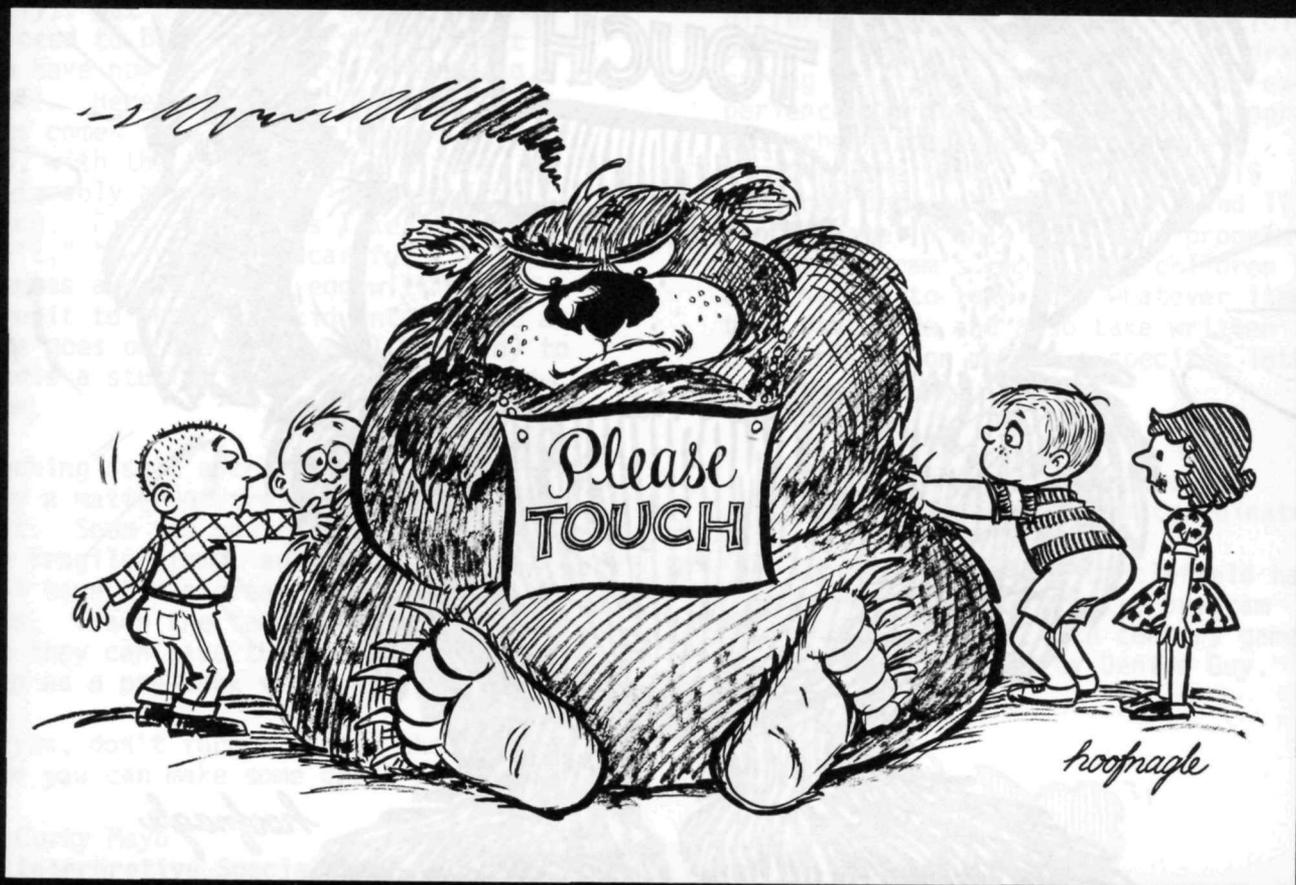
The Meet a Ranger program hopes to make students aware of Gulf Islands National Seashore and of what a Park Ranger does. We would like the students to become familiar with the ideals of the National Park Service, specifically preservation of our natural and historic resources.

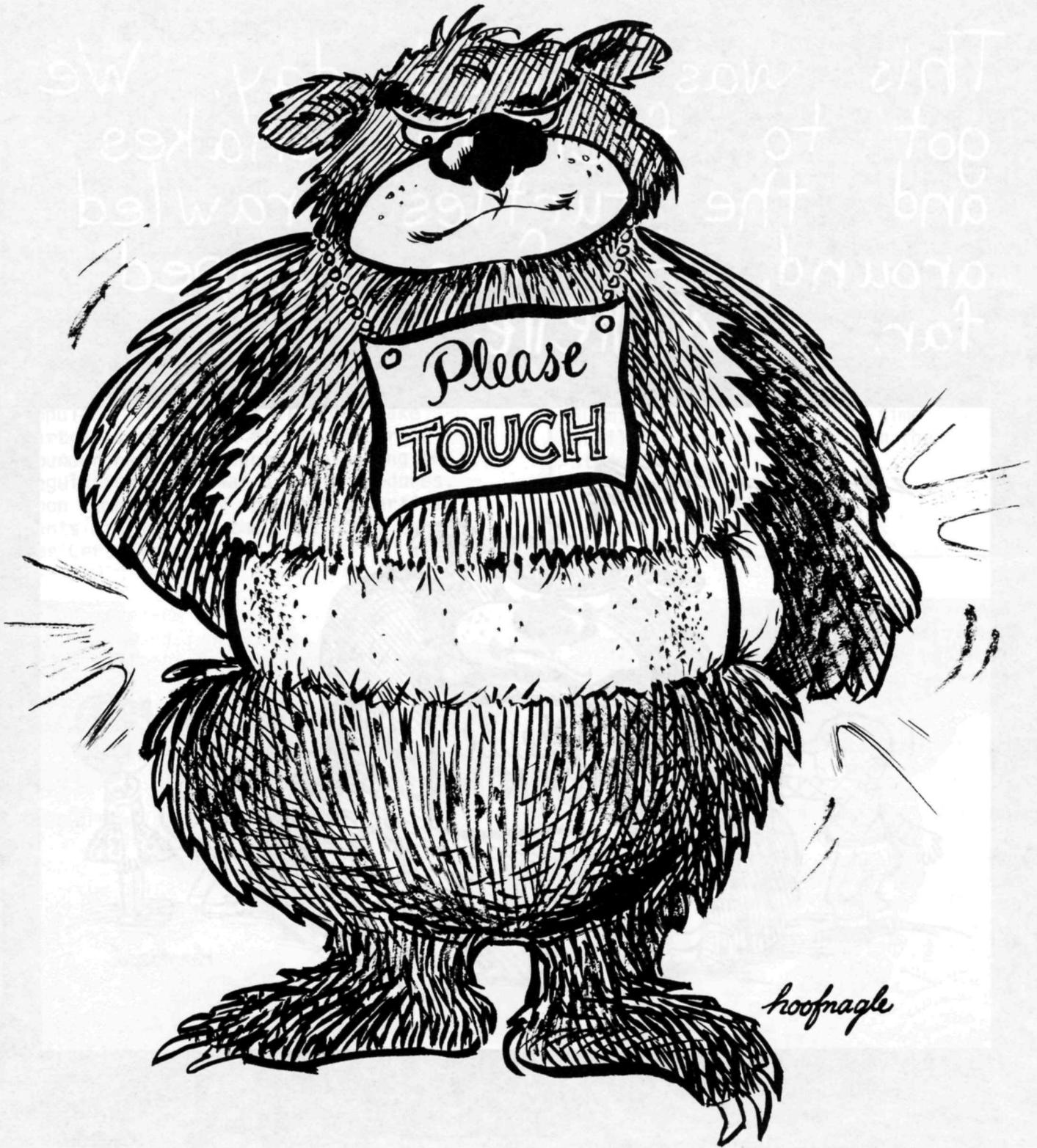
The program is designed for 4th grade students. It includes a slide and filmstrip presentation describing the National Park Service in general and giving specifics about Gulf Islands National Seashore. The program is presented with the help of Polly and Bernard, two well-known puppets. Length of the program is 30 minutes with additional time available for questions from the students.

Mary L. Dodd
Chief of Interpretation



This was a good day. We
got to feel the snakes
and the turtles crawled
around. A frog jumped
far.
Michelle





hoofnagle

THE EGG AND THEY

Have you ever heard or said this, "Now listen children, when we get off the bus I want you to keep your hands in your pockets and DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING!" Then there is the old favorite, "Those kids are just too small to touch anything. They'll just break it." And so it goes . . . the young whose every contact is a sensory-oriented learning experience, are told to keep "hands off." Well, here is a "hands on" exercise that will teach the joys of touching without catastrophe.

First, get yourself a dozen eggs. Give them all a good shake (individually), put pinholes in each end, and proceed to blow out the yolks. What you have now is an empty, intact egg shell. Here's where the learning process comes in. Take one egg at a time and, with the kids all in a circle, preferably a small circle, pass it along. Pass with words like "fragile," "soft," "easy," "very careful." Chances are the first egg will only make it to the first kid intact, but as time goes on the group will be ready to handle a stuffed duck or any reproduction.

Touching isn't a fearful thing. It is only a matter of training and we can do that. Soon the egg, and they, will be the fragile items, and they, and you, will have had a great learning experience. Teach the teachers the techniques and they can have the kids blow out the eggs as a pre-park visit exercise.

Oh yes, don't forget, after the kids go home you can make some great omelets!

Corky Mayo
Interpretive Specialist
George Washington Memorial Parkway

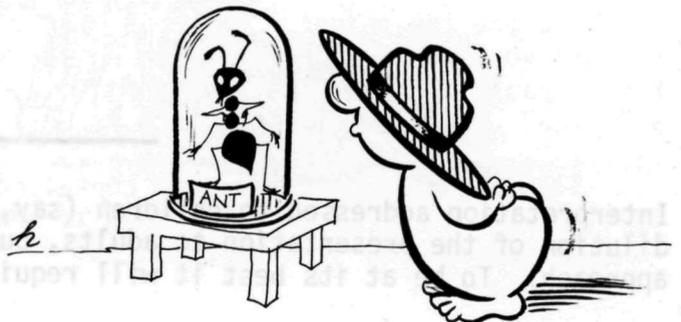
INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK WHIMMY DIDDLES PROGRAM

A WHIMMY DIDDLE is an 18th century handcrafted toy which consists of two sticks of wood. The larger of the two sticks has V-shaped grooves on the center and a proportionally shaped propeller at the end. To make this propeller spin, a child rubs the smaller stick against the grooved stick in a certain way and the propeller will spin either to the right or left.

Our objectives of the "Whimmy Diddles" program is to show the children how their 18th century counterparts would have lived, and how 18th century life differed from that of today. Participating children are encouraged to draw strong relationships between their experiences in the Whimmy Diddles program and other experiences during their visit to the park. A maximum of 15 children between the ages of 7 and 11 participate in this hour long program. At the program's close, the children are invited to take home whatever items they have made and also take written instructions on making a specific 18th century toy.

Mary Devlin
Park Technician, Independence
Whimmy Diddles Program Coordinator

Fort Necessity National Battlefield has a comprehensive interpretive program involving the use of 19th century games for children prepared by Denise Guy.



ALLIGATORS AND MUSKETS

Did you ever stop to think of the similarities between the natural and historic resources found in the National Park System? Sure, there is a big difference between an alligator and a flintlock musket, but there are striking parallels in how we must relate to each of them.

Both are irreplaceable; once gone, they cannot ever be replaced. Both have intangible values; a price tag cannot be placed on values derived from seeing or studying either. Both depend upon a quality environment for their survival; an environment which man somehow determines. Both have been considered important enough to our culture to have park areas established for their preservation. Both require a commitment of money and manpower to insure their survival; we staff parks to prevent poachers and to provide methods which will prevent theft of historical objects.

Ah, there's the rub! It is my belief that we have not recognized our responsibility toward historical objects to the same degree that we have toward preservation of natural resources. A forest fire threatening our tree resource bears a close analogy to rust and/or mold slowly destroying an important collection of historical artifacts. Although we unhesitatingly will spend hundreds of thousands of dollars to extinguish the fire, we find it difficult to budget even small amounts of time or money to protect our historical artifacts. A Southern Pine Beetle infestation in a forest brings forth an army of experts with bulging checkbooks to the battle, but Dermestid beetles in a collection of American Indian artifacts hardly brings on a raised eyebrow.

When a natural park is established, we irrevocably commit ourselves to the continuation of the ecosystem we were entrusted to protect. Likewise, when the Service accepts either a historical park or a single historical artifact we have committed ourselves to its perpetual care.

So come all you curators, historians, and interpreters who have responsibilities for managing our museum collections; speak up loudly when you see your collections being neglected. After all, you bear the same responsibility to the museum collection that the firefighter does to the forest. Speak up to have adequate funds programmed that will give you the necessary storage equipment to properly house your collection. Speak up so that your managers will be aware of your minimum staffing needs to properly manage your collection, and so he can plan and budget appropriately. Read the NPS Activity Standards as they pertain to the management of your museum collections; you will be surprised to learn how well we are supposed to manage our collections in order to be considered adequate!! Learn to fill out Form 10-238's asking for improvements for your museum collection. Finally, don't be bashful, let's look to the day we can unashamedly ask for money and manpower to take care of our museum collections on the same basis as any other manager of any other resource.

Arthur C. Allen
Chief, Division of Museum Services, HFC

Interpretation addressed to children (say, up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best it will require a separate program.

Freeman Tilden

OPEN-ENDED SENSORY STIMULATOR AGRICULTURAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BOUNTIFUL BASKET...

The Turkey Run Farm staff is striving to involve visitors more directly in 18th century farm life. We recognize that people learn more through activity, when the senses are directly stimulated, when one can see/touch/smell/hear/taste. We put together our "Sensory Basket" to meet this need.

The Basket is full of "artifacts" and products that reflect aspects of the lives of the "farm family" portrayed at the site. Made up of such items as basic food staples, herbs, metal objects, wood products, crockery shards, domestic chores articles, recreational items, textile process souvenir packets of flax and wool, the objects are used to touch, sniff, taste, etc. This approach can be adapted and utilized by all age groups, yet it becomes increasingly important to pre-school and lower elementary grades; when the historical aspect of the interpretive story is above their comprehension. Used in the classroom as a pre-visit or post-visit tool, the basket's hands-on experiential approach can enhance the visit, encourage observation, identification, classification, association, and offers an opportunity to develop language skills. This collection of "archaeological finds" can be analyzed by a lab group to stimulate discussion and further study (unlike the expensive reproduction equipment used in our living history program). The basket is also adaptable to use by children with physical disabilities.

Sample of Some of the Bountiful Basket Contents

Articles are stored in representative containers where possible. Obviously, glass jars with screw-top lids do not correspond to the 18th century period. However, they are the only practical container for our liquids. Tins were available in the 18th century although our 20th century cans are fashioned differently. Linen and leather bags are representative as is the oak splint basket.

Allow a silent observation period for each person to study (feel/smell/manipulate/etc.) the contents of their container.

Allow participants to speculate about the classification of the materials, i.e., why do you suppose these items are grouped together? What might they have in common?

FARM PRODUCTS BAG:

Tobacco twist and seeds
Dried corn on cob and
loose kernals
Dried assorted beans and
peas: kidney, October,
black-eyed peas, English
peas, white & speckled
lima beans
Gourd

Where does the product come from?
Habit of growth? Growth season?
How gathered? How preserved? Use?
Importance in farm life?

BASIC FOOD STAPLES BAG:

Bacon grease
Vinegar
Salt
Molasses
HOT red peppers
Whole oats
Wheat berries
Rice
Corn meal
Whole wheat flour

Where does item come from?
How is item obtained?
How is it used? How often used?
How is it stored in cabin?

HERB BAG:

Southern wood
Fennel
Lemon verbena
Rue
Sassafras
Mint

Identify herb. Describe smell.
What part of plant was used? Are other parts used also? How is herb used? Are these herbs used in the 20th century?

METAL OBJECTS BAG:

Pewter spoon
Coins
Pewter buttons
Bronze buckle
Nails

Where is item used and found on farm?
Where was it fashioned? How made?
Type of metal? Decorative and/or functional? Importance in farm life?

TEXTILE PROCESS PACKETS: (souvenirs)

Flax pack: flax stems, line fiber, linen thread, 2 samples of plain woven linen (plain & check)

What is the source of the raw material? How was it prepared? Who prepared it? Who does the spinning? Who does the weaving? What is the linen thread used for? What is the material (woven) used for? Who works with it?

Wool pack: raw fleece, cleaned fleece, yarn, woven & dyed wool

Numerous other questions are possible. Here are a few more:

You are the object. Describe yourself (look, smell, feel, color, shape, etc.). How are you made or where and how do you grow? How important are you on the farm? How valuable are you? Is your function utilitarian or decorative or both? Who "works" with you? What does it feel like to be a

Sleuth game. Describe your contained object or article to your friends without telling what it is or allowing them to see it. Now, can they guess what it is; how it is used; where does it come from; was it ever alive?

The Turkey Run Farm Staff
George Washington Memorial Parkway

CHILDREN'S INTERPRETATION AT COLONIAL NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

Under the new name of Cultural/Environmental Heritage Programs, Colonial NHP plans to embark upon another highly successful season for our young school age visitors. We offer 8 - count them! 8 programs designed to stimulate their thinking and make a visit to Yorktown and Jamestown an educational experience, not just a souvenir buying spree. We attempt to actively involve the children in the thinking process. They must look for clues--draw conclusions and use their imaginations. We want them to see that the study of history can be fun, exciting and a worthwhile endeavor.

Nature of Groups - Our audience is drawn from the nearby school systems (York County, James City County, Newport News, Hampton, and Virginia Beach), to those within the metropolitan Washington, D.C. area. A driving radius of approximately two hours has been consistent with the various requests for programs. Though the age levels range from kindergarten to high school, the bulk of these groups are from grades 1-7. Participating schools vary from public, private and religious-affiliated institutions to centers for physically or emotionally handicapped children. Intellectual capabilities range from slow learners to the highly motivated students. Groups vary from 10 to 45 students per session.

Descriptions of Programs - With the cheer "one, two, three, four, dump the tea and start the war," we present the following four programs at Revolutionary Yorktown!

The Fortunes of War - Grades 4-7 - This 50 minute presentation focuses attention on the following topics: the motivations for war; the life of the Revolutionary soldier; the conduct of siege warfare; both the great and the unknown participants in the Battle of Yorktown. The educational devices used are: a slide program, a soldier's knapsack containing 18th century reproduction articles, uniforms, a musket, charts, displays, and a topographical map with an accompanying tape of a soldier's experiences at the Yorktown Battle. The work booklet entitled "The Fortunes of War," is the means by which the self-guided tour through the battlefield is made. A pre-visit booklet entitled "Joseph Plumb Martin's Guide to Yorktown," is available to school groups.

Colonial Family of Yorktown - Grades 1-3 - This 40-50 minute presentation examines the lifestyle and roles of each member of a typical colonial family. The educational devices are: a slide program, cooking utensils, spice bags, displays of a colonial family, hornbooks, slates and colonial games, such as bowls, marbles, rolling hoops, etc. A walking tour of Yorktown is directed by means of a map and stamp exercise. The pre-visit booklet entitled "A Colonial Family of Yorktown," is available to school groups.

Yorktown: A Thriving Seaport - Grades 5-9 - This 50 minute program concentrates on the economy of Colonial Yorktown during the 18th century. Students discuss the importance of such figures as William Rogers, "The Poor Potter," and "Scotch" Tom Nelson in influencing the economic growth of Yorktown as a seaport. Educational methods used are: a slide program showing the "Poor Potter" archaeological dig; identification of pottery shards; an examination of "Scotch" Tom Nelson's will and the inventory of William Rogers; and the use of maps showing sea traffic to and from Yorktown. A walking tour of the town is directed by means of a map and stamp exercise. The pre-visit booklet entitled "Yorktown: A Thriving Seaport" is available to school groups.

Loyalist vs Patriot - Grades 6-10 - This 50 minute program studies the lines of four actual Yorktown and Hampton people (white patriot, white loyalist, black patriot, black loyalist), prior to, during and after the Revolutionary War. Students are presented facts on who those people were, what they believed, what they did, and the consequences they suffered for their actions. A moral dilemma confronts the students in studying these people--should they have joined the revolution or remained loyal to the crown. A pre-visit booklet entitled "Loyalist vs Patriot" is available to school groups.

Well how about Jamestown? Did Captain John Smith really eat spoiled pork? The following programs are presented to challenge and enlighten students in dealing with 17th century Jamestown.

Jamestown: A Beginning - Grades 4-7 - This 50 minute program deals with the challenges the English faced at Jamestown as they established the first English settlement. Special attention focuses on Samuel Collier, a 10-year-old boy who arrived at Jamestown in 1607. Educational devices used are: a slide program of Sam Collier's recollections, charts, artifacts, clothing, and a sea chest of 17th century artifacts. A map and stamp exercise serves as the guide for the Jamestown tour. A pre-visit booklet entitled "Jamestown: A Beginning" is available to school groups.

Virginia Indian Life - Grades 1-3 - This 50 minute program focuses on what it was like to be a 17th century Tidewater Virginia Indian before and after the English arrived. Educational devices include: a slide program on 17th century Indians; an object analysis of clothing, weapons, tools, etc.; and group participation in such activities as corn grinding. A map and stamp exercise serves as the guide for the Jamestown tour. A pre-visit booklet entitled "Virginia Indian Life" is available to school groups.

Jamestown's Other People - Grades 7-12 - This 50 minute program deals with the challenges that white women and black men and women faced at Jamestown in the mid-17th century. Through the life stories of three fictional Jamestown people, attention may be focused on topics such as slavery, indentured servitude and cultural differences. Most importantly, the contributions of these individuals to our heritage are considered. The educational devices are: a slide program and a life line chart tracing their three lifestyles; and, a discussion of African clothing and tools. A map and stamp exercise serves as a guide for the tour of Jamestown. The pre-visit booklet entitled "Jamestown's Other People" is available to school groups.

Jamestown: Life and the Land - Grades 4-7 - This 50 minute program concerns the effect which environment and man have upon each other. With the aid of visual materials students discuss how Jamestown Island has been altered from earliest settlements of Indian and white populations to the present time. Students can then develop an appreciation of the impact which they can have on their own environment through their study of Jamestown history. Teacher and class may take a self-guided walking tour of Jamestown.

Diane Stallings
Yorktown Historian

PUPPETRY

A children's puppet show, which was given twice this summer, proved to be a most successful interpretive program for visitors of all ages at Carlsbad Caverns. The program was aimed at giving young children an interpretive program they could understand and enjoy. At the same time it had excellent appeal to adults.

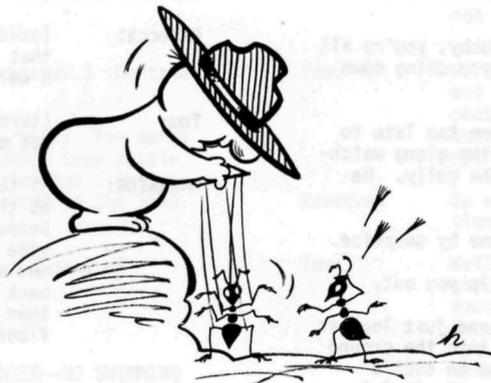
Each of the interactions between the characters was designed to get a message across to the audience about things which are commonly misunderstood by visitors. Young and old alike reacted very favorably to the program and hopefully had a better understanding of bats and cave preservation.

There were five puppet characters and three acts in the show. The characters were a park ranger, a visitor, a bat, a cave formation, and a cave restorer. The visitor, a boy from Philadelphia, meets and talks with each of the other characters and learns about the Cavern, bats, cave preservation and cave restoration in the process. At the end of the show, children in the audience also had an opportunity to talk with the puppets.

At the beginning of the program, the children were encouraged to sit directly in front of the puppet stage. This emphasized to them and to the rest of the group that they were the special visitors to the Park that day, and that they were going to be an integral part of the program. Between scenes, the interpreter directing the program, asked the children questions about the part of the play they had just seen and also prepared them for the upcoming scene.

Separating the children from their parents caused some distraction during the program but also created amusing situations. Several children stood up while the puppets were talking and asked questions or tugged at the puppets directly. They believed the puppets were real and helped the older visitors let their imagination take over for awhile. One child commented to the most popular character, the Bat, "if bats do eat insects, maybe you could come over to my motel room and eat dinner there 'cause we've got plenty." The spontaneous outbursts from the children helped to promote a congenial, relaxed and totally involved audience.

The program was conceived and produced entirely by seasonal employees, mostly on their own time. Park Technicians Joan Mayer, Jim Grace, Peggy Sorenson and Mike Tevlin conducted the program. Others who assisted in preparation of art work and puppets were Karen Bizak, Judi Stroud, Louise Power, and Barbara Stump.



PUPPET SCRIPT

HOW THE ERODED HILLS CAUSED SOME TERRIBLE SPILLS

SOUND EFFECTS-(Pre-program music for a half hour before show time. Sound of chirping birds as the NARRATOR begins the show.)

NARRATOR: Cubby Bear and Rebecca Rabbit are skipping happily down a hillside not far from Deep Green Woods. Gentle showers have just stopped falling from clouds scattered across the April sky. A warm sky is playing hide-and-seek with the clouds. A beautiful rainbow is spread across the horizon.

Pause. Turn off chirping birds.

Rebecca: Hey Cubby! Look at that lovely rainbow!

Cubby: Rainbow? Where's the rainbow?

Rebecca: Up in the sky of course! Where in the world would you expect it to be?

Cubby: Oh, I see it now. It sure is pretty!

NARRATOR: Cubby trots on keeping his eyes on the rainbow and not paying any attention to where he is going. Suddenly, the ground disappears beneath him and he goes tumbling head over heels into a deep ditch.

SOUND EFFECTS-(A loud thud.)

Terrified by the fall and thinking he was trapped, Cubby thrashes about madly.

SOUND EFFECTS-(Grunting and groaning.)

At last, he gets his feet untangled and tries desperately to climb out of the hole. Rebecca rushes over to see whether her friend is hurt. When she sees Cubby trying to get out, she knew he was all right.

SOUND EFFECTS-(Talking through a tube.)

Cubby: Help me! Help me!

Rebecca: (laughs)

Cubby: (as he realizes he's o.k., embarrassed and sheepishly) I guess I wasn't watching where I was going.

Rebecca: Boy, that's the truth! If your brain worked just half as fast as your feet, you'd be the smartest animal in the forest.

Cubby: This hole wasn't here last year. How did it get here?

Ranger Tom: (trotting up) Hi you two! Cubby, you're all covered with dirt! What are you doing down in that ditch?

Rebecca: Hello Ranger Tom. You got here too late to see the fun. Cubby was skipping along watching a rainbow and fell into the gully. He sure was scared.

Cubby: Aw, I was Not! It just took me by surprise.

Tom: Give me your hand and I'll help you out.

Cubby: This hole wasn't here before and just look at all those deep scars cutting into the ground on the hillside. This used to be such a pretty place and now look how ugly it is!

Rebecca: Gee, Ranger Tom, it's too bad these holes are here! This used to be one of our favorite playgrounds.

Cubby: Well, how did they get here?

Tom: These gullies were caused by soil erosion.

Cubby: What's soil erosion?

Rebecca: Gosh, you're dumb. Everyone knows that.

Tom: I'm glad you do. Since you know so much, why don't you explain it to Cubby?

Rebecca: (stammers and stutters) I guess I was just trying to look smart. I really don't know what it is either. I'm sorry Cubby.

Tom: All right, I guess you're both ready to hear what it is. Remember when the woods covered the top of this hill?

Rebecca & Cubby: Yes.

Cubby: Someone cut down all the trees a couple of years ago.

Tom: Well, those trees used to hold the rain and melted snow after it fell. Since the trees have been removed, water just rushes down the hill. It loosens more and more of the soil and carries it away. We had a lot of rain last fall and a lot of snow during the winter. Now we have this mess on our hands. Let's go down to the bottom of the gully and see how deep it is.

Pause. Curtain closes.

SOUND EFFECTS-(Solemn, danger music.)

NARRATOR: As the three of them scramble down to the bottom of the gully to see how deep it is, they didn't notice that high above the hilltop the sky had become very black. Streaks of lightning replaced the lovely rainbow.

Pause.

SOUND EFFECTS-(Thunder storm.)

A real cloudburst had hit the area above them. Pause.

SOUND EFFECTS-(Rushing water.) Curtain opens.

Rebecca: (suddenly lifting her head to listen) What's that funny noise Ranger Tom? It sounds like a waterfall.

Tom: (turning and looking over his shoulder) Let's get out of here fast!

NARRATOR: At that moment the heavy rain hit them almost as though someone had turned on a hose. Desperately the animals try to climb up the side of the gully but the earth had turned to mud and was so slippery that they slid right back to the bottom. Around the bend above them swept a wall of water. It was a flash flood racing down on them like a freight train!

Tom: Run for your life!!

NARRATOR: All three turned and ran madly down the hill, scrambling over the rocks and slipping in the mud. But as fast as they ran, the water moved faster. Like a giant tidal wave it caught up the three friends and threw them head over heels. They were thrown from one side of the gully to the other. Cubby was thrashing his legs desperately as he bounced down the hill. Water filled his mouth and nose and he was sure he would drown. Just as it seemed they could not stay alive another minute, the water reached the bottom of the hill and threw them into shallow water at the edge of Pine Tree Lake. Ranger Tom and Rebecca quickly regained their balance, but Cubby was knocked unconscious. His two friends grabbed him, straining and puffing, they dragged him up on the bank of the lake. In a few minutes he woke up, coughing and snorting to clear his lungs and rubbing the big lump on his head.

Rebecca: Wow, that sure was a gully washer. I never saw anything like that before.

Tom: No, as you can see, soil erosion is bad in more ways than one.

Cubby: Golly, something ought to be done about that stuff. A guy could get hurt.

Tom: They often do--and I did! I bounced off so many rocks, I feel like one big bruise.

Rebecca: What can be done, Ranger Tom?

Tom: Well, first of all, people should be careful when they clear slopes for developments. That's usually when the trouble starts. But if there are already gullies like these, they should be filled with old trees, rocks, bushes, and other debris. The hillside should be replanted to help heal the scars.

Cubby: Well, I hope people are careful when they build around here to prevent soil erosion.

Rebecca: You know, now that we've recovered from that near disaster, why don't we get the gang together for a picnic down here at Pine Tree Lake, and we can all go swimming!

Cubby: I think I've had enough swimming for today and besides, the water will be high from all the water running into it during that storm. But I do like the idea of a picnic.

Rebecca: I knew you'd like the idea of eating. That's why you're such a chubby little Cubby. (Rebecca then starts chanting "chubby little Cubby" over and over as they leave the stage.)

Curtain closes.

SOUND EFFECTS-(Background music and happy chatter.) Curtain opens.

NARRATOR: (Animals come on carrying lunches.) The merry group soon reaches the lake where they settle down and begin opening their lunches. Tommy Turtle slowly crawls over to look at the lake and comes back to the group.

Tommy: Boy, Ranger Tom, have we found a pack of trouble!

Rebecca: Trouble? What sort of trouble?

Tommy: There's a sign that says "DANGER--NO SWIMMING AND FISHING".

Tom: Wow! Everything was all right the last time I was here. Let's take a closer look.

NARRATOR: The animals all crowd around the edge of the once beautiful lake and stare in amazement.

Rebecca: Look at those thick green clumps floating on top of the water. It looks awful and doesn't smell very nice either.

Tommy: Look, look! What's wrong with those fish out there?

SOUND EFFECTS-(Water splashing.)

NARRATOR: Dozens of fish were swimming at the surface of the water in the middle of the lake. Their mouths were moving rapidly, gulping air.

Cubby: What's wrong with them?

Tom: I think they're having trouble getting oxygen.

Rebecca: But why Ranger Tom?

Tom: I'll tell you later, Rebecca. But right now, we've got to do something for those fish! Help me get that boat over there into the water!

Rebecca: Come on, everyone! Let's rescue as many as we can and take them to Shady Pond!

NARRATOR: The picnic was forgotten. Some of the animals grabbed empty lunch boxes and tossed them to Cubby and Rebecca, who were sitting in the boat with Ranger Tom. Tom rowed out to where the fish were gulping air. Quickly, Cubby and Rebecca scooped water and fish into the boxes. When the boat was full, Ranger Tom rowed ashore. Everyone carried a box and they hurried down the trail as fast as they could go. Finally, all the fish were rescued and were swimming happily with Billy Bass in the clear water of Shady Pond.

Tom: Let's find out what happened to the lake. We can hike around it and see if we find anything.

NARRATOR: They hiked around the lake until they came to where the gully emptied into the lake. Here the water was brownish from the soil washed into the lake. The green clumps of algae were especially thick here. Suddenly Ranger Tom stopped.

Tom: Aha! There's the trouble right there! We should have noticed it this morning when we got caught by the flash flood.

Rebecca: But Ranger Tom, what does this gully and all this yucky algae have to do with the fish not being able to breathe?

Tom: Well, as soil washes down through the gully and into the lake, the nutrients in the soil cause algae growth. As the algae grows, it uses up the oxygen in the water and the fish don't have any oxygen to breathe!

Rebecca: So what can we do about this terrible situation, Ranger Tom?

Tom: Well, we can fill in the gullies and plant shrubs and grass over the bare soil so soil erosion won't happen here again. But even more important is to tell people not to remove the plants from the side of a hill for a development because of what will happen when they do.

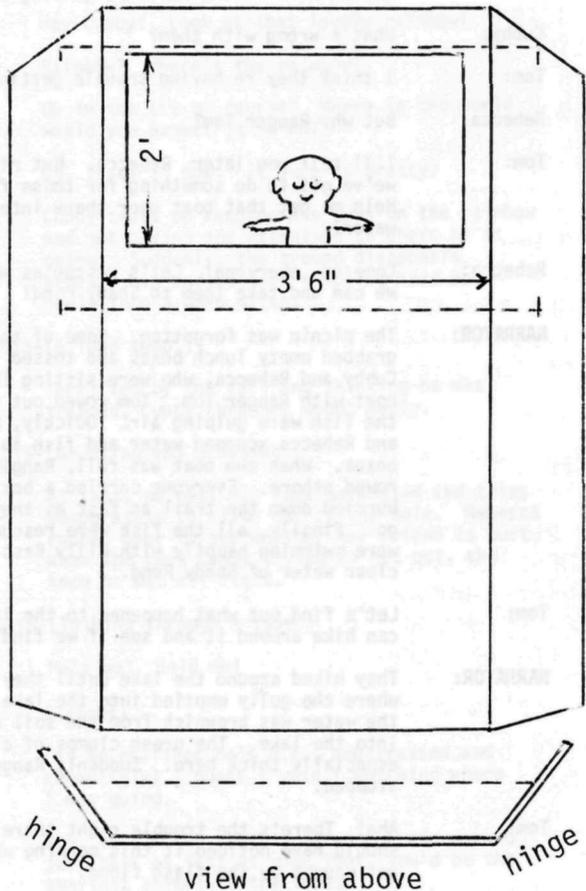
Cubby: That sounds like good advice. We'll tell all our friends and tell them to tell their friends. If we can only keep this from happening again we'll have a beautiful, safe place to live and play in.

Curtain closes.

SOUND EFFECTS-(Music.)

Joe Ross
Recreation Planner
Bureau of Land Management
Portland, Oregon

PUPPET STAGE DESIGN



MATERIALS

- 1/2" AC ext. plywood - 2 4"x8" sheets
- 2 6' piano hinges
- 2 84" expansive curtain rods
- curtain

Dotted lines represent curtain rods inside of stage. From these rods a backup curtain will be mounted at least 12" behind front facing.

Folded and ready for transport.

6' piano hinges on inside

side panel flare to side giving more inside room

stage can be collapsed into a flat position

stage can be stained, painted or covered with material

Wayne Valentine
Gulf Islands National Seashore



ROLE-PLAYING AT SALEM MARITIME NHS is an interpretive program during which each participant assumes the role or occupation of someone who may have worked in the bustling Port of Salem some 150 years ago. Each Job is boldly printed on a 5x8 index card, the color of which designates the nature of the occupation or the area in which it was practiced. Seagoing individuals (Ship's Captain, Seaman, etc.) are printed on blue, Customs Officials (Collector, Clerk, etc.) on yellow, Craftsmen such as the Rigger, Rope-maker and Mast-maker are on brown, while green denotes any others needed to support the community (Merchants, Ship Chandlers, etc.). Fifty individuals are represented, one per card, and are randomly distributed among the young people.

The signal of success for "Seaport Jobs" begins when the interpreter hears "I'm a Copper," "I'm a Rigger." When we begin to hear "What's a Wharfinger," "What did the Supercargo do" (and the list goes on), the interpretive challenge has been set in motion. The answers to the questions are unveiled as the students discover Salem Maritime; as they are guided along Derby Wharf, as the seamen operate the sails on the scale model of a nineteenth century Brig that sailed the China Trade, and as their senses are aroused in the Bonded Warehouse. It is in the latter structure that the "Public Storekeeper" can direct the "Warehouse Workers," the "Weighers," the "Measurers," and the "Guagers" into action.

Kid's Stuff introduces a new regular feature to In Touch. Its purpose is to present a variety of ideas for children's interpretive programming on a continued basis. The column title should be credited to the "Kid's Stuff" staff at Great Falls Park, Va.

Pat Stanek

CHILDREN'S ART. Children ages 8 through 12 are involved in a variety of projects utilizing beachcombed objects. Participants are limited to ten and advance registration is required. Nature and recycling are learned through the use of driftwood, shells, feathers, etc. Glue, string, ink, clay, cheap paint, construction paper, imagination and a little guidance is all that is needed for the child to use things he has found. All kinds of three-dimensional objects and mobiles have been constructed. Popular also are ink impressions of fish or dead vegetation on papers. With natural history discussion on beachcombed items, the child takes home a creation that provides memories of his visit which are tangible and long lasting. He has hopefully discovered that he can entertain himself, that beauty in nature exists down to the smallest object, and that finding it is quite economical! Thomas F. Norris, Jr., Assateague Island.

FLAGS THAT TALKED (ages 8-13). Battlefield communications is the summer program at Antietam Battlefield. Using signal towers and binoculars, the children saw how flags communicate messages over long distances. After an explanation of morse code, each child makes a cypher wheel with his own code. This program was used mainly for Cub Scouts who earned badges through participation. A manual is available upon request for all groups who participate in the program.



Sunrise Visitor Center, Mount Rainier National Park; photo by Helen Schreider, HFC

OF DUCKS AND THINGS . . .

Do not speak to me of "Children's Interpretation," of plans and policies, of programs and special events. I would rather you spoke of human beings, about minds, and senses, and meanings.

For what do you know of my needs, of what a Park means to my child? He and I have no need for slide/tape programs, for lectures, for nature walks.

We need only some meadow, a stream, and a thousand stones.

Some ducks willing to eat stale bread are a bonus.

My son cannot understand your lectures, cannot comprehend the strands, will not read a closely reasoned monograph. He does want me close by. He wants a cold drink on a hot day, and a hand to hold as we scramble through the woods.

For his life is circumscribed--was circumscribed by a power beyond my knowing. We no longer ask why. He is our answer and we need no other.

Will your plans and thrusts and evaluation techniques somehow include us? Will there be time to sit by the water? To sit for hours alongside a creek just throwing stones?

And to be content . . . knowing the butterflies, and the water striders, and the redwing blackbirds hold no danger?

Because I am there . . . and he is safe.

Could it be, could there be the slightest chance that you need us more than we require your services? You plan to give us so much . . . but our requirements are so meager. Can you accept us on our terms, or must we acquiesce to meet your demands?

Do not speak to us about NEW, IMPROVED, DYNAMIC programs for children. Rather, speak humbly, softly . . . if you must speak at all. And we will offer you something, someone, irreplaceable--a gift of innocence and light and laughter.

Because yours are not the only streams, nor the only ducks.

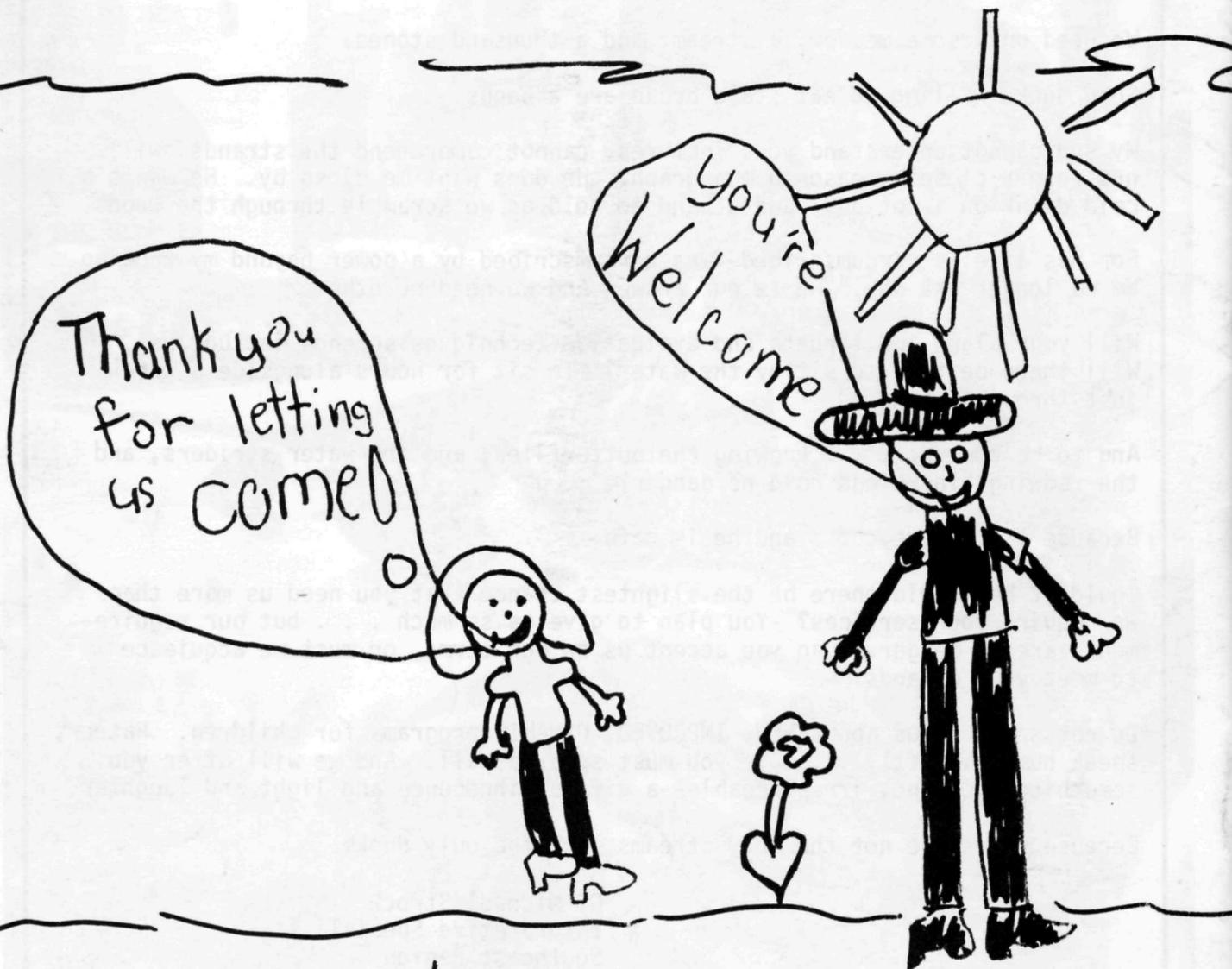
G. Michael Strock
Interpretive Specialist
Southeast Region



interpreters
information
exchange

May I Please ~~IN~~ TOUCH

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



Love

Ann
Brandenburger