

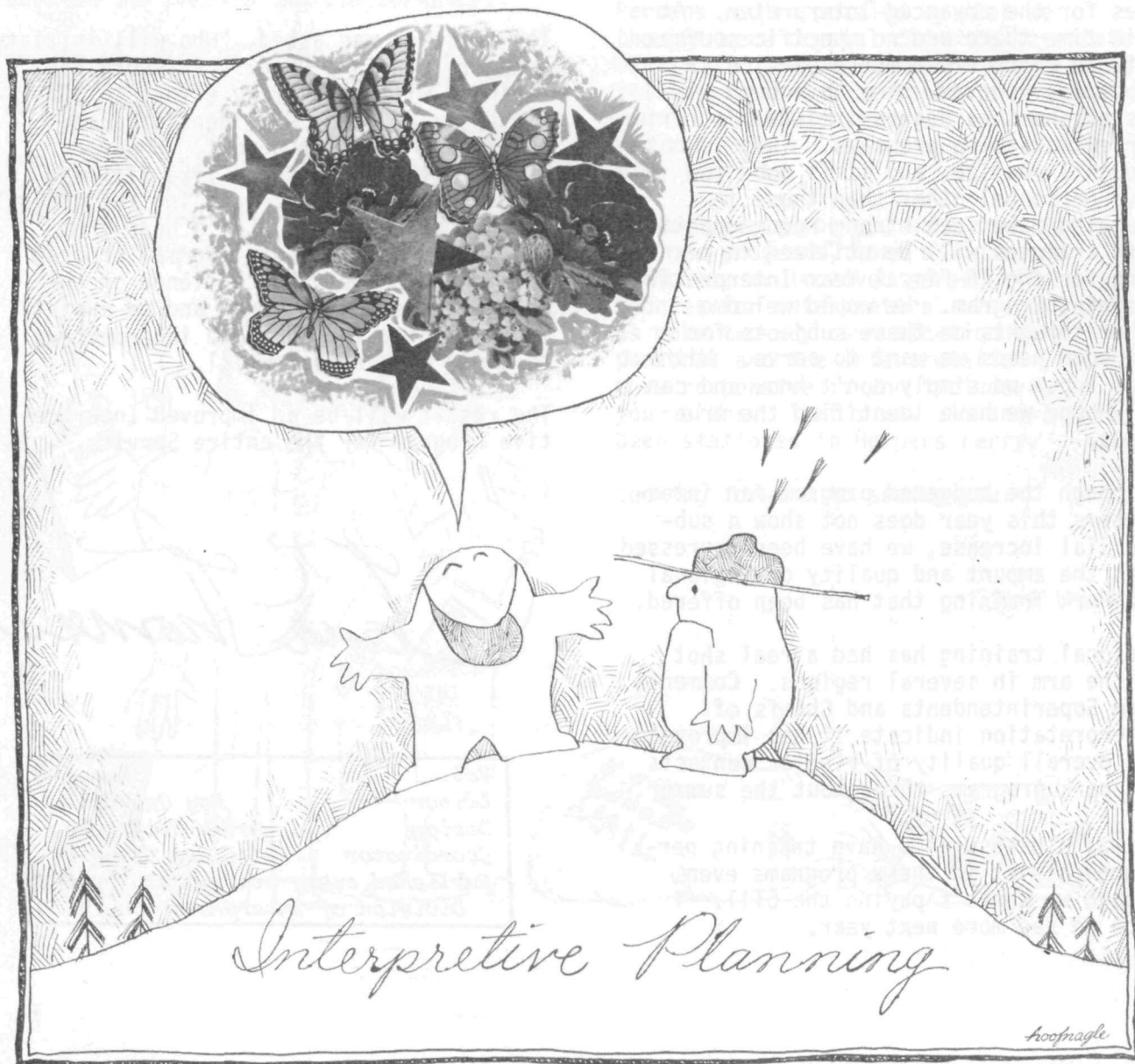
interpreters
information
exchange

IN TOUCH

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

Number 4

October, 1974



TO: ALL NPS INTERPRETERS

FROM: Tom D. Thomas, Chief, Branch of Training

As Chief Training Officer, I appreciate the opportunity to respond to recent articles in IN TOUCH.

There is little doubt that Bill Brown and Doug Evans identified areas of need and concern in the challenge of our changing visitor patterns and in opportunities for the advanced Interpreter. At this time there are no specific courses offered which treat these particular subjects; however, they have been discussed and to a degree included in our current training programs. This is not enough I realize, and it is good to have personnel other than those in training make such strong recommendations. Both articles will be utilized in planning for the 76 Fiscal Year Interpretive Training Program. We would welcome other thoughts on these subjects for it's your needs we want to serve. Without your input we simply don't know and can only hope we have identified the true needs.

Although the budgeted program for interpreters this year does not show a substantial increase, we have been impressed with the amount and quality of Regional and Park Training that has been offered.

Seasonal training has had a real shot in the arm in several regions. Comments from Superintendents and Chiefs of Interpretation indicate it has improved the overall quality of visitor contacts and park programs throughout the summer.

It was a pleasure to have training personnel assist in these programs even though we weren't paying the bill. I hope we see more next year.

I would also like to see some of the ideas and methods generated in these courses written up for IN TOUCH. There were practical and meaningful solutions to common problems discussed - many of which related directly to the changing visitor patterns - and to the "challenge" about which Bill Brown wrote so eloquently.

The question was asked, "Who will initiate such training and when?" I assure you Training will make every effort to initiate it, as needs are identified and budget and manpower permit. However, I'm sure there are those like Bill and Doug who are already "rattling the chains" and doing something. Let's hear from you and get a meaningful formal program developed to meet the challenge of the changing visitor patterns and to assist in developing the advanced interpreters to their highest potential.

The result will be an improved Interpretive Program for the entire Service.



Vol. 1	No. 4
Editor	Roy Graybill
Design	Keith Hoofnagle
Coordinator	Roy Graybill
Published every other month by NPS	
Division of Interpretation, WASO	

SPECIAL NOTE

Attached to the back of this issue of IN TOUCH is a special supplement which takes a look, from several angles, at the present National Park Service interpretive planning process. We put it together with the idea that (1) it would provide those of you who have not been actively involved in the process with a candid introduction to it, and (2) it would provide all of us in interpretation with perhaps a different perspective on the process and its workings.

We are thinking of using this type of approach to "air" various subjects that are of concern to interpreters. How do you feel about it? Is this approach and type of information useful to you? If so, what particular subjects would you like to see "aired"? We would like your comments.



Are you planning to visit historic and scenic Harpers Ferry this year? Whether your main purpose is a course at Mather or a project at the Center, please make it a point to see your Interpretation Division men there. Jim Murfin has already told you in these pages of his eagerness to talk over Cooperating Association matters.

I'd like a chance to talk with you on anything related to interpretation. Are you concerned with the career outlook for professional interpreters? Perhaps you're puzzled by what we thought were crystal-clear policy statements. Or are our directions in living interpretation, Bicentennial, and environmental education programs rather gray? You can help all of us by taking some time to talk.

Better yet, maybe you have some ideas for new programs, more enlightened policies, or improved personnel procedures for interpreters. You can help us make two-way communication more personal and the Interpretation Division more responsive if you include us in your plans. That's why Jim and I have been stationed in Harpers Ferry.

Looking forward to seeing you.

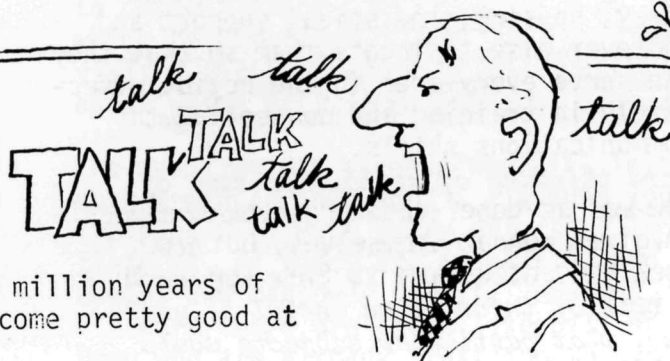
Steve Lewis

COMMUNICATIONS COUNSELING

A Seasonal Training Program

"Man", it has been said, is the only creature on earth who can talk himself into trouble".

"After a couple of million years of practice, we've become pretty good at it".



Don Fabun

"Communications: The Transfer of
Meaning"

Kaiser Aluminum News, 1965

Interpretation isn't so much how much the interpreter knows as how much can be communicated to others. Though much emphasis has been placed on the spoken and written word in interpretation most National Park Service interpreters have been selected for subject matter knowledge instead of communications skills. Gradually recognition has come that any interpreter, to be effective, must develop his or her communications skills. There have been a number of innovations to meet such a need. A noteworthy one is now operating in the Rocky Mountain and Midwest Regions.

It all began in Yellowstone, (doesn't everything?) where Dr. Bill Lewis, an experienced seasonal with extensive training and experience in communications, was assigned to supervise training and counseling for park seasonal staff a few years ago. The apparent improvement in the seasonal performance at Yellowstone gave birth to the notion that other National Parks in the System might benefit from such a program.

In the fall of 1973, the old Midwest Regional Office interpretive staff decided to experiment with the idea. After much muddling, superb advice from Bill Lewis,

and a major regional reorganization the program got off the ground and will be going into a second year in the 1975 season.

The program idea is simple. First you find people like Bill Lewis, with contemporary communications skills and ability to teach them to others, then you get money, housing, logistical support and whatever else to locate them so that they can serve every area in the region effectively in training and counseling the communications skills.

How was it done? Looking back the people involved wonder themselves, but with some luck and enthusiasm it flew (or it that flied)?

The objective was simply to provide the necessary expertise to serve National Park areas desirous of improving the communications skills of the seasonal interpretive staff.

It was decided, fortunately correctly, that the program would adhere to the following stipulations:

1. It would be a service program, the counselors providing the service only to the National Park areas requesting it.

2. The counselors were to assist in training and counseling of communications skills and not to evaluate performance or programs. There was a real concern that park staffs would consider the program interference and not assistance.

3. The counselors were to schedule their own time under minimal supervision, they being the only ones to know the necessary preparation and travel

time to meet requests. They did a splendid job.

4. The counselors would schedule directly with parks of their responsibility by phone or memo without going through the regional office.

5. The counselors, being skilled communicators, were responsible to develop good working relationships with park staffs.

6. The counselors were to EOD as early as possible, preferably mid-May, to assist park staffs in the development of orientation training at the beginning of the season.

7. Each counselor would be responsible for 6 to 8 park areas and be housed in a park centrally located in the cluster to minimize travel expenses and time.

Of these seven major points only two, numbers six and seven proved to need some revision after the first season's experience. It was found that many parks start planning seasonal training as early as January and a mid-May EOD didn't really provide a great advantage. Next season the counselors will be on intermittent appointment, available by agreement between park and counselor to assist whenever planning is done. The park clusters were not always so clustered, the housing not always located to minimize travel, and six to eight park areas is the maximum that can be handled by one specialist with good results

There were a number of problems in getting the program set up and operating during the season. All of these have been hashed out in an end-of-season evaluation meeting with regional staffs and counselors, some even solved.

The first problem was to find people skilled in communications training and counseling, not public speaking, but contemporary communications processes, theory and practice. Bill Lewis came to the rescue by recommending 5 of the 6 hired who he knew and expected could meet the responsibilities of a job he had developed himself in Yellowstone. The sixth was a man known to the regional office staff from his professional relationship with the Park Service as a consultant and resource person.

The people selected turned out to be the wisest thing done. They proved responsible, enthusiastic and dedicated to making to work in spite of all the difficulties of things promised and never materialized in a new program. Had they not been very special people the program would have failed.

The second problem was money, one that always rears its ugly head. Fortunately the directorate in the old Midwest Regional Office went with the idea and reserve funds to the tune of \$15,000 were made available. The third problem was housing. Finding housing proved to be easy in most cases as resident parks were ready and willing to help. In one case the housing was available far from the cluster center and the counselor had difficulty meeting requests because of travel time and expense. It will probably continue to be a problem unless clusters are modified to fit the housing availability.

The fourth problem was regional reorganization. The reorganization came in the middle of the planning, after seasonals were hired and assigned. It created some confusion among all concerned. The salvation came when the new Rocky Mountain Region

adopted the program intact and treated it as their own. It took some big people to take on someone else's idea and go with it. However, it is recommended that an innovative program not be started if a regional reorganization is imminent. You may not be as lucky.

The fifth problem was orientation of the counselors. A January meeting of three days was set up at University of Vermont since most of the counselors resided there and Bill Lewis could help. The meeting was too short and, as with anything new, the content of the meeting fell short of what was needed. For the coming year a full week is planned at Mather Training Center to orient additional counselors and cover all the ground necessary. It is a must as is the final evaluation meeting at end of season.

A number of minor problems developed as the season went along. Working space in the resident parks was in short supply. Park clusters looked good on a map, but in reality there were some places that "you couldn't get there from here", at least not easily. The parks and the counselors found that one to one counseling with seasonals was the most effective, yet the most time consuming and impossible for all parks in the clusters. Seminars and workshops had to be substitutes. The counselors needed better grounding in travel voucher preparation and other procedures related to their job. Fortunately the resident parks pitched in and helped. The money for each counselor in the program was placed in the resident park account in Rocky Mountain Region and it seemed to alleviate some of the fiscal fumbling.

All in all, the program was a success because of the enthusiasm and dedication of the people involved. Bill Lewis pro-

vided the basic standards to do the job and most of the counselors by his recommendation. The counselors were those unique kinds of people who did not discourage easily and took on all the responsibility the creators of the program dropped. In case you're interested, the cast of characters were:

Mike Cronin, University of Vermont,
Resident Park, Ozark NSR for Midwest
Region;

John Hanna, Texas A&M University,
Resident Park, Timpanogos Cave;

Tom Hudspeth, University of Vermont,
Resident Park, Rocky Mountain;

Janet Olive, Denver, Colorado, Resident
Park, Wind Cave;

Helen Steeves, University of Wisconsin,
Resident Park, Wind Cave;

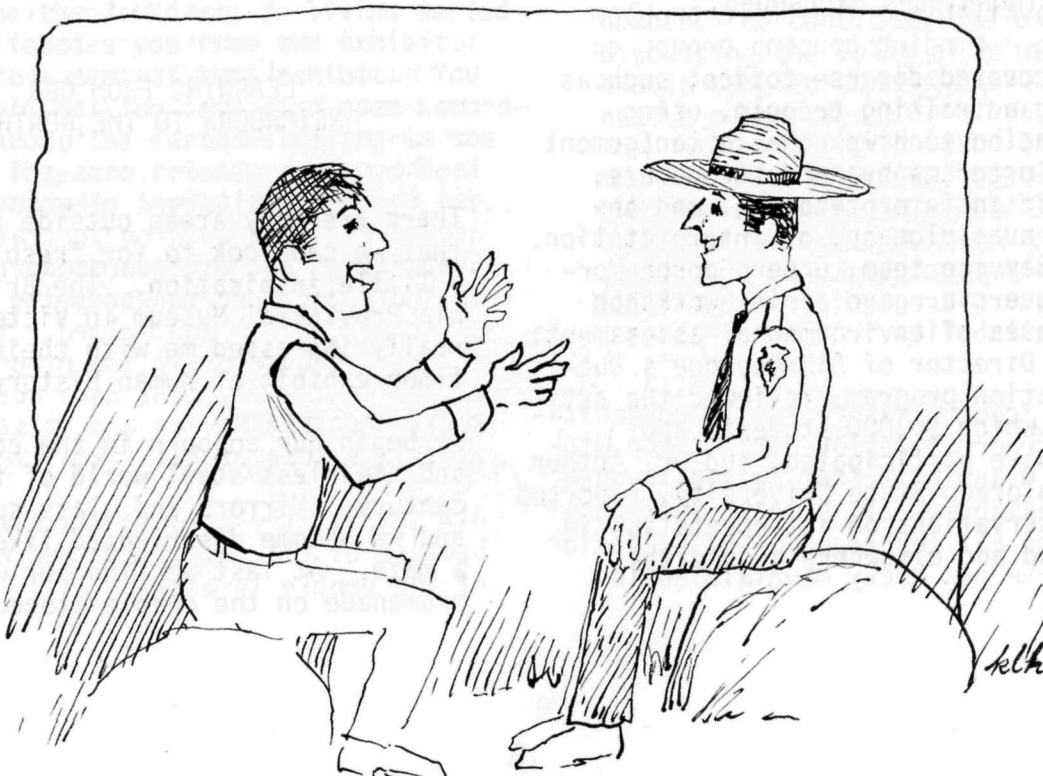
Katherine January, University of Ver-
mont, Resident Park, Mesa Verde

For all the reasons one could find in the success of something, it always seems to come back to the people involved. If we did nothing else right in developing this thing, we picked six winners.

Nothing new is easy to operate; it takes a great deal of learning, some of it through failure. Had the program failed, the knowledge gained would still be invaluable. All it takes is a little guts, a little luck and a helluva lot of belief in what one is doing. All of us in the program had those things and think it has great potential, perhaps Servicewide, perhaps beyond interpretation and seasonals to all aspects of park operation.

We are, after all, in public service and that demands we communicate to the public and among ourselves.

Andy Kardos
Mather Training Center



ON THE OUTSIDE



A.I.N. AT GRAND CANYON

There's nothing unusual about seeing people at Grand Canyon from far-flung places, but it was a special gathering recently for more than 80 interpreters who made the trip to attend an Association of Interpretive Naturalists workshop. The Albright Training Center hosted the group, with representatives from the National Park Service, Forest Service, three universities, state agencies, public schools, STEP, plus many independent interpreters. It was a stimulating - and stimulated - gathering because of the ideas and techniques exchanged.

Sessions covered diverse topics, such as developing a training program, using interpretation to help achieve management aims, sky programs by non-astronomers, using music in interpretation, and the politics, or diplomacy, of interpretation. A Forest Service team, under George Worley, Albuquerque, gave a mini-workshop on techniques of environmental assessment; John Cox, Director of Albuquerque's Outdoor Education program, reviewed the activities in which 90,000 students and teachers have participated; and Dr. Arthur Wilcox, Colorado State University, reported on his observations on interpretation in New Zealand and elsewhere around the world.

The workshop was under the direction of Al Mebane, Chairman of the Rocky Mountain-High Plains Region of A.I.N., and John Tyers, Program Chairman. Attendance at this session was triple that of a year ago when the new A.I.N. region was established. The many NPS'ers who attended came away with a strong feeling of sharing with others in the profession.

Al Mebane

* * * * *

LEARNING FROM OUR NEIGHBORS TO THE NORTH

There are many areas outside the Service that we can look to for fresh ideas and a little inspiration. The British Columbia Provincial Museum in Victoria, has really impressed me with their third floor exhibit of human history.

We begin our sojourn in the computerized and stainless steel world of the 20th century. Mirrors and glass surround us, and we become disoriented like a rat in a maze. At last we find our way, and promenade on the cobble-stoned streets

of a turn-of-the-century town, past the blacksmith shop, telegraph office and saloon. We may visit the hotel, and go to the cinema to chuckle through a silent movie.

Our trip through time continues by visiting a sawmill, a fish-packing house, a ranch, a mine shaft, gold fields, and even Captain Vancouver's ship - the Discovery.

The visitor is not mired down with lengthy text; it is not needed if we choose wisely to operate under Mies van der Rohe's principle of, "less is more". We can look at, listen to, touch and smell the exhibits - we are there in time. Time is not only followed by the various social and economic activities that were typical of each period, but within each period, one is aware that time is passing:

A cock crows on the ranch.
The clock goes "tick-tock" in the office.
Telegraph keys click out messages that are history as soon as they are received.
Past an open window a surrey creaks.
Night! Dawn! Sunset!

Then becomes merged with now, or does now become then? No wax or living period figure alienates you from the exhibit. You become a part of that exhibit. You hear people walking past your open second-story window, the curtains waving in the breeze. They are friends, and you rush to the window to invite them in for tea.

Yes, I think we can learn a great deal from our neighbors to the north.

Stewart W. Fritts
North Cascades N.P.

The following note was taken from the Summer, 1974 issue of THE INTERPRETER, a publication of the Western Interpreters Association.

"WILDLIFE IN AMERICA"

Author: Peter Matthiessen

Copyright: 1959

Third printing: August 1967

Publisher: The Viking Press,
New York

I'm sure that if you are a layman or a specialist, you will find this book a valuable addition to your conservation library. Mr. Matthiessen has researched his facts as far back as the writings of the early explorers and settlers and presented them as a chronicled, historical survey on what the white man has done to the wildlife that once roamed free and wide across our land. He sets the stage by portraying the original abundance that occurred in North America, which showed that the fertile land could support vast numbers of species if the food chains and energy pyramids remained intact. In the text he vividly writes about how reluctant everyone was in believing the animals could be declining in number. He concludes the book by discussing the folly of bringing in exotic species to replace our endangered native populations.

The illustrations that accompany the text were excellently done by Bob Hines. They add to and compliment the dramatic story by Peter Matthiessen.

Paul Ferreira, Naturalist
Coyote Hills Regional Park

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS



EDITING BY DESIGN

All copies of Editing by Design are now out on loan. We intend to accommodate anyone who would like to see this publication. Loan period is for 30 days. Copies will be available for your review at the Executive Secretaries Conference.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARIES CONFERENCE

This office has been working on the program for the Executive Secretaries Conference for a number of months. Those who have reviewed portions of the plans say that it will undoubtedly be the best and brightest. We are most anxious to have 100% attendance. If you have considered attending and decided against it, call this office for a sales talk. We believe we can convince you otherwise. We intend to cover every subject possible, from small store operations to inventory control, from the Internal Revenue Service to insurance. This is your conference and your participation is what will make it a success. Remem-

ber, this is the one time every two years that you have an opportunity to sound off on behalf of your association and its problems. We don't guarantee solutions for all but with the expertise on hand everyone should go away satisfied. Many associations are sending not only their executive secretaries but their business managers as well and in some cases members of boards of directors are attending. Cooperating Associations are coming into their own and we see an era of good feelings and good relationship with the National Park Service. We will have representation from the Director and we are looking forward to good words on the Directorate's attitude toward all association activities. Firm reservation forms were mailed from this office on September 1 and replies are now coming in. We are most gratified with the results and look forward to an attendance of more than 100. If you have not received a reservation form or a tentative agenda, contact this office immediately. We are calling for reservation forms to be returned by October 7. This does not mean we will exclude anyone who comes in late. We look forward to seeing you in Denver.



PUBLICATIONS TRAINING AIDS

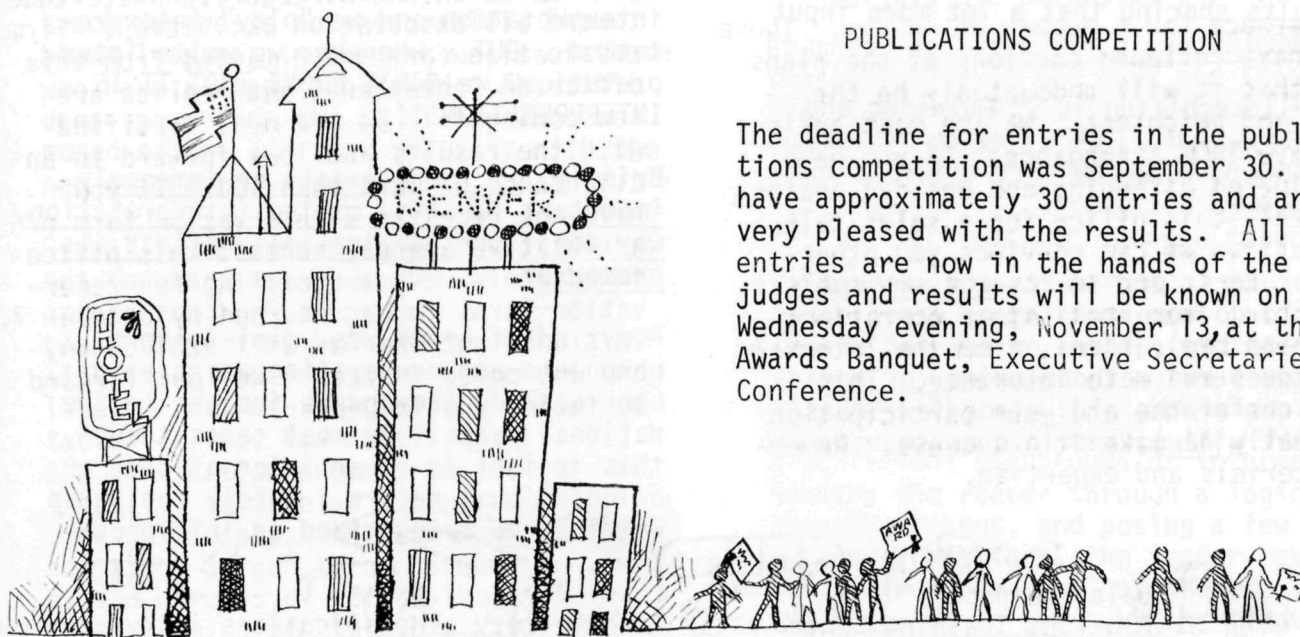
This office has acquired from Eastman Kodak three slide-sound training programs on the following subjects: "Line Photography", "Halftones and Other Tones", and "Basics of Four-Color Reproduction". Each program comprises approximately 80 slides and a 20-minute cassette tape. All three were used in the management training seminars and will be used at the Executive Secretaries Conference. Following that date, all three programs will be available on a loan basis to any Cooperating Association or any individual park. All three are excellent ground work for persons interested in the mechanics of publications.

COOPERATING ASSOCIATION MANAGEMENT TRAINING

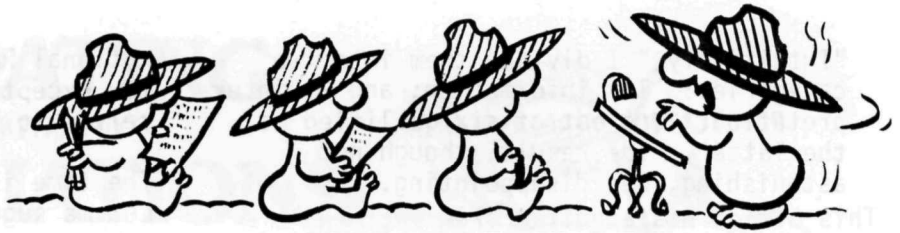
We have just concluded two weeks, Mather and Albright, of Cooperating Association management training. The cost of these two training seminars came from the Servicewide Fund. There is reason to believe that we will continue this training in the future on an annual budget basis. We filled up both classes this time and had some left over. If you applied and were not accepted, please consider next year. The criteria was the need for training and although you may well have had a sincere desire or a specific need, this office was totally responsible for a very careful consideration of each person. Priorities were established on the basis of 24 applicants for each school.

PUBLICATIONS COMPETITION

The deadline for entries in the publications competition was September 30. We have approximately 30 entries and are very pleased with the results. All entries are now in the hands of the judges and results will be known on Wednesday evening, November 13, at the Awards Banquet, Executive Secretaries Conference.



FORUM



It seems to me IN TOUCH may be falling short of its intended purpose in one vital area.

In the first issue we (that's you and me) were invited to use IN TOUCH as a means for "...examination of concepts and directions of the Service." No problem here. There have been several contributions of this sort; that is, a swapping of philosophies and viewpoints, espousals and rebuttals, etc., etc.

But, IN TOUCH was also to be our medium for "...dissemination of information on techniques, tools, training, and sources of help." It's in this realm of nuts and bolts sharing that a lot more input is needed.

The philosophizing is stimulating and necessary. But, let's try to strike a balance with a few more articles on the basics.

Interpreters, permanents and seasonals, ought to do more trading of experiences (good and bad), ideas on new and creative techniques and methodologies (or modifications of the old, since few ideas are really new), and info on sources of materials and expertise.

Dale Thompson
Albright Training Center

PUT "IT" IN WRITING

IT bothers me!!!

WE bothers me!!!!

I bothers me !!!!!

IT, WE and I are about interpretation. IT is the interpretive effort. WE is the group of employees engaged in IT. I is the individual who calls her/himself an interpreter.

Without doubt we "policy" interpretation; we "program" interpretation; we "promote" interpretation and we "play" interpretation...BUT...whenever we write interpretation..we CAN'T PROVE THAT IT IS INTERPRETATION!!!!

Briefly, if there exists an immensely important function called interpretation, why don't our publications reflect its presence?

A myriad of brochures, mini-folders, pamphlets and cooperating association booklets add tremendous insight to the national parks. In most cases though, this insight is of an informational or orientational nature. Rarely can these writings be categorized as interpretation.

An inventory of publications in my previous park offered an interesting opportunity.

"Intuitively," I divided them into two categories: 1. information; and 2. interpretation. One out of six qualified as the latter. The result, though not astonishing, was disappointing.

Bruce Hopkins, of the Publications Division at Harpers Ferry Center, informed me that parks are being encouraged to reduce strict information conveyance in brochures in order to add interpretation. That sounded great until we tried to pinpoint the difference. Stalemate! There were no guidelines by which the parks could separate the two.

Stepping back, let me point out why IT, WE, and I disturb me so much. A recall of written materials across the System brings forth memories of taxonomic lists, identification keys, chronologies of historic dates and places and verbose introductory texts. Is this interpretive writing, Cindy Kryston? Why have they been labeled interpretation up to now, Bill Dunmire? Where is our interpretive writing, Bruce McHenry? The track record is not honorable! The blame lies not in the ink wells of those who have already published. The fault does spawn from the IT of the WE composed of the I's that identify with the new interpretive revival.

Overall appearances suggest that IT has not focussed keenly enough on "written interpretation" to produce a crystal clear image. WE has neglected to realize this, and even more shameful, has labeled "all of the above" as interpretation. I has had little impact on the publication process because of an inability to develop a firm interpretive philosophy. This is a result of the aloof jargon thrown around in the closed circles of WE and the hard to grasp meaning of "interpretation." (reference Cindy Kryston's article, page 6, 2nd issue of IN TOUCH).

National Park Service interpreters, with few exceptions, have not committed themselves to WRITTEN INTERPRETATION.

The time is ripe for that step to be taken. Let me suggest a start. Please comment.

First, WE must agree on minimum requirements for interpretive writing. Not the grammar, nor the subject matter, nor the length, nor the language. Not the layout, nor the color, nor the order, nor the detail. The minimum requirements should "define the impact of IT on the reader".

As Bruce Hopkins emphatically points out, a long list of requirements would stifle individual initiative so allow me to propose only three for your consideration. These requirements may be found separately in other texts. The significance of interpretive writings would be the culmination of all three in each work. If you disagree or can suggest another, please speak up.

Requirement #1

An interpretive writing should espouse the integrity of the park and inspire the reader to action in order to better know that piece of real estate. Sensual exercises to acquaint the reader with the resource, as instigated by the publication, will provide immense interpretive impact.

Requirement #2

An interpretive writing should actively reveal relative concepts. By providing a sufficient background of information, leading the reader through a logical thought process, and posing a few provocative questions, the reader may be lifted from one level of understanding and interest to another. Writing to convey concepts aids the reader in thought

and lends a sense of wholeness to the information packet. This is the valid impact.

Requirement #3

One interpretive piece should engender only one theme.

Generally, we try to say too much. State the theme, support it, and close with it. The ease of tying concepts and subject matter into one theme should have the impact of making interpretation accessible to all types of minds.

The next step, obviously, is that action be taken to incorporate the requirements in our writings. This is a personal resolution but it can be encouraged by a concerted effort of WE. (Supervisors especially).

All park publications should not be interpretive. But all parks should be interpreted through publication! Let's do more. I entreat WE to make something tangible out of IT. From this point forward -- put "IT" in writing.

Rex Derr
Interpretive Specialist
C & O Canal N.H.P.

* * * * *

The real cures for more meaningful interpretation are more contact with professional organizations (per Alan Mebane Letter) and the "real work . . . of reading, thinking, planning" (especially in terms of our changing audience) noted in that valuable manuscript excerpt at the top right of page 23 of the August IN TOUCH. But, how many interpreters do keep up with mere reading? It doesn't

have to be time consuming research; there's a wealth of solid interpretive insight in print these days; more of it really ought to be on sale in our visitor centers.

However -- when NPS Interpretation speaks of professional interpretive organizations, why oh why do we hear only of those relating to the naturalist field (especially when the bulk of NPS areas are historical)? The Bill Brown piece in the very first IN TOUCH, and the manuscript excerpt in the most recent issue certainly point up the obvious special problems of the historical areas. For goodness sake (and I have said and written this before) play up the American Association for State and Local History (1315 Eighth Avenue, South Nashville, Tennessee 37203) which -- even with its limitations -- still puts out a stimulating monthly History News, wonderful technical leaflets, sponsors useful seminars throughout the country (all of which might even help some of the naturalists) -- and has a new book on interpretation of historic sites coming out soon!

You might even point to the American Association of Museums (which usually has a "History" section at its meetings) and its publication Museum News. (I don't suppose I dare mention the professional historical associations or their magazines -- which are useful for keeping one posted on the latest interpretations in print.) History is not dead -- if its interpretations are kept alive

But, my congratulations to IN TOUCH-- which is becoming what Interpretation should be -- a center for thought, for more meaningful interpretation for more people. We even have a representative of Historic Preservation IN TOUCH with us now; high time we learned again to blend the two approaches of preservation and interpretation and -- ironically

for communicators -- to communicate!

Keep up the good work! The message is the first medium for understanding -- and understanding is Interpretation!

Frank Barnes
Retiree Recycled
(and Re-excited)

* * * * *

TO THE EDITOR:

In the December 24, 1973, issue of the NPS Newsletter Director Walker commented on "the certitude of continued growth" of our society in 1974. I wish he had done more than just comment.

The National Park Service styles itself as the principle conservation agency of the United States government. Yet it merely conforms and caters to the whims of a society (and its political expression) whose material and human growth values and patterns are the exact opposite expression of the conservation and preservation ideals upon which the Park Service was founded.

If the Park Service is truly our nation's leading conservation agency then let it take a leadership role in championing conservation values. Conservation is more than just administering a park or encouraging energy use reduction; it is a way of life. I would like to see the slogans LESS IS MORE and SLOWER IS FASTER adopted by the Park Service and instilled in all Americans who visit the parks.

Randall T. Kane
Fort Laramie
National Historic Site

LIVING HISTORY, ANOTHER OPINION

As one who regretted the demise of the old "Newsletter", I was happy to see the first two numbers of "In Touch". Like other NPS employees, I believe that interpretation merits continuous discussion if it is to retain its crucial position in the preservation-interpretation tandem that has long been our mission.

I especially enjoyed Robert Utley's "Forum" contribution, "Living History: How Far is Too Far?" As one involved in the research and preservation disciplines, I share Mr. Utley's concern with the accuracy and appropriateness of some areas of living history. I agree that living history is dramatization, i. e., that it is basically theater. Theater is of course a perfectly legitimate vehicle for historical interpretation. One thinks immediately of Rolf Hochhuth's many plays, Peter Weiss, The Andersonville Trial and, on another level, all those Kermit Hunter historical dramas. They are all subjective, dramatized documentaries with at times high theatrical content. My basic uneasiness with much of our NPS living history is that it is poor theater. As a spectator or member of the audience I simply do not understand what the relation is between accurate uniforms, camp scenes, and weapon firing and the meaning and significance of the particular stage, usually a battlefield or fort, on which living history is played. That is nice, is my usual reaction, but what does it have to do with the military, political, social, or cultural significance of the historic resource? I often come away muttering to my children something like: there was no script, just boom-boom sound effects; the actors were well intentioned young people

playing impossible parts; the action in no way resembled what really happened (thank God!); and the whole program added nothing to our understanding of the park. When it is poor theater, living history becomes vulgar. When it is vulgar, I fear living history can actually ridicule and demean the areas in our care.

In my function as a research historian I would make a plea for the reintroduction of "meaning and significance" as interpretive conceptions. In my opinion they are the heart and soul of interpretation. It is a simple question: what is the meaning and significance of a Yorktown, a Gettysburg, an Edison, a Carl Sandburg, a Mesa Verde, or a John Muir? The answer is never simple and is more than telling a story. It requires the cultivation of knowledge. In the language of "the good old days," one must know his park. Interpretation of meaning and significance is never dull. The literature abounds with: "the traditional interpretation," "the revisionist interpretation," "new perspectives," "in his book-film-play-novel John D. or Mary X. interprets...", "this new method, e. g. psycho-history, opens up whole new areas of interpretation," "the Marxism interpretation is..." and on and on. There is interpretation from the perspectives of the major disciplines and there is interpretation from the various interdisciplinary approaches. Underlying and unifying all interpretation is the search for meaning and significance. Mastery of the most sophisticated and innovative interpretive techniques can never substitute for the absence of content. A media without a message is vulgar technology that contributes nothing to understanding. From my admittedly prejudiced perspective of the research historian I simply do not find a concern with meaning and sig-

nificance in much of our NPS interpretation and especially not in living history. **Technique dominates.** Attention to the importance of meaning and significance would, in my opinion, make a difference in the quality of our interpretation.

James Sheire, Historian
National Historic Sites
Survey

* * * * *

Several things have been bothering me about National Park Service interpretation. I've talked with several people about them, but have never put them out for public consumption. Now is the time! I can always survive on berries in the mountains if the flack is too heavy.

Personal Feelings:

1. Highly qualified interpreters are available outside NPS in county, state, and private organizations. In addition, highly trained individuals are coming out of universities like Michigan State and Texas A&M.
2. Good interpreters make good interpretation.
3. We can train a good interpreter to be a better - perhaps even outstanding - interpreter. We can NOT train a poor interpreter to the standards we need (4x0 is still 0). Tilden says interpretation is an art and in some degree teachable . . . but only partially teachable. Interpreters - good ones, are bred. They have certain physical and philosophical/mental characteristics - not the least of which is charisma - that distinguishes them from other people.

4. Many outstanding interpreters I know today served an apprenticeship under an outstanding senior interpreter early in their career - usually at the 5-7 level - where they learned on-the-job how TO (rather than how NOT to) run a quality interpretive program. I don't believe this training ground exists now. Outstanding interpretive supervisors do not merely tell people (verbalize) how to do a job. They show by positive example what they want and set the standard by their own performance.

Proposals:

None of this is really new!

1. If we want good interpreters to produce quality interpretive programs - HIRE THEM! Tap the National Science for Youth Foundation "Opportunities" flier for talented people - tap Audubon - tap the California State Park system - tap county and private parks around the country. Hire these people as GS-9 interpreters directly into the Service to fill responsible interpretive jobs. The work they're doing outside should qualify them for GS-9 jobs. Why should a person highly qualified and interested in Interpretation even consider the NPS as a profession when s/he must come in as a law enforcement person without any assurance that s/he will get into interpretation? They can go with other organizations and begin interpreting immediately.

2. For those people who come in without interpretive experience, but want to do interpretation - place them in a "training" park where they can get leadership, experience, direction from a highly qualified NPS interpreter. A good example recently might have been to feed Everglades (George Robinson, Bruce McHenry, and Jack Stark) 2-3 potential interpreters every 2-3 years.

This "training" park situation necessitates outstanding relations between interpreters and management. The two must be working together to make Interpretation a viable management tool.

3. Develop an Apprentice-Journeyman-Master interpretive training program to span the career of an interpreter. This would involve personal development, park, regional, and Servicewide training programs as well as attendance at training and professional meetings outside NPS. For example, encourage NSYF annual conference attendance, AIN and/or WIA membership and involvement, publication in professional journals, AAM membership and involvement to name a few. Doug Evans proposed this in the last IN TOUCH, at least in part. I know proposals like this have already been made, even to the point of laying out a sample long-term training program. Bill Dunmire and Andy Kardos are working on some way to implement such a program now and have been for a year or so. I believe there have been some good ideas suggested on how such a program might work ... but ideas will never become reality until Training, Management, and Personnel get together and support ideas with tangible course offerings.

4. Consider annual recognition of high performance of a FIELD interpreter through an award similar to the Roy B. Appleman Award for Historians. This could and should be called the Freeman Tilden award (idea compliments of Nan Rickey).

These are some of the ideas rattling around in my head! I'd like to hear your comments on them.

James L. Massey
Interpretive Planner, Division of
Planning, Denver Service Center

RAP UP



INTERPRETIVE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The National Park Service Training Institute for Park and Recreation Management will sponsor an Interpretation Workshop, November 18-22, 1974, at Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas; and an Interpretive Protection course, January 20-24, 1975, at Fall Creek Falls State Park, Pikeville, Tennessee.

Participation in the course will be open to park and recreation personnel from the National Park Service, State and local governments, colleges and universities, as well as private organizations.

For further information, please contact the Training Institute for Park and Recreation Management, National Park Service, Mather Training Center, Harpers Ferry, West Virginia 25425, or phone: 304-535-6371, Ext. 226.

* * * * *

Just discovered an excellent interpretive "aid" which should be of special benefit to Bicentennial areas: a pamphlet titled "The Reappraisal of the American Revolution in Recent Historical Literature" by Jack P. Green of John Hopkins University (Number 68 in the AHA series). It can be purchased for one dollar from the American Historical Association, 400 "A" Street,

S. E., Washington, D. C. 20003. It is an excellent, quick review of all the changing viewpoints on the American Revolution-Constitution period (and, believe me, there have been many!) and should be invaluable in helping our embattled Bicentennial interpreters keep the story reasonably straight -- at least regarding what the Revolution was all about. It might even make a good sales item at the Park Visitor Center.

Also, Elkins and McKittrick's "The Founding Fathers: Young Men of the Revolution", at one dollar, looks most useful.

Frank Barnes

* * * * *

HOW ABOUT SOME HELP!

Presently, each field area is on its own in the struggle to procure authentic replica uniforms, arms, and equipment as well as civilian items. The best source of help is in the form of reciprocal aid between field areas and, in a more formal sense, the various Camps of Instruction. Some things, though, could be more successfully handled at higher levels and would help us put original

specimens back into the museums where they belong. An arms firm, for instance, will give no consideration to an individual park requesting specially-made guns; however, it would seem that Harpers Ferry or the Washington office could lend valuable assistance in contraction for larger quantities. The weapons could then be made available to individual areas as needed. We also need more and better sources for leather goods, canvas goods, and metalware. How about a Service-owned, operated, and staffed facility to make all sorts of clothing and equipment? This would insure, hopefully, accuracy and would eliminate the outrageous prices due to margins of profit and labor charges.

Douglas McChristian
Fort Davis N.H.S.

* * * * *

COMIC AND/OR COLORING BOOKS

We take adults on nature walks and tell "stories" at campfires in the hope that they might use the NPS areas less harshly, appreciate these areas, and give us the where-with-all to Preserve, Protect, and Interpret them. Yet, some psychologists tell us that we may only scratch the surface, since our personal activity patterns are programmed into each of us before the age of eight years. Therefore, if we really wish to do a good job of Preserving, Protecting, and Interpreting, we

need to get to the children. From here is a natural lead-off into greater children's programs within and without the NPS areas. The field is wide open, but one idea I would like to offer is one of a good set of Bicentennial Comic and/or Coloring Books depicting the role of the National Park Service in the Bicentennial Heritage. I see in the latest IN TOUCH that a Coloring Book of the American Revolution was produced several years ago. I submitted a similar idea to the Yellowstone Centennial Committee. I could not carry the ball because of the time element, my own local duties, and I am not a cartoon artist. It would have necessitated a crash program on an approved story for all areas to sell it. The profit was, of course, to go to the Centennial Fund.

However, for the Bicentennial, there is now time for the story writers to be selected and their works approved, the cartoonists obtained, and the presses rolled for the production. The stories could be either color comic books or coloring books with instructions for authentic coloring. Several stories, other than that already written by Ms. Hutzky and Ms. Meuse, could be: 1) National Park Service areas of the American Revolution placed in sequence of the overall action regardless of geographical location; 2) The Nation's growth as represented by NPS areas; 3) Areas representing North American History from the Southwest Indian life to the Revolution; 4) Scenic parks representing original America; and 5) How the NPS preserves the history and scenic America through archaeology (ancient and modern), museum preservation of artifacts, exhibit design, planning, and wilderness and scenic area management. Different themes can easily be contrived by writers who know the National Park System and all its types of areas.

Since I feel so strongly about the idea, I throw it up for grabs in the hope that the powers on high will see the value. Such an undertaking can only come from on top. No one individual can carry such a ball alone as was suggested to me on my Yellowstone Centennial idea presentation. The project could be financed by a loan from all the Cooperating Associations. The profits from area sales AND THE GENERAL MAGAZINE MARKET (for Nation-wide distribution) could repay the loans, give each selling Association their normal profit, and the remainder aid the NPS Bicentennial effort.

Here is an opportunity to reach the younger generation with the worthwhile NPS philosophy, the heritage of the American people, and something which would be more easily "read" and understood by our many foreign visitors. Even foreign language versions could be easily made through the cooperation of the military language schools for those areas which can use them. Their usefulness would long outlast the Bicentennial year for many areas. Here is an opportunity to tell the world about the Bicentennial and the National Park idea. And, remember, both the psychologists and "The Good Book" say, "And a child shall lead them."

Robert C. Zink
District Interpreter
Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks



* * * * *

Interpretation is transmitting something from one place to another, in our Park Service sense, to the mind, eye, ear and heart of the beholder.

The best way to move something from one place to another is as follows:

- Shortest distance.
- Neatly packed.
- Durable container.
- Clearly labelled.
- Correct destination.
- Knowing that it should be moved.
- Knowing that it is wanted at the destination.
- Damage nothing on the way.
- Knowing that a place has been prepared for it.
- Have sufficient assistance so the labor is a joy and not an agony.
- Knowing that it is worthy of the effort.
- Knowing that it will be used once it arrives.
- and
- Not moving it in the first place, if they already have one.

Jerry Sheerin
Mather Training Center

INTERPRETING LAKE MEAD'S "BACK YARD"

The following is a description of an interpretive activity that perhaps is extraordinary in that it occurs at Lake Mead NRA, an area most notable for its endeavors in law enforcement and water-oriented recreation.

Our hiking program extends over the cooler months of the year, late October through April. Those who participate, for the most part, are middle-aged residents of the Las Vegas area. Weekly, the forthcoming Saturday hike is listed in the newspaper, "Las Vegas Review Journal." With this coverage alone we attract groups of ten to fifty. Large groups tend to be cumbersome to manage. Some of the more experienced hikers recognize the situation, falling behind to bring up the rear.

There is a high percentage of returning hikers each week. In fact, the most ardent of these have formed their own group, inviting us to provide an interpreter, whenever possible, for their Sunday hikes.

With almost all hikes some driving is required from the Visitor Center to the point where the feet take over. The distance is as little as three miles or as many as thirty, one way. Logistics of conducting these hikes aim at energy conservation. At the Visitor Center, where we initially congregate for hikes, participants are encouraged to form car pools, with reimbursement to the driver. This type of setup is beneficial too as an icebreaker, integrating new with old hikers.

An established trail system is non-existent in this desert environment. We wind our way over hill and dale: canyons, washes, ridges, game trails, and occasionally, secondary roads. Destinations also run the gamut: coves on Lake Mohave; mountain peaks around Lake Mead; and valleys and basins with colorful formations. Routes have been determined with the aid of topographic maps and patience. More than once I've reconnoitered a prospective route only to face up to its terminus in a dry waterfall.

We hear so much about environmental education and children; yet, I have found that older people can be just as spontaneous with questions and just as gleeful in discovery as youth -- in a stimulating environment, which just happens to be the vast "backyard" of Lake Mead National Recreation Area.

On each of these all day ventures I learn more myself about the area, and so frequently, from contributions made by fellow hikers. Last spring, when we had a bounty of wildflowers, many hikes ended with enjoyable controversy over plant identification. Of course, not all hikers become so engrossed. Nonetheless, I continue to be amazed at how some of the surroundings brush off on even the most indifferent individuals. Las Vegas harbors "normal" people in spite of its idiosyncrasies!

Could this type of activity be adapted to other Parks? Certainly -- where areas are not bound by morphology or tradition!

Elaine A. Hounsell

CURATOR'S CORNER

COMMUNICATIONS RAP

Recently this Division has been asked by several people, "What's all this business of calling direct to you people at HFC, haven't you ever heard of channels?" Yes, we have, and maybe we'd better go over a few things. Our hope is that we can maintain direct lines of communication from park people who are in the process of performing preservation treatment on museum specimens to the HFC Museum Services conservator. These are communications of process and technique - not policy or operations guidance. It's "how to" rather than "should you".

The Regional Curator should be consulted in most cases before making a call to HFC - Museum Services. The Regional Curator will usually be able to assist you, but for specialized treatment information he will probably direct you to HFC. The traditional function of the Regional Curator has been to provide technical and professional assistance and guidance to the parks within his Region in acquiring, recording, developing, storing, protecting, disposing of, and using museum collections. Emphasis on these duties may vary slightly from region to region but the basic responsibilities remain the same. The Division of Museum Services certainly does not want to short circuit the Regional Curator's role; we only want to help.

Certainly you all know the curator in your Region, but you may be interested in having the other Regional Curator names:

Mid-Atlantic Region	Bill Jedlick
Rocky Mountain Region	Ed Jahns
Midwest Region	John Hunter
Southwest Region	Gordon Gay
North Atlantic Region	Ed Kallop
Pacific Northwest Region	James R. Richardson (Acting)
National Capital Parks	Vacant
Western Region	Marty Leicester (Acting)
Southeast Region	Undesignated

* * * * *

EMERGENCY NUMBER FOR FOREIGN VISITORS

This information might be helpful to offer visitors from other countries who come to your area.

Foreign visitors to the United States who need directions or find themselves in an emergency situation may reach an interpreter by placing a toll free telephone call to 1-800-255-3050. This daily year-round service is offered by the Travelodge Corporation and is open 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. Central Time. Employees at this telephone speak French, Japanese, German, and Spanish.

From "Whatchamacallit?"
RMR Interpretive Newsletter

HAPPENINGS IN NATURE
AT
ROOSEVELT-VANDERBILT

In 1973, a "Happenings in Nature" program was initiated in the Hyde Park Elementary School for first grade children by two Volunteers in Parks under the direction of Park Technician Harold K. Nelson. This was the first time in the Park Service that this type of program was being presented to children of this age, therefore, we were not sure how this pilot program would be accepted.

The first program, "Trees", was received with a great deal of enthusiasm by both the teachers and the children. Ten programs were presented during the next five months. The "Happenings in Nature" program covers all facets of nature. Programs have been twice monthly throughout the current school year. At present there are four Volunteers in Parks who are involved in the highly successful program. Other schools in the Hyde Park area are desirous of having this program presented at their schools. In the fall more teams will be formed to extend the opportunity to other schools. Upon completion of the course each spring the children receive diplomas presented by the National Park Service.

The year 1974 has been a good year as we are now using the many diversified talents of the VIPs and our own staff. An example of this was a program on "Endangered Birds" presented by Park Technician Don Borquist, a member of the local Waterman Bird Club and the Audubon Society.

During the year and a half that "Happening in Nature" has been presented, approximately 16 different programs have been prepared. Each one features a lesson plan and most were critiqued by Mr. Nelson and the volunteers that participated. Anyone interested in receiving copies of the lesson plans and critiques should write to the Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites. Please request them only if you are committed to undertaking a similar program as reproduction involves considerable xeroxing.

Harold K. Nelson
Park Technician
Roosevelt-Vanderbilt
National Historic Sites

* * * * *

FOR SALE

Eastern National Park & Monument Association has a NCR cash register (model number 24-107-2-4) for sale. This machine has two departments, one registers the sale and the other the sales tax. It's about two years old and runs good. The price is \$300 and it's located in their main office. Call or write -

ENP&MA
311 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa 19106
215-597-7129

Interpretive Planning

As mentioned in the special note on page 3, the idea behind a special supplement to IN TOUCH is to "air" a subject of general concern to NPS Interpreters. The emphasis will be on viewing the subject from many angles and points of view with the hope of providing new perspectives, along with a better general understanding.

This first supplement is on the National Park Service Interpretive Planning Process. We want to thank the authors of the articles in this supplement for the time and effort they spent in helping us put it together. We hope you will find it of value.

Ed

THE PROCESS

When the editor of IN TOUCH asked if we would explain the role of interpretive planning in the Denver Service Center and how such planning is accomplished, he properly sensed the horrendous dimension of the task.

The fact that most interpreters get involved in some form of interpretive planning makes the general activity familiar. Both long and short range planning are requirements for area operating programs. While each of us has formed some opinion of what interpretive planning is, we do not always agree on what we should do with it.

Not unlike the farmer, who when asked by the mental patient where he planned to haul the wagon load of horse manure, replied that he was taking it home to put on his strawberries.

The patient shook his head in disbelief and exclaimed, "You're crazy not to want cream and sugar on them!"

Understanding and individual appetites are important considerations in interpretive planning. At the Denver Service Center the activity is part of a long process which involves several highly specialized plans. Each recipe is a little different.

If the concepts and proposals which emerge from our interpretive planning could be thought of as strawberries, then the planner helps grow them in the field. He also picks, processes, packages, and sells them under several labels to different customers around the Service. The interpretive planner cross-fertilizes ideas, prunes the dead leaves and coordinates the total effort from conception to completion of the plan. His tool is the written word.

Now sometimes a superintendent is allergic to strawberries, or perhaps the preserves turn out to be marmalade. Whatever goes sour with the product should be evaluated early in the sequence. In the creative enterprise there is nothing wrong with failure, so long as the momentum doesn't stop there.

The five full-time interpretive planners in Denver have been responsible for writing interpretive sections of: (1) new area studies, (2) master plans, (3) interpretive prospectuses, and (4) development concept plans. Individual time is scheduled to handle the priority projects of nine different regions. The comprehensive plan for an area includes the master plan and the action plans which describe in detail how the master plan concepts will be accomplished. Development concept plans and interpretive prospectuses are examples of action plans.

The master plan and interpretive prospectus must operate hand in hand. The master plan defines the broad direction its action plan must take. Master plans deal with the WHAT and the WHERE of interpretation; i. e., what are the interpretive themes and objectives--WHERE will the visitor contact station be located? The interpretive prospectus tells us the kind of facilities and services proposed in the master plan, then develops the objectives and outlines actual content of interpretive presentations. It tells us HOW the master plan will be accomplished; i. e., HOW many themes and HOW they will be presented at site proposals, or HOW the contact station will perform its function. It then proceeds to lay out the interpretive plan by selecting media and content.

It is worth mentioning that in addition to guiding the overall direction and development of area interpretation, the prospectus also justifies money and posi-

tions to be funded for completion of its proposals. It warrants more than a cursory glance by the interpretive manager.

It is the park superintendent, who through his programmed request, invites Denver Service Center interpretive planners to the area. Representatives from region and park staff also comprise the team. The team encourages creativity and innovation. As Marc Sagan says, "Nothing good will happen until someone gets excited about it."

After the field input, the interpretive planner writes a rough draft of the plan which he sends directly to all team members for comment and review. Washington, Harpers Ferry, and regional interpretive specialists also get an informal copy for review.

It is here that the magic takes place! Rough edges are taken off and additional ideas inserted. The team best functions when they are willing to exercise patience, cooperation, common sense, and compromise.

After the plan is revised with the team comments inserted, it begins a long review process which ends on the desk of the Regional Director. By then, the field area will have had at least two opportunities to comment on the prospectus. By this time, the prospectus should have been altered and polished into a plan that reflects the combined thinking of many interpretive specialists.

Sometimes we are asked why the field interpreter should not be the one who writes and coordinates the interpretive prospectus. Several years ago this was attempted. The key is in having a position where essential coordination and idea exchanges take place between Washington, Harpers Ferry, region and the field.

We are always seeking field interpreters who would like to try their hand at interpretive prospectus writing, and we would encourage more interpreters to consider this specialty as a part of their career objectives. However, the position where the task is best performed is in a central office like Denver.

In closing, we would like to remind readers that interpretation is an art. Writing and creating are only parts of the whole service provided. We encourage field interpreters to store up their ideas in the files and to continue their quest for quality interpretation. Maybe in this way we can together become the artist John Ruskin (1819-1900) described in the following:

"He is the greatest artist who has embodied, in the sum of his works, the greatest number of the greatest ideas."

Don Follows
Interpretive Planner
Denver Service Center

* * * * *

There is nothing I do as a field interpreter that I enjoy more than planning. I consider interpretive planning to be one of my prime responsibilities; for it is here that I can make the most significant long term contribution to my Park.

Though interpretive planning has been officially removed from the province of the field interpreter, we remain the ultimate retailer of the finished product -- the interpretation of the Park resource. If this product is less than acceptable we must face the public daily,

knowing that they are receiving less than the experience the Park resource is capable of giving.

While there is a broad spectrum to discuss in the field of interpretive planning I will only address myself to those portions with which I have experience--interpretive planning as seen and evaluated from the Park level.

I believe firmly that every field interpreter has an obligation to approach interpretive planning in the most professional manner of which he is capable! We cannot expect to be accepted as a part of the professional makeup of the planning effort unless we do!

Such an approach begins by compiling and defining the Park's resources in the most precise manner possible. This basic raw data must then be evaluated and organized into the essential Park story. At the same time the Park's region and audience should be investigated to such an extent that the team will have available all the data needed. This process includes drawing upon the expertise of the entire staff for their requirements and input. For they know the Park in great depth and have much to contribute.

By this stage a compilation of raw data should be available. This should be taken to the Superintendent for indepth review of the available data and delineation of management requirements or thrust. All this should be done before the team arrives.

Also prior to their arrival, the Park Interpreter should begin to consider and elicit input as to how the Park might be interpreted. This will allow the Park staff to be ready to provide its share of creative input to the interpretive planning process. The greatest obstacle to be avoided at this stage is

for any portion of the team to enter the effort with pre-conceived ideas. The Planning Team's fresh approach and internal creativity coupled with the Park Staff's local expertise is the raw material from which the best product can come. For any portion of the team to be inflexible will hinder this effort!

Obviously, none of us are perfect. To do as well as we would like, there must be a goal towards which we should strive! It is no secret that many planning efforts have been marked by the clashes between the park staff and the planning team. These do not have to be serious, for any creative effort is marked by honest differences of opinion. Unless these differences crystallize between the parties involved, little harm is done. In all situations one idea must win and the others give way and time alone will prove which is right! All that is truly important is that we continue to build upon our successes and learn from our errors in judgement!

Beyond what I feel the individual interpreter can do to make a contribution to the planning effort, I feel that the interpretive planning process itself as it functions at the Park level should be carefully examined. In my opinion certain points should be considered. These are:

1. Research on the Park's resources should be sufficiently complete to allow Management to make sound decisions well in advance of development.
2. The planning process should be more closely integrated with funding in order that the planning product can be utilized as soon after its preparation as possible. This would eliminate the many plans throughout the service which have been filed and have never been executed.

3. Planning should have firmer guidelines to insure that it is sufficiently realistic to be implemented!

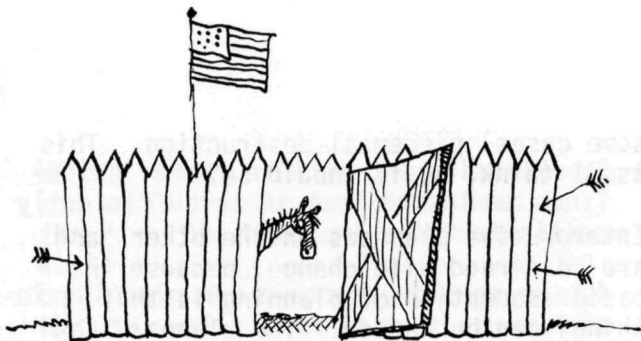
4. We should structure our planning in such a way that it will allow for coordinated development regardless of the level of funding which becomes available.

To summarize, I feel that from the Park level we must insure that we are approaching interpretive planning from the most professional point of view and doing our best to make a solid contribution. I also feel that the planning process should be restructured for more efficient utilization of time and talent.

If we can accomplish the aforementioned, our efforts should result in plans which have an excellent chance of being implemented and our resources will be concentrated on planning and developing the highest quality of product; a product in which we or our successors can take pride. If not, we may have to live with a lot less!

Jim Haskett
Chief Historian
Colonial N.H.P.





MEANWHILE - DOWN AT THE FORT

Bent's Old Fort was in the beginning stages of developing an interpretive prospectus when I arrived as the new Superintendent. The interpretive planning team arrived for their first visit to the area shortly after I did.

Although I was aware that the previous acting Superintendent had been in contact with the members prior to my arrival, I got the feeling that the team had already drawn up the plan and that all that was left for us to do was approve it. We didn't have much input on that first visit, but in retrospect I don't think it was entirely the fault of the planning team. While we were not comfortable with some of the ideas presented we were not sure just what would happen to the momentum of the project if we objected. So we let it go the way it was and didn't raise our points of concern or provide much input.

A few months later we received the draft of the team's plan, along with a request for comment. By then we had discussed the experience with various people and realized the importance of two-way dialog in the planning process. We reopened the discussion with the team and communicated our concerns. Each one of our comments and suggested changes were given consideration and a number of changes were made.

When the final draft was completed. I think all of us that were involved felt comfortable with the plan. I have lived with the plan now for four years and find that I still feel it is a good one and would not make any major changes.

My advice to any field person approaching the interpretive planning process for the first time is to be ready to provide your share of the creative input at the very beginning. You know your park intimately: its needs, its characteristics, its visitors. Don't be intimidated by the Seven Pillagers of Wisdom and their 104 years of applicable experience. They need you!

John Patterson
Supt., Bent's Old Fort NHS

* * * * *

THE TROUBLED ROMANCE

Scarcely any area of interpretive activity within the National Park Service seems to generate such heat as interpretive planning (and interpretive planners). Ever since Marc Sagan, Alan Kent & Company inaugurated the process and the discipline ten or so years ago, the romance between the parks and the planners (and I think it has been close to that) has been tempestuous. At first a marriage was tried (with field interpreters doing the planning); then divorce (no field interpreters doing planning). Now

an uneasy separation has been agreed upon, but emotions still run high, spats and quarrels are frequent, interspersed with reconciliation and moments of great joy and achievement.

I'd like to share with you why I think this is so, and why I think it is good.

Let us start from two basic assumptions that I make, and I believe we all share. These are that the role, the goal, of interpretation in all parks is to:

1. Help the park preserve its resources.
2. Help the visitor truly understand and enjoy the resources.

Then let me state another one that we may not all agree upon:

3. That there are only a few things in the average park interpretive program (indeed in all human activities) that cannot be better than they are--more effective in achieving the above two goals.

Number 3, a premise held by all planners, is where the trouble usually starts.

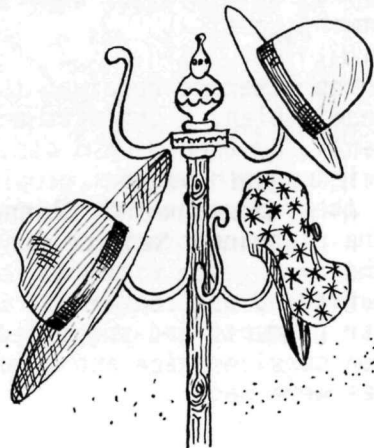
Let's look at how we, interpreters all, assume different postures working for good interpretation, depending upon our positions.

Field interpreters live with the resource and its interpretive program. They know their park intimately, and are immersed in its interpretation. They are in daily contact with their visitors and witness, moment by moment, the pleasure and enrichment experienced by most of them. Field interpreters care about the preservation of their park's resources in a way one can care only if they are constant observers of its changes, fragility and (in

some cases) piecemeal destruction. This is, I think, as it should be.

Interpretive planners on the other hand are concerned with change, because the basic assumption of planning is that things can be better. The planner, not in daily contact with the park and its visitors, looks for and sees elements of the interpretive program that don't work, or that could be more enriching for visitors even though they now give pleasure and satisfaction. Their eyes, seeing the park as an occasional visitor, pick out gaps and weaknesses that even visitors overlook. The park's resources tend to be static to planners, their fragility not witnessed, but only intellectually understood. To the planner the individual park resource is not his daily environment, but exists primarily as a small part of a very much larger cultural or natural ecosystem, and is endowed, by this relationship, with broad and highly-charged significances that present nearly irresistible opportunities for interpretation. And that, I think, is as it should be.

As people working in Interpretation, we change our postures as we change our job responsibilities. I've been astonished to witness this in every field interpreter who becomes an Interpretive Planner, and to see the switch back, too, when they return to the field.



And so, (and I realize I'm generalizing) field interpreters are the managers of our already good interpretive programs and guardians of their park's particular resources; interpretive planners are the identifiers of problems on the doorstep and opportunities on the horizon, and the salesmen of change.

Is it any wonder the relationship is sometimes stormy? And isn't it good that it is? We truly cannot do without each other. As the system of checks and balances operates in our government, so it operates between interpreters and interpretive planners.

Interpretive planners need the sure knowledge of the specific resource, the concern for conservation, the sense of goodness in what is that only field interpreters can give. The field interpreter needs the critical eye of the planner, his unique view of the park's resource, and his interest in change -- not for the sake of change but for the sake of better.

Together, we can achieve our common goals. We aren't likely to stop squabbling -- there are always going to be these creative, constructive tensions.

And, it seems to me, that this relationship is the key to excellence -- the ultimate goal.

Nan Rickey
Interpretive Planner
Denver Service Center

ONE WHO WASN'T PILLAGED

The June issue of IN TOUCH featured Cliff Soubier's explanation (The Seven Pillagers of Wisdom) of the Denver Service Center's approach in preparing interpretive prospectuses. The approach calls for effective communication between planners and park history specialists, and purportedly always works successfully.

But the approach failed at Castillo de San Marcos National Monument in May 1971. The planners went wherever they wanted to and immersed themselves in the environment--the city, The Castillo, Fort Matanzas. Then we sat down to draft the interpretive theme. The captain opened with a statement about the Spanish in America that made me wince and groan, would not accept my objection, and adjourned with the team to their motel. There was no further communication between us.

The planners drafted the interpretive theme of Castillo unilaterally. They surmised that the task was similar to that of drafting themes for historical parks anchored in the Anglo-American mainstream of the country's history. They must have looked for standard books on the subject and found that there are no such books or a definitive bibliography because most of Spanish Florida history still lies silent in unpublished sources.

The draft of the prospectus came out. The interpretive theme focuses generally on Spanish America rather than specifically on St. Augustine. Besides, people of Spanish origin or descent and others who know Spanish American history object to it. Lastly, I was punished for my rebuff by exclusion of my name from the list of planning team members. The theme's inadequacy still holds up approval of the prospectus.

The planners underestimated the fact that Florida is rooted in that other thread of our country's history, the Spanish Borderlands. Florida's part is not as well known as those of the Anglo-American thread. Disregarding good judgement, the planners chose not to ask for guidance.

Knowledge about Castillo is clearly and presently in danger of being frozen at a certain level due to lack of professional support. In historical investigation particularly, only three of fourteen study proposals have been completed. Programming of the rest has been moved up several times. Investigation requires working with Spanish sources and rendering data into modern Spanish before translation for use in English. NPS does not have personnel to do this nor is it contracting to have it done. The result is that Castillo does not get the same share of the support that the Anglo-American historical parks get.

Luis R. Arana
Castillo de San Marcos

* * * * *

As a student intern laboring in the Interpretive Planning section of the Denver Service Center, I was recently asked to relate my views on Interpretive Planning for "In Touch".

Since my arrival at the Service Center in January of this year, I have been greatly impressed by the interpretive planners here in Denver and the field

and regional personnel I have come in contact with. Problems in interpretive planning, it seems to me from my admitted limited experience, are not a result of anyone's incompetency but rather are present because of the nature of Interpretive Planning. Interpretive Planning deals not so much with physical reality but rather the array of human emotions that can be generated by this reality. This type of planning bounds on a level of philosophic thought that often seems to approach the complexity and controversy of religion and politics.

In dealing with this type of planning certain things must, but often do not, happen. Perhaps most importantly all the people involved in the planning effort must remain open-minded in listening to and really hearing each other's ideas and feelings. Cooperation between the people involved is another must. Members of a planning effort cannot view each other as obstacles to overcome if the effort is not to be a wasted one. It is my opinion that it is, for the most part, the absence of these two considerations - cooperation and open-mindedness - that results in a document ending up as only an object collecting dust on a shelf.

So as I prepare to return to the security of university life, stripped of my naivete that planning can be perfect but clinging to the belief that it can always be better, I urge all of you to pull together and continue to provide the public with top quality experiences.

Craig Truman

Interpretive Planning



IT'S THE INTERPRETIVE PLANNING TEAM FROM DENVER SERVICE CENTER AND HARPERS FERRY CENTER. THEY HAVE A LITTLE PRESENTATION.

