

interpreters
information
exchange

IN TOUCH

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

Number 13

May 1976



A new personal training package for field interpreters has just been released by the Division of Interpretation, WASO, and is now available from your Regional Chief of Interpretation. The package, entitled The Park, The Visitor, The Interpreter: A Personal Training Program for Interpreters, consists of a 124-page syllabus-workbook and five videotapes. A copy of the syllabus-workbook should be available for review in all field areas of the System by this time.

The objectives of the package, which is designed to be a self-study training course for seasonal and permanent interpreters in direct face-to-face contact with park visitors, are:

1. To provide an interpreter with a better understanding of how a typical visitor perceives a national park, a park interpretive program, or a visit to a park.
2. To assist park interpreters in finding a common base or level with visitors from which they can build their interpretive programs.
3. To acquaint interpreters with some basic leader behaviors which facilitate learning.
4. To develop or increase an interpreter's ability to discern, analyze and consciously and deliberately perform these behaviors in his or her own interaction with visitors.

The program involves individual study of the workbook and videotapes and individual on-the-job experimenting with the concepts and ideas presented on regularly scheduled interpretive activities.

The Branch of Training has designated this program as an official NPS Interpretation training course and has

assigned it a code number in the 77FY Training Opportunities Booklet. Upon satisfactory completion of the total package, it can be listed on Form 10-180 as formal training and become part of an employee's permanent training record. (Satisfactory completion means demonstrating to your supervisor that you have completed the package and are applying at least some of the ideas and concepts to your daily interpretive activities. A Form DI510-A is then prepared by the trainee, signed by the supervisor and submitted to the Regional Training Officer.)

Over the past three years, several interpretive training packages have been prepared by this office, especially for seasonal and permanent field interpreters: the audiotope training kit on interpretive technique (1974), the videotape training package on critiquing interpretive activities (1975), and now the Personal Training Program for Interpreters. These materials are either available now in your park or can be obtained through your Regional Chief of Interpretation. They were made for you and I encourage you to use them.

Bill Dunmire

Vol. 1	No. 13
Editor	Roy Graybill
Design	Keith Hoofnagle
Coordinator	Roy Graybill
Published every other month by NPS	
Division of Interpretation, WASO	
Address contributions to-	
National Park Service	
Room 3410, Interior Bldg.	
Washington, D. C. 20240	

A decade after the National Historic Preservation Act and 50 years since the launching of Colonial Williamsburg, we finally have a basic book on interpreting our historical heritage. The American Association for State and Local History has published Historic Site Interpretation, by William Alderson, AASLH Director, and Shirley Low, formerly with Colonial Williamsburg. (Nashville: AASLH, 1976. paper, 189pp., bibliog., index. \$6; \$4.50 to members) The result is a sound beginning, which gives lots of practical guidance and numerous examples for "shoppers of the competition."

The authors avoided discussing in depth interpretive principles, visitor psychology, minority or handicapped audiences, sales, and community relations, saying these subjects needed much wider professional discussion before anything definitive could be written. The book's practical approach can help NPS interpreters build sound programs as well as understand the purpose of recent policy and guidelines. The authors advocate written objectives appropriate to the primary purpose of the park, supplemented by a list of supplemental objectives and formally adopted to guide later decisions. The book emphasizes repeatedly that "the visitor may depart with other information and perceptions, but for him to depart without understanding the historical value is to negate the entire purpose of the preservation effort." The staff follows the adoption of objectives by deciding where, when, and how these will be accomplished.

The book discusses at some length the trade-offs in means of "presenting the site," both personal and non-personal. A critic is quoted, calling the NPS visitor center a "giant label for the site." A whole chapter is devoted to school programs, which cites a variety of approaches throughout the country,

such as the inductive method and the Live-in at Old Economy in Pennsylvania. Unfortunately, there seems to be little cross-fertilization between general public and children's programs.

Also germane to NPS are the chapters on Selection and Training of Interpreters, which treat volunteer personnel, too. The section includes a suggested interpreter training program relevant to most seasonal situations. The authors conclude that "the training of interpreters...is never done...Extensive training is expensive, but it pays off...The site itself will enhance its interpretation..."

Regarding security, the book advises written procedures for visitors and staff, basing much on the experience of Colonial Williamsburg. "Without security, there would soon be nothing to interpret; and without interpretation, there would soon be no one who cared about what was saved."

A chapter on evaluation provides a good introduction to the subject, although the special obstacles to federal surveys are not mentioned. The advice they give is solid.

The book ends with two appendices in which they apply their own advice to the development of a hypothetical site and its model interpretive program. A useful bibliography and rather short index wrap it up. All in all, this book is an excellent beginning, addressed to the practical concerns of field interpreters anywhere, yet explaining the need for an orderly approach such as our new Guidelines require. It would be a good addition to your personal library.

Steve Lewis

THE CRAFT OF HISTORY

Please consider the three thoughts that follow a kind of trinity. They comprise one central concern, enunciated in an introductory letter in the March issue, about the health of the craft of history in the National Park Service. The craft requires some special disciplines and philosophies that are no longer practiced in the Service as consistently, as openly, or with the dedication that they deserve. Each particular thought below---the product of perceptions gathered in seasonal and permanent interpretive experience as well as in central office work---speaks to one element of that craft and its practices that we are presently wont to forget.

AN ETHIC BEYOND ACCURACY

No NPS historian or interpreter will admit any virtue in factual error. Whatever our record, we aren't about to condone obvious historical inaccuracies. That's admirable, but only the beginning of the ethic implicit in the craft of history. What we'd better be about is historical honesty.

Historical honesty involves the kind of patience and tolerance and distance that often separates a historian from an anti-quarian or buff. It is the intention to understand and present the events of the past on the past's own terms. It is the incredibly delicate task of both trying to put ourselves in the shoes of another generation and still recognize - daily - that we can't ever do so. It is, as well, applying the golden rule to historical research and interpretation.

That means, then, that being historically honest, we:

- have no right to assume that people of the past felt as we do about similar experiences or ideas.

- cannot ever imbue previous generations with our own political principles or values.

- cannot misleadingly "select" the facts we present to make the point that we'd like to make.

Marcella Sherfy
Staff Historian
Division of History

- dare not allow ourselves to think or tell others that we are portraying the past, when, in fact, we simply demonstrate some few physical activities or objects of a previous generation.

There is no more frustrating experience than to stand silent, unable to offer any explanations or qualifications, when someone pokes fun at us, takes our words out of context, bends our opinion to serve their arguments, or characterizes us with the unimportant minutiae of our life. The people of the past are in that position. And since we'll be there someday, too, it behooves us to be as thoughtful and honest with them as we want interpreters of the future to be with us.

That kind of honesty requires a different kind of research than that needed to determine the shade that was Civil War sky blue. But it is far more important. What we're about after all, is interpreting. And for historians, that means listening to the people of the past and then repeating (not twisting or culling or exaggerating) their words and thoughts.



TIME PAST/PASSED

The present watchwords of historical areas are "recreate" and "reenact." The standard beginning to a living history talk or interpretive schedule is "step into the past with us." And when asked what it is we want to do for visitors to a historical area, we usually respond "to make history live."

Those phrases may represent only the lessons of our high school public speaking course that taught us to engage our audience with a clever beginning. Or, particularly after years of use, they may express what we think we're doing. In either case, they're misleading and in a real sense dishonest.

What we're doing at any historical park is preserving and interpreting remnants - pieces of the past - that have survived to the present. Those remnants include buildings and fences and furniture and the skeletal outlines of some human thought and activity. Those remnants are surrounded by the rest of our parks or the rest of our actions or words. And we design that surrounding space or activity to resemble what we think might have existed around those remnants in the past. But in no sense have we brought back or recreated the "past." And short of Star Trekian miracles, we won't. We can come closest physically, but even that won't ever be very close. The efforts we spend just to get reasonably accurate costumes illustrate that. Weather patterns change; years of special breeding, chemical fertilizers, and insecticides subtly but permanently alter raw materials; and in many cases we'll simply never know everything about a physical historic environment.

But of much greater importance is the fact that no recipe exists from which to concoct the thoughts, values, and emotions of people who lived in the past.

Even having steeped ourselves in the literature of the period, worn its clothes, and slept on its beds, we never shed 1975 perspectives and values. And from those perspectives and values, we judge and interpret the past. We simply cannot be another person and know his time as he knew it or value what he valued for his reasons.

Insisting that we can create and present a whole segment of the past denies the marvelous complexity of human beings. And whether visitors recognize it or not, that assumption deliberately and inevitably misleads them: we promise to recreate a whole or significant part of the past for them; we then give them bits and pieces of it instead; and so we allow - even encourage - them to assume that they know most of that particular past when in fact they know only its pieces. The consequences of the deception include romanticizing, false stereotyping, and the easier manipulation of the past for its propaganda value.

Time past has, very simply passed. And that would seem to be the first principle to convey to our visitors. The magic of history and its ability to provoke thought and learning come from the mystery, from the uncharted and intricate reaches of earlier thought and motive yet to be discovered. Far better then to provoke visitors to explore those reaches, using the historical remnants that we have, than to lull them into the pleasant notion that for one area or time period they have learned "the way it was."



MEDIA versus MESSAGE

It is, after all, a useless pointless debate. If it had any validity or necessity 10 or 20 years ago, it doesn't

anymore. You see, arguing now over whether we need communicators or historians in a historical park presumes that we have to choose one or the other. Given the number of people who want either permanent or temporary jobs with us, we have the opportunity to hunt and choose and promote those genuinely skilled in both areas.

But since the argument continues and since one school of thought still insists that when a crunch comes, communication should be the primary skill sought, let us present our case for the necessity of hiring someone also trained as a historian.

What we value about honest-to-goodness historians isn't just their store of historical knowledge. Any number of people know a good bit about the past, but misrepresent or misconstrue or misuse that information. What we need are people who have a better than average command of historical information who can make thoughtful, well-founded decisions on when and how that information should be used. A degree in history doesn't guarantee that skill, but it increases the odds for its presence. In fact, though there are many ways to learn them, the skills and historical discernment we seek are the goals of the formal study of historiography.

The uses and necessity for that skill and judgment in a historical park are as subtle as they are important. Historical competence is needed:

- to recognize the difference between historical show biz and interpretation.
- to understand and articulate the park's historical theme.
- to judge the measure of historical accuracy and honesty in a book or a talk.

- to stalk elusive but needed historical information in obscure library corners and professional publications.

- to cull the toy cannons and key chains from interpretive sales shelves - and to know why that should be done.

- to judge a DSC report or a HFC exhibit with an eye not to appearances but to substance, honesty, effectiveness, appropriateness.

- to describe for a park manager the significance of a historic house or fence or site to the park's theme.

- to set up logical research priorities.

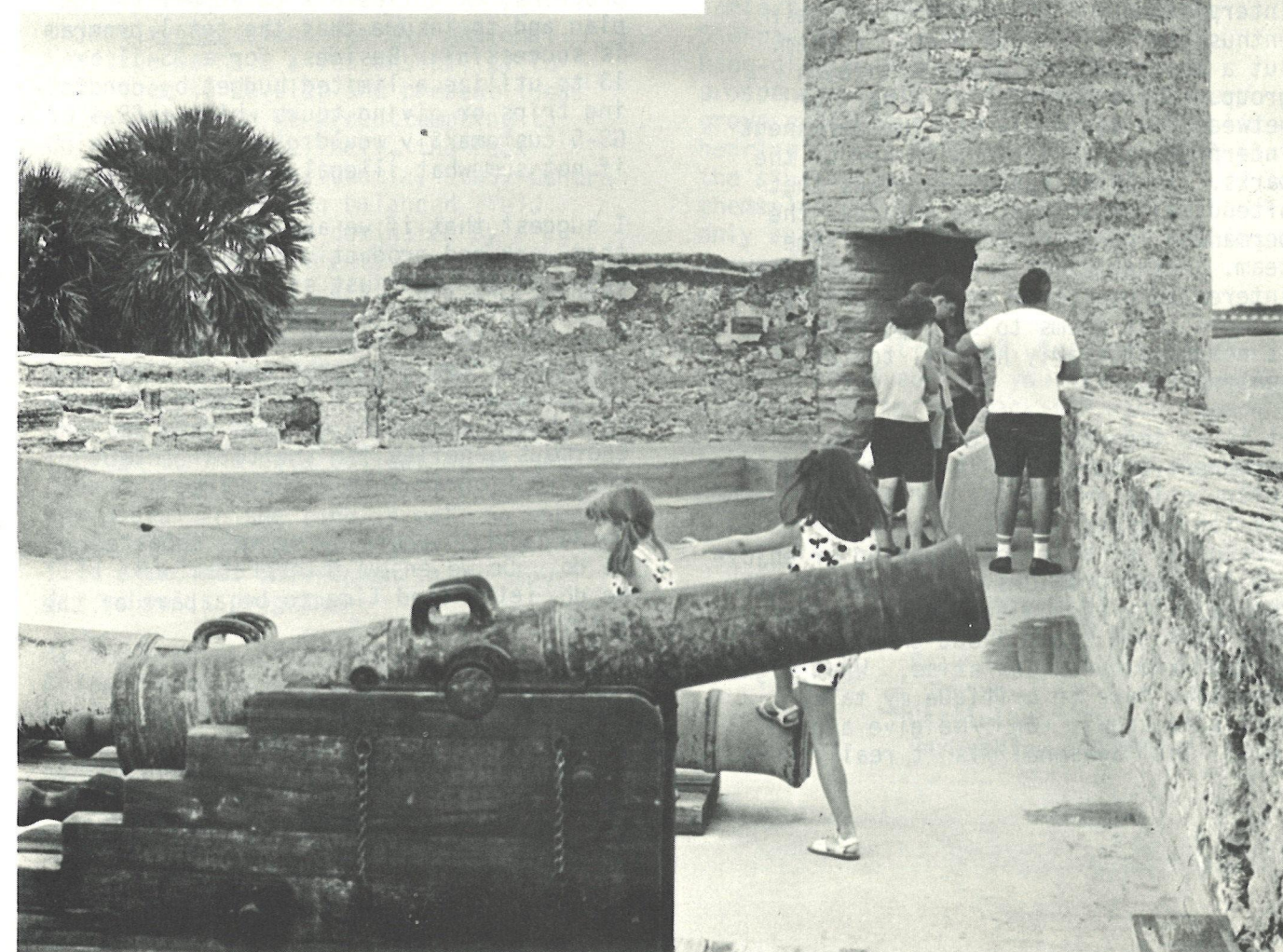
- to stand up - at all times - with obvious expertise and integrity to a Service that does not always take history seriously - and to a profession that doesn't always find us professional.

Unfortunately, not all those decisions or situations are met by people with significant historical knowledge and discernment. And - in spite of that - parks keep operating - visitors keep coming - programs are still praised. But given the gamut of things liked by the American public, popularity is only a limited measure of success or good management.

You see, we hold the nation's most important historic sites - the places of greatest significance in its perception of its past. We don't in point of fact, reach the American public as widely or as relentlessly as formal education or the entertainment and publishing industries (where some license with historical fact is forgiven). But - however corny it sounds, we touch visitors after they have come - almost

as part of a pilgrimage - to see and know those surviving elements of their past that make their present more understandable, more hopeful.

If by ignorance or casualness or whim we distort visitors' comprehension of the past, "sell" them an easy version, perpetuate appealing myths, use the past as our soapbox, we've abused our responsibility and their trust. And whether they "find us out" today or tomorrow makes no difference in the magnitude of the offense.



FORUM



GET INVOLVED!

Recently I have been involved in the training of several groups of seasonal interpreters. I was excited by their enthusiasm for the job ahead of them. But a major concern arose with each group. There seems to be a barrier between the seasonals and the permanent interpretive people in a number of the parks. In blunt terms, it means that often the "seasonals" do not feel the permanent Interpreter is part of the team. Rather s/he is just an occasionally interested evaluator of their efforts, a thorn that seems to be important, but is not particularly helpful to the seasonal.

It is an important fact that when a permanent Interpreter is not engaged in interpretive activities during the visitor season, in the eyes of the "seasonal" s/he is not enduring or enjoying the same problems and triumphs that the majority of the team experiences. S/he does not sweat about the same issues--and questions arise. What right does s/he have to critique my talk? Does s/he know? Can s/he give a good talk? The "Seasonal" isn't really sure,

and s/he doubts. The permanent does not seem to be a member of the team. The permanent Interpreter may respond to this line of thought during the brief, intensive visitor season with, "I should not present programs, my duties are to supervise and plan and to insure that the total program is successful. Besides, for a GS-11 or 13 to utilize a limited budget by conducting trips or giving tours which a GS-4 or GS-5 customarily would give is wasteful if not somewhat illegal."

I suggest that if we are interested in team-work and productivity we must get involved and not just sit back and direct. As a start, seasonal employees should know that the permanent staff can give programs, does give programs, and is quite capable at it. The needed three to four hours a week to achieve this has enormous benefits for the total Interpretive Program within the Park.

Do we need to prove ourselves repeatedly? We do. Do we enjoy interpretation? If we do, let's find time to be a part of the team.

Dave Karraker
Superintendent
Mather Training Center

INTERPRETATION FOR SCHOOLS

In the winter of 1975 I had the pleasure of visiting with the National Park Service to look at interpretation and training. So valuable was this experience that I feel compelled to share my gratitude with all those whom I meet. It was a most stimulating experience.

Of particular interest was the NEED program and its attempt to structure otherwise random observations into a related whole. Unfortunately it was not possible to see the programme in operation and I felt a nagging suspicion that something was missing from the material that I saw. On reflection I realise that it was the conscious application to current National Park problems and thinking. If future generations are to have the where-with-all to make objective decisions for our national heritage we have a responsibility to help them to develop and present ideas on management. We are attempting to do this at Losehill Hall, the Peak National Park's residential Study Centre where we feel that a balanced field programme, so often dominated by examination requirements, can have an equal blend of self-discovery and arousal of environmental awareness.

Any visit to the National Park should be structured to give students a specific problem that they have already worked through to the data collecting stage. Data collection then becomes purposeful and useful in the long as well as short term. This approach is used for all five exercises undertaken in our four day school's programme.

At the present time National Parks in Britain are going through the Master Plan process involving public participation. By-and-large, young people of school age have not been consulted on

the grounds that only the professional planner has the ability or knowledge to undertake these surveys and policy decisions. Our experience shows otherwise. In fact, students are capable of making very shrewd, reasoned judgments that the planners and managers would do well to listen to. We have found this by extending the work outlined above into role playing exercises whereby the students carry out their normal field programme in small groups and also make a landscape evaluation survey.

With the aid of a questionnaire they are also encouraged to consider the relative merits of various types of landscape and management policies. At the end of the day they enter discussion groups to prepare a management plan on behalf of a selected interest group. In a U.S. context such groups might include the Sierra Club, the concession company, hang-gliding enthusiasts, mineral prospectors, etc. In the morning every group presents its policies at a "public hearing" where it is readily apparent that the students have totally involved themselves with the issues and are not only enjoying the experience but putting forward important, well-considered recommendations.

Why not give it a try? Get your local schools involved once you have gathered a basic information pack for each interest group. It works! If you don't believe it, come to see us on your next jaunt to Britain.

Tony Escritt
Vice-Principal
Losehill Hall
Peak National Park Study
Centre
Castleton
Derbyshire S30 2WB

HABLA USTED ESPANOL?

PARLE VOUS FRANCAIS?

SPREKEN SIE DEUTSCH?

I've recently returned from a holiday trip of 3 weeks to Southern Germany. I was repeatedly struck by impressions about "interpretation"...the NPS kind, even more than my sometimes desperate need for language translations.

Since Southern Germany happens to be a holiday destination of many Europeans as well as Americans we expected to find lots of English-speaking people. It was a shock to find that not so...and we learned some very basic German really quickly. This didn't help us beyond bed and board, and was especially limiting when it came to understanding the tourist attraction information. But, Europe has done a lot for the foreigner, and we might do well to look at their efforts with an eye to what they teach us.

First, Europe recognizes that many languages are spoken, but that symbols can be universally understood. Hence all signs which are "directive" are in symbols such as we are installing in parks today. After 3 weeks of driving in Germany, I can heartily endorse the expansion of symbol signs in America. They are VITAL if you don't speak the native language, and it is very encouraging to understand something when all around you things are incomprehensible! Symbol signs, we found, must be posted well in advance of whatever they refer to.

Another point which impressed us was that many of the tourist attractions had either English-speaking guides, English-printed booklets, or both. There might not be sufficient people on hand

to have an English language tour, but we could buy the book and go along with the Germans and read the information. It wasn't always satisfactory this way (we missed all the jokes told by the guides), but most of the information was available. Surprisingly there were areas of heavy American visitation where we could find no information in English. This seemed principally to occur where there were many servicemen and where wartime activity had taken place. When we found no English it hit home; I kept thinking about our largest parks with heavy foreign visitation, and wondered if the NPS did near as well in foreign language interpretation as the Germans did in small castles.

Unless we happen to be lucky enough to find a seasonal who speaks fluent something-or-other, do we have the expertise to give foreign language tours? Do we even try to meet the needs of foreign visitors with printed material? How many areas in the system even have access to a foreign language dictionary?

Until you've stood in front of a sign giving you the history of a building, and realized you couldn't translate more than 1 word out of 30, you just don't understand what it must be like to visit the United States and speak no English. I recognize that many of our visitors speak excellent English, but I have a greater sympathy for our visitors who don't... and a tremendous admiration for those who learn more than one language.

It strikes me that the NPS can approach our assistance to foreign visitors in

several ways. The first would be: don't assume that everyone speaks English!! (They may be able to order a hamburger, but not understand a thing about Spanish forts on American shores); secondly: let's get our cooperating associations involved in buying foreign assistance material (such as language dictionaries). Here at Walnut Canyon we've had foreign language information sheets printed in German, Spanish, French, and Japanese; our cooperating association helped us pay people to translate our guidebooks into German, tape them onto cassettes, and even bought us the tape players which we lend; thirdly: be sensitive to the special needs of foreign visitors ("restroom" means nothing; "W.C." is universal), and get those symbol signs installed everywhere you can. Those signs are needed for food dispensers, sleeping establishments, water fountains, campgrounds, walking trails, and W.C.'s.

We may never get as good as the Europeans in handling tours in many languages, but we might start looking for seasonals who have language arts in addition to knowing how to fight fires and identify plants. Let's look at our entire staff, find those who speak another language other than English, and get them involved in interpretation-- regardless of what their job title might be.

Once you've traveled in a land where you are a foreigner, and no one speaks your native language, believe me you are ever so much more sensitive to the problems of communication.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND ENGLISH!!!

Marion J. Durham
Administrative Clerk
Walnut Canyon



MICHAEL FARADAY, MI
(MASTER OF INTERPRETATION)

The first-time interpreter, the interpreter who is working up new material, or the seasoned interpreter who anguishes over the symptoms of ennui (and we all experience such moments) can find inspiration in the English scientist, Michael Faraday.

After joining the Royal Institution in the early 1800's, Faraday discovered this "fulcrum of British scientific research" was in danger of having to close down for lack of funds. This he proposed to remedy by interpreting science to the public. But there was one obstacle, so discouraging that it would have squelched a lesser man: Faraday had "no natural gifts" as an interpreter; indeed, his early writings show he had an unhappy talent in putting thoughts to paper. And as for handling an audience--that he would not have dared. In short, this great man had "difficulty in articulating."

How he dealt with his problem has recently been related by the historian Paul Johnson in A Place In History (London: Futura Publications, 1974).

Faraday set out to become a professional speaker, but quickly learned, "I am sorry to say that the generality of mankind cannot accompany us one short hour unless the path is strewn with flowers."

Thus it was, writes Johnson, that Faraday "paid careful attention to the seating arrangement in the lecture room, to the supply of fresh air, to the elimination of noisome smells (for a chemist, he had a curious hatred of smells, and often went about the Royal Institution sniffing and eliminating their source). The positioning of his illustrative experiments, the exact way in which they were carried out, their precise relationship to the purely verbal passages in his

lectures were all a matter of intense study and constant modification. He spent five years preparing himself before he took the podium, and it is not surprising that he is one of the very few great lecturers who has succeeded in teaching others how to do it, for he certainly learnt the hard way himself. His notes to lecturers have the clarity and felicity of Shakespeare's advice to actors in Hamlet, for Faraday saw a lecture as an exercise in balance: a dramatic performance disciplined by the rules of aesthetic reticence, an exciting adventure, but one where truth was the hero and never the victim.

"From 1825 until he retired in 1862, Faraday lectured constantly; his Friday Evening Discourses became a national institution. His subjects covered a prodigious range: theoretical chemistry in all aspects, but also a great variety of practical matters, such as the artificial production of precious stones, magnetism, lighthouses, electric silk-loom, the ventilation of mines, the manufacture of mirrors and reflectors, zoology, botany, astronomy and geology."

That Faraday succeeded splendidly in his determination to overcome his "difficulty in articulating" and become one of the finest interpreters of his age--or of any age--was testified to by those fortunate enough to have come within range of his self-taught skills.

"'He articulates,' wrote a German professor, 'what other people swallow and chew.' There is no doubt that Faraday in full flow was a magnificent spectacle: he did not charm...he--the metaphor is apt--electrified. 'It was an irresistible eloquence,' wrote Lady Holland, 'which waked the young from their visions and the old from their dreams...his enthusiasm sometimes carried him to the point of ecstasy...His hair streamed out from his head, his hands were full of nervous

action, his light, lithe body seemed to quiver with its eager life. His audience took fire with him, and every face was flushed.'"

If Faraday could practice for five years, painfully developing the skills of interpretation before daring to face his first audience, couldn't we look upon our working years as ones of self-improvement as we, too, deliberately seek mastery of our specialty?

Charles Konopa
Seasonal Interpreter
Petrified Forest NP

PSEUDOERGOCYTES:
LEADERSHIP AND INTERPRETATION

A few years back--several decades, actually--I had the pleasure of studying under Bob King at the University of Iowa. Bob was an ant man; not exclusively, but for relaxation, he liked to study the social structures of ant colonies. In addition to the normal castes--workers, soldiers, nurse ants, etc.--he discovered a new rank, for which he coined the name "pseudoergocytes." It has the body of a worker, looks like a worker, and acts like a worker. But it doesn't do anything.

Perhaps pseudoergocytes are just naturally lazy; or perhaps some ant colonies have an unemployment problem; or perhaps the pseudoergocytes are just waiting for strong leadership, and clear guidelines from the front office. I was thoroughly disturbed recently to hear that the latter is "...what Interpretation needs."

I protest. The strength and effectiveness of interpretation is dependent on the character and motivation of the field interpreter, not on who or how many employees are assigned to WASO or the regional offices. Interpretation does not need increased power in Washington; what is needed is the restoration of responsibility to the field naturalist, historian, and archeologist to plan and carry out the park's program.

There are two basic attributes that are common to all good interpreters--a catholic curiosity about the world in which s/he lives, and a willingness, indeed a driving need, to share that curiosity with others. The shift of interpretive responsibility to the central office, and subsequent standardization of interpretive methods has contributed to the atrophy of curiosity. Inadvertently, or by design, we have reduced the field interpreter to a pseudoergocyte. It's time the field interpreters once again be permitted the satisfaction of being full and creative workers.

Jim Reid
Regional Chief Scientist
Rocky Mountain Region

ON THE OUTSIDE



IN TOUCH WITH THE SKY

"To a person uninstructed in natural history, his country or seaside stroll is a walk through a gallery filled with wonderful works of art, nine-tenths of which have their faces turned to the wall."

Thomas Henry Huxley

Interpreters spend much of their time helping people bring the other nine-tenths of the world into focus. Every time people have the experience of stepping back to get a broader point of view it becomes clear how important it is to be able to see relationships between things. Sometimes we get so involved with details of one sort or another that we fail to see the whole world about us. Other times we see the world all right, but cannot comprehend it because of our lack of detailed knowledge. Details are important and so are panoramic views. It is the combination of understanding of microscopic and macroscopic parts of the world which is most beautiful and satisfying.

Our escape from this world is an excellent example. We knew that Earth was a small planet orbiting a star, but it meant so very much to SEE IT AS A PLANET; to pause for an introspective moment and look back to see all of our world at one time. The conditions which sustain our lives, the land and water and sunshine suddenly became so obviously scarce, delicate and precious amid the emptiness about the planet.

Which brings me to "Sky Interpretation."

There are not many places left where people go in large numbers and where conditions favor good visibility of the natural sky. Parks, forests, and some recreation areas are such places. Here one can feel the presence of natural things and look out into space to contemplate how all this came into being. We can study the miracle of sunlight and air and consider the cosmic processes and time which have produced them. Indeed, we can also more clearly imagine the replication of similar worlds, and different ones, multiplied innumerable time amid the stars of the Milky Way and other galaxies.

What is really alarming about the need to interpret the sky is the realization that most humans are really quite blind to the universe. How many people have any real concept of the stars, of the vast cosmic distance and time scale, or even of the sun? It is startling to learn how many people have never, in their entire lives, even seen a dark, country, star-filled sky.

Yes, parks are THE places where people can best enjoy the sky and the Nation's astronomers are anxious to help park custodians put people in touch with the sky. For the past two years the American Astronomical Society has conducted a project to encourage sky interpretation in national parks. Workshops, seminars, training sessions and volunteer activities have taken place in many parks and some parks now conduct regular sky interpretation

programs. The project is now in its final year and all activities are directed toward procedures and events intended to perpetuate interpretive astronomy after the project is over. Here are some of the things which are being done.

Meetings are being held and group efforts are being organized to coordinate sky interpretation within regions. Information and training centers are being identified in the vicinity of parks with the hope that parks will continue to use these resources in the coming years. Many astronomers and planetarium educators feel that this service is a worthwhile outreach function which they can continue to offer as a professional activity. But this will only be effective if parks continue to request it.

Workshops and seminars are beginning to be held at selected places to give interpreters the opportunity to learn basic astronomy or brush up on the latest astronomical discoveries. One such workshop was conducted on April 29, 30 and May 1 in Tucson, Arizona. It was sponsored by the planetarium at the University of Arizona with participation by Tucson area astronomers. Another workshop is under consideration for the Washington, D. C. area.

A survey has been sent to more than 3200 astronomers and planetarium educators to determine the locations of places where interpreters can receive help. In addition, it is clear that hundreds of amateur astronomy groups are eager to use their telescopes for the benefit of visitors to parks. It is becoming clear that there are people who can help in the vicinity of nearly every park. Some of these resource people are willing to visit parks and give training and sample programs. A few are willing to participate as regular volunteers.

An annual Sky Interpretation Resource Bulletin is planned with the first issue to be published in the late spring or early summer of this year. This will list names and addresses where interpreters can receive help. It will also contain selected information in the form of articles and references. You may receive the bulletin without charge. Just send your name and address to the author at the following address:

Von Del Chamberlain
Sky Bulletin
National Air and Space Museum
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D. C. 20560.

One additional idea is under consideration. It is possible to develop a mobile sky interpretation facility which could consist of a large astronomical telescope, a solar telescope, a small weather station and associated interpretive equipment. It would be possible for entire audiences of more than one hundred people to simultaneously see what the telescope is focused on by the use of video projection and image amplification technology. The author is very interested in receiving indications of the level of interest in such a facility and its potential use in National Parks. Please comment to the address listed previously.

The most important question is whether or not parks will use the resources being offered. The degree of success of the project will depend upon the response of people in parks. So get involved. Make use of the opportunity to broaden your interpretive horizons. Get on the list to receive the Sky Interpretation Resource Bulletin. Don't wait. Do it now.

Von Del Chamberlain

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS



1976 COOPERATING ASSOCIATION PUBLICATIONS COMPETITION

The formal announcement for the 1976 competition will be going out around the first of July. The excitement generated by the 1974 competition is still being heard at association workshops and meetings and it appears that there will be an enthusiastic response to the competition this year. We want to give you an opportunity to comment on the categories before they are officially announced. They are as follows:

1. Interpretive publication (the historical, geological, ecological, etc., story of a park including special subjects, i.e., birds, wildlife, mountains, flowers, mammals, etc.), more than 48 pages, one to three colors (other than cover);
2. Interpretive publication same as above except full color (other than cover);
3. Interpretive publication, less than 48 pages, one to three colors (other than cover);
4. Interpretive publication, same as above except full color (other than cover);
5. General park guide, more than 36 pages, any use of color;
6. General park guide, same as above except less than 36 pages, any use of color;
7. Self-guiding trail or tour folder or booklet, any use of color;
8. Children's publications: coloring book, interpretive story, illustrated guide; any number of pages, any use of colors;
9. Miscellaneous publications: newspaper, map, poster, foreign language translation, etc.;
10. New edition of any old publication or a reprint with significant alterations (copy of old must be submitted).

Although there did not seem to be any major disagreement to the categories established in 1974, there may have been some new publications created during the past two years which would necessitate a reorganization of the categories. Your suggestions or comments within the next two or three weeks would be appreciated.

PRICE MARKING

Recently you received from this office samples of pricing labels. As a direct result of that mailing one association responded with information on a Pitney Bowes labeling gun which had proven quite satisfactory. Pitney Bowes was contacted and we now have information on the Econo-Ply labeler, Monarch Model 1110. Eastern National Park & Monument Association has tested it against several other models and has determined that the 1110 is better and cheaper, and, much to our delight, it is on the GSA Schedule. If you do a lot of marking using peel-off gummed labels, you might want to consider the investment of between \$20 and \$25 for a rapid-fire marking system. If you are interested let us know and we will provide you with information. If you are stopping by our office, we have a labeling gun for demonstration.

POSTAGE STAMP MACHINE

If you are having difficulty with your postage stamp machine or are interested in a new or different model, we now have contact with a supplier of both machines and stamps in folders. The prices are highly competitive and the service is excellent. Drop us a note for complete details.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Pacific Northwest National Parks Association for a successful first year and for what appears to be a most successful cooperative effort with the U. S. Forest Service. Nez Perce National Historical Park (formerly Nez Perce Park Cooperative Association) is the newest member of PNWNPA.

AMERICAN BOOKSELLERS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

This year's ABA convention is being held in Chicago June 6-9 at the Hilton Hotel. Those of you near Chicago or passing through at that time should make every effort to attend the trade show and see the publishers display. Ask Helen Douglas (Coastal Parks Association) or Denny Davies (Dinosaur Nature Association), who attended ABA three years ago in Los Angeles, if you have any doubts as to the worth of time spent at this convention. Write for further details.

ASSOCIATION TRAINING PACKAGE FOR SEASONALS

Sometime ago Mesa Verde Museum Association, under the direction of Gil Wenger, organized a brief slide and tape program to train seasonal rangers in the activities and management of the association. This has been extremely helpful in acquainting seasonals, many of whom are exposed to associations for the very first time, with the peculiarities of this business. This office has been so impressed with Gil's handiwork that we are considering using the program as a foundation for developing a similar training package to be available to all cooperating associations. The package will include 30-50 color transparencies and a 15 minute tape. The subject matter will be broad in scope, but will be designed for any individual association to add on pertinent material that would apply to their own management operations. The package will be developed over the summer months and introduced to associations at the November conference. If all goes well it will be ready for early '77 distribution. We would greatly appreciate any suggestions that you might have and/or slides you feel are important to include.

NEW FTS PHONE NUMBER: 925-6226

This number will get the Coordinator's office direct. Regular commercial: 304-535-6371 ext. 226.

RAP UP

CORRECTION

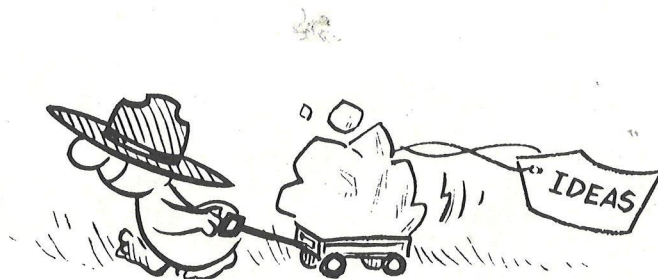
In the July 1975 issue of *In Touch* we printed an article on the fate of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Since that time, we have been advised by both John Luzader, Chief of the Historic Preservation Division in the Denver Service Center, and Leonard Brown, Southeast Region Historian, that the article contains major factual errors. As Len put it, "May I suggest that a retraction or clarification be printed and printed soon, before some interpreter using these facts as published in *In Touch* finds himself with egg all over his face." John suggests that *Signers of the Declaration*, volume XVIII of the *National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings*, published by the NPS, is a better source of information.

Our thanks to John and Len for pointing this out to us.

ed

ASTRONOMY AT THE GRAND CANYON

Astronomy programs have been a part of the evening offerings at the Grand Canyon for the past three years. Two programs were given each week in the summer and one each week in the winter. In the summer, on an average, about 150 attended the astronomy session each night it was given.



I soon found a slide program helped develop a story and also solved the problem of what to do on cloudy nights. The introductory slides in the program deal with the Grand Canyon. Starting with the sunrise and ending with the sunset I am able to give a very basic idea of some of the natural and historic features of the Grand Canyon.

The sunset slides lead naturally and easily into the night sky and set the stage for the astronomy program. For the next twenty minutes, slides and comments describe the sky above Grand Canyon. Star viewing along the rim follows. On cold nights this may last only ten or fifteen minutes while on more favorable occasions we may stay 45 minutes to an hour.

I have put outlines of constellations on 20" by 24" cards as an aid for those having difficulties. Sometimes a SCA may assist helping small groups with using the cards. Recently I acquired a used homemade telescope. When the crowd dwindles down to about 20 people it can be set up for added interest. A telescope, however, is not necessary to a successful program.

The Grand Canyon newspaper, the SAMA, features astronomy news seasonally. Anyone interested in starting a similar program should contact Von Del Chamberlain, National Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C. 20560, or

write to me at Grand Canyon National Park, Grand Canyon, Arizona 86023. I would be more than happy to assist anyone in setting up a program like the highly successful one here at the Canyon.

John Kline
Park Ranger
Grand Canyon NP

Everyone receives letters from the park visitor commending their work. These letters are looked at and then filed away with all the other memorabilia, if kept at all. But once in a red moon, a letter really says something. It tells us not only what we did, that our methods of communication were acceptable, but also that we as interpreters really are part of the team. The team that is trying to obtain the original goal of our being.

"To conserve...(all values)...for the enjoyment of future generations."

One such letter was received by Jim Thompson, Superintendent, Death Valley National Monument. We would like to share this letter with the rest of you.

Bruce Kaye
Supervisory Park Technician
Death Valley NM

Dear Sir:

I would like to congratulate the staff of Death Valley National Monument on their outstanding interpretive programs. Their presentations are thought-provoking, challenging and entertaining. The rangers here are extremely articulate spokesmen for the many values that have been incorporated into the National Park System.

I especially appreciate their obvious enthusiasm for the great environmental and historical issues of our time. This enthusiasm is contagious and I am sure that their presentations have motivated many visitors to become involved in the struggle to preserve our vanishing American heritage. Programs like "A Place for Us" and "Plants, Man and Survival" stimulate discussion of important environmental issues like resource exploitation, game "management" and wilderness preservation. On the historical side the programs given by the Indian ranger on the Shoshones are excellent. Her perspective is unique and her presentations are a living tie to the historical past which many Americans have too long ignored and too often failed to appreciate.

On these and many other programs the staff of Death Valley National Monument is to be commended. I would like to believe that the rangers here are reaching the people who ultimately will decide whether the historical and environmental values enshrined in our parks and monuments will fade and disappear or whether they will flourish vigorously for generations to come.

Sincerely,

John H. McCoy
Minden City, Michigan

CURATOR'S CORNER

STUDY COLLECTION - STORAGE IN NATIONAL PARKS

The Park Study Collection consists of all museum specimens not on display. Study collections are therefore a fundamental park resource of great value. The value

can be expressed in terms of dollars, research potential, or as tools of interpretation. As resources, study collections certainly merit the provision of adequate and proper space which will secure their conservation, protection, and provide for their ultimate use as tools to stimulate understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage.

It should be remembered that out of the three and one-half million objects in the custody of the National Park Service, no more than 1 or 2 percent of these objects are on public display at any given time. Therefore, the greater part of our historic artifact resource is in storage condition at any given moment. Because of this tremendous responsibility to maintain the historic resource, even though it is out of sight and in storage, certain considerations must be given to selecting space for the use of storing museum specimens.

The listing that follows provides a number of characteristics of proper storage space:

1. The space must be environmentally adequate. This means there should be stable humidity and temperature. The exact level of humidity or temperature will depend on the geographic location of the collection. The most important consideration is that the temperature or humidity does not fluctuate greatly in any short period of time, and that the temperature remains above freezing and below 80 degrees. The relative humidity should never exceed 70%.

2. The rooms should be physically secure. This means the rooms should be isolated and lockable. Access to the room containing the museum storage collection should be limited to people with responsibilities for the collection.

3. The room must be separated from all other uses. A proper storage collection room is dedicated to that single purpose.

4. The space selected for the storage area should be spatially adequate to accommodate the peculiar characteristics and quantity of each park collection. Collections with a great deal of furniture, for instance, require large amounts of space so that furniture can be properly stored without having pieces stacked on one another. Collections with large amounts of archeological material might be consolidated by proper use of standard specimen storage cabinets. Since the reason for the existence of most historical parks is to protect the historical resources of that park, the space allocated for the study collection should not be skimpy.

5. The space available should be planned by knowledgeable persons so that specialized storage equipment, which is available for specialized purposes, can be used to efficiently use the space and provide the ultimate protection for the objects being stored. Examples of this are rolling racks for the hanging of framed art prints or oil paintings, special cabinets for the proper storage of costumes and textiles, and special containers for the proper storage of historic paper.

Basically these are the criteria for proper storage. A good storage space has considered all aspects mentioned above, and, keeping within these guidelines, has allocated the space which would be most convenient to the staff having to work on it, and to the public which will ultimately use the study collection area.

Arthur C. Allen
Chief, Division of
Museum Services
Harpers Ferry Center

JUNIOR RANGERS: PROFILE ON PROBLEMS AND POTENTIAL

"You know, this park belongs to you just as much as it belongs to me or your parents..." begins the Ranger, "and for the next two and a half hours, we are going to explore Grand Teton National Park and learn how to save it for 'our' children and our children's children."

Fifteen children ranging in age from 6 to 11 listen intently as the Ranger asks, "What is a national park?" At first, there is silence; then a hand goes up. "It's a place where the animals are safe." Then another hand: "You're not supposed to take anything out of a national park." Three more hands go up...another Junior Ranger program has begun.

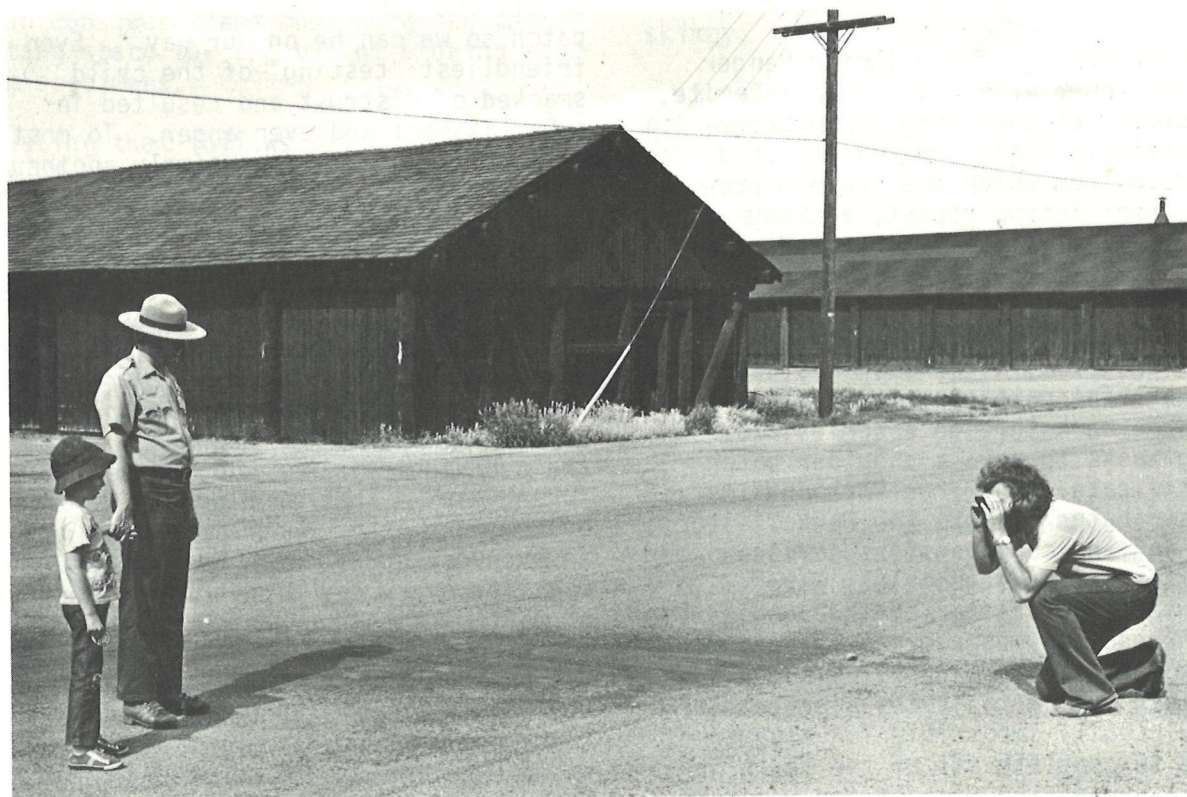
The real beginning of the Junior Ranger program followed a 1973 visit to Yosemite, the "masters" of this type of interpretive activity. Their program was used as the mold from which the present program at Grand Teton is cast, although today's program is really the product of experimentation and many growing pains. In 1973, a lack of seasonal personnel prevented us from offering a live activity program. A workbook was developed and youthful participants were encouraged to work through a series of learning tasks to earn a shoulder patch and certificate. The free workbooks were distributed by both the Park Visitor Centers and the concessioners. Within hours after the first booklets were distributed, the visitor center personnel were barraged by youngsters holding completed workbooks and eagerly demanding their patch and certificate. The problem: It was virtually impossible for a seven-year-old to complete all of the tasks in less than a day, and many of the visitors were only passing through the Park. As might be expected, there was some "fudging"



going on and some rather nasty confrontations between children, parents and visitor center personnel: "Aw, come on, Ranger, my kid isn't gonna have time to do all the junk...just give 'em the patch so we can be on our way." Even the friendliest "testing" of the child smacked of distrust and resulted in embarrassment and even anger. To most visitors, the patch was simply another souvenir, not a symbol of accomplishment. This, coupled with the tremendous amount of time involved (the workbook was supposed to eliminate this) in managing the program, finally led to its discontinuation. The following season, we offered an afternoon program every other day for youth between the ages of 5 and 12. Several more problems emerged. What about the overnight visitor who arrived on the "wrong day"? That problem was resolved by dropping other programs and going to an everyday operation. Even offering the activity every day didn't lower the number of participants who wanted to sign up for the program. Before a reservation system was instituted, as many as fifty children would show up for the program. Limiting the numbers through reservations eliminated one problem and created another. What about all of those visitors who were turned away from the program...many were insistent that "something be done." Out

came the old workbooks again. This time, they were distributed only by the visitor center and only after the day program was filled. Perhaps not the best solution, but a workable one. We also found that the age spread between 5 and 12 was too great. A five-year-old who has not gone to school lacks, for the most part, the social background to mix in with older children. The twelve-year-olds, on the other hand, tended to shun some of the activities as "kid's stuff." The immediate solution was to reduce the age range down to 6 to 11. An even better solution was found last summer when we began offering two separate programs: a Junior Ranger Lunch Hike for the 8 to 12-year-olds, and a traditional Junior Ranger program for the 6 to 11-year-olds. This simple innovation proved very successful.

One final problem that we face to this day is staffing. A ratio of one staff person to five participants is ideal, but costly. We also found it a good idea to have at least one male and one female with a mixed group; but, how do you free two or three interpreters for an entire afternoon? We found the solution in recruiting volunteers (VIP's) to assist the interpreter. These people played an important role in the success of the program. Relieving the interpreter of "housekeeping" chores such as filling out the certificates, setting up craft materials, projectors, etc., the pace of the program could be maintained. VIP's were also valuable in the field--handling stragglers, problem or disinterested participants--and thus relieving the naturalist of "policing duties."



With a patch in one hand and a Ranger on the other, a newly "appointed" Jr. Ranger gets his picture taken by a proud father.



We have discussed the problems; what about the benefits? I think few in the Park would argue that the Junior Ranger program is one of the most positive interpretive activities offered. It has the potential of really changing attitudes in the young by establishing a basic ethic toward land use. More complimentary letters have been received regarding the Junior Ranger program than all of the other programs combined; and if that isn't an indicator of success, then perhaps the parting words of a new Junior Ranger is: As David, age 7, climbed into the family car at the end of the program, his father asked, "Well, what did you learn?" David's reply: "That national parks are special places that belong to all of us and have to be protected by you and me." What more can be said?

Bob Huggins
Interpretive Specialist

Recently we at Fort Union had the good fortune to be visited by Bill Lewis, the University of Vermont Communications Professor, who, in addition to having

been a seasonal at Yellowstone NP for the past twenty summers, has worked as "communications specialist" for the Park Service. Mr. Lewis' "Interpretive Critiquing" video tapes have been seen, enjoyed, and profited from by many of us. During Mr. Lewis's visit, I asked his recommendations for good "communication skills" books. He recommended several, but especially one entitled People in Quandries: The Semantics of Personal Adjustment by Wendell Johnson (1946). This book is, in my opinion, an excellent introduction to General Semantics, the study of the influence of our language on our behavior. In the book, Mr. Johnson examines the importance of "scientific method" to semantic good health, the connection between semantic good health and personal adjustment (how semantic "blockages" lead to maladjustment), the importance of understanding how we use the abstracting process, and the influence which verbal symbols have on our reaction to people and ideas. This book is, again in my opinion, exciting useful reading. It discusses many specific communication skills concepts which I feel to be of important consequence not only to interpreters, but to anyone interested in improving his/her communication skills.

While this book is thirty years old, it can still be ordered through your bookstore; your library might have it. I read our local university library's copy first, then ordered a personal copy, and a copy for our park library (I plan to make parts of the book "required" reading for our seasonals). I'm a firm believer in sharing good books. While I understand that "good books" is a relative term based on personal opinion, and that anyone reading any book will react to it in a personal, unique way, I wanted to bring this book to the attention of fellow interpreters; I'm glad that Bill Lewis brought it to mine.

Robert J. Hoff
Chief Ranger

THE Rangeroon's Guide TO THE V.C. DESK

Part 2!

...BY THE WAY, YOUNG MAN, I USED TO BE A **RANGER** MYSELF. WORKED IN YELLOW-STONE DURING THE SUMMER OF '32. LET ME TELL YOU THAT WAS ONE BUSY SUMMER! DIDJA EVER HEAR OF HARRY DINGLEDORF? YEAH, HE WAS THE DISTRICT RANGER THEN. QUITE A FELLOW. WHY, ONE TIME HIM AND ME HEADED INTO THOROFARE. WE WERE TOLD THERE'D BE FOOD IN THE CABIN SO WE DIDN'T BRING ANY OURSELVES. WELL, WE FOUND THAT THE **CCC** BOYS HAD BEATEN US TO IT. WE ENDED UP LIVING FOR A WEEK ON ONE CAN OF BEANS AND TWELVE SODA CRACKERS!?

IT'S NICE TO CHAT WITH THE OLDTIMERS, BUT A BUSY V.C. DESK IS NOT THE PLACE FOR IT...

LET THE OLDTIMERS CORNER YOU SOME OTHER TIME. YOU'LL ENJOY THEIR TALES!

...AND ONE FOR MY SISTER IN WALLA WALLA, AND ONE FOR THE LADY ACROSS THE STREET, AND ONE FOR THE MILKMAN (HE'S SUCH A DEAR FELLOW) AND ONE FOR THE GIRL WHO'S TAKING CARE OF MY PEKINGESE...

TRY TO LIMIT VISITORS TO ONE PARK BROCHURE PER FAMILY ...IF YOU CAN!

YOU SAY YOU'VE PLANTED A **BOMB** IN THE VISITOR CENTER AND IT'S SET TO **EXPLODE** IN 15 MINUTES? HOLD ON A MOMENT, PLEASE, I'LL HAVE TO FILL OUT A 'BOMB THREAT' FORM !!!

STAY CALM, AND ALWAYS USE THE PROPER FORMS!

SAY, LADY, HOW DO I GO ABOUT GETTING A JOB WITH THE FORESTRY SERVICE? I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO BE A RANGER

IF IT'S AS DIFFICULT TO GET A JOB WITH THE FORESTRY SERVICE AS IT IS WITH THE PARK SERVICE, HE'S GOT A LONG HAUL AHEAD OF HIM!

I GET TO READ FINKS ARTICLE NEXT !!

PACK PAPER MAGAZINE
hoofnagle HAVO