

Autumn  
1988

# *Interpretation*

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**Sam Vaughn**

Interpretive Specialist  
National Capital Region

We have assembled a selection of perspectives based on experiences with magic, or creativity, or provocation. We hope that these shared experiences will nurture the magical abilities in all of us.

**Dan Murphy**

Interpretive Specialist  
Southwest Region

Several characteristics of "magic" emerge from these accounts:

- Some magic is so rarefied as to appear only seldom, like Jack de Golia's White Buffalo. Such "High Magic" anchors one end of a spectrum; the other end you may recognize as the little connections and discoveries that sustain us day to day.
- Magic emerges in relationships between interpreters, visitors and parks. Successful programs transcend static information, and facilitate shared experiences. Magic is more process than thing.
- Ten of our peers have been named as 1988 Regional Freeman Tilden Award Winners, and are featured in this issue of *Interpretation*. Recognition of their ability to inject magic into interpretive programs is well deserved.
- Magical moments are charged with emotion (charged, not necessarily dripping). Facts must be accurate, but unless they touch emotional reactions, they seldom evoke magic, and often encourage sleep.
- Magic is an art, which combines many arts, and is in some degree teachable. Wait a minute, didn't I hear that somewhere before:

Read on.

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# Regional Information Survey

## Alaska



The Outreach Program in the Region is an interdisciplinary effort to let people know some of the positive things the NPS is doing. Because of an increased emphasis on tourism we felt that the time was right for increased public exposure to experiences and programs available in NPS Alaska units.

The Outreach Program began in FY 1987 with the production of a slide, tape and video program about the 15 NPS areas in Alaska and the production of 3 30-second public service announcements for release to television stations in Alaska. A "Brown Bag Seminar Series" was also initiated in the regional office to keep employees informed of NPS events and programs in the state. Wayside exhibits were installed at visitor contact points at King Salmon and Seward.

Future programs will include interpretive exhibits in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Sitka, Juneau, Kotzebue, and Yakutat airports.

## Pacific Northwest



**Interpretive Progress:** In the same year Mike Gurling is Chief Naturalist, Western District, Olympic; Kim Sikoryak has moved to Hawaii, Kalaupapa; Dave Clark, CRMO, won the Regional Freeman Tilden Award; the Veiled Profit Fair in St Louis was attended by thousands who witnessed the talents of Rangers Eckberg, FOCL, and Jim Ross, MORA.

Olympic National Park celebrated its 50th Anniversary--with more than 500 volunteers participating.

The Henry M Jackson memorial is being constructed at North Cascades.

## Midwest



We hope biological diversity will become a household word next year. Valuable species are vanishing before the onslaught of bulldozers and high technology. The variety of our earth's resources is dwindling, but mankind will be the real loser.

Voyagers, NPCA, and other NPS offices joined with the Minnesota Environmental Education Board to design a curriculum for interpreting the importance of biological diversity with fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. We will field test the program at Voyageurs and Indiana Dunes this winter before distributing the final curriculum Servicewide. To help Interpreters grasp the significance of this concern and learn ways to weave it into their park operations, a fall workshop is planned.

## Western



The Western Regional Office of Interpretation is back to full staff! Rick Smith, former Chief Ranger of the USS Arizona Memorial came on board in March to handle SFIs, personal services interpretation, historical/cultural interpretation, perform operation evaluations and field reviews, do interpretive planning, and coordinate the regional Interpretive Skills Team. He joins Lynn Nakata, who coordinates DSC and HFC projects, performs interpretive planning, handles the division budget, and manages cooperating associations; and part time employee Chris Nielsen, who coordinates the regional VIP program, performs interpretive planning, and handles special emphasis activities. Kathy Tustanowski is our most recent addition, filling our secretary position. Kathy comes from Eugene O'Neill NHS. Heading up this office is Dick Cunningham, regional Chief of Interpretation. Dick's expertise is in Natural History/Ecology interpretation.

## Rocky Mountain



With the idea in mind that poor communications can have negative impacts on employees and programs, the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services and the Division of Resource Management and Visitor Protection co-sponsored Alliances Four. This joint training session brought together interpreters, resource management specialists, and law enforcement specialists. Theme for the three day gathering of employees from 21 parks was "Respecting the Past, Anticipating the Future." Topics ranged from scanning and lateral thinking to finding funding, personnel issues, Native American rights, and natural resource management issues.

No concurrent sessions were held, so that attendees could take full advantage of the entire rostrum of speakers from the park, regional, and Washington levels. Alliances Five is scheduled for 1990, and is expected to include a mix of participating specialists.

## Southwest



The development in Southwest Region of most interest and use to other regions is the Spanish Colonial Research Center. SCRC is a joint project of the NPS and the University of New Mexico. It is on the campus in Albuquerque, and takes direction from the Quincentary Task Force office in Washington. SCRC is developing a computerized data base of Spanish colonial documents, and already has available such unexpected gems as a Spanish map of the Yellowstone area from 1819, material on Black soldiers in the Spanish forces, and Spanish diplomatic actions and observations on the American Revolution. For information, call 505-776-8744 or FTS 474-8744.

# Service Center Report

## North Atlantic



Interpretive planning has been an important activity for the North Atlantic Region. Nine interpretive prospectuses are being revised or written; a General Management Plan for Acadia is under development; and the Division has participated in four operations evaluations.

Chiefs of Interpretation George Berndt -- Martin Van Buren -- and Randy Turner -- Gateway -- have served details in the Regional Office, Division of Interpretation working on special planning projects. Kathy Tevyaw, Educational Specialist at Lowell NHP, is on detail to produce a Regional education manual. Interpretive Skills Team members assisted in an operations evaluation, a special park detail, and training.

A conference on urban area interpretation will be held in Lowell, MA, the first week of April 1989. It will involve NPS, state, community, and museum representatives.

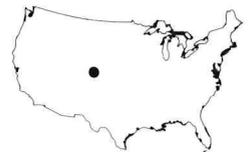
## Mid-Atlantic



At New River Gorge NR, improved efficiency and labeling time in cataloguing and inventorying 35 mm slides resulted from the use of "SlideScribe Labels, 1 3/4" x 7/16" labels in pin-fed rolls of 500 and fit exactly into standard 2" x 2" slide mounts. The "SlideScribe System," which includes computer, printer, custom designed software, encoder/decoder, and special self-adhesive magnetic slide strips, efficiently labels, catalogues, and tracks slide inventories. Encoder/decoder and magnetic strips allow instant retrieval on slides or hard copy. Write: SlideScribe, 690 Mendelssohn Avenue, Minneapolis, MN 55427; phone 800-345-4118.

Park rangers test the water quality of Dingman's Creek in Delaware Water Gap NRA for the benefit of visitors who participate in testing, searching for interesting aquatic life and learning more about threatened water resources.

## Denver



A workshop on interpretive planning and design was held at the Denver Service Center on September 13 and 14. The theme for the workshop is "Improving planning and design for visitor use."

An interdisciplinary group of 25 planners, designers and interpreters from the Regional Offices, Harpers Ferry Center, and the Denver Service Center were invited to examine and make recommendations on the following topics as they relate to visitor use and interpretation: The process, the products, organizational structure, and post evaluations.

The results of the two days of deliberation will be presented to DSC and HFC management, leading to a strategy and position paper on improving visitor use planning and design.

## Southeast



Interested in interpreting critical resource issues, but not satisfied with the information you're getting? Try an approach that has worked well for the National Park Service's Southeast Regional Office. All research reports, whether produced in-house or by contract, are required to address interpretive alternatives. At the regional level, staff park rangers attend formal briefings and/or receive copies of the reports. In turn, they bring interpretive alternatives to the attention of the appropriate field offices. Several resource issues have been brought to the attention of front-line interpreters. The response has been positive. If you find yourself in a critical resource issue vacuum, here is one alternative that will develop your networking skills and get results.

## National Capital



How does your region or park deal with the constant demand for basic information? One answer that NCR has found is the "hand-bill." Produced by the Parks & History Association, a handbill is a 4" x 9" flyer that fits perfectly into a No. 10 envelope. It is printed on both sides of 65 lb Hammermill cover paper in one color, and costs only pennies apiece.

The handbill includes a park summary, an eye-catching illustration, a special features section, hours of operation, and a directions map. With visitor inquiries on the rise, consider the handbill as an economical alternative to the official park brochure. For more information, contact Winnie Frost at FTS (202) 426-6770.

## Harpers Ferry



Noted theatrical set designer Ming Cho Lee was the keynote speaker at a recent seminar on "Theater and the Interpretive Arts." Theater and museum experts joined the HFC staff to explore the similarities between creating stage sets and designing exhibits. Both creative efforts rely on illusion to communicate, both attempt to provoke the audience, and both are the product of a collaborative process. The only difference is that our products run a lot longer than the Broadway "bombs" and hits.

Jim Sims, Smithsonian Senior Designer, called museums a site for "representing that which is not usually present." He maintained that drama is an essential element of presentation and emphasized the responsibility inherent in public interpretation. He likened the use of the public's time as a sacred charge--one not to be taken lightly in the planning and design process.

## Interpretation

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**Robert Huggins**  
Private Sector Involvement  
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When we speak of interpretation we almost always think in terms of grey and green. But, by not including the private sector in our planning process, we may overlook some golden opportunities. During the next few months I am going to be gathering materials and ideas on how private sector, including concessioners, cooperating associations, foundations, mass media, educational institutions, etc, may contribute to the parks' interpretive programs. If you have any ideas, please let me now.

**Martha Aikens**  
21st Century Task Force  
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The Congress, in 1916, established the world's first system of national parks, when it authorized the National Park Service. The Service was directed to "...conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife **therein** and to provide for the enjoyment ... by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations." The Service has since grown to a system of 344 units and 80 million acres.

The 21st Century Task Force has been instructed to incorporate the additional charges given the Service since 1916 into a mission statement that reflects our expanded responsibilities and opportunities. Below is a statement that attempts to incorporate the elements of our evolution as an agency into a comprehensive statement of purpose.

We now need our employees and interested persons outside of the Service to look critically at this proposed mission statement. We must decide if it really does reflect what this agency is about now and whether such a mission is appropriate to guide us into the 21st Century.

The National Park Service is dedicated to preserving the natural, cultural, recreational, scenic, and scientific resources and values of the National Park System for the use, enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations; to identifying and advocating protection of other nationally significant resources and values; and to leading and assisting others in providing recreational opportunities and identifying and protecting the natural and cultural heritage of the Nation and the world.

This statement is not intended to change the park system mandate embodied in the 1916 Organic Act but to recognize the myriad of other responsibilities that the NPS has, and the leadership role it plays and must continue to play if we are to preserve the parks themselves. The statement is intended to refer to the following NPS responsibilities:

1st Clause--reiteration of basic mandate of the 1916 Act; other legislation has amplified or been added to this mandate, eg the Concession Policy Act, the General Authorities Act of 1970, the Wilderness Act, the Clean Air Act, etc.

2nd Clause--a statement that broadly captures the legislative responsibilities for National Historic Landmarks; National Natural Landmarks; Wild and Scenic Rivers; etc.

3rd Clause--recognizes the NPS role as a leader in national and international conservation, recreation and historic preservation activities eg Man and the Biosphere, World Heritage Sites, international cooperation and technical assistance activities, National Register of Historic Places, Historic Preservation Fund grand program, Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant program, recreation technical assistance to States and local governments, etc.

Send your comments to: Chief,  
Office of Policy, Department of the Interior, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127