

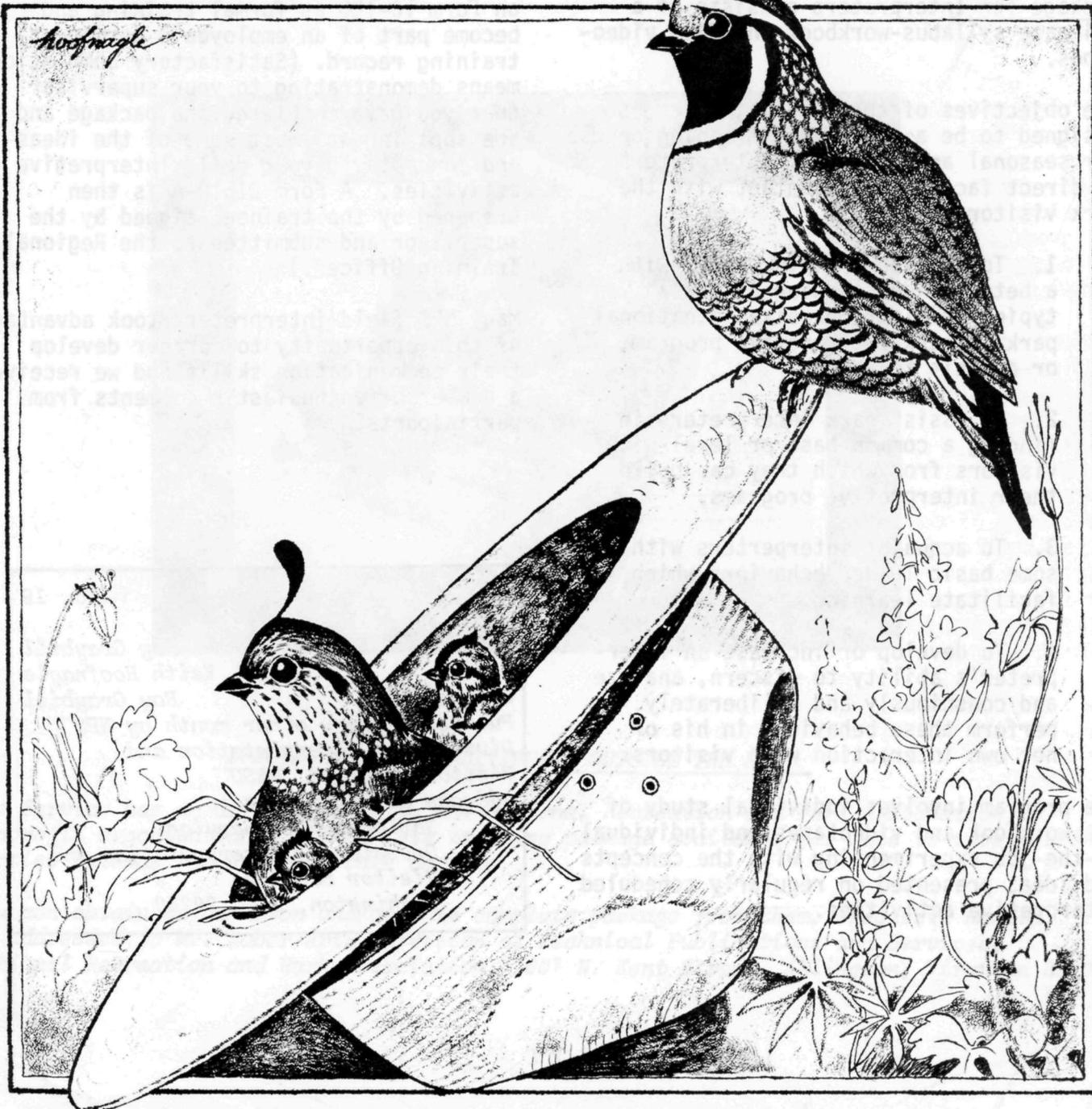
interpreters
information
exchange

IN TOUCH

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

Number 19

May, 1977



SPECIAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITY FOR INTERPRETERS

A year ago the Division of Interpretation and Visitor Services here in WASO distributed to the field a new interpreters communications skills training package. The package, titled The Park, The Visitor, The Interpreter: A Personal Training Package for Interpreters consists of a 124-page syllabus-workbook and five videotapes.

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 the 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 designated the program as a official NPS Interpretation training course and assigned it a code number in the 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.)

Many NPS field interpreters took advantage of this opportunity to further develop their communication skills and we received a number of enthusiastic comments from participants.

Vol. 1

No. 19

Editor

Roy Graybill

Design

Keith Hoofnagle

Coordinator

Roy Graybill

Published every other month by NPS

Division of Interpretation and

Visitor Services, WASO

Address contributions to:

National Park Service

Division of Interpretation and

Visitor Services

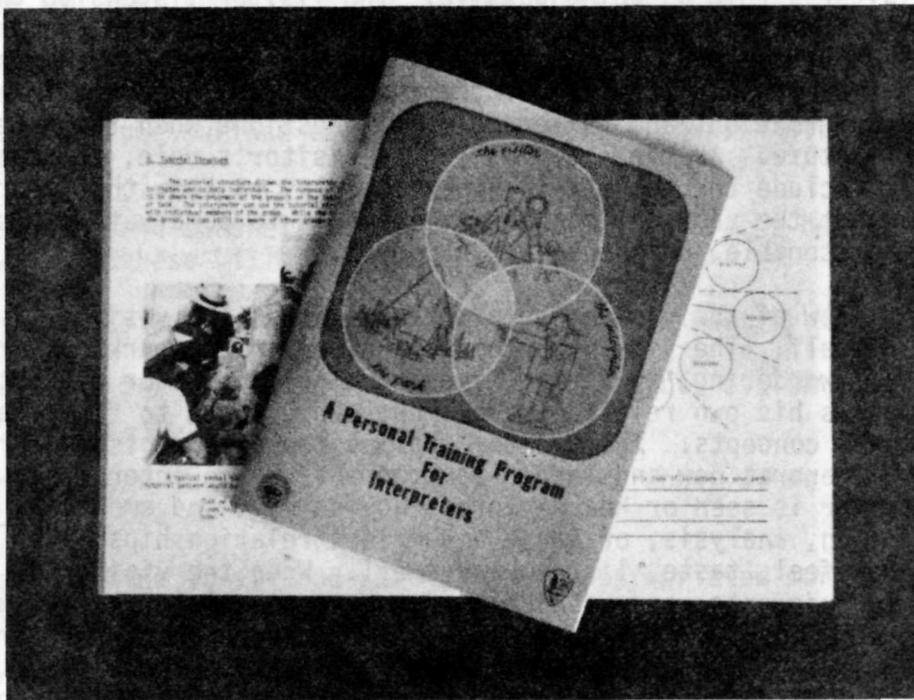
Washington, D.C. 20240

This training package is available to you, as a NPS field interpreter, Now!

We have just made a large distribution of the syllabus workbook to all regional offices for distribution to the field. Video equipment is now available in many parks and in all regional offices. Your supervisor can advise you of the availability of video equipment in your area.

The special feature on pages 4 through 10, written by the developers of the package, will give you an idea of what it is all about. If, after reading it you would like to explore the concepts further ask for the syllabus-workbook, illustrated below. This training package was made for you and we encourage you to give it a try.

Dave Dame



SPECIAL NOTE TO INDIVIDUALS OUTSIDE THE NPS

The Service has an arrangement with the National Recreation and Park Association, a nonprofit organization, to make this training package available for sale to interested parties outside the National Park Service.

You can obtain information and/or this complete package from them. Requests should be addressed to Mr. Rober Artz, Division of Technical Publications and Services, National Recreation and Park Association, 1601 N. Kent Street, ARLington, Virginia 22209.

THE VISITOR AS INTERPRETER

BY

Lawrence F. Lowery
University of California
Berkeley, California

Arthur L. Costa
California State University
Sacramento, California

Interpretation is closer to being an art than a science. In attempting to determine the important elements that comprise interpretive skills, one is continually confronted with the problem of identifying, describing, or organizing interpreter behaviors that enhance the visitor's experience in the park setting. Evaluation of good interpretation largely depends upon one's assumptions of the visitor's role during the act of interpretation.

One can view the visitor's role as being passive. The visitor listens to the interpreter, absorbs the information that is disseminated, and fills his mind with as many rich ideas and important facts about the park as time allows. The interpreter realizes his or her success when the visitor is seen listening attentively, laughing at the interpreter's jokes, seeking more information, and asking relevant questions when the interpreter has finished his or her lecture. In the light of such a visitor's role, the qualities of the good interpreter include the ability to speak clearly, to know the important facts and understandings about the park environment, to be able to punctuate talks with vivid examples, and to be personable, humorous, and eloquent.

A somewhat different view of the visitor's role assumes that the visitor is a person who interprets for himself. The visitor becomes involved in the parks environment, experiencing, feeling, wondering, analyzing, inquiring. The visitor generates relevant facts for himself, draws his own relationships among those facts to form meaningful principles and personal concepts. The visitor applies those concepts and principles as he goes forth to interpret new and larger environments. The interpreter realizes success when the visitor is seen or heard expressing feelings and emotions, making statements of comparison, analysis, or cause and effect relationships. The visitor uses his senses to observe, feel, taste, listen, and smell. When the visitor is heard hypothesizing, making judgments, and predicting outcomes, the interpreter knows the visitor is interpreting for himself. The qualities of the good park interpreter include designing ways to cause the visitor to become involved, helping the visitor derive meaning from the park environment, and facilitating the visitor's own interpretations.

The latter example of the park interpreter's role is vastly different from the former example. In the latter, there are certain identifiable behaviors that the interpreter can use to enable the visitor to become an interpreter. These behaviors include: questioning, structuring, using silence, accepting, clarifying, facilitating data, and modeling. Each of behaviors are described briefly in this article.

Questioning

The interpreter can use questions to engage visitors in certain intellectual or thinking processes. Particular questions invite the visitor to think about and thereby better understand the environment. The interpreter's skill at questioning is directly related to the type and quality of meaning that the visitor derives from the setting. Several examples follow.

1. The interpreter can cause the visitor to recall something that was learned in the past or to identify and describe something that can be observed directly:

"What is the name of that bird?"

"What are the names of the three minerals found in granite?"

"What do you see on the rock's surface?"

"Can you spot the blue heron in the flock of storks?"

2. The interpreter can cause the visitor to analyze, compare, or reason:

"How does the surface of the limestone rock compare with the surface of the lava?"

"Having found seashell fossils and sedimentary rocks here, what can you say about these hills?"

"Why did Columbus believe he could get to the East by sailing West?"

3. The interpreter can cause the visitor to predict, evaluate, or apply information:

"What do you think this park would be like today if we did not restrict people to the marked trails?"

"Do you think it is good that Congress appropriated money to set aside this land as a National Park?"

"From what we've learned about sedimentary rocks, can you look about and find other examples of this type of rock?"

The types of questions listed above appeal to the visitor's intellectual powers and involve him in thinking. Through the use of such questions, the interpreter can enhance the visitor's understanding of the park environment. Rather than using unrelated, ambiguous, or rhetorical questions the interpreter can pose questions that involve visitors in thinking processes that help them derive meaning for themselves from the park environment.

Structuring

The interpreter is structuring when he or she outlines what is to be accomplished, how it is to be accomplished, how the visitors will be organized to do it, what constraints of time or movement are placed on the group, and what materials are to be used.

Meaning for the visitor is enhanced when the interpreter clearly structures the purposes, tasks, and ground rules prior to the talk. If the structuring is confusing, incomplete, inappropriate, or too complex, the visitor will not be able to focus properly upon what meaning the interpreter wants him to derive. Interpreters usually establish structure verbally, non-verbally, by writing, or by logistics.

1. The interpreter can orally communicate the objectives and purposes of the talk, ground rules, tasks to be accomplished, constraints, or directions. Some examples of verbal structuring might be:

"We are going to see a short film today. It shows an enactment of the battle. After the film, we will tour the battleground."

"The tour will take about 45 minutes."

"Please do not touch any of the geologic formations along the tour route."

2. The interpreter can communicate by gesture, motion, or some other "body-language." For example, the interpreter can:

Point to direct the visitor's eyes.

Place a hand to his or her mouth to request silence.

Beckon to invite the visitors attendance.

3. The interpreter can communicate directions through the use of signs, bulletin boards, or brochures.

4. The interpreter can organize and reorganize the physical arrangements of the people and materials so as to accomplish certain tasks. Such logistical structuring might involve:

- a. Assigning a task to each individual visitor in the group, "I would like each of you to tell what one thing most impressed you during the bird walk today."

- b. Assigning tasks to several groups of visitors, "I would like you to count off from one to four. All the fours form a group and gather around this tree. Your job will be to make observations of the life on this tree."

- c. Lecturing to the entire group, "Before we start our nature walk, I'd like to give you some background information about the geological history of the park."
- d. Conducting a Socratic dialogue, "Look at the palm fronds on those two trees. How do they compare? How do you explain why one looks stiff and green while the other is drooping and brown? What do you think might have happened had these trees not been cared for by the park service?"

Using these types of structuring behaviors, the interpreter can organize, focus, and direct the group to achieve the greatest meaning from the park environment. Structuring is most effective when the interpreter does it consciously, deliberately, and clearly, and when it directly relates to the meanings the interpreter wants the visitors to acquire.

Using Silence

It has been found that many interpreters, after asking a question, wait only one or two seconds before they either call on a visitor, ask another question, or give the answer to the question themselves! Many interpreters feel that unless someone is talking, no one is learning. It has also been found that if the interpreter waits several more seconds, there are observable differences in the behaviors of visitors.

When the interpreter poses a question then waits, visitors tend to respond in whole sentences and complete thoughts. There is increased speculativeness in the visitor's thinking, a tendency to justify answers more fully, and an increase in the visitor-to-visitor interaction. When the interpreter uses silence, it indicates to each visitor that the responsibility for deriving meaning is the visitor's, not the interpreter's.

Accepting

If one wants visitors to interpret the park for themselves, then they must be free to try out ideas without fear of making mistakes. To maximize the involvement of visitors in answering questions, offering ideas, asking questions, and voicing opinions, each visitor must feel psychologically safe.

The interpreter creates a psychologically safe climate by remaining non-evaluative and non-judgmental. Even though the visitor's ideas and answers may differ from those of the interpreter, the interpreter accepts them because it is up to the visitor to modify his own thinking and to derive his own meaning. The interpreter makes no responses that would make the visitor feel his idea is unworthy, inferior, or stupid. Conversely, the interpreter also does not heap praise or laud a visitor's idea because this detracts from other possible ideas and causes conformity, convergence, and it inhibits thinking.

There are three basic alternatives to giving the visitor praise or criticism. They are passive acceptance, active acceptance, and empathic acceptance.

1. Passive acceptance means that the interpreter merely receives what the visitor is saying without judgment but with acknowledgement that the visitor was heard.

"Okay"

"Um-Hmm."

"That's one possibility."

2. Active acceptance means that the interpreter rephrases, translates, or reflects what the visitor has said. Active acceptance tends to extend, build upon, or use the visitor's idea.

"What I hear you saying is that if the heat were increased, the molecules would move faster and therefore cause the rock to crack."

"Your idea is that we should all write to our legislators while Tom's idea is that we should send one letter from this Audobon Chapter."

3. Empathic acceptance means that the interpreter accepts feelings as well as ideas.

"I can understand why you'd be confused. Those directions are unclear to me too."

"I can understand why you'd be upset when you see beer cans in the river. It makes me angry too."

If one wants the visitor to interpret for himself, the visitor must be free to try out ideas on the interpreter and on others. That freedom is maintained by the interpreter's use of acceptance.

Clarifying

When a visitor uses some terminology, expresses a concept or idea, or asks a question that the interpreter does not understand, the interpreter might want to clarify what the visitor has said. This is done by inviting the visitor to be more specific or to elaborate on what was said.

The intent of clarifying is to help the interpreter better understand the visitor's feelings, and behaviors. When the interpreter clarifies, it demonstrates to the visitor that his ideas are worthy of exploration and consideration. To clarify, the interpreter might say:

"Could you explain to me what you mean by 'charisma'?"

"You'll have to be more specific. Whose armies were you referring to?"

"Let me see if I understand you. Did you say the boss said it was all right to come to work late each day?"

Facilitating Data

If one of the purposes of interpretation is for the visitor to process data or information by comparing, classifying, or making inferences, then data must be available for the visitor to process. Facilitating data means that the interpreter makes it possible for the visitor to acquire information when needed or requested. The interpreter can create a climate that is responsive to the visitor's question for information in several ways:

1. By serving as a data source in response to the many questions that visitor ask.
2. By making it possible for the visitor to experiment with equipment and materials.
3. By calling upon members of the group as data sources.
4. By making sources of information, such as almanacs, maps, and field guides, available.
5. By supplying manipulative materials to extend the visitor's powers of observation. Such materials might be binoculars, hand lenses, microscopes.

Modeling

Modeling means that the interpreter behaves in a manner that is consistent with the goals he or she has for the visitors. An interpreter's enthusiasm for his or her park will soon infect the visitor. The interpreter's expression of wonder for phenomena in the park will intrigue the visitor. When the interpreter exhibits emotion for beauty, awesomeness, pagentry, or grandeur, the visitor will feel free to react with similar sensitivity.

Conversely, such aspects as passiveness, apathy, and inhibition result when the interpreter models these behaviors. Modeling tends to reinforce visitors' perceptions of the values and goals stated by the interpreter or the park. Exhibiting the kind of behaviors desired in visitors, strongly influences the visitors' behavior patterns.

Listen to yourself,

Do you question the visitor to engage his intellectual powers?

Do you structure, giving directions and organizing the visitors to maximize personal involvement and group interaction?

Do you listen to the visitor's ideas, clarifying them when there is a possibility of misunderstanding?

Do you respond to the visitor's inquiries with the best, most honest information you have or do you direct him to other resources?

Is your behavior consistent with the ways you'd like the visitor to behave?

This article is an attempt to identify those interpreter behaviors that can facilitate the visitor in interpreting the park environment for himself. The NPS Training Package The Park, The Visitor, The Interpreter; A Personal Training Program for Interpreters goes into the behaviors in much greater detail. If these ideas have caught your interest, pages 2 and 3 of this issue describes the training package and how you can obtain it.

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS



COOPERATING ASSOCIATION TRAINING SEMINAR

The annual Cooperating Association Management Training Seminar will be held at Albright the week of September 12. This year's session will be divided into two classes: A, General Management, approximately 12 students; B, Advance Fiscal Management, approx, 12 students. While we have run about 125 association people through this seminar, there are still some who need training. This year, however, we will attempt to begin more specialized training. Half of the session will be devoted to an indoctrination in general association management, much the same as in previous classes. We will also provide an opportunity for association paid business managers to brush up on bookkeeping and other fiscal management subjects.

Class A will be available to NPS personnel involved in association matters (agents, executive secretaries), and will be financed by the Servicewide Account. Joining the Coordinator will be a university bookstore manager. Class B will be available to association paid employees. Their travel and per diem must be financed by their own association. This class will be conducted by a professional in the field of bookstore fiscal management.

A survey form has been mailed by the Coordinator's office. We should be notified by April 29 of any interest in these sessions.

ASSOCIATION SPONSORED SEMINARS

There was much discussion at the Albuquerque Conference on association involvement in field seminars and similar programs, and the question is constantly raised with this office. The association with the most experience is Yosemite. Henry Berrey, business manager, has just released the 1977 program for "Field Seminars in Yosemite National Park." This will answer many of your questions. Write directly to Henry.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

Because of the current solicitor's agreement, the Coordinator is visiting a number of association board meetings. While attendance at all meetings is impossible, it is good to know when they are scheduled. May we respectfully request notification of meeting dates? We would like to create a calendar of such events. Be certain to also notify your regional Coordinator.

FORUM



Dear Editor

As is all too often the case I fear we have once again failed to fully recognize the genius of one among us until, alas, he is gone. As he notified the National Park Service of his resignation as Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, "Nate" Reed has recommended that we read an article which he graciously enclosed with his resignation.

America's National Parks, Their Principles, Purposes and Prospects was written by Joseph Sax and published as A National History Special Supplement in October, 1976. The profound and everlasting truths which Sax articulately re-submits as food for the soul and spirit of the National Parks should be accepted by each of us as a legacy to the enlightened stewardship of Assistant Secretary Reed.

Those who have not read the Sax article should avoid doing so at all costs. Any modern piece of journalism which so modestly and truthfully searches for the true essence of our National Park purposes and principles must be considered to be subversive and deviously inspired. Its truths could even whet our appetites to be lifted up from our various depths of mediocrity, uncertainty, and despair.

Those of you who have already read Secretary Reed's farewell message and those of you who may be stimulated to do so because I have suggested that it may too stimulating for your cholesterol spirits should be required to re-read the article at least once annually under imminent

threat of eternal incarceration in the dining room and kitchens of Bright Angel Lodge, or Old Faithful Inn, or Flamingo Inn, or Scotty's Castle; or better yet in a Mission 66, (you've seen one, you've seen 'em all), Visitor Center.

Take a chance, read it. It may be painful. It may be refreshing.

Zeb V. McKinney
Superintendent, Shiloh
National Military Park

EDUCATING VISITORS ABOUT THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

What makes your park so different? Probably, its primary interpretive theme and the historic environment that existed there at the time it attained historical significance do-or should. So how do you as an interpreter, permanent or seasonal, educate the public about that environment? To begin, are your interpreters aware of what the park's primary interpretive theme even is?

When you give that musket demo or sweat over that campfire cooking wild hickory nuts or whatever, are you giving equal time to the historic environment other than its physical or natural setting? What were the militiaman's feelings about

marching off with Jackson to meet the Creek menace? How did his family feel about it? Did not his Indian adversary and his family share similar feeling the night before the battle? About their future. Physical ailments of the time affected soldierin' and just plain living every single day. What part did the weather play? If made a mess of black powder. What friction existed among the troops or tribes who came from different localrs and backgrounds? What park did religion, customs, traditions, etc. play? What caused the battle's participants joy, fear or anxiety? How has the modern visitor been affected by the occurence of the historic event your park commenorates?

Noel McInnis in his book, You Are An Environment, states that one's understanding, appreciation of, and concern for the environment is first a self-centered one. Each person is an environment. Thus, when each person's individual environment comes in contact with that of others, they combine to form our total environment in which we live and by which our lives are controlled. This was certainly true in the past as well as the present.

Interpreters, rally your seasonals and give your park's historic environment a promiment place in your interpretive program.

Paul Ghioto
Historian
Horseshoe Bend NMP

INTERPRETERS AS VISITORS

What do interpreters do on their days off? Or on a vacation? Some play "visitor."

Some off-duty interpreters love to pretend they are incognito with their Indian jewelry, bola ties, Penney's green jeans, and boots. Their cover is blown if they visit another park area. Besides the obvious jewelry and togs, there is just something about a Park Service type which makes the guy at the info desk remark to a friend, "See this visitor coming up the walk? I'll bet he's with the Park Service!" Accuracy is probably between 70% and 90%. It's a good wholesome, friendly image--one to be proud of. But it can be hard to conceal at times when we want to be just another visitor. If you plan to speak to the interpreters in the Visitor Center or in the field, you might as well introduce yourself as an interpreter from (your park), because you'll be found out sooner or later!

When park interpreters visit non-NPS attractions, they can usually feel secure in their anonymity, and enjoy the full benefits and courtesies of being a visitor.

Frequent visits to other parks and attractions keep us aware of what the visitor needs, wants, expects, and feels when entering a new area. It can sharpen our perception of our own park and our park's impression on visitors.

Just as it is important for the park visitor to become an interpreter, so also the interpreter benefits from being a visitor!

We've all heard that interpretation seeks to enhance the visitor experience. Is it conceivable to lose clear sight of just what a "visitor experience" consists of if we don't assume the visitor's role occasionally? Without being a visitor, could we end up enhancing the INTERPRETER'S EXPERIENCE of the visitor's experience? Double talk? . . . Certainly we can perceive when visitors are excited, pleased, and happy, but by repeatedly becoming visitors ourselves, we might stay more tuned in on the more subtle expressions of that "visitor experience."

As visitors we are exposed to others' interpretive techniques, styles, and "tricks." Sometimes these interpretive encounters become the nucleus for new field of interpretation in our parks. How often it was just a sentence or a technique of another interpreter which sparked an idea which we developed into a program, a talk, or an interpretive experiment.

Many interpreters have difficulty being simply a visitor during another interpreter's walk or talk, because of the natural tendency to mentally critique other interpreters. Visitors accept an interpretive activity on face value: how it felt, what they learned, what it did for them. If we don't watch out, we can become so absorbed in evaluating (How would I have done that better or differently???) another interpreter, we'll miss the meat of the message and blow any chance at a visitor experience.

It's not easy for an interpreter to be an objective visitor--maybe it's impossible, because interpretation is not merely a profession we can

put on and take off at will. For many, being an interpreter is a way of life which after work hours may affect which books we read, which friends we associate with, which TV programs we watch, which magazines we subscribe to, which photos we take, how we decorate our home, where we visit, and many other aspects of our personal lives. Interpreters are always searching for new ideas, new knowledge, new techniques, new experiences to share with the visitors to their park. Very few of these ideas emerge during the interpreter's 8 hours workday. Most ideas come at other times--from the media, during discussions, in dreams, when we least expect it, and from other interpreters when we are visitors in their park. As visitors we are exposed to new ideas and novel expressions in interpretation.

Seems that being a visitor is healthy and happy for visitors and interpreters alike. Interpreters can learn much by being visitors to other areas and partaking in their interpretive activities.

When interpreters spend thousands of hours each year making visitors feel important and enhancing their visitors' park experience, it only follows that interpreters would like to turn the table and occasionally be the recipients of some of this dedicated effort and pleasure. Being a park visitor was never better! It's fun, enlightening, and a great way to spend a free day or vacation.

Tom Danton
Park Technician
George Washington
Birthplace NM

Dear Editor

After a long silence, I couldn't resist a "rejoinder" to Ron Gibbs letter (March newsletter) re the possible compatibility of living history and historic preservation. Maybe! And I was briefly encourage to find a Park Interpreter speaking up for preservation. But the more I thought about Ron's point, the more I wondered. And--though I'm sure it wasn't intentional on his part--I wondered whether Ron's argument wasn't really one of those "cosmetic" approaches one sees often in the TV ads.

Isn't Ron's focus (however well-meant) still on "demonstrating" the glories of "living history"? Apart from the more-than-possible false stimulation of "public interest" through historical sideshows (which, in content and emphasis seem often to mock the "genuine" aspects of an authentic historic site), there is still potential physical contradiction in the alleged advantages of the greater visitation that may result from such activities. After all, more visitors means more wear and tear on resources, even potential vandalism. And the funds spent on living history programs might even be put directly into preservation--rather than mere "pump priming" activities of often dubious interpretive value.

Still, there's the argument of the practical American, of course--that things must be put to use; those historic "facilities" must not stand idle. But that argument wasn't used when Yellowstone was established, and isn't today--and the natural area (as far as I know) aren't emulating the proliferating commercial "safari" or wild-animal parks in order to attract vistors (to get more funds for preservation). In fact, at last report, Yellowstone was even removing the bears from visitor molestation (I only

saw one on my last trip there) --removing "living natural history" in effect, to preserve natural resource values (including the bears themselves).

Why should we care that much about the interest of the Murfreesboro crowd when it comes to Stones River? After all--like other parks and sites--that area was established for all Americans! Somehow, I still have faith that the NPS will take care of its historic resources without deliberately resorting to more often-misleading, mis-emphasizing and expensive "fun and games" activities. Of course, I am always interested in encouraging more people to visit the historic sites, and stimulating their interest-- but through honest, relevant interpretive meaning (which also does not have to be achieved through super-expensive Visitor Centers and movies--some of the funds for which can also perhaps be more wisely used for preservation!).

If the NPS doesn't take care of its historic resources in time, maybe a collapsed structure or two would raise a national (or management) stink sufficient to bring the problem out into the open--a stink comparable to what happens when it comes to the conservation of natural resources. Maybe it wouldn't, either, but people are more interested in historic sites than they were--even for environmental reasons (let alone the employment of architectural historians). And meanwhile, at the co-ordinating management level of the NPS, somebody must read the "organic" 1916 act, which though it tries to balance preservation and use, still puts preservation--for all generations--first!

Yours for continuing better interpretation!

Frank Barnes
Retired Historic (Sight)

RAP UP



SKY INTERPRETATION UPDATE

Since 1974 the American Astronomical Society has conducted a project to assist the National Park Service in using the visible sky as an interpretative resource. The project, as currently established, ends June 30, 1977. It is hoped that activities which have been started in the past few years will persist indefinitely.

The rationale for the project was as follows. The parks are the only places where large number of people go and where conditions favor visibility of the spectacular sky full of stars. Here skilled intpreters are available to increase awareness, enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of nature and the sky is full of natural wonders which deserve interpretation. These combined factors indicate an unparalled opportunity to blend astronomy into other phases of interpretation.

Many parks have included sky interpretation in some fashion in their programs and many individual interpreters have begun to add sky interpretation to their repertoir of skills. A few university programs designed to train environmental interpreters have added at least an introduction to sky interpretation into their curricula.

As this article is being written responses to a sky interpretation survey are coming in from National Park units.

One-hundred-thirty-two replies have been received. Forty two percent reported some type of sky intepretation activity. About one-fourth have explored the sky at campfire programs and one-fifth have guided starry eyed visitors on night walks. Fifteen percent have provided telescopes for public use. Responses received so far have reported, during the last year, about 725 sky interpretation events presented to more than 40,000 people. The majority of this activity seem to have been prompted by the Astronomical Society project since eighty percent of those reporting sky interpretation started it since 1974.

This is an encouraging beginning. On the other hand the project has offered resources which have not been used. About one year ago the first annual issue of the Sky Interpretation Resource Bulletin was published. The most important part of this publication was a list of about 350 astronomers who were willing to assist parks. It was suggested that park interpreters consult the list and contact nearby resource people to begin relationships which could be productive over substantial periods of time. A recent survey showed that only about eight percent of these "sky people" had been contacted by interpreters. In essentially every case the astronomers were able to perform the requested services. It is sad that more requests were not made since a valuable resource was ready and waiting. It would be interesting to know the cost if such services were to be purchased.

A second, and perhaps last, volume of the bulletin is now under preparation. Again a list of resource people will be included; a shorter list identifying astronomers who are eager to help as their time and business matters permit. Perhaps the first issue has paved the way for more effective use of the new bulletin which will be distributed to a growing list of parks and individuals. Readers, not already on the distribution list, wishing to obtain copies may request them by writing to the undersigned.

Now that the project is officially ending, those of us who have enjoyed working with it are contemplating the shape of any further emphasis on sky interpretation. What is next? Nothing at all? More of the same? A series of workshops offered around the country?

Special materials for sky interpretation? A book on sky interpretation? A mobile sky interpretation facility? what do you think is desirable? If you have an opinion please share it with the editor of IN TOUCH. Perhaps we will rejoin our families and sit back for a while awaiting your response.

Von Del Chamberlain
National Air & Space Museum
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C. 20560

MATCH-A NAT

"In Touch" spreads good ideas, a valuable function. May you continue. However, there is no substitute for personal contact between those interpreters who love their job and park. I have enjoyed and benefited from my spontaneous meetings with travelling seasonals and vacationing permanents. In addition to an interchange of tried ideas, there is a give-and-take that stimulates new ideas. Also the visiting interpreter sees the park better than he could by himself and the host sees his park with a fresh new perspective. Plus, sharing a park with people of similar interests and expertise is plain fun.

Presently, such meetings depend on hit-or-miss individual efforts. Strangely, the Park Service has done nothing to encourage these unofficial meetings. They should, for these contacts develop new ideas and higher morale.

One way of encouraging this is to have each park keep a list at the Visitor Center of personnel wishing to meet others. It could be stipulated what sort of person they wish to meet and what hospitality they can extend (meetings during business hours, hiking, lodging). With such a list, visiting personnel can be directed to those eager for sharing, to the benefit of all.

I believe these individual contacts are a rich, untapped resource. If others share this belief, please share your opinions and ideas with "In Touch." Maybe we can get something started.

Paul Krapfel
Seasonal Naturalist
Big Bend N.P.

SOUNDS GOOD, BUT...

I read with much interest Elsie Roach's article in the September issue of In Touch on interpretation for deaf and handicapped visitors at NCR. There seems to be a slow growing movement to provide more public services for handicapped people in this country. People who cannot hear, although being able to move about freely and fend for themselves physically, are greatly hindered. It is the same as watching television with the sound turned off; the feeling of frustration must be great.

Ms. Roach has described what seems to be an excellent program at NCR. At Independence National Historical Park, we have begun a modest attempt at reaching those who cannot hear. The Park Service Sign Shop has provided us with several name-tag type pins, for those interpreters here who sign, to wear above their regular name tags. Most deaf persons will not make their problem known readily while on a tour, but with this tag for them to see, they will hopefully come forward and have the story interpreted for themselves also. The initial response is encouraging.

I am greatly pleased that the program at NCR has gotten such a good start. I hope that similar interest can be kindled throughout the Service so that the deaf and other handicapped individuals can enjoy all the natural wonders and historical heritage that are embodied in the National Park System.

David B. Dahlen
Supv. Park Technician
Independence NHP

Two years ago Rock Creek Park was shuffled around in another reorganization. We "old timers" chuckled and sat back to watch the usual "what a mess" noise that would always follow. (Were we in for a surprise!)

Our new managers were not of the usual breed. They waited for a while and caught us off guard! During a brainstorming session long after they had arrived (at least three months) our new Park Manager, Jim Redmond, threw out an idea. Our new Chief of Interpretation and Recreation, Julia Holmass, took it a few steps further. Sure that I was the only sane person there, I threw in a few ludicrous frills (hoping to show these poor fools how silly the idea was!). I was rewarded for my progressive thinking by being put in charge of the mission. (Some people would say I deserved that!)

My mission, which I had no choice in accepting: Go one step further with the Volunteer In the Parks Program and get our neighbors active in the whole park process. (If you think that sounds easy, I suggest that you read it again!)

We gave this non-existent program a powerful name-FORCE (Friends of Rock Creek's Environment)- had application cards printed, and, the clincher: some bumper stickers. Recruitment for this new organization began with newspapers, radio, and at our 85th Anniversary Celebration (catch 'em while they're havin' fun!).

November of 1975, our first step was to hold a meeting in our nature center for anyone in the area willing to come. (Since I expected 10, the 50 who did arrive boggled my mind!) We let it all hang out: budget, future projects, park problems, and any other area in which an

interest was voiced. We had taken a great risk in exposing ourselves as human beings who do not always make the proper choice. Instead of rotten eggs we got roses. Instead of a negative feedback session we got an equal sharing session. Instead of a fiasco, we got a triumph.

By word of mouth, FORCE has grown. We have had people come and go, but we keep a solid corps of people who are "captivated by our refreshing openness" (to quote one person). Anyone in the Washington Metropolitan Area has the opportunity to be part of the decision making process of the park. Each person has the opportunity to see the park from every direction. Not only does it keep us honest, but it gives us a much better over-all-view when a decision must be made. We all have to compromise whenever possible, but the park is always the winner.

Our monthly meetings are exciting, sometimes controversial, but always a learning experience for all of us. We have people of all ages, background, and experience. There is also a good cross-section of interests so that we do not end up in one corner for any length of time.

We are just beginning, and we make mistakes. Somehow, this has brought us much closer, since we all must work together. The measuring stick is the fact that so many people continue to be involved. The programs that have grown out of this group are exciting, innovative, and fun to do. (If you are beginning to feel just a little curious, then you have the excitement that this group generates!)

What better way to brag about our neighbors, but to give you a few examples of their triumphs and dedication:

--due to their questions, it was soon

obvious that we needed a better handle on our "uninvited guests" such as bikers, hikers, joggers, etc., for statistical purposes. They spent many weekends and weekdays scurrying all over the park to collect this data.

---our 86th Anniversary Celebration included over 40 programs, with FORCE active from the planning stages all the way through evaluation. Many of the programs were arranged, planned, publicized, and/or put on by our neighbors.

---keeping the roads open for commuters is one of our biggest tasks, and, with the recent snow, that has been a demanding job. Because of constant monitoring by FORCE, we were encouraged to keep the bicycle trails open, too, since a few commuters do use it.

---a concerned FORCE member got a positive committment from Potomac Appalachian Trail Club to help us with our trail system as we begin the upgrading task.

---litter craft workshops making such things as bird feeders, holiday cards, from litter found in the park. (completely planned and produced by FORCE)

I could go on and on, but I think that you have a clear picture. I will end with just one question: how many of your neighbors are on a first name basis with your Superintendent or Park Manager and feel free to discuss park problems with him or her in order to get a clearer and more concise angle?

Sue Pridemore
National Capital Region
Rock Creek Park

NEW "POCKET-SIZED" TOPOGRAPHIC
MAPS TO BE TESTED IN
NINE NATIONAL PARK AREAS

A nationwide program to determine map-user response to folded topographic maps is now underway by the U.S. Geological Survey with the cooperation of National Park Service Association personnel in nine areas of the National Park System.

A self-addressed postcard questionnaire has been included with each 7.5 minute folded quadrangle for those who would like to participate in the nationwide poll. A tally will also be kept on folded vs. flat map sales to determine the public interest. The quadrangles will be available in reusable plastic pouches which are designed to protect the map from dust and wet weather.

Another type of folder map included all of the Mount Rainier National Park area in the State of Washington. This map is contained in a paper jacket. The 33 x 34 inch multicolor Mt. Rainier map was prepared at a scale of 1:50,000 (1 inch equals about 4,200 feet). The rugged alpine terrain of the park is portrayed by benchmarks and spot elevations as well as by 80-foot interval contour lines

that are printed in brown over the land surface and in blue over glaciers. The map covers about 450 square miles and shows such features as roads, trails, picnic areas, campgrounds, shelters, patrol cabins, woodland, lakes, streams, falls, glaciers, and place names. The folded map is sold at seven Association outlets in the park.

USGS topo maps have usually been sold flat as scientific working tools. But a 17- by 21-inch map is not too handy to keep in the glove compartment or tackle box. Similarly, because of the large size of the flat maps, few public outlets have been able to give the maps the exposure they might otherwise receive. The new folded map in its pocket-sized package should prove popular with a large segment of the users. Certainly, the new format will allow distributors and concessionaires to display the topo map out with other popular books and magazines where more people can become aware of their availability".

Doyle Frederick
Topographic Division
U.S. Geological Survey



LIGHT FILTERING SCREENS

Light damages organic materials. Thus any museum specimen which is organic and in light is damaged.

Our problem is to eliminate as much of the damaging light we can without eliminating too much of the light by which we see. Ultraviolet light is invisible, and can be eliminated by filters. Recently we have compiled information concerning devices which will screen ultraviolet rays. These fall into two categories: Sunlight screens, fluorescent bulb screens.

Sunlight screens:

Sheet plexiglas exists that has ultraviolet filtering chemicals scattered in it. It comes in several thicknesses and various colors. It has been used in place of glass or over glass (as in historic houses).

A type of "glass" exists which is ultraviolet filtering plexiglas sandwiched between two sheets of plate glass. This "glass" is practically shatterproof and vandal proof.

There are polyester plastic sheets which attach to the inside of windows, but are too reflective or mirror-like for most historic houses. This is the most effective screen, and new technology is reducing the objectionable mirror effect. One brand is available in do-it-yourself kits.

Another available product for sunlight filters is a liquid film applied by flowing onto the windows. The windows are masked and syrup liquid is flowed over the window and the excess is caught by a trough at the bottom. This appears to

be especially good for historic houses where you don't want to disturb the fabric of the house or detract from the historic scene by modern intrusions. This flow-on material can be either clear or tinted.

There is a roll down blind type of polyester screen which can be purchased in many sizes and installed like window curtains.

Fluorescent bulb screens:

A thin plastic sleeve which wraps around the fluorescent bulbs is available. One advantage of this type is that you do not have to take the bulb out to get the ultraviolet screen in place.

Another type is an extruded ultraviolet plexiglas. Yes, this is plexiglas in the shape of a tube. You have to take the fluorescent bulb out to get this one on. We hear rumors that when the fluorescent bulbs burn out maintenance people throw sleeve and tube out; or forget to place the sleeve back on. One solution to this is a bulb with built-in ultraviolet shield-which also exists!

For more information about light filters, call the Division of Museum Services, Harpers Ferry Center.

Robert W. Olsen

CRITIQUING INTERPRETATION

Interpretive Guidelines (NPS6) recommend that at least twice during the peak season supervisors critique their field interpreters. That's the guideline. Knowing that it must be done does not make the moment any less painful for the field interpreter or the supervisor.

The field interpreter may be a new seasonal with all kinds of misgivings about how the supervisor will react or "judge" his/her work. One problem is the form some supervisors use to rate the interpreter's performance. Where used, these local forms often look like report cards: a long list of subjects, columns of spaces for the proper grade, a legend so the interpreter can see what each grade stands for, and the supervisor's signature block and date. Children have always hated report cards and interpreters fear them even more. These forms can pit one interpreter's grades against another's and in some rare cases may serve as an easy bureaucratic cop-out for a supervisor inclined to peep into an activity for 10 minutes, jot down his report, and disappear without an open, hearty discussion with the interpreter.

After all, what is the purpose of the field interpreter's critique?

- To improve the park's interpretive programs.
- To share interpretive ideas.
- To help the interpreter to know him or herself, image, audience, and task.
- To help the interpreter to grow in his or her art of interpretation.

Yes, and in the end to make sure the visitor gets only the best we can give. Report cards and grades don't serve this purpose--discussion does.

At Washington's Birthplace, we devised a checklist of questions to help interpreters evaluate themselves. The emphasis is on the interpreter. After an activity, the "interpreter" disusses his/her performance with the supervisor. The checklist serves two major purposes. First, it's a fairly comprehensive OUTLINE for the interpreter to use in self-evaluation. Second, it leaves room for COMMENTS next to each question. Comments may be suggestions, ideas for change and/or improvements, or constructive remarks by supervisor or interpreter.

Evaluations are never easy for evaluators or evaluatees. Maybe this checklist will in some way help you in your area. It's worked fantastically well at Washington's Birthplace, a living history colonial farm. It's based heavily on other NPS interpretive literature. No matter which side of the evaluation we are on, we are all interpreters with the same goals of serving our visitors.

Tom Danton
Park Technician
George Washington
Birthplace
National Monument

LOOK OUTSIDE

Have you ever considered going outside the Park Service for establishing an interpretive program? Probably many of us would have to confess "No" to this question. While working on the Blue Ridge Parkway during the summer of 1976, the idea came to surface to offer chair caning classes and spinning classes. Well of course in most cases (specifically in our's) parks cannot charge a fee for various programs or activities. As we did not have the necessary funds, the thought came to mind to involve another agency separate from the NPS or the Federal Government. By utilizing the services of the Augusta Co. Parks & Recreation in Virginia, we were able to go through with the classes. The recreation department collected all fees, which were applied towards the purchase of materials, and contributed help when several other small problems were encountered. The classes proceeded on schedule and were termed a tremendous success. Our program accomplished three goals. First, it provided a great interpretive program for visitors. Secondly, it involved the NPS with local residents and a local government agency. And third, the participants learned the crafts of caning chairs and spinning wool. Surely this program would not benefit all park areas, but if your park is having a problem funding a particular activity and cannot be responsible for a fee, why not give it a try. It works!!

Larry Davis
Park Technician
Carl Sandburg Home NPS

Gentlepeople:

Could you put me in contact with someone that could help me out with a problem that probably has obvious answers.

I am in charge of an Entrance Station on the Cannell Meadow District of the Sequoia National Forest (just east of Bakersfield, in the mountains).

We hire from 3 to 5 seasonals to work exclusively in the Entrance Station during the summer (usually from April 15th to November 15th). The problem lies in what these seasonals can do while sitting in the Entrance Station, waiting for the next car to drive up (it is not a mandatory stop). In the past, this time has been used up in reading magazines or knitting, after they had read and some what was required for them to do, natch. We are attempting to break the monotony by having them go out into the field occasionally, but that still leaves a lot of time with them just sitting there.

How have other Forests or agencies handled this? As I said, there are probably a lot of obvious answers, but it's a case of not seeing the forest for the trees and I appreciate any and all suggestions, from anywhere.

Keep up the good publications "In Touch"!!!

Cheri Dollar
V.I.S.

P.S. Send your suggestions to:
Cheri Dollar,
Box 6. Kernville, California 92338

HOW GOOD IS THAT TALK?

We have always had a big problem with figuring out just how effective our V.I.S. (Visitor Information Service) activities are with the people who count the most-our National Forest visitors. People will turn out for campfire programs and guided walks, and they almost always make polite comments afterwards, but how much of what they see and hear do they really find interesting?

The Pacific Northwest Forest and Range Experiment Station in Portland, Oregon, thought the question significant enough back in 1973 to do some research on the subject. A project was set up during the summer of 1973, and researchers carefully experimented with a variety of techniques at campgrounds and visitor centers until they found a method that worked.

The results of the study and an outline of the method are presented in the PNW Experiment Station publication, Audience Attention as a Basis for Evaluating Interpretive Presentations, by Ronald Dick, Erik Myklestad, and J. Alan Wagar, Project Leader.

Rejecting questionnaires as too clumsy and annoying to visitors, the authors focussed on "audience attention" as something that could be observed, recorded, and analyzed without disturbing anyone. Previous studies have shown that a presentation's ability to attract and hold attention is basic to its effectiveness.

Essentially the system is built on a count of "attentive" and "inattentive" people in an audience at timed intervals during a presentation. The results are then transposed to a graph which gives a picture of the rise and fall of audience

attention during the length of the presentation. The percent watching is determined by watching peoples eyes. The authors found that this correlates well with general audience responsiveness. For less ideal conditions, orientation of people's heads toward a speaker or presentation is accepted as indicating attention.

After very little practice, two observers will be found to record consistently comparable results. Not only does the data give an overall picture, but, with graphing, it lets us pinpoint weak spots in a presentation. With the simple form and the instructions given in the nine-page booklet, the technique can be used in the field with a minimum of training.

Admittedly, the system gives a rather one-dimensional measurement, but it's surprising the amount of additional information that comes out of its application. Furthermore, it is consistent and objective to a very high degree.

During the summer of 1976 we began to use the technique on some of our established operations in California Region National Forests with excellent results. A short description of a typical application will give you some idea how it works in the field.

Arrangements were made in advance with managers of VIS programs-no surprise visits. The seasonal naturalists who made the presentations were also aware of my presence on the scene and the nature of what I was doing. I wore civilian clothes and tried to conduct myself like any other visitor. An assistant, who carried the stopwatch and filled out the counting form, also wore civilian clothes and tried to look

like a regular visitor. So far as I could tell, we were not a distraction at any of the activities.

Beginning with the interpreter's introductory talk, observations were started at 30 seconds into the presentation and at one-minute intervals thereafter. Observations were taken only while the interpreter was addressing the group, not while they were hiking between stops.

At each stop, counting did not begin until 30 seconds after the interpreter began to talk. I tried to take the same position each time, that is, at one end of the half-circle audience group, to the interpreter's left. I was part of the group, but from that vantage point, I could see most of the faces in the audience. My assistant stepped on my foot to let me know it was time to count.

The count was started with the same person each time (at any one stop), and my scanning followed the same route through the audience. Most of the time I found it best to count the inattentive rather than the attentive, since, I'm happy to say, there were less of the former.

Where the focus of attention was meant to be on the interpreter or an object, counting eye contact was easy. Some situations were more difficult, such as when interpreter invites people to "look around" or make their own observations. Interestingly enough, there is still a sense of attentiveness you're able to detect even in these situations.

Time of day was noted at the beginning and end of each stop, along with pertinent data about the location and incidents. I was strict about counting inattentiveness even if it was only a momentary turnaway. I found that it was the only way I could remain consistent.

A question came up about counting children since some of them were never attentive. This was where the first of our side benefits came up. I found that even in our best presentations we were not giving enough attention to engaging children's interest in mixed family groups. I counted all children along with the rest of the audience.

In this process I found that I was observing our audiences more intently than I ever had before, and from this was getting more information than just an attention survey. A good example of what I mean is that on most walks, after about a half-hour, I noticed people looking around for a place to sit when we came to a halt. On hearing of this, the interpreter scheduled more sit-downs on the next walk.

After the first season of using the system, I formed some conclusions and observations:

On guided walks, eye contact counting is feasible and easy.

Most interpreters could apply this technique with no training. This is an excellent device for checking previously subjective judgments. It serves well to illustrate things for people who need "hard" facts. Because this technique is so beautifully unobtrusive, so far as our visitors are concerned, we should continue to develop other facets of it. The next logical extension is to build some behavioral suggestions into the interpreter's talk, and then observe and record the level of visitor response.

Obviously, this kind of observation is only part of evaluation. It will always have to be combined with good judgment, and tempered by experience. It's an excellent foundation on which

to build. Best of all, we don't have to bother our visitors to gather the data!

We will be using the system again this season, and will be happy to compare notes with anyone else giving it a try.

Nord Whited
Visitor Information Staff
Recreation Staff, Region
Five
U.S. Forest Service
630 Sansome Street
San Francisco, CA 94111

SOLVING A PROBLEM

Have you analyzed your training objectives? Have you formulated a balanced program? Have you hugged a tree lately? Have you participated in a sun ceremony? Have you put your Regional Director on the hot seat? Thirty-one interpreters from parks in the Southwest Region did all these and more as they participated in an interpretive training course the first week of March.

For a long time the staff in the Regional Office had been concerned about the quality of interpretive training in some of the parks in the Region. We knew we had top notch permanent supervisory interpreters, but for some reason what they knew about interpretation and how they interpreted was not being conveyed to new permanent and seasonal interpreters.

As we travelled from park to park monitoring and evaluating programs we began to see similarities in the weaknesses of programs. It soon became apparent that many of the programs had no objective. They were just "neat programs to have". Another thing we noticed was that visitors were only passive participants. One other major problem was that many of our front-

line interpreters seemed to lack communication skills.

Our experience with the Fundamentals of Training courses indicated that, while it covered the basic methodology of instruction, much of it was not specifically applicable to interpretation except for operational skills. Something more was needed.

So we started brainstorming this by phone and in person with Dave Karraker and Andy Kardos at Mather, Jim Coleman at Albright, and Tom Thomas, WASO, Ed Ortega, Southwest Region Training Officer, and others we felt could be helpful. Based on these discussions, we started putting together a course to meet the needs we had identified.

Then we started to identify resource people to teach the various sections. We stayed "in-house" for some review sessions on basic instructional methods and what should be included in interpretive training. A workshop session on the preparation of objectives was led by Tom Thomas. Excellent material on the "whys and wherefores" of objectives convinced us all that we needed these to insure we were meeting our mandates to convey the purpose of the park to our visitors.

We went to George Williams College for Dr. Steve Van Matre who conducted our sessions on getting visitors actively involved. Steve did a great job of conveying his concepts so that the participants would know how to teach them to others. We did actually participate in some activities, but these were presented so that they could be easily translated into training for someone else. Even though Steve essentially deals with the natural world, application to historical and archeological areas was described

and illustrated. These sessions stimulated a lot of discussion and everyone realized that there are many ways to convey ideas in addition to the "tried and true" ways.

We went to Texas A & M to get Dr. John Hanna to conduct our communications skills sessions. Much of this subject matter was familiar, but the approach John took was how to teach these skills. Practical exercises demonstrated the "how to's," with all trainees participating.

A session on effectively utilizing VTR equipment was really helpful. One important aspect covered was what the equipment won't do. Another workshop session got into the nitty gritty of preparing a session to be presented in a training program. Working in small groups we discussed the subject matter and decided the best method for getting it across, developed a lesson plan, activity (ies) to demonstrate it through participation, time frame needed to accomplish and some kind of follow-up to measure the effectiveness of the session. Each group developed a workable session which can be "plugged in" to any interpretive training program.

Our formal session led by our new Regional Director covered his philosophy on interpretation and what he expects of the interpreters in the field. Our informal session was a "no holds barred" question and answer period.

All in all this training course was well received and good results should be evident this summer.

Betty T. Gentry
Interpretive Specialist
Division of Interpretation
and Visitor Services, SWRO

A NEW FORM OF INTERPRETATION

Dr. Kelly from the University of Delaware made reservation to bring his history class to Ford's Theatre National Historic Site. The purpose was to hear a talk on the assassination of President Lincoln. Due to the inclement weather in the month of January, Dr. Kelly was unable to transport his class to Washington D.C. Instead he called the Theatre and asked if I would speak to his class via a conference telephone. He added that he would show slides of the Theatre while I spoke. After arranging the slides in a chronological order, I made a list of their sequence and suggested a time for Dr. Kelly to call the following day.

At first I was hesitant about giving a talk over the telephone. I felt it would be difficult to express myself and the class would lose its interest. However, my mind was quickly changed when the questions and enthusiasm from the students kept me on the phone for over an hour. I am certain that anyone who tries this form of interpretation will find it as rewarding as I have.

Bob Dodson
Supervisory Park Tech.
Ford's Theatre N.H.S.

VOICE FROM "DOWN UNDER".

I was most pleased to open your September issue and find our philosophy on page 2. It wasn't the easiest of things to write, so to have it recognized is quite an honour and makes it worthwhile. I read with interest Cynthia E. Kryston's "refreshing interpretive waves" and felt I could contribute a little here myself.

We conduct a walk called "Legs". I introduce the topic with the question: Well, which way does a horse's knee bend-forward or backward". This invariably starts an argument and helps the group come to know each other and helps me to appraise my party. I then lead the party off on the walk and casually discuss the legs of the kangaroo (where legs are such that they must hop since they can't move independently) and the odd one out, the tree kangaroo.

But the main aim of the walk is to discover those "greedy for legs" things-centipedes and millepedes.

With a bit of rock and log turning, the group can usually find a few good specimens. This discovering activity allows me to bring in the concept of habitat, niche ect. so that there is rarely a need to dwell on the point of returning the log or rock to its original position-people do it because they appreciate that they are disturbing the animals home, just as if a giant tore our houses up just to find us.

Rarely does anyone know about our quarry so to involve the group I tell them, or let them discover, that centipedes have one pair of legs per segment, while millepedes have 2 pair. We then play centipedes and millepedes. Centipedes hold each segment (person) at arms length. The front person is the head with the

biting parts. The group discovers that if they run in harmony they can travel quite quickly.

As millepedes they hold each other around the waist (great activity for mixed groups). They discover that despite synchronised running they can hardly get up a trot.

With that participatory activity the groups can deduce that the millepede is a browser and the centipede is a carnivore. This leads into the various modes of living of the animals and their defence and offence strategies, their role in the forest environment, and their ultimate significance to man.

Rarely does the discussion stop there. Everything around seems to have legs which are just right for what is needed by that organism and, likewise, those-with them, are best without them.

One member of a group was so taken by the walk that he went away and calculated that a flea leapt with an acceleration that would flatten a man. I don't know if his calculations were correct but the point was, of course, "that he went forth inspired" by and in awe of the magnificence and rationality of nature.

Perhaps your readers might gain some ideas from my experiences.

Bill Carter
Interpretive Officer
National Parks
and Wildlife Service
Queensland, Australia

A Midsummer's Night Stalk

A July night on the prairie of South Dakota can be a gallery for the senses and the imagination. The great 'sea of grass' dissolves into an incomprehensible vastness bordered only by starry space. The air rings with choruses of coyotes and owls. Encouraged by ever-present breezes, sweet fragrances of grasses and flowers come and go like so many perfumed ghosts. The White River Badlands rise from this evening beauty with fantastic, almost lunar, stateliness. But most visitors to the Monument, usually satisfied with the security of the campground, have an acquaintance with the Badlands night that seldom goes further than the evening 'campfire' program.

One does not have to work in Badlands National Monument long before it is apparent that day activities are of scant appeal. The weather is unpredictably inclement or unbearably hot. Few visitors linger in the park, and most are in a hurry to get to Yellowstone. Those who stay in the campground have usually been caught by night and plan to leave early the next morning. Nonetheless, attendance to evening programs and star walks that follow has always been high. The potential for further nighttime activities seemed promising, and, so, last summer the 'nightstalk' was born. The basic idea was to offer an alternative for those visitors unable to participate in walks during the day. Such program had never been tried in the Monument, and, at first, no one was quite sure what could be done with a group of people in the dark. However, the ethereal qualities of the Badlands inspire imagination, and as the weeks passed, each naturalist developed a unique approach. One evening would be filled by a parable from the Sun Dance religion, while another might be used for people to just sit and listen to the

sound of the night. No doubt the scenario startled many an unsuspecting driver passing through the Monument. Seen across the plains from the road the walk could have been a long procession of fireflies, a Christmas pilgrimage, or even a luminescent serpent. Usually no less than 100 people would eagerly follow a naturalist into the darkness, flashlights in hand and feet safe in sturdy shoes. At an appropriate spot they would be asked to be seated, and then told the story of the night. Most of the nightstalks tended to be historical in nature. The Badlands have been in the eye of many historical hurricanes, but the interpretive program had always focused upon natural history. Thus, the nightstalk added a new dimension to the Monument's offerings.

Midsummer a couple of us experienced the historical cave tours at Wind Cave National Park and enjoyed it so much that we decided to try our own adaptation in the Badlands. A group would be led into a natural amphitheater created by the buttes. All flashlights out, everyone sat in hushed expectation beneath a black velvet sky. The only movement was the flickering of a kerosene lamp. Suddenly, there was a wild rebel yell and a tall, grizzled figure emerged from the darkness. Children shrieked, adults gasped, and finally everyone dissolved into laughter. As quickly as it began, the ruckus died down and the man introduced himself as Hugh Glass, mountain man who came through the Badlands with Jedediah Smith on the way to the Black Hills. His story was of being mauled by a grizzly bear and how he managed to survive. The next night a group would be brought to the same place. Many of the faces had been in the group the night before. The same kerosene lamp flickered. This time, however, the singing figure of a woman emerged from the shadows. Broom in hand, she swept the dust as she talked. She introduced her-

self as Sarah Tyree, a woman who had homesteaded on her own in the Badlands. The story she had to tell was of life in Interior, South Dakota circa 1900—the aftermath of the Battle of Wounded Knee and subsequent homesteading. After each story the audience had an opportunity to ask the 'characters' questions.

The nightstark was a success. Perhaps the greatest measure of this was the increase in the number of people who stayed in the Monument a day or two longer than they had planned. As one would expect, there were numerous logistics problems in giving these walks. Moving a large group of people efficiently in the dark required forethought and planning, and routes had to be scouted and familiar well in advance. Rattlesnakes, while never a problem, were nonetheless a consideration. Most people complied willingly with our requests for flashlights and sturdy shoes. They were asked to walk in pairs, a system which greatly facilitates movement. Charged with the spirit of adventure, the atmosphere was one of cooperation and enjoyment. In fact, one night a group back in the butts was caught in a brief, but mighty, thunder-shower. They came back laughing and chattering. Everyone loved it!

As summer approaches once again, perhaps other parks might find that they, too, have nightstark potential. At least in the Badlands, it provided the interpretive staff with a fun and creative professional experience and, even more significantly, involved more visitors than could the day programs. The modern traveler often maligns and misunderstands the Badlands, and the nightstark proved to be an effective tool to draw him (or her) into the beauty of the environment, and for understanding that the worst part of the Badlands is its name.

Kheryn Klubnikin
Seasonal Naturalist
Badlands National Monument
Interior, South Dakota

You Bet, Charlie

I wholeheartedly agree with Charlie Hawkins that the sex of the interpreter should have no bearing whatsoever on the historical character represented in third-person living history presentations. Since this concept must apply equally to either gender to be valid, we may try the flip-side of the coin here at Fort Laramie this summer. Due to his qualification, Tom Lindmier, formerly a corporal of Co. K, 2nd Cavalry could be our laundress-complete with authentic dress, petticoats, and bonnet. He could certainly discuss the role of army women as well as anyone else. I'm confident that so long as his presentation properly reflects those hardy women, the mere fact that he himself is historically incongruous will go unnoticed by the visitors. Now, if I could only get him to stop chewing tobacco and to shave off his mustache

Doug McChristian
Supervisory Historian
Fort Laramie NHS

Here is a suggestion for any park who desires to update their file of informational folders from other NPS areas. Instead of using the shotgun approach by writing a letter to each park, send your requests to the regional offices. They maintain a supply of brochures for each of the areas they administer and can send you a set. This can save you a great deal of time, trouble and correspondence.

Neal R. Bullington
Fire Island N.S.

ODE TO A BLANK

In memory of Blank, who in matters interpretive
stood four square on the viewpoint conservative;
He had little time for new fangled ways
and so in his park he went through the days
boring the kids, and mater, and pater,
It worked great in '48--why not 25 years later;
He scoffed at all changes, rejected new tools,
Those guys in the Region and Harpers Ferry are fools;
So were his fellow park interpreters who
were finding new ways to get their message through.

So Blank sat and smiled his smile so superior
and dreamed of past glories, while his programs got drearier,
but he did sort of marvel how he'd been so darn lucky
to spend twenty years in grade at Old Yackumpucky,
till finally one day he just faded away--
and nobody missed him till the Superintendent said "Hey--
How come of a sudden our programs are better--
I hear people say so, and look at this letter
from a visitor who says its the best program ever;
It's fresh and exciting--you people are clever."
"It's great," said the Super, "I'm all in a swivet,
It looks like old Blank finally got with it."

But Blank wasn't there to hear the bouquet,
As mentioned above, he'd just faded away
But at Yackumpucky they say,
in the still of the night, you
can hear old Blank, still fighting his fight;
"It won't work" he will whisper, "it'll fail"
he will wail--and so to this day
he sits on his tail--and he says
"I am right--this new stuff can't last
And I'll be back with my programs right out of the past."

But poor old Blank--no one will listen--
they hurry on by him with eyes all a-glisten,
To attend the programs of Yackumpucky's new chief,
who's full of ideas right up to his teeth,
And Blank lurks in the shadows, shunned by the throng--
and now he wonders--"could I, oh could I, could I have been wrong?
The moral is clear--let's not be Blanks,
Of course, none of us are, and for that we give thanks

Pete Shedd
written in October of 1973

HOOFNAGLE HAS GONE TOO FAR THIS TIME!



The Uniform!

THEY TOOK THE POOR FELLOW'S BADGE OFF AND HIS VOICE WENT FALSETTO!



hoofnagle HAVO... WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS, ESPECIALLY DALE THOMPSON!

HEY, BOY, YOU'LL HAVE TO TURN IN THAT BADGE!!

ONLY US CLASS ONE REAL-RANGER LAW-ENFORCEMENT TYPES CAN WEAR BADGES! BLAH BLAH BLAH!

Featuring the Rangeroons

OKAY, HERE'S MY BADGE... AND HERE'S MY HAT, AND HERE'S MY SHIRT, AND... HERE'S MY BELT

AND MY TROUSERS AND MY BOOTS AND SOCKS... AND HERE ARE MY SHORTS!



1.



2.



3.

SOME SUPERINTENDENTS ARE EXTREMELY PICKY ABOUT THE PROPER WAY TO WEAR THE UNIFORM

WHEN THE HAT RAIN COVER IS WORN AS PART OF THE UNIFORM IT WILL BE WORN WITH THE SEAM CENTERED IN THE BACK!



HMMM... THE GUY'S WEARING A HAT COVER, NOT A PAIR OF NYLONS!

UNIFORM Accessories SOME PEOPLE SEEM TO THINK THEY ENHANCE THE RANGER IMAGE!



SUNGLASSES: EITHER VERY DARK OR REFLECTIVE... (WE WOULDN'T WANT ANYONE TO SEE OUR EYES WOULD WE?)

PIPE: VERY RANGEROONLY INDEED !!

CHIN STRAP: WORN IN BACK HELPS TO KEEP HAT AT PROPER RAKISH ANGLE!

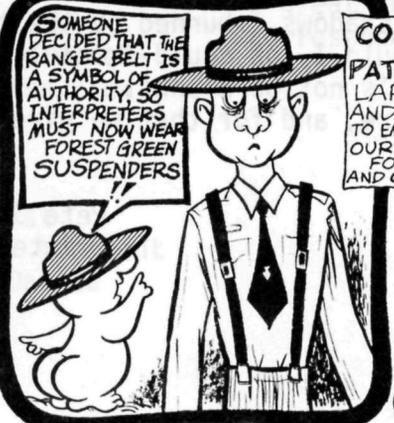
HANDIE-TALKIE RADIO: WORN CONSTANTLY WITH REMOTE SPEAKER MIKE PLACED IN JAUNTILY CONSPICUOUS PLACE!

GOOD GRIEF! HE LOOKS JUST LIKE A STATE PATROLMAN!

THE PERSON WEARING A RANGER UNIFORM USED TO BE THE EPITOME OF FRIENDLINESS AND HELPFULNESS. NOWADAYS HE'S EITHER OUT TO ARREST YOU OR TRYING TO CON YOU INTO GOING TO SOME KINKY LIGHT SHOW WITH A BUNCH OF HIPPIES!



SOMEONE DECIDED THAT THE RANGER BELT IS A SYMBOL OF AUTHORITY, SO INTERPRETERS MUST NOW WEAR FOREST GREEN SUSPENDERS



COLORFUL AND PATRIOTIC LAPEL PINS AND BUTTONS TO EMPHASIZE OUR CONCERN FOR GOD AND COUNTRY!