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The paper, Some Radical Comments on Interpretation, beginning on page 3, was presented at the AIN workshop at Texas A&M University on April 7, 1977. After you finish reading and digesting Dr. Nyberg's comments, how about sending us your thought through comments.

TAKE NOTE

*AIN-WIA workshop-conference
Tucson, Arizona
April 5-7, 1978
Hosted by the Arizona Sonora Desert
Museum.*

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SOME RADICAL COMMENTS ON INTERPRETATION
A LITTLE HERESY IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL

By Kenneth Nyberg, Ph.D
Assistant Professor of Sociology
Texas A&M University

Do not say, "Draw the curtain that
I may see the painting." The curtain
is the painting.

- Nikos Kazantzakis

In one of the more pretentious descriptions of environmental interpretation, Carr (1976) is reputed to have said that:

not having an interpreter in a park is
like inviting a guest to your house,
opening the door, and then disappearing.

Unlike Carr, I rather suspect that not having an interpreter in a park is more like returning to your own home and not having a salesman there waiting for you. Indeed, it is the essential thrust of my thesis that not only is environmental interpretation largely unnecessary, but significantly more likely to produce harm than benefit, as well.

Introduction

There is a considerable body of literature addressed to modes and means of "improving" environmental interpretation. Prior to this address, three distant colleagues have already added to this literature and others are sure to follow. What is not considered is the fundamental character of the phenomena itself, i.e. the more radical questions of "what is it, why is it, and what has accrued because of it?"

As a beginning, I offer three short answers to these three short questions. The remainder of this presentation will elaborate these considerations.

Regarding the first of these questions, i.e. what is environmental interpretation, it appears that the interpreter does three things: (1) the interpreter tells the audience what it already knows, or (2) the interpreter tells the audience what it does not want to know, or (3) the interpreter tells the audience more/less than it should know. The important thing to remember here is what will be elaborated upon later, i.e. that the interpreter is forever "telling" the environment to others.

The second question, i.e. why environmental interpretation, is even simpler to answer. Having considered the question of why we have interpreters at all, I have come to the only conclusion possible: that the interpreter exists as a service to the good Bishop Berkeley, so that if a tree should fall in the forest we can be sure that it does make a sound, because someone is in fact there to hear it.

The third question, i.e. what hath environmental interpretation wrought, is considerably more complicated but can generally be answered by noting the plagues upon every conceivable house. The interpreter, much like Job, continues to glance over his shoulder just in time to catch everything turning to salt. Before him lies plague, pestilence and immeasurable debauchery in the cathedral.

The Curtain is the Painting

There is something wholly audacious about the environmental interpreters' work. Much like the doorman treating the landlord as a tenant--and an undesirable one at that--the interpreter is involved in the business of convincing the public that their land is in fact his, and if they are good they may visit it for a short period of time. The term for this in Yiddish is "chutzpah", and basically means "unmitigated gall".

Not only is such gall unmitigated, but it is also undiminished. Having convinced the owner that he is not the owner, and having provided him with a new title, e.g. "visitor", the interpreter then proceeds to convince the newly constituted audience that it is ignorant, as well. The "visitor" does not see, taste, hear, feel or smell what he sees, tastes, hears, feels or smells. Rather, he mis-sees, tastes, hears, feels and smells what is "really" there. Hence, the visitor does not see a pretty, leafy tree sprouting nut like growth, nor does it even see the "Ohio Buckeye". Rather, the visitor misperceives what is, in fact, an Aesculus glabra.

In short, the environmental interpreter is in the business of "telling" reality, thus denying to all others present the inspiration of speculation. To remove, hinder, or displace this speculation is to destroy reality; borrowing from T. S. Eliot (1952:117), reality is:

an abstraction

Remaining a perpetual possibility

Only in a world of speculation

and by "telling" it, no longer is the possibility possible, "Telling" reality negates reality, and ultimately negates man himself. As the philosopher Heidegger (1961) notes, the fundament of man is brought forth in a threefold act of founding a world (Grunden), discovering the things-that-are (Shiften), and endowing them with a sense of meaning (ontologische, Begründen des Seienden). The interpreter, by "telling" a meaning, diminishes discovery and ultimately precludes man's founding of a world.

Realities are nothing more than ways of knowing, things to be known. When the interpreter "tells" his reality, he does not share it on an equal footing. Rather, he "tells" it so that it now is to be someone else's reality. It is an act of epistemological violence, not simply saying "my reality is better than your reality", but that "my reality is reality". All else is illusion or delusion.

Much like the priest who observed that it is almost impossible to have a religious experience during a church service, I am compelled to argue that an environmental experience is far more often precluded by interpretative programs than it ever is facilitated. Indeed, it has always struck me much like programmed love-making, complete with a coach. Whatever technical knowledge the coach can provide will hardly compensate for the loss of passion and intimacy. It is damnably difficult to enjoy what you are doing, when some other third person keeps shouting instructions.

Aside from meeting the quizzical demands of Berkeley's dilemma, the very real question remains: why environmental interpretive programs in the first place?

Here it is important to remember, that unlike the proverbial chicken and egg, the interpreter clearly did not precede either the environment nor the actor in it. And improbable as it may seem, far more people have benefited from an "un-interpreted" river than from an "interpreted" one. Here, the general rule is, if God had wished for there to be interpretive programs He (She) would have properly labeled trees and rock formations in the first place.

Essentially, interpretation--the "telling" activity--was largely instituted to provide a need, not to meet one. Prior to interpretive programming, such responsibility was entrusted to a various assemblage of incompetents typically termed "fathers", "mothers" and "friends", or--worst of all--ones own imagination and scholarship. This occasionally led to such crises of consciousness and faith as confusing a "douglas fir" with a "slash pine"; "sandstone for limestone"; and the "yellow-bellied sapsucker" with the "loon". Such angst was relieved by the presence of the interpreter. Now one did not have to make up something when one didn't know, or figure it out for oneself, someone was now present to assume this responsibility. Not only could we now be sure that the tree is, in fact, a "douglas fir" but we also were immeasurably "enhanced" --interpretive programs invariably "enhance"--by the knowledge that the average twelve year old "douglas fir" regenerates 11,156 needles every year, while the "loon" hardly any.

I do not mean to deny the fact that a great many people like interpretive programs; they prefer having their world told to them. Generally, however, people who like interpretive programs also believe the Northwest Passage was opened by "Coleman and Winnebago". Their idea of a "primitive campsite" is one where the television reception is bad, and the ice-machine is at least 30 yards away.

The argument goes that we need interpretive programming to meet the increasing demand of larger visitor populations. One of the reasons for this increasing visitor population is greater numbers of interpretive programs. My suggestion is to cut off the snakes' head and let the body die. Simply abandon every interpretive program; tear up every access road; dismantle every prepared campsite and refreshment stand; and remove every plaque, sign, poster, arrow and restroom.

What will occur? Basically, a great deal fewer people will attend parks, wilderness areas and forests. Only those people truly interested will go, not as "visitors" but rather as indigents. After all, where is it really written that everyone needs a "wilderness experience", properly interpreted or not?

If you can imagine the consequences of my suggestion, then you now know the "what", "why" and "benefit" of interpretive programming: pure Keynesian economics. Indeed the only unquestioned benefit of interpretive programming is that it:

may assist in the successful promotion
of parks where tourism is essential to
an area's...economy (Sharpe, 1976:9)

In this regard, the interpreter becomes a lackey for the exploitive interests of the proletariat class, and--unless pay scales have improved immeasurably--like all lackeys, does not participate in the proletariats' profits.

Now you may well ask do I really believe all this to be true? Do I truly view interpretive programming as encouraging Bad Faith (Sartre, 1965), playing reductio absurdum with the natural environment, and unwittingly participating in capitalist exploitation? The answer is yes.

The question, however, is not what I believe about interpretation but rather what you believe about it. Do you really believe that interpretive programs "enrich experience", "enhance understanding", "broaden horizons" and "protect the environment" (Sharpe, 1976)? Once again, I believe the answer is yes. Clearly, not a meeting of minds.

A student and--until now, at least--a good friend, has argued that the interpreter should "...assume a role that supports public mental health services" (Philipp, 1976:12). I take this suggestion as a final measure of evidence as to why I am right and you are wrong. The interpreter perceives his/her role far too ambitiously. It is now simply outrageous, it is dangerous as well. You are tampering with the lives--mental, physical and spiritual--of people. You are taking from people not only their definitions, but their defining capabilities and processes too. You have moved from prophecy to priesthood; your proclamations no longer are prayer, but are revelation. And the fundamental question is: do you know what you are doing?

Conclusion

By now, I suspect I appear like Madalyn Murray O'Hare at the Southern Baptist Convention. In truth, my remarks are not intended to feed complacency, both rather to challenge complacency. I believe it useful to question the very basis of that which we do; to go to the roots; to be radical. This is true of science, life, and interpretational programming, as well.

Quite often the journey itself is more important than the ultimate destination. Quoting one of James Agee's (1960:458) wonderful aphorisms, "the tigers of wrath are wiser

than the horses of instruction", Saner (1970:178) goes on to observe that:

One learns little or nothing if he avoids the
central tigers of his discipline or craft, even
though remaining with the gentle, domesticated
horses may seem safer. It is necessary, then, to
enter the fray; not for me to pretend to instruct,
which is for horses, but rather to take up the issues
directly, inviting you to think through with me the
sense of criticism and its demands on thinking.

It is my hope that these few remarks serve as a catalyst for this demand on thinking,
and that the remainder of our time together be devoted to the critical consideration
of environmental interpretation: What is it, why is it, and what has accrued because
of it? That we confront tigers, if only to grab them by the tail--and consider seri-
ously the topic which I have only poorly delineated. Finally, and returning once more
to T. S. Eliot,

We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time,

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS



GRANTS FOR ASSOCIATION ACTIVITIES

How can your cooperating association get the money it needs for a new project? One solution is to ask around until you find another association that can afford to extend you a loan. But setting aside the necessary repayment funds can slow your project down. More aggressive merchandizing may also be a solution. But if you transcend certain limits, you may well give your concessioner reason to object. Another possibility is to approach your friends or members through a fund drive. But they may not have the kind of money you need. Instead, consider asking for the money from somebody who not only has it but who is in the business of giving it away. Philanthropic foundations seek out worthwhile causes like yours. Let them know about you. We did at Voyageurs National Park and our efforts were well rewarded.

In the introductory paragraph of your proposal, tell the foundation what your association is, what it does, and what you will do with their grant if you get it. Later paragraphs should expand on each of these points.

To establish your legal identity, give your dates of incorporation, IRS non-profit recognition, and NPS designation. You should also identify all directors, officers, or managerial employees of your association by name, address, and position in the organization. An itemized budget for the project will nearly

always be required. In addition, be sure to state the objectives of your project and show how the budget will help you attain them.

Two ground rules govern your grant application. The first is to submit it six months or more in advance. In July 1977, the Lake States National Park Association applied to six foundations for funds necessary to initiate association operations at Voyageurs National Park. If granted, the funds must be on hand by March 1978. Three of the foundations have not yet acted on the proposal. Two others have decided not to fund it. The sixth foundation accepted the proposal and has funded two of its five increments.

And that illustrates the second ground rule. A foundation will find it easier to act if you break your proposal down, in priority order, into increments that range from the largest amount you can legitimately obligate to the minimum amount that would still be partly effective. If you describe your alternative sources (other foundations to which you have applied, potential lenders, etc.)--or your lack of these sources--it will help each foundation to reach its decision.

Once you receive a grant, be alert to the conditions that will likely accompany it. One-year time limits are common. You must return funds you are unable to expend within that period. You

should also expect the foundation to monitor your expenditures to insure their conformity to your proposed purpose. If you stray too far, you may be called upon to repay the funds.

All other factors being equal, a foundation will be more interested in funding a project that becomes self-sustaining than one that lasts no longer than its grant. Such cooperating association activities as initiating operations at

a new sales outlet or preparing a new publication meet this test admirably. All you must do is let the foundation know it.

G. Franklin Ackerman
Executive Secretary
Lake States National Park
Association

It is with deepest regret that we inform you of the death of our good friend and fellow cooperating association supporter Harold Peterson, January 1, 1978. Pete was a member of the board of directors for Eastern National Park and Monument Association and a man to whom we all owe much gratitude. His influence on and devotion to our cause will be missed and remembered.

FORUM



As a reaction to the "Forum" letter by Charles W. Wendt regarding the images used by Keith in his monthly satire on our Park Service Family, I would like to offer the following remarks.

I was quite taken aback by Bill Wendt's letter in the last "Forum" indicating that Keith Hoofnagle's cartoons are an impetus to a split among Service divisions as well as causing us to forget our professional goals. Bill clearly defines the Service goals and shares my strong feelings that I&RM does work and that it is the most viable way to achieve our objectives and serve the Park Visitor. However, he seems to have lost a necessary objectivity, if not his sense of humor. The characters in Keith's works are excellent satire on ourselves, showing both the good and the bad. Keith helps us to maintain a necessary self-scrutiny.

The Service has been around a while, and with our maturity we are losing the sages who personally exemplify what we stand for. Time has taken Frank "Boss" Pinkley, Stephen Mather, John "Evergreen" Louis, Frank Kowski and other legendary figures. There are few left in the field to whom we can turn and ask, "What was it like?" We have lost these stable figures with their humanistic views towards Service life and goals, these points of reference. And now more than ever, we are daily reminded that we are a Government Agency, subject to very real political pressures encouraging us to move in one direction or another. We especially need people like Keith who can give us a point of

reference, who can remind us where we should be with our personal conduct and how we project ourselves to the park visitor.

He allows us to pause for a moment and assess ourselves.

Keith has been exposed to all aspects of Park Operations from lonely lookouts to impersonal service centers, to pit toilet duty in picnic areas on Monday morning. He does not view Park Operations with myopia, but with the broadened point of view achieved only by having been there in many divisions and operations.

We should take heed if we are offended by his satires, for if we are, perhaps we have lost sight of our 1916 mandate. I have met many new Rangers in interpretive and law enforcement sessions who have never had the opportunity to achieve his perspective. These people are set apart not by Keith's influence, but by the lack of direction from those of us in a position to lead. Yet, we can all remind them of what once was and still can be, in spite of increasing pressures to specialize and meet new demands.

So come on, Bill. Don't discourage one of the few things we have that allows us to laugh and at the same time gives us perspective and a special unity in the Service.

James F. Martin
Palisades District Ranger
C&O Canal National Hist. Park.

RAP UP

VIOLENCE, GORE, SEX AND CRIME!



Now that we have attracted your attention, we would like to ask you a few questions having nothing whatsoever to do with the title. Seriously, folks, did you ever try to get information about a museum object? Perhaps you were lucky enough to discover a catalog card complete with all the information you were looking for. Maybe you even hit the jackpot with a catalog folder bursting at the seams, stuffed with exactly what you wanted. Realistically, however, both are almost as likely to occur as Kojak being arrested on prime-time TV for child molesting.

Anyone who has looked at museum records is well aware of the fine work of some curators who have fastidiously completed catalog cards. However, Servicewise, museum records are in sad shape as researchers will readily attest. The reason is that most parks lack the manpower and interest to do the job right. Hopefully, that will all change.

The Division of Museum Services is about to create a central repository of museum records in a specially designed vault in Harpers Ferry. The records will receive a degree of security presently unknown. In addition, they will be organized in a way to facilitate research. All catalog cards will be stored in binders according to park, and a second copy will be made and organized by subject classification - similar to a library. For the first time, researchers will be able to locate a particular musket, list all the paintings by Charles Wilson Peale owned by the NPS, or determine whether a certain herbarium specimen exists.

We are also considering a computerized museum records system, which will enable you to search by any conceivable function. In other words, you could retrieve data on such factors as author/artisan, origin, catalog number, park, classification, location, dimensions or almost any conceivable category. Here's why we need your help!

In order to design a good retrieval system, we want to know what kind of information you need about museum objects. Curators, for example, are often concerned with detailed descriptions of artifacts. Exhibit designers usually need to know the dimensions, location and accessibility of specific items. Finance officers are concerned with inventory functions. Other people can probably use information, even if they have never worked with museum objects. Interpreters especially can gain from accessible information. They could quickly answer visitors' questions or retrieve more information about specific artifacts.

Let us know how museum records could be improved to help you with your job. If you have any criticisms of the system, here's your chance to get it off your chest. If you would like to see more specific information included, drop us a line -- we want to hear from all you architects and archeologists! Take a few minutes to think of what you would like to know about five million museum objects - then write us a letter. Also try to estimate how many times a year you would use a computerized records system to retrieve information. Send letters to: Division of Museum Services, Harpers Ferry Center, Harpers Ferry, W. Va. 25425, Attn: Michael Paskowsky.

★ ★ ★

SOLAR COOKING

Curecanti National Recreation Area

Keith Rogers is the senior Seasonal Naturalist at Curecanti National Recreation Area. Colorado's Teacher of the Year in 1974, Keith is an avid outdoorsman--hunter, fisherman, camper and trail biker.

The solar cooker described below is one of two built by Keith. The other is a solar oven which cooks cookies at 250° F. Detailed information was taken from the Handbook of Homemade Power which may be purchased for \$1.95 from the Mother Earth News Inc., P.O. Box 70, Hendersonville, North Carolina 28739.

Feeding hot dogs and cookies to park visitors when great sanitary care is used in handling and preparation was approved by the Public Health Service. Pork or fried foods are to be avoided. Any variation from the Curecanti program needs to be approved by the Public Health Service.

SPHERICAL SOLAR COOKER

Curecanti National Recreation Area

A stove made of plywood and aluminum foil sounds about as useful as a square tire on a car. This reflector cooker--constructed entirely of plywood, poster paper and aluminum foil--will broil steaks, grill hot dogs, fry bacon and eggs, make coffee or even heat water for doing the dishes. All that's necessary to make it work is clear weather because this stove cooks with sunshine.

At Curecanti National Recreation Area, we are trying to help our visitors stop and think that every time we cook--be it with gas, electricity or charcoal--we indirectly use the sun's energy, which has been stored up and reconverted to heat. Basically then, our solar stove's fuel is nothing really new. The use of direct sun heat for cooking goes back many years. Sun-dried foods have long been eaten and crude solar stoves were built a century ago. Besides, who hasn't heard of cooking an egg on hot asphalt?

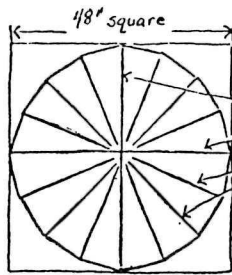
Of course solar stoves won't totally take the place of conventional methods of cooking, but they can offer a solution in easing the energy shortage. In fact, on a rainy day the reflector cooker is not much use except maybe to crawl under to keep dry. But properly used in clear weather, this reflector stove will amaze the most skeptical observer.

At the Park our visitors are given a brief explanation of how to construct the stove and why it works. A tasty brunch of hot dogs is then prepared. The cooker will bring the hot dogs and two cups of water to a boil in seven minutes. We cook the samples for about ten minutes and then allow our guests to spear a delicious tidbit with a toothpick. Mustard is offered as a added spice to the occasion.

We have a lot of fun cooking with sunshine and so will you. It's safe, it's clean and greatest of all--it's free!

Bill Gardiner
Chief Park Interpreter
Curecanti NRA

Spherical Cooker

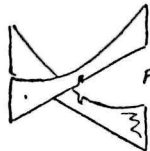
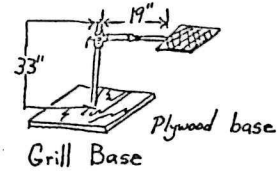


Baseplate & Rib Location

Full ribs. (2 places)
Half ribs (Equally spaced
12 places)



Assembly of poster sections

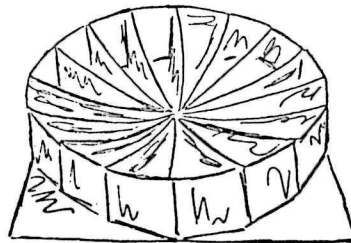


Full ribs interlock

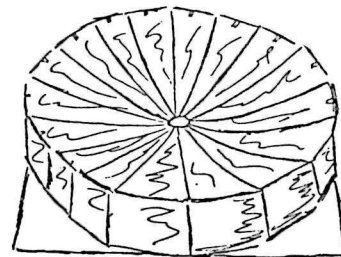
36" radius



Rib pattern - shaded area
shows half-rib pattern



Assembled framework



Covering Complete



MILDEW

Mildew is a plant that flourishes in a damp, warm, poorly aired and poorly lighted area. It dissolves fabrics and causes them to rot.

Keep fabrics clean. Soil can furnish enough food for mildew to start growing when moisture and temperature are right. Get rid of dampness. Air conditioners and de-humidifiers will dry and cool air. Heating the house for a short time in the summer will dry air. Use fans to get this hot humid air out of house. A light bulb burning continuously in a closet will furnish enough heat to dry air. Remove mildew spots as soon as they are discovered - preferably outdoors - by brushing. Avoid scattering mold spores in house. Vacuum ~~article~~. Remove bag outdoors.

Another way to remove mildew on upholstered furniture is to wipe with a cloth wrung out of diluted isopropyl alcohol (1 cup alcohol to 1 cup water). Dry thoroughly in sun if possible. Fungicide sprays are helpful. Lysol in pressure cans is available in most dry goods store, and can be used without problems.

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Allen Cochran

★ ★ ★ ★

"WATT WENT WRONG"

Energy interpretation through drama? Why not? The Creative Arts Team of New York University offered an energy show entitled "Watt Went Wrong" to Washington, D.C. area youngsters during the second week in November. The Team, part of the Theater in Education effort in the United States, was brought to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts by the Alliance for Arts Education in cooperation with the National Park Service. The Center, one of the nation's cultural parks, is perhaps a rather unusual place for energy interpretation but then the Team is not so commonplace either.

Set in the context of a "Consumption Carnival," the Team presented an historical sketch of energy development in the United States. A blend of dance, mime, music, and dialogue helped the audience visualize the basic sources of energy (fire, water, sun, and wind), the steam engine, the electric lightbulb, automobiles, and the atom bomb. The plot thickens with the rise of selfish exploitation and ends with a comparison between the "old ways" of energy use and modern conveniences which lead to the eventual depletion of resources.

Throughout the program a fortune teller predicts the impending doom of the energy race. The audience is left in a dilemma. ...Do we remain "energy piggies" or will we practice sound energy conservation?

The show is actually only a small part of the program the Team offers. Mailings containing suggestions for activities are sent out to school groups prior to performances to stimulate thought about energy and to clarify terms that would be used by the actors. The show then serves as a springboard for audience participation in discussion and impromptu dramatics.

Teachers are also given resource materials with which to work and an opportunity to be involved in workshops which provide grassroots instruction in Creative Dramatics.

We as interpreters would do well to examine Creative Dramatics and perhaps incorporate some of the techniques in our programs. Margaret Faulkes of the Theatre Center in London has described Creative Dramatics as....

"...an activity involving extemporaneous speech, spontaneous action and movement, imagination, simple characterization, story-making, and uses the whole self interacting with others to create a dynamic, immediate experience. It occurs in any kind of space, uses neither written script nor conscious structured theatre art form and involves no presentation; it concerns personal experience rather than communication to an audience."

Because it involves physical, emotional, and vocal action and is extemporaneous it is an ideal tool for the interpreter. Few props are used and what objects are needed are "physicalized" by the participants (talk about audience participation and understanding). Although aimed at high school students and those younger, the technique can be oriented for adults (inhibitions must be overcome) and used to analyze complex issues thus provoking further thought on the subject at hand.

Recently, interpretation has been on the bandwagon of gimmicks. How are our audiences reacting? Are they suffering from multi-media overload? It might be worthwhile to try some creative dramatics. After all, theater arts have survived many a century. Someone must enjoy them.

Gordon Olson

★ ★ ★

PRESITE BROCHURE

With the financial help of our Cooperating Association, we have developed a pre-site brochure to send in response to information requests. At 1.2 cents per copy (including typesetting), ten thousand brochures are reasonably priced and save your supply of park mini-folders for on-site use.

The brochure should be designed for potential visitors of your park, telling them an inviting story and giving them basic information on the area.

With these things in mind, you may want to include a graphic description of the site, a brief history, the facilities available inside and outside the park (museum, auditorium, programs, buildings, hotels and motels, etc.), hours of operation, park rules, the park's address, and a map of the park's location. A black-and-white photo makes an eye-catching illustration.

4" x 9" is a standard publicity size and fits into a legal envelope. You would be surprised how much information you can fit in on the front and back. Contrasting colors cost little more than the usual black ink on white paper. Finally, choose your typeface carefully so it is easy to read.

Peggy Dixon
Park Technician
Fort Frederica N.M.

★ ★ ★

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

As a seasonal interpreter in Everglades National Park last winter, I not only was involved with adult visitors but worked with 4th-6th graders in Environmental Education.

I was fortunate enough to be one of the leaders in a 6th grade three day, two night campout in the Everglades. For this I developed and gave a one-hour activity that the kids seemed to get into and enjoy. I would like to share it with you.

This activity has to be given outside as it includes a natural ecosystem and the outdoor environment. Therefore, you should pick an area where the children can move around freely and that you can observe.

I developed this program in hopes that the children (most of them come from the inner-city) would realize that the "natural" world was nothing to be afraid of. I worked with 25 students who all participated in the activity. They all became very involved with who they were (frog, alligator, tropical plant, etc.) and seemed to enjoy it very much.

For instance, while I was strolling around to see how everyone was doing, I came upon a girl in a tree, lying on a slanting branch. I asked her what she was doing and she replied she was a snake, and was resting from eating a big meal!

I hope if you do this activity you'll get as much pleasure out of it, as I did.

ROLE PLAYING: WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE AN ANIMAL, PLANT, ETC.

Materials

- A. Box of odds and ends; string, coke caps, threads, buttons,
- B. 3x5 cards with an animal or plant name on each one.
- C. Description of each animal or named plant.

Objective

To give the kids a chance to understand that animals, plants, etc, have problems "making a living" from day-to-day. Hopefully, the children will become less fearful of "wild creatures," appreciate them more, and realize that only people can decide, by their behavior, whether other species will be able to survive.

Activity

Children guess what the item is as its description is read from the 3x5 card. The child who guesses correctly gets to be that object and doesn't guess any more.

After all the cards have been read and each child is something, the "animals," "plants," and "rocks" have to build their "homes" somewhere in the immediate area. To build a home, each child can use any material he/she needs from the box of odds and ends.

After the homes are build, the children, in turn, invite other "objects" to their homes and explain to them why they need to live there--why it is important and what they like about it.

After the kids have had a chance to discuss

their "life" with others, bring them into a discussion group and talk about the ecosystem and relationships involved, including how humans could or do fit in.

This activity stimulates imagination and gets the child involved in thinking outside his/her own existence.

Carmen McMahan
Seasonal Interpreter
Everglades/Mesa Verde

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ANOTHER JUNIOR RANGERS PROGRAM

In the June, 1976 issue of In Touch, I read of a program at Grand Tetons called Junior Rangers. I read the article with great interest because Gulf Islands has very few programs designed specifically for children. When planning for the summer interpretive programs this year, I suggested we try a Junior Rangers program on a trial basis. Randy Turner, Helen Kennedy, and I pooled our thoughts and came up with a program which adapts to our particular situation at Gulf Islands. Our main objective is for the children to achieve an understanding of the mission of the National Park Service: resource preservation and protection while at the same time providing for the enjoyment of the visitor. Of course, we want to have fun, too. We begin with a puppet show, followed by a tour of an 1890's battery. We then learn some natural history and the role of the National Parks in the future. We conclude with role playing and a test.

The puppet show involves "Joe," the Park Ranger, a little boy, and a Brown Pelican. Joe and the little boy talk about the National Park Service and the role of all of its employees with emphasis on the

preservation of both our natural resources and historic structures. The Brown Pelican explains about being an endangered species. Soon the little boy begins to understand his role as a Junior Ranger at which time Joe and the boy invite the children in the audience to become official Junior Rangers, too!

Next we explore a Spanish-American War Battery and discuss its purpose of protecting the Pensacola Area. With natural history we stress the importance of sea-oats and dune-beach ecology and also learn about one of the exotic, poisonous plants on the island. Relating the past to the present, we talk about problems the Park faces today and how Gulf Islands will perhaps be different in the future.

After a brief refreshment period, the children participate in role playing as "Rangers" who interpret to the "Visitors" the importance of preservation and their job. We then have a short, ten question test. Official certificates are presented after they take the Junior Ranger oath. We have been getting very positive results from both parents and children. We continue to change and improve the program hoping to expand it into our winter schedule. We feel it is a very worthwhile and enjoyable program. If you have any questions or comments, please contact us at Gulf Islands.

Ann Walter
Helen Kennedy
Randy Turner
Gulf Islands National
Seashore

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LIBRARY ADDITION

I have recently discovered a book that I feel many historical interpreters will find valuable. It is The Face of Battle by John Keegan (New York: The Viking Press, 1976). Any interpreter working at an area that includes a battlesite or deals with the life of a famous soldier owes it to himself to become familiar with this work.

At first glance, it would not seem to be especially useful to the student of American military history. Keegan gives a fairly detailed account of three European battles: Agincourt (1415), Waterloo (1815), and The Somme (1916). To dismiss the book for this reason would be a serious error because these discussions are, in reality, illustrations of an approach to battle history that the author feels is vital for any real appreciation of what occurred on the field. This approach is outlined in an essay that precedes the battle accounts, and is the real meat of the books. The essay also attempts to place military history in perspective with the rest of history. It is the first serious attempt at military historiography that I have come across. Mr. Keegan is an instructor at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst, England, and looks at military history primarily as it is used to train officer cadets. Although he never once mentions the word interpretation, and may not even be familiar with interpretation as we in the Park Service know it, his book is a valuable addition to a park library.

Hugh E. Manar
Fort Necessity National
Battlefield

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LITTER PROBLEMS?

Do you have a litter problem? I think it's safe to say that many of us are plagued by that two legged monster, who seems intent on leaving remnants from his lunch along nature trails, overlooks, and roadways. We've discovered a way to not necessarily stop the two legged pack rat, but at least clean up after him. It doesn't involve tying up your staff with litter pickup nor does it involve much funding. Are you interested?

I'm a forest naturalist with the U.S. Forest Service at Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area, Utah. Here at Flaming Gorge we've developed what we call "The Litter Incentive Campaign," and its operation is really quite simple. At our visitor centers, manned contact stations, information centers, and headquarters we have large bulletin boards set up. On the bulletin boards are stapled two bags of garbage and a number of prizes with the words, "Litter Incentive Campaign," at the top. At these various locations we distribute, upon request, plastic litter bags (22" x 18") to visitors that come in. As the visitors camp and travel around the area the litter bags are quickly filled up. Upon returning to the distribution centers with full litter bags, they earn a prize. The prizes are divided up into two categories; prizes that can be earned for one bag's worth or prizes for two bag's worth. The prizes vary from Smoky Bear rulers and badges to Smoky Bear comic books and sew-on patches. The litter must be collected from the surrounding area, not car litter bags and garbage cans. Parents must sign a sheet upon returning with the litter stating that their children (or themselves) did pick up the litter in the area, according to the rules.

The program has been a terrific success here, not only with kids but with older

folks as well. Families come in with six or seven bags and are ready to start all over again. At one of our visitor centers we get as many as forty to fifty bags of litter per day. The great thing about the program is that you don't have to tie up your employees at the distribution centers, as these are places that already have a person on duty.

Needless to say, our area is much cleaner as a result of the program. But there is more good to the litter campaign than meets the eye (no pun intended). I think it is helping to change people's attitude about littering. As a result of taking part in the program, people can't help but think twice about throwing that gum wrapper or bottle out the window. Best of all it involves children who are learning at a early age to respect their environment. The program actively involves people of all ages in doing something about cleaning up their environment, and that in itself leaves a lasting impression.

James R. Vanko
U.S. Forest Service

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THE WHAT-Z-IT PROGRAM

After searching for ideas for a new program, it finally dawned on us to try a program similar to the Liars Club on TV. With this particular program the emcee passes an object around to a panel of judges and each member must give an explanation of the object. The catch is that only one member will be telling the truth.

We were fortunate enough to have located in the Moses H. Cone house a large collection of artifacts. After selecting ten of the artifacts, we decided who was going to tell the truth about what and

what interesting lies were going to be told. Our panel of judges (or Liars) consisted of a Naturalist, a Curator for the artifacts, and a Dramatist portraying a mountain man. I acted as the emcee for the program.

The artifacts were not handled by the audience and remained in Park Service hands. Therefore we had complete control over them. After the descriptions of the object had been given, the audience was responsible for deciding which member was telling the truth. The beauty of this program is that everyone was involved. The visitors were of course completely involved as well as the different divisions of the Park Service. And not only were the visitors thoroughly entertained, but they left having learned something different. Also, these artifacts which are now being stored were used in a manner which was not detrimental to them but allowed many visitors to see them and learn some of the history of the Southern Appalachians.

Our program was successful because everyone enjoyed participating and did not look at it as something which had to be done, but rather a sharing experience. If your interpretive program is stale or lacking extra something, be imaginative or watch more television!!!! (Once and a while you may learn something.)

Jim Sparger, Free Lance Dramatist
R. Lary Davis, Supv. Park Technician
Blue Ridge Parkway

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You can count on it...

UNIFORM STANDARDS:
WALKING BOOTS, AND ALL OTHER BOOTS, WILL BE WORN HIGHLY SHINED.

HIGHLY SHINED BOOTS? THAT'S SORT OF LIKE A CHROME DUMP TRUCK!

WELL, YOU SURE CAN'T CALL IT 'GILDING THE LILY'!

YEAH, IT'S MORE LIKE 'GILDING THE TOADSTOOL'!

LAST TIME I SAW HIGHLY SHINED BOOTS WAS IN BOOT CAMP!

NOW I KNOW WHY RANGERS WEAR DARK GLASSES. THEY'D GO BLIND LOOKING AT ALL THE SHINEY BOOTS!

YOU CAN COUNT ON IT. THEY'LL BE HIGHLY SHINED WHEN THE REGIONAL DIRECTOR VISITS THE PARK...

BUT PROBABLY NOT ON ANY OTHER DAY!

1. YOU CAN COUNT ON IT: CALL SOMEONE IN THE REGIONAL OFFICE TO DISCUSS RATHER IMPORTANT BUSINESS, AND YOU CAN'T GET A WORD IN EDGewise.

HELLO... YES..AH..I ER...SAY.. ER...OH... ..AH!

2. OH, I'M SO GLAD YOU CALLED! SAY, WHILE WE'RE ON YOUR NICKEL, YAK-YAK, BLAH-BLAH, JABBER JABBER, YAKITY-YAK... OOPS, GOTTA GO NOW! **BYE!** (CLICK!)

SLAM

3. BUT, BUT... HEY, I HAVEN'T HAD THE CHANCE TO TELL YOU WHY I CALLED!

1. YOU CAN COUNT ON IT: SON, I WANT YOU TO SEE THE WAY THE RANGER BUILDS THE CAMPFIRE. RANGERS ARE SKILLED WOODSMEN WHO KNOW THEIR STUFF!

2. HALF AN HOUR LATER (NO SUCCESS)

UH, IT MUST BE THE HIGH HUMIDITY! ER, WOULD SOMEONE HAND ME ANOTHER SEATTLE TIMES.

HEY, RANGER WHERE DID YOU LEARN TO MAKE A CAMPFIRE? IN THE BLUEBIRDS!

THANK FOR THE IDEA STEVE HEATON, YELLOW STONE N.P.

AFTER SPENDING HIS WEEKLY 15 MINUTES ON THE VISITOR CENTER DESK, YOU CAN COUNT ON CHIEF NATURALIST BIDDLESNORT TELLING ALL HIS EMPLOYEES HOW MUCH HE LOVES VISITOR CONTACT AND THAT HE CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY ANY REAL NATURALIST WOULDN'T WANT TO WORK AT THE FRONT DESK 8 HOURS A DAY, 5 DAYS A WEEK!

I'LL TRADE YOU FIVE ALOHA SHIRTS FOR SOME THERMAL UNDERWEAR!

hoofnagle HAVO OLYM

AND, YOU CAN COUNT ON HOOFY ENJOYING HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT, TOO!

OLYMPIC, EH?