

# Chesapeake Chat

SPRING 2019

## Director's Matters

Spring is a busy time at our parks, nature centers, historic sites, zoos and museums. Like the green grass shooting up after a winter's rest; school kids, families and all kinds of visitors quickly sprout on site, remembering how much they love our locations. Any slowness over the winter is quickly forgotten as we embrace the blooms of springtime visitors. We all know the plants may look asleep over the winter but they're busy growing strong roots and soaking up water during the down time. Like our plant friends, we've been busy behind the scenes getting ready for all those spring visitors. Planning programs, buying supplies, getting the schedules just right and if we're lucky, hiring some new staff and getting everyone trained and excited for the busy season.

Region 2 also had a very busy winter. The Workshop Planning Team did a stellar job planning and executing the March 12 workshop at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum. A host of presenters got rave reviews from the nearly 90 attendees. Delicious food, engaging discussions and creative sessions abounded and we are very appreciative of our generous sponsors; The Design Minds, Taylor Studios, Acorn Naturalist, PA State Parks and Izone Imaging.

The Region 2 Board has sprouted some new branches with the additions of Maddie Koenig serving as Acting Secretary, Jessica Greensmith serving as DC State Rep, and James Hersick joining us as West Virginia State Rep. Our family tree is very full for now but we'll be looking for more folks to join us as we grow the Planning Team for the 2020 Spring Workshop. Keep an eye on your email for upcoming opportunities.

The NAI National Board and staff have been super busy this winter. After basking in the glow of a very successful National Conference in November for all of 5 minutes, they launched right into the next phase of planning for the international conference in Brazil. You may still be able to sign up for a week of great interpretive training May 20-24.

Where ever this spring finds you, bloom where you are and root out some great interpretation.

Yvonne Johnson  
Director NAI Region 2

### Region 2 Leadership: Executive Committee

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## Region 2 Leadership continued

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## Meet The Board!

### Jess Greensmith

I am very excited to join the team here in Region 2!

I fell in love with Interpretation at the Walt Disney Company interpreting conservation stories through Wilderness Explorers at Disney's Animal Kingdom. I then moved to Illinois to be an assistant director for summer camps at a nature museum and then an education fellow with the Forest Preserve District of Will County. I finally found a home at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago, where I facilitated animal demonstrations, designed programs for volunteers and wrote interpretive signage. I served as NAI Region 5 IL State Rep for 2 years before being elected Secretary for the Heartland Region. Before I left to come to DC, I was working towards increasing awareness about zoo and aquarium interpretation and getting NAI members to think outside the box about where interpretation could be used. IL members also enjoyed the "field trips" I facilitated to a variety of organizations that were using interpretation in new and exciting ways. It created a fun culture of sharing ideas and learning from fellow interpreters.

I now work for Friends of the National Zoo (FONZ) as an adult and teen volunteer supervisor and education program specialist. I am very excited to continue my efforts with NAI here in DC! Through my work with teen and adult volunteers, I have already established contacts with fellow educators throughout Smithsonian, and am looking forward to building and supporting NAI membership in the district.

If you're ever in DC, please let me know – I would be happy to give you a tour around the zoo!



### Upcoming Training

*CIG trainings in the region and neighboring states*

July 16-19: Milford, OH; Cincinnati Nature Center

September 3-5: Columbus, OH; The Ohio State University

October 28-November 1: Powell, OH; Columbus Zoo and Aquarium

December 3-6: Millersville, MD; Maryland Environmental Service

*CIH Train the Trainer in neighboring states*

September 23-26: Delaware, OH; Deer Haven Park

Check the main calendar at [www.interpnet.org](http://www.interpnet.org) for trainings further away.

## Region 2 Leadership continued

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- **West Virginia**

James Hersick

## Personally Relevant Interpretation with Urban Youth

Seeing smiles blossom and eyes dance while engaging successfully with diverse urban youth is one of the most satisfying aspects of being an interpreter in an urban setting.

What do you do when scores to hundreds of urban elementary, middle and high schoolers arrive at your site looking glum or stressed? What about when you find children running around your park in packs with neither chaperones nor any motivation to access the site's TIU resources? What do you find works at your site?

I have found it fun and effective to engage diverse urban youth groups in short, personally relevant five-minute bursts of interpretation (Interp Bursts). Here are a few ideas:

1. **Historic or Cultural Site?** Interactive role play with every student responding at same time but each in their own unique way, framed by a uniquely captivating event that actually happened at the site,
2. **Natural Site?** Reenact as a group something challenging, gross or bizarre from the perspective of the other(s)—even if those others are inanimate objects—using "theory of mind" that pushes the envelope of the possible, yet is based on actual evidence, science, natural history or geologic timeline, and/or
- 3) **Any Site?** Collaboratively shape a story within your site's framework to allow each diverse young person to review (and share or not) their childhood and life experiences within the broader context of your site's very specific human history, cultural and/or natural framework.

In each case, the goal is to quickly inspire each urban student to connect personally to your site's mission within a fun, evidence-based framework.

By creatively linking memories, life-experiences, interests and style of each young person to the site's most interesting events, objects and stories, a uniquely personal bond is formed immediately, building lasting connections. Using Interp Bursts as a way to facilitate individual engagement, we interpreters can provide an opportunity for diverse urban youth to be keenly aware of their own lives and existence in the broader context.

Contributed by Ranger Jen, National Park Service



Photo by Garden of Dreams Foundation @gardenofdreams

Current link: <https://www.gardenofdreamsfoundation.org/rangers-show-kids-new-york-ellis-island/> retrieved 4/14/19

Top Photo: Wetlands at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum  
Bottom Photo: Attendees at the Regional Workshop enjoy one of the many sessions offered

See additional photos on the Region 2 website.



## Success in Philadelphia!

### the workshop that persevered

Neither rain, nor more rain, nor federal shutdown stays these interpreters from the swift completion of their workshop planning.

Planning the 2019 NAI Region 2 Spring Workshop proved to be a bit more challenging than usual. The John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum generously offered to host the workshop, opening their doors, classrooms, lecture hall and exhibits to the event at no cost to the region. Then on Dec 22, 2018 the federal government started what would be the longest U.S. Government shut down in history. Undaunted, the planning team started researching alternative locations and working on a viable plan B while staying optimistic that the shutdown would end. This extended shut down put a damper on national park sites registering as did the huge financial impact many jurisdictions were experiencing with lost revenue caused by excessively rainy weather. In many places it rained 32 out of 52 weekend in 12 months.



As interpreters we deal with variables and surprises on a daily basis. So the questions "Will there be a workshop? Where will the workshop be? Will we have enough attendees?" were taken in stride by the team and they kept chugging along. The plan was set for a modest workshop possibly at John Heinz; possibly not, with a key note address by the host site, eight concurrent session and a panel discussion. Thankfully the shutdown ended on January 25 and we were back on track. The next surprise was the train started speeding up. More and more registrations came in as we got closer to the closing date. How exciting. Again the team took it in stride and switched tracks with only a short lead left before the conference. The modest workshop expanded quickly with four additional presenters responding to the call for presentations, expanding the concurrent session offerings by 50%.

Over 80 attendees from seven states and two regions came together in Philadelphia for engaging sessions, panel discussions and networking on Interpretation in Urban Parks. Many thanks go to the 2019 NAI Region 2 Spring Workshop Planning Team lead by Deputy Director Sammy Zambon and including Yvonne Johnson, Rebecca Whalen, Amy Henry, Tyler Twyford, and Chris Kemmerer. Great Appreciation goes to the volunteer presenters Nancy Bowley, Kara Okonewski, Susan Newton, Kaitlyn Dykes, Sarah Zimmerman, Angela Yau, Kate Fisk, Mike Cornell, Liz Androskaut, Barbara Woodford, Ken Rosenthal, Sammy Zambon, Yvonne Johnson, and Lauri Schuler and panel members George Boudreau, Renee Albertoli, Dennis Pickeral, Yvonne Johnson and Angela Yau.

We were very fortunate to have five generous sponsor and appreciate their support of the workshop: Taylor Studios and Design Minds at the Hiker Level, Pa State Parks and Acorn Naturalist at the Paddler Level and IZone Imaging at the Mountaineer Level.

Last but not least a huge, Region 2 thank you goes out to all the staff and volunteers at the Johns Heinz National wildlife Refuge at Tinicum, especially our point of contact Brianna Patrick, Environmental Education Supervisor and Refuge Manager Lamar Gore. Their generosity in donating the use of their facility was only exceeded by how warm, open, and gracious they were as hosts.

Workshop attendees enjoy the beautiful new exhibits at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum



# NAI Region 2 would like to thank our workshop sponsors!



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## Submission Guidelines

Each edition will be theme-based so if you have something to contribute short or long refer to the table below for upcoming deadlines and themes. Submissions for other sections can be sent at any time but if it fits in with a particular theme send it by that edition's deadline otherwise it will be used for a future edition.

Recommended lengths for submissions: 500-600 words for articles  
100 words for each tip or trick

Pictures should be submitted as an attachment to your email. Other materials may be sent in the body of your email or as an attachment.

If you have any suggestions for a theme for future newsletters, please send your suggestions or requests. Themes can be anything related to interpretation that would be of interest to the region.

Newsletter submissions including calendar items should be sent to:  
[ChesapeakeChat@gmail.com](mailto:ChesapeakeChat@gmail.com)

	Deadline	Theme
Winter Newsletter	January 15	Using Art in Interpretation; Art sparks Interpretation
Spring Newsletter	April 15	Integrating Active Recreation in Interp; Certification Success
<b>Summer Newsletter</b>	<b>July 15</b>	<b>Fall Migration; Roots in the Soil</b>
Fall Newsletter	October 15	Reaching teens with interp and volunteers; Climate Change