



Chesapeake Chat

WINTER 2019

Director's Matters

It's hard to believe how fast time is going by and that I've had the honor to serve as your director for a whole year. I feel like an orchestra conductor leading a world class symphony. Instead of woodwinds, brass and strings we have naturalists, historians and interpretive specialists. Our musical score is a lively theme.

Completed movements:

- March's Multi-day workshop at the 4-H Education Center in Front Royal VA
- Sammy Zambon was officially elected to the Region 2 Deputy Director position. He was acting Deputy Director since last March.
- 5 Beltway Chapter Events - The National Museum of the Marine Corp, Lichens at Riverbend Park Great Falls VA, Magnolia Bog in Springfield VA, Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute Front Royal VA, Fungi program at Audubon Woodend Sanctuary Chevy Chase MD.
- Over 75 Region 2 members attended the National Conference in New Orleans and two of the concurrent sessions were led by our members
- Maddie Koenig took on the role of Region 2 Board Secretary
- Membership voted to donate \$1,000 from our funds to National's Journey Home Campaign and help retire the mortgage on our headquarter building
- Region 2 hosted a PIP, Process on Interpretive Planning class in VA in early January

Upcoming movements:

- Region 2 Spring Workshop "Interpretation in Urban Park" March 12 at the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge a Tinicum, Philadelphia PA
 - Register [here](#).
- A specialty workshop at Green Bank Observatory in Green Bank WV will be April 2-3. Get to see the optical and radio telescopes.
 - Information coming soon.
- Planning team will form soon for the 2020 Spring Multi-Day workshop.
 - o Contact Yvonne Johnson or Sammy Zambon to join the team.
- More great Beltway chapter events coming up. Contact [Mona Enquist-Johnston](#) to get added to the email list for upcoming events.

Many thanks to all who made this a banner year for Region 2.

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Region 2 Leadership continued

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An oversight in our Summer edition was brought to our attention. The article titled “Arlington Discovery: Screech Owls Make a Home in Suburbia” was originally published on the ARLINGTON REGIONAL MASTER NATURALISTS Blog in August.

Post Conference Trip, NAI National Workshop
Photo courtesy of Yvonne Johnson



Home School Programs

by John Shafer, CIM

I developed a Bird Biology unit for home school students in 2011. We have run the program a number of years and I've had two other instructors conduct it as well. When I created it, I choose to conduct the classes over time to allow for monitoring of bluebird nest boxes to see the growth and development of whatever species of bird were in the boxes. Here are some lessons that we have learned concerning home school programs that may help you as you provide interpretive services for this user group.

Make your first session of any home school program as tight as you can because word of mouth and repeat customers are key to success with this demographic. You'll need to design content to work with a wide range of ages. Realize the kids most likely already know each other well before the program. This means they can get side tracked a lot and can cause conflicts unrelated to your leadership or the program's structure.

There will be siblings present, which has its pros & cons. The sibling dynamic can bring in conflicts, competition, envy, energy, silliness, and even bravery from a higher level of self-confidence from having a family member nearby. Give tasks to older students to assist you and to help younger students. Giving this leadership role for some tasks, provides further development for the older participants beyond the material at hand. Moms or guardians may hang around and not want to leave. They may create a distraction as a "peanut gallery" including getting involved in the program like a participant. You have to decide how you want to define the adult's roles as you plan the program and communicate it clearly at the start.

We found parents preferred once a week timing for series programs. We started with a session once every other week to try and capitalize on the nest bird's development, but it was too far apart for the taste of the clients. Be sure to ask parents what other topics they want and find correlations to your site's mission and interpretive themes.

Providing programs as series or mini events/fairs can be more successful with home schoolers. When it comes to home school programs, design the learning structure and themes to provide access to resources and experiences that these participants aren't able to do on their own. This will ensure repeat customers and avoid you inadvertently acting as a trainer for their own self-guided learning.

Region 2 Leadership continued

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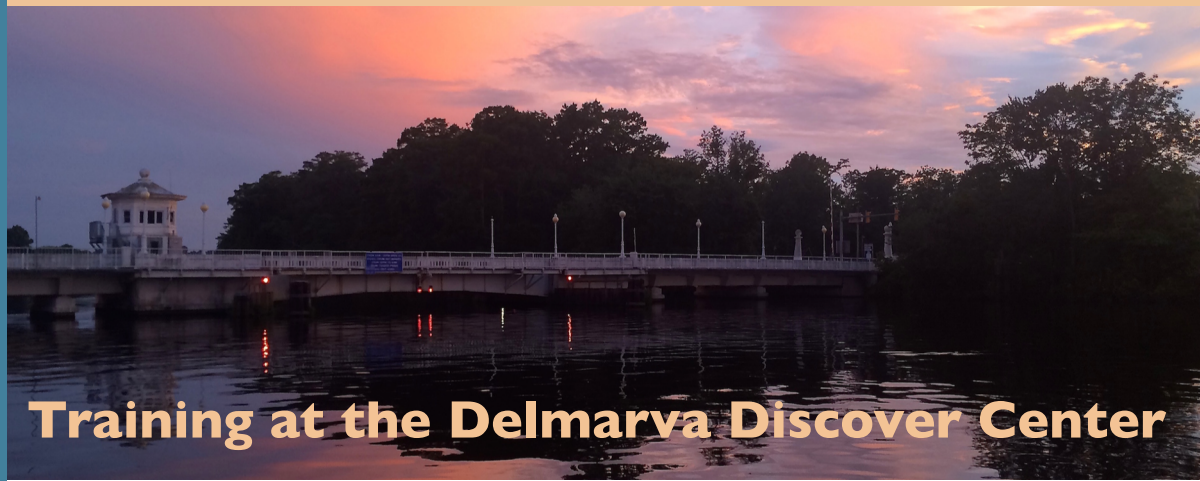
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vacant



Training at the Delmarva Discover Center

by Jay Miller

In late March I was honored to spend time on Maryland's Eastern Shore to lead CIG training and two days of my interpretive planning workshop for the Delmarva Discovery Center. My daughter and son-in-law had lived in Pocomoke City the previous year so this was like coming home to a familiar place. When Museum Director Stacy Weisner invited me, I jumped at the opportunity. However, that familiarity was more like an acquaintance, because I learned so much from those who participated in these two workshops.

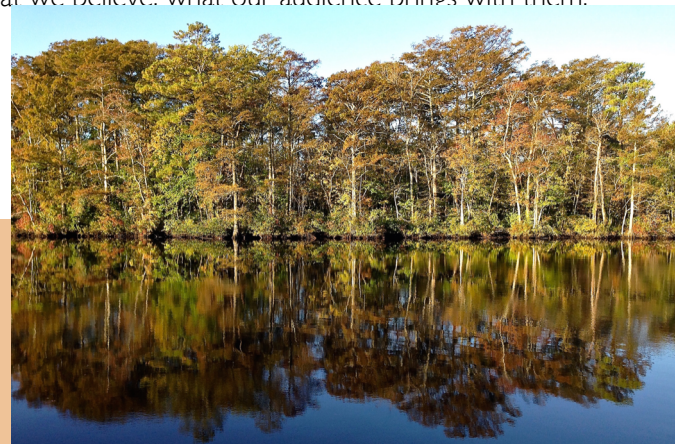
In addition to the workshops, this gave me a chance to make it special, so I chose a small motel on Chincoteague Island a few miles south of the museum/discovery center, and I enjoyed every moment of it. I walked trails, did some birding and some running, found a great restaurant or two, and even had an evening of wild, blowing snow! Plus, I enjoyed the peaceful drive every morning and evening. It couldn't have been better ... but it was.

The Discovery Center is a surprising place. Along the east coast there is amazing heritage, and you expect communities to take pride in their heritage, and probably have a small museum to tell their stories. That's what I expected when I stepped into The Discovery Center. Instantly I 'discovered' this was different. The Center has large, walk-in dioramas, models, touch tanks, otters, and a huge walk through steamship. They tell the story of the Delmarva area from Native Americans to watermen, to decoy and ducks, to the great Pocomoke City shipbuilding era. This is no typical small museum; it's a captivating immersion experience. In addition, they have a significant school outreach program and a variety of events. Yet, they wanted more. I was pleased to be invited.

As President of NAI and after 28 years as Chief of Interpretation with Arkansas State Parks, which includes museums and historic sites as well as recreational parks, I have experienced many parks, science centers, and museums. Over time I developed a workshop that I call Interpretive Thinking based in interpretation philosophy, message/theme development, and practical application. For success it requires a time commitment from all levels of staff. Over two days they set aside other

duties and take this opportunity to focus on the purpose, value, meanings, and message of the site. It's a rare thing to have staff and stakeholders devote that must time to interpretive thinking, but the discussion, the learning, and the ideas are worth it every time. Through interpretive thinking we discuss mission, value, audiences, resources, what we believe. what our audience brings with them. how people learn, meanings and relationships, and the thoughts and feelings we want our visitors to take home. Then we push this into action through exhibits, activities, programs, events, and even interpretive resale. Here, we crafted an overarching theme and laid out how that theme reaches into each existing exhibit and program, and how those can be improved.

Our two days of interpretive thinking set the stage perfectly for the four-day CIG workshop, which was attended by Discovery Center staff and interpreters from sites in the area. Everyone was talented and enthusiastic and brought something special to the training. I enjoyed it, and I think they did too ... and they all earned their certification.



Meet Your Board: Patricia Dietly

Hello! My name is Patricia Dietly (rhymes with 'sweetly'). I'm the Region 2 Outreach Coordinator, and I've been asked to share how I became an NAI interpreter.

On long trips with my family as a child, I would look out the car window for hours, thinking how lucky I was to have been born in the most beautiful place on earth. I couldn't get enough of the mountains, trees, wildflowers, rocks, and streams of southwestern and central Pennsylvania. From an early age, I was hooked on nature.

My love of the environment, and fascination with plants, grew with me through Greensburg Salem High School and Grove City College, through marriage and children, a teaching certificate from Gannon University in Erie, Pennsylvania, and through a career as a Field Biologist and Senior Project Manager in the environmental departments of Urban Engineers and Asbury Development in Erie, where we spent 20 years. It wasn't until my husband and I moved to northern Virginia, however, in 2008, that I became acquainted with interpretation as a profession.

As the Education Specialist at Meadowlark Botanical Gardens in Vienna, Virginia, I learned from Keith Tomlinson how to teach visitors of all ages about the 95-acre park. Mona Endquist-Johnson invited me to interpretive trainings offered by the Beltway Chapter of NAI. Eventually I found myself in CIG class with instructors Tammy Schwab and Cheryl Rash Jones.

Guess what? Interpretation is not all about putting on a show! (A big relief). It's about putting your audience in touch with the resource. Share your passion so they can develop theirs. Show them how valuable the resource is, so they will value it as you do. As a CIT working through the Fairfax County Park Authority, I encourage my trainees to embrace the basic principles of interpretation that transformed my perspective on programming for the public.



Combining Nature & History

by John Shafer, CIM

Are your interpretive programs and exhibits about natural or cultural history related topics ...only? Challenge yourself to find ways to integrate both histories. At Ellanor C. Lawrence Park, we have a unique opportunity to tie natural history and cultural history together. The human habitation of the site from 8,000 years ago through the late 1800's was defined by clean ever-present water from close to the surface springs at multiple sites within the park. This fresh water has also shaped the flora & fauna present.

To help you to start thinking of ways to do this at your site, here are some bullet suggestions:

- Teach about tree species by using wood grain and color in the furniture in your historic house.
- Stage your fishing program on a river or stream where historic fish weirs have been found.
- Teach forest succession at a cedar tree grove, highlighting that it appears where a former field was.
- When teaching about weather, start with a compelling first-person account of a past storm in your area.
- Hold birding, butterfly, and meadow life programs on former battlefields.
- When you use universals or senses to teach, draw correlations to both histories. For example, tell your group the noise of the summer cicadas you hear now, would have been drowned out by the Battle of Manassas on July 21, 1861.

Natural history and cultural history exist together, and both have influenced and shaped the other. Enrich your programs, events, and exhibits, by finding unique ways to spotlight them together.

NAI at NOLA!

by Yvonne Johnson

NAI certainly loves its acronyms; CIG, ZWPA, CIT, NCDA, CIM, IM, CHI, etc etc. I had to ask another interpreter what NOLA stood for - New Orleans, Louisiana. A good interpreter can certainly smooth out the bumps on the path to understanding.

The path to New Orleans for the 2018 National Association for Interpretation National Conference lead to some wonderfully warm days, beautiful destinations, thought provoking sessions, delicious Cajun and Creole foods and outstanding local traditions. When in Rome do as the Romans do. When in New Orleans... have a 2nd Line Parade. So what better way to kick off the start of the conference? You've probably seen a 2nd Line Parade in a movie or TV show as part of a funeral. As many celebrations do in New Orleans, we skipped the casket, mourners and cemetery visit but included the brass band, beads, bright, blingy outfits and of course, dancing in the streets. Just imagine over 300 interpreters from around the country dancing their way through the streets of New Orleans' French Quarter.



Keynote Speaker Twitty

It wasn't all fun and celebrations although there was certainly much of both. Pre-conference workshops ranged from Multi-day excursions to learn about, and taste the difference between Creole and Cajun food and history, to more traditional topics like visitor evaluations. The concurrent sessions were diverse, engaging and numerous. So many choices, including two sessions lead by Regions 2 members. What I don't understand is why any two or three sessions I'm really interested in always happen at the same time and the next time slot has sessions that don't pique my interest. Ah, a longstanding conference mystery.

Michael Twitty's keynote struck an insightful balance using history, food, personal experience and humor. He addressed the challenging topics of bias, prejudice, discrimination and how the people living under those conditions find a way to survive. (To see his full talk go [here](#).) And the Keynote Panel was chockfull with amazing presenters who brought deep understanding and diverse perspectives to a conversation on Cultural Interpretation and Diversity. (See the presentation [here](#).)

The Exhibitor Hall was filled with merchant vendors, exhibit designers, science organizations, and Region and Section tables. Many thanks to all the Region 2 folks who stopped by our table, volunteered time to staff our table, donated items for our raffle baskets and bought some raffle tickets. We gathered in the hall for buffet meals filled with local cuisine, enjoyed a glass of wine, or two, and bid on the many silent and live auction items. What a fun way to support our profession. One of the highlights was a visit and ceremonial dance from local Native American Tribal members in their full, feathery, ceremonial clothing. These amazing garments were steeped in tradition and hand made by each wearer.

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Region 2 basket winners
All photos courtesy of Yvonne Johnson



Left: Birds eye view from the top floor of the east tower

Right: 2nd Line Parade

All photos courtesy of Yvonne Johnson



Another highlight for me was the Region 2 meeting held on the last day. About 20 members attended and got to know, and then introduce, a person they didn't know before. Folks from all over our region shared happens in their area and learned about Region 2 Board work and up coming events. It was a pleasure to meet them all.

As all good things do, the conference came to end. But wait – we can't leave out the Post-conference excursions. There were several to choose from and I selected the bayou kayak trip. I expected a nice Kayak paddle, and wildlife spotting. Yes, there were alligators, but just a few and they didn't seem hungry. But the surprise was the journey to the bayou. As we drove parallel to the water, our local guide pointed out many of the sites and places I only knew about on the news during Katrina. Then there was the lake. I heard about Lake Pontchartrain but taking the full, hour-long drive to get to the other side added a much deeper understanding.

Running a weeklong educational seminar for over 800 people, from all over the county is no easy task. The NAI staff did an amazing job. From orchestrating the myriad of moving parts to adapting to surprises, like half the hotel losing power for 18 hours and then taking three days to get all the repairs done. Through it all they stayed cool, calm and collected and have already started planning for 2019 conference in Denver. Hope to see you there.

NAI REGION 2:

Delaware

District of Columbia

Maryland

New Jersey

Pennsylvania

Virginia

West Virginia



We're on the Web!

See us at:

www.interpnet.com/2/



**National Association for
Interpretation Region 2
Chesapeake**

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

| | Deadline | Theme |
|-------------------|-----------------|---|
| Winter Newsletter | January 15 | |
| Spring Newsletter | April 15 | Engaging Diverse Audiences and Interpreting Urban Parks |
| Summer Newsletter | July 15 | |
| Fall Newsletter | October 15 | |