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## Director's Note

Freeman Tilden, our renowned "Father of Interpretation," once said "Interpretation is an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through use of original objects, by firsthand experience and by illustrative media, rather than simply to communicate factual information." Those of us who have engaged individuals with everything from a butterfly wing to a Civil War trench, know how very true that statement is.

The theme of this issue of the Chat is "Interpretation through objects." Engaging and provoking audiences to delve more into a subject is really brought home through the

connections we make with objects—whether living, dead, human-made, or wrought through the geologic ages.

You will also find notes on my trip to the NAI National Workshop in Denver, where I visited a cabin built by one of Tilden's predecessors, the "Father of Rocky Mountain National Park," Enos Mills, and you'll be enticed to attend our one-day Spring Workshop in Gettysburg National Military Park in March.

Keep inspiring through interpretation!

Linda Bailey

## Outside the Box Objects

When I thought about the theme of this newsletter, my mind immediately went to inanimate objects. But Arlington Park Manager David Farner hit me with the obvious stick that living animals are certainly 'objects' we use for interpretation.

At Ellanor C. Lawrence Park in Chantilly, VA we have three birds of prey we use for programming. These 'objects' pose a number of challenges for their use in interpretation. Chief among them are the Federal and Commonwealth legal requirements for their use. Jim Dewing our Resource Manager and Interpretive Naturalist, holds the personal permits and permissions required to hold, house, and display these unique animals. To use these

animals for interpretation requires care and a range of humane needs, including the issues related to animals that have been rehabilitated after injury that keeps them from being released back into their wild habitat. We also have to consider the safety of the birds, the public, and staff. These animals are predators after all. There are also ethical concerns related to keeping and confining live animals for interpretive purposes that guide how, when, and in what way we use these 'objects' that are too verbose for inclusion in this size article.

I'll limit my discussion to how we use these objects. We use them to: support summer, spring break, and school holiday



## Where in the Region

Find out where this picture was taken by turning to page 5.

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## Outside the Box (continued from page 1)

camps; enrich bird club activities; provide traditional programs of all types; school outreach; support agency summer camp staff training on local natural history; campfire and wagon ride programs; home school classes; special community event support; and as tools for the first aid and safe handling training of Animal Control personnel concerning raptors.

We create a business model to ensure the animals help us earn enough revenue to pay their way so these 'objects', as tools of interpretation, are a value to the overall mission and objectives for the park. Birds of prey are a local nature center's megalofauna. They attract visitors to programs and exhibits in the way elephants and pandas pull people to zoos. Before considering adding them to your objects for interpretation, please create a business plan that carefully considers the factors mentioned here and more to ensure raptors will meet your site's objectives effectively, efficiently, and ethically. (The big three 'E's)

This is essential because living 'objects' involve an even larger amount of responsibility when used in interpretation.

Region II interpreters David Farner, John Callow, and myself will be representing NAI and raising donations for the Cape May Raptor Banding Project (CMRBP) this May by participating in New Jersey Audubon's World Series of Birding event. Please contact David Farner at [dfarner@arlingtonva.us](mailto:dfarner@arlingtonva.us) or 703-243-4342 to get a pledge sheet and instructions on how to help sponsor the team. We want to raise awareness at this event of the important work interpreters do and support the scientific work CMRBP does with birds of prey. To relate that dual mission the team will be called "The Interaptors".

John Shafer, <sup>CIM</sup>  
Naturalist III, Park Manager  
Ellanor C. Lawrence Park  
Chantilly, Virginia

## These are a Few of My Favorite Things

By Suzanne Holland, Visitor Services Manager  
Hidden Oaks Nature Center/Fairfax County Park Authority

Forget raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens for making connections to natural history subjects. I recommend crayons, clipart and clues of a more prosaic nature. From camps to campfires, Thing Bags create exciting avenues for creative learning.

At a NAI workshop in Syracuse back in the 1990s I attended a session which provided a springboard for my favorite interpretive tool. The presenter introduced the concept of Thing Bags, literally a collection of objects that represented an aspect of the topic. A bag on owls may include swimming goggles to represent the nictitating membrane of the owl's eye, a toy tiger as a representation that owls are referred to as tigers of the night and a slip wrench to depict how an owl's beak opens wide. Participants are encouraged to blindly select an item from the bag and hypothesize how the thing was

similar to the subject. Upon returning to my nature center, I pulled together objects to try out on my 5-8 year old audiences. Over fifteen years later, Hidden Oaks Nature Center keeps thirteen thing bags at the ready – plus a collection of additional lists and things ready to assemble – to create up to twenty interpretive bags. The flexibility and the inclusiveness of this activity benefit both the participant and the instructor in curious ways.

Children experience a range of positive emotions from thing bags, especially curiosity, anticipation, wonder, and excitement. With the flexibility of adding items, each child can share in the fun. Better still, there are never any wrong answers! A prepared interpreter can spin any answer into an appropriate response. If a child selects a party blower from a Frog Thing Bag, he or she may state that a group of frogs is like a noisy birthday party. That works! The interpreter could add that, when blown, the party blower rolls out similar to

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West Virginia  
 Vacant

## Things (continued from page 2)

how a frog's tongue zips out to catch a fly. Other children may have additional ideas. When pulling out a model T-Rex from a Snake Thing Bag, answers range from "Snakes are scary!" to "Snakes are reptiles." to "Snakes are carnivores." Asking everyone to wait for the child whose turn it is to answer first can be a challenge. By inviting each child to have their own turn to speak first, the activity becomes more a collaborative game than a test.

The interpreter also gains from using Thing Bags. Typically we use this interpretive tool as a summation or evaluative exercise. During our summer camps on dinosaurs, a thing bag will recap an entire Mesozoic era! For a small group you could easily use this for filler or even out on the trail. We often use thing bags as a calming device since they are so instantly popular. Children are very willing to join the circle and see what appears next as they wait their turn.

Prior to the program, Thing Bags become a great planning tool. New and veteran naturalists alike enjoy brainstorming items for the bag. Surprisingly, having an actual thing is not as important. Children love to draw out an envelope and slowly unfold the paper with the graphic. For an earthworm Thing Bag, we use the "No" symbol of a circle with a diagonal line over a cartoon of a hairy leg. Even preschoolers can guess that this drawing means, "No Legs". Even rebus-style clues can get nonreaders or early readers to join in. Additionally, by the time the interpreter has loaded the Thing Bag with clues, he or she has set the salient points to memory. Since there is no particular order for things to be drawn, the program leader needs to be ready with the relevance of the object as well as open to different interpretations.

Now that the Hidden Oaks' staff are devotees of Thing Bags, I would like to pass along some of the more interesting surprises. We have successfully used this tool with children as young as four. As children get older, at about six, they become worried about sticking their hand in a bag. Maybe it is because we have live snakes in the building! We find that, by assuring everyone at the outset that no one will get hurt or surprised by reaching in the bag, we

quell trepidations. We do not go in order of how the children are seated but take volunteers first. The more gregarious children can demonstrate the high success and low worry factor for the risk-adverse. Typically every child will join in by the end of the activity, with many more begging for a second turn. Returning nature day campers cheer at the announcement of Thing Bag Time and proudly describe the process to the new campers.

Let your creativity run wild! Typically we start with a list of characteristics we wish to review, and unleash the stream-of-consciousness. Our list of twelve items for a Snake Thing Bag follows. Once you get started connecting meaning to objects, it is hard to stop. It is just the right thing to connect the visitor to the resource!

### Snake Thing Bag

- Toy globe: Snakes live in most of the world, especially warmer climates.
- Fondue fork: Snake have forked tongues, but theirs are soft.
- Medal of Honor (clipart): Snakes are heroes for eating mice and rats
- Plastic egg: Snakes typically hatch from eggs which are not as brittle as chicken eggs
- Inside out sock: When snakes shed, the molt is turned inside out
- T Rex toy: Snakes are carnivores
- Lizard toy or picture: Lizards and snakes are both reptiles
- Baby's rattle: Timber rattlesnake, reviews the discussion of native species plus the difference between neurotoxin and hemotoxin.
- Tuning fork: Snakes sense vibrations, review senses as experienced by snakes.
- Balloon: No breastbone, so ribs expand and therefore body can expand when the snake eats.
- Small child's jacket: The jacket would purposely be too small for a class participant. When a snake grows, the skin is too tight and is removed through a shed. Review how the growth of a reptile varies from the growth of a child.
- Sign: Fragile Snakes' ribs are thin and, even though surrounded by muscle and skin, can break easily under pressure.



## Rocky Mountain High

By Linda Bailey, Region 2 Director

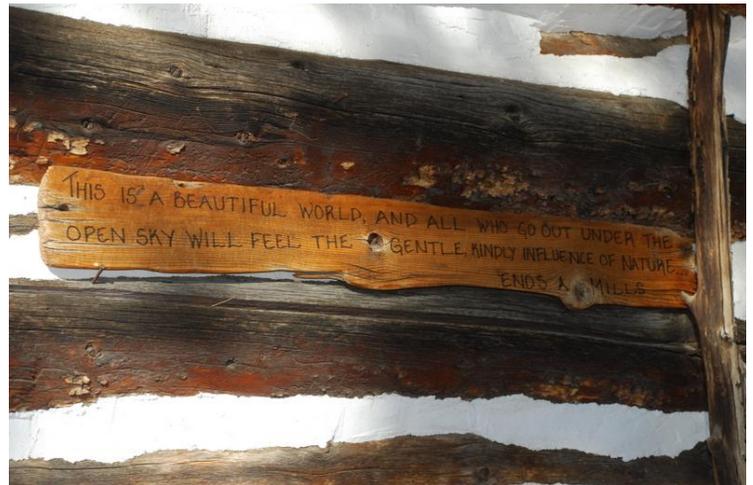
In November I had the great privilege of attending the National Interpreter's Workshop in Denver. As your regional director, I attended several meetings designed to inform and involve the organizational units (regions and sections) of the workings at the national level.

What was abundantly reinforced for me is that we have a phenomenal organization! The leadership of the elected board, with Amy Lethbridge as President, and of our staff in Fort Collins, Colorado, with Margo Carlock as our Executive Director, is on top of our concerns, challenges, and successes, and eager to help out!

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the Region 2 Basket. Filled with goodies from all over the Chesapeake Region, including books, pottery, and more, we raffled it off and raised \$201!

One of the highlights of the trip was the Friday offsite to Rocky Mountain National Park. Our ranger wore a chef's hat and put many interpretive ingredients into her pot. She was extremely

knowledgeable about the history and management of elk in the park, tales of several severe flooding events (one which occurred last year), stories of raging wildfires, and more. After lunch we visited the "original nature guide," Enos Mills' cabin, where we had a delightful encounter with Erin Mills, Enos' great-granddaughter. For nearly an hour, she regaled us with lively stories of her mother, grandmother, and shared many family secrets.



## Region 2 Position Openings

by Linda Bailey, Region 2 Director

One of the things which makes our region so great is the fantastic group of leaders I get to work with! Energetic, fun-loving, hard-working, and very talented, we have a fantastic board. Please consider being a part of our team! These two positions are very valuable and not difficult.

### Membership Chair (MC)

We're looking for someone to embrace the following duties:

- Attend monthly regional board conference calls whenever possible. As a team member, MC input into what happens in the region is very valuable.
- Communicate with 7 Regional State Reps (SRs):
  - Ask SR's to attend monthly regional board conference calls when possible.
  - Receive bi-monthly (every two months) short "hello" from SRs which MC would send out
- Send Region 2 highlights to regional newsletter editor: ChesapeakeChat@gmail.com (Cynthia Rabbers) and website: nairegion2website@gmail.com (Parker McMullen-Bushman)
- Recruit new members:
  - Create general membership flyer for the Region – Director will assist you as needed. Make available (print and online)

to board and regional members for distribution at workshops of other organizations (MAEOE), etc.

- Develop ways to incentivize others to become members of NAI

### State Representatives (SR)

We're looking for reps in the following areas: Delaware, New Jersey, West Virginia, District of Columbia. Here's what you would be asked to do:

- Attend monthly regional board conference calls as possible. As a team member, SR input into what happens in the region is very valuable. Share highlights from your geographical area.
- Communicate with your STATE members. Write up a bi-monthly (every two months) greeting to your state members which the Membership Chair will email to them. This may highlight regional workshops and trainings, job postings, natural and cultural history highlights – just a paragraph or
- Send Region 2 highlights to regional newsletter editor: ChesapeakeChat@gmail.com (Cynthia Rabbers) and website: nairegion2website@gmail.com (Parker McMullen-Bushman).

Contact Linda (lbailey@fredericksburgva.gov) to volunteer for any of these positions.

# Spend a Day at Gettysburg with Region 2

Kimble Talley and Chris Kemmerer, Workshop Chairs

This spring's one-day workshop will be held at Gettysburg National Military Park on Wednesday, March 25. We wanted to hold the workshop somewhere which could bring together cultural and environmental resources and foster a professional learning community. Gettysburg is interesting in that there are many moving parts including the National Park Service and Gettysburg Foundation. Representatives from many organizations will come together for a panel discussion and share how they work together to force greater meanings. Attendees will have the opportunity to explore Gettysburg NMP exhibits, film, and cyclorama. There will also be two concurrent sessions. A short description of each of the sessions is listed below:

**Canal Classrooms: Finding a Path to the Classroom through Partnerships.** Presenters will provide an overview of the Canal Classroom program including the importance of strategic planning, forming partnerships with schools and nonprofits, and creating a flexible staffing model.

**Best Practices to Help Visitors Connect to Places and Resources.** This interactive presentation will focus on the best practices to help visitors connect with not only your site's resource, but the place itself.

**Using Programs to Conduct and Directly Finance Resource Management.** A Public Program to provide for archaeological investigation was created; during this session the model will be introduced.

**The Reaction to John Brown, Monuments and Racial Politics.** From the 1890s to the 2010s, from the United States Daughters of the Confederacy to the NAACP, John Brown monuments in Harpers Ferry provide a discussion of racial politics.

**SAVE THE DATE**

**NAI REGION 2**  
2015 Spring One-day Workshop

Wednesday, March 25, 2015  
Gettysburg National Military Park  
1195 Baltimore Pike  
Gettysburg, PA 17325-2804

Gettysburg National Military Park Visitor Center

**Gathering at Gettysburg: Making Connections**  
Weaving community, cultural, and environmental resources together

**NAI REGION 2 Spring One-day Workshop**

Workshop Registration Fees (Morning coffee, Lunch, Afternoon break, Exhibits, Cyclorama, and Film included)

- \$65 NAI Members / \$75 Non-members - Deadline March 1, 2015
- \$80 NAI Members / \$90 Non-members - Deadline March 10, 2015
- \$7.50 - Eisenhower Historic Site (Optional - Meet Shuttle at 3:15pm)

For registration information go to:  
[https://www.interpnet.com/nai/nai/events/Event\\_Display.aspx?EventKey=r2\\_2015](https://www.interpnet.com/nai/nai/events/Event_Display.aspx?EventKey=r2_2015)

Online registration is preferred but if you need paper registrations they are available on the Region 2 website.

This edition's "Where in the Region" pictures were not taken in our region, they are from this year's National Workshop. Pictures by Linda Bailey.

**Wednesday, March 25th, 2015**  
Gettysburg National Military Park, 1195 Baltimore Pike, Gettysburg, PA 17325

**Schedule:**

8:30-9:00	Check-in & Coffee	1:00-1:50	Concurrent Sessions
9:00-9:30	Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshop Co-Chairs - Chris Kemmerer &amp; Kimble Talley</li> <li>• Regional Director - Linda Bailey</li> <li>• NAI Deputy Director - Paul Caputo</li> </ul>	1:50-2:10	Coffee Break
9:30-10:30	Panel Discussion - Connecting Friends Groups With Your Site	2:10-3:00	Concurrent Sessions
10:30-12:00	Gettysburg NHP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Film 'A New Birth of Freedom' narrated by Morgan Freeman</li> <li>• Cyclorama and Exhibits (self-guided)</li> </ul>	3:00-5:00	Optional Sessions: <i>Gettysburg National Cemetery</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75 minutes (3:30-4) Free</li> <li>• Led by Gettysburg interpreter</li> </ul> <i>Eisenhower Historic Site</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$7.50 per person for entrance and shuttle to Eisenhower Historic Site</li> <li>• Farm practices sustainable agriculture with heirloom plants</li> </ul> Exhibits - on your own
12:00-12:45	Lunch		

**Schedule**

# Beltway Chapter News

## Interpreting the Night Sky

by Mona Enquist-Johnston, CIT  
Beltway Chapter Co-Chair

On November 10, 2014, twenty interpreters from the region gathered at Riverbend Park in Great Falls, VA for the Beltway Chapter session, "Interpreting the Night Sky." The evening's hands-on, interpreter-led stations were well-designed and engaging. Staff at each of the stations skillfully shared information and involved us. We learned how to make a comet, practiced using a star chart, experienced the waxing and waning of the moon, took a constellation tour, heard star stories, and peered through the site's telescope, plus savored s'mores and camaraderie around the campfire. The evening was action-packed and inviting.

We're grateful to interpreters John Callow, Jennifer Soles, Julie Gurnee, Chris Kopsick, Michelle Brannon, Marijke Gate, Rita Peralta and Jordan Libera. They transformed a clear, cool night into a highly effective training session.



A new line dance: moon phases. Jordan leads the way.  
Photo by Michelle Brannon



What's cooking? Julie demonstrates comet making.  
Photo by Mona Enquist-Johnston

Be on the lookout for the 2015 line-up of Beltway Chapter programs.

### .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/](http://www.interpnet.com/2/)



National Association for  
Interpretation Region 2  
Chesapeake

## Submitting Material for the Chesapeake Chat

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	
Spring Newsletter	April 15	Volunteers & Friends Groups
Summer Newsletter	July 15	Fall Programs (Marketing and more)
Fall Newsletter	October 15	