

### 2014 Spring Workshop:

• The planning has begun but there is still room for you to help. If you are interested in serving on the committee to plan a fantastic workshop for the Spring of 2014 get involved now. We need YOUR IDEAS and help with logistics, registration, volunteers, program components, social events, publicity and more! If you are willing to serve on the committee for this fantastic event contact Linda Bailey, Region 2 Director at [lbailey@fredericksburgva.gov](mailto:lbailey@fredericksburgva.gov) or 540-372-1086 x213.

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## Director's Note

We can all recall events in our lives that stand out. What made them unique? Was it fear, surprise, awe, side-splitting humor? What pulled us in and seared the moment in our minds? Now, think about interpretive programs that you have done...the ones that didn't fall flat but held your audience in rapt attention. How did you pull them in? What techniques did you employ to get them "hooked?"

May this newsletter grab you—hook, line and sinker! It's full of ideas, news, calendar items and more. Read, discover, be drawn in and inspired!

I hope to see many of you on March 20<sup>th</sup> at our one-day **Spring Workshop and Awards Ceremony** at Catocin Mountain Park, MD!

Linda Bailey  
Director - Region 2

## From the Editors Desk

You may have noticed that the NAI website is back up and running with a new design. We wanted to let you know that there are a few steps you need to take in order to be able to access the member only sections of the website. If you missed the directions from the NAI Now newsletter we are reprinting them here.

### Create your own account on the new NAI website

NAI members can now create their own username and password to access members-only features on NAI's website. To do this, members should visit [interpnet.com](http://interpnet.com) and click on "Create Account" at the top. (When creating an account, please use the email address where your *NAI Now* was sent to

link to your account.) Once you have created an account, you can use the "Log On" link to update your membership information and access a searchable membership database.

Please note that since the website has a new structure and navigation system, you may have to update your bookmarks. Look for upcoming announcements in *NAI Now* as we unveil new features on the website.

The new web address for Region II is: [NAIRegion2.weebly.com](http://NAIRegion2.weebly.com), in addition to information on the region pdf files of the current and previous newsletters can be found there.

## Getting Started

by Cynthia Rabbers

“You never get a second chance to make a good first impression.” This quote has been attributed to many people including: Oscar Wilde, Will Rogers, and Mark Twain. Regardless of who actually was the original, no truer words have ever been spoken. Getting your audience hooked or making a good first impression are quite important to interpretation. From the moment you step into your setting and begin the program, people are either tuning you in or tuning you out. Where or how you start that program can make all the difference in the world.

I once joined a naturalist on a program on scat, one designed for school-aged children. I believe he was leading a group of fifth graders on this particular occasion and I remember being skeptical that they were going to find this exciting or even interesting. I was absolutely wrong. We started the hike without much introduction other than him telling them his name and that we need to go somewhere else before we could start the program. We started hiking and a short distance from the trailhead we stopped. The naturalist, I believe his name was Mark, overflowed with excitement about something he had found. Mark told the student he thought it looked like rabbit scat and picked a piece up which of course got a lot of “ewws” out of the students. He sniffed the

rabbit scat and proceeded to put it in his mouth and eat it after which he proclaimed it absolutely was rabbit scat. Of course there were some more “ewws” and several dropped jaws including my own. The program was exciting from that moment on and the excitement continued until the very end. Later I learned that he either planted them ahead of time or more often he stealthily dropped them at the spot where he wanted to find his first pile of “scat” which was really a pile of chocolate covered raisins.

This is just one of many ways to start a program. Other ways to start a program include the use of stories, games, and unique props. Based on your responses to a recent survey, your favorite ways to start a program are using stories and asking questions but other suggestions include:

- Using humor
- Art projects
- Simple welcome/  
establishing credibility
- Quotes
- Poems
- Attention getting props (i.e. whistle)
- Icebreakers
- Games
- Songs
- Getting the audience involved

One of the most difficult things about starting a program is knowing how you need to start for

each type of group, especially if you don’t know the participants. The type of program can help. If you’re doing a program where the participants want to be there then your audience is probably already hooked, you just have to keep their attention. What about a program where your participants don’t necessarily want to be there, a school program perhaps or a guided tour where an uninterested family member is drug along by one or more interested family members. These are the programs where your hook is most important and so is reading your audience.

My two favorite ways to start a program are stories and games. I have two different types in each case and decide which to use based upon an initial reading of my group as well as my goal for the program. Children’s storybooks that have a theme that can be tied into your theme work great if you need to keep your audience somewhat mellow. For example if I am doing a program on watersheds I like to read the story “The Precious Gift” by Ellen Jackson. If I want a more upbeat beginning I may tell a story instead of read it and have my audience participate in some way, often by having them make animal sounds for animals in the story. I will often use this second type of story if my goal is more geared towards getting my audience excited about the topic rather versus a program that is

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more educational in nature. When using games I often choose based upon what I see in my audience. A group of kids that is so excited that you will not be able to get their attention until you wind them down I will choose the kind of game based upon the amount of time I have. If I have a lot of time, several hours for example, I will play a high

energy, tag style game with them (Oh Deer, or Park Ranger). If I only have an hour I will play a lower energy game that requires them to focus without them realizing that is what I am doing. Animal Names, Napoleon or whatever you happen to call the game where you pin the name of an animal on their back and they have to ask yes or no questions

to figure out what it is works great for this.

Don't be afraid to stray from your normal starter and see if something else works. If it works you have a new option to add to your bag of tricks, if not you can always go back to what you've always done.

## Tips and Tricks for Getting Started

by Alonso Abugattas

- Animal calls (duck, turkey, goose, squirrel, etc.) are a nice way to get peoples' attention or to give you a talking point when needed. You can purchase them at hunting supply stores, order them from catalogs, or online. I usually carry a couple depending on the audience and topic.
- Behind the Back – By taping a picture of the animal you are discussing to your back, you can get the groups attention fairly easily and in a humorous fashion by pretending you don't know it's there. Make sure there are no other pictures or examples visible for them to see when you do this. This is also a good program starter with young kids.
- Quickly and dramatically point at something. This will get people to try and find out what you are looking at. It can be for real or not.
- Have the kids mimic you by saying quietly "if you hear me touch your nose, if you hear me stand on one foot", and so on until everyone is following your instructions. Try ending with "if you hear me, stick out your tongue" (they can't talk once

they've done this, so you can!).

- Using foam/rubber noses, buck teeth, hats, or masks that you quickly put-on can get the groups attention very effectively and emphasize facts.
- Lowering your voice to a whisper will often get people's attention rather than yelling.
- Pickup something small and stare at it till people start wondering what you're looking at. Then challenge them to find out if they can hear it drop to the ground.
- Use a pointer to point things out or simply get people's attention (they will want to know what you're looking at). The light can also distract or lure certain creatures like lizards or birds, perhaps s getting them in a better observation position.
- Concrete Examples – Kids in particular sometimes have a hard time understanding abstract things or numbers. It helps to have concrete examples of things like size and weight for instance. This can be as easy as measuring our how big an animal is and using painter's tape to mark how high it is. Now a child can compare themselves to the

height of a polar bear, or see if they weigh as much as world's largest turkey ever (86lbs) by stepping on a scale, or feeling how big a 12lb groundhog is by lifting a bucket of sand that weighs that much and thus knowing it really is Virginia's largest ground squirrel, etc. You can even make it into a game by measuring out how far a rabbit, frog, or other creature jumps and having the kids try and match it. This really gets their attention whether in the field or classroom when the real thing is not available.

- Superlatives – People are always interested in superlatives (biggest, smallest, fastest, most dangerous, etc.) so make sure you do your homework before you do any program and learn the superlatives for your topic since it is likely they will ask. Some animal superlatives: (i.e. fastest mammal-cheetah, fastest bird-peregrine falcon, smallest bird-bumble bee hummingbird, largest mammal-blue whale, largest fish-whale shark, fastest fish-sailfish, largest frog-Goliath frog, largest lizard-Komodo

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dragon, longest snake – Reticulated python, etc.).

Other “tricks” for catching your groups attention:

- Yoyo a Spider – If you find a spider hanging by a single thread, you can often yoyo it. Simply grab it by the top of the web and give a slight flick downwards. It will normally stop just short of hitting the ground. If it tries to lower itself, then reel it up. With practice this can be done several times and is a cool trick to show kids.
- Pet a Bee – Everyone seems afraid of bees but you can demonstrate how peaceful they are. Find a bumblebee feeding on a flower and gently pet it

along the fuzzy back. They are very tolerant of this and almost never sting (I’ve never been).

- Scat Tactics – Real or fake scat (including realistic Repliscat) can make for good conversation pieces along the way. In addition to discussing what you find, what is in your finds, the “scat rap,” and other interpretation of these signs, edible scat can make for a great program highlight. Classic ones include chocolate covered raisins for deer or rabbit and molded tootsie rolls for small predators. Just pop one in your mouth as you describe that’s the best way to identify it.

- Butterfly Mouths – Large butterflies can be captured and the proboscis slowly unfurled with a slender twig to show to an audience.
- Butterfly Noses – Most butterflies taste with their front legs and males in particular like salts (when you see groups of butterflies “puddling” by the water’s edge, they are almost always males). If you capture a butterfly and hold it near the base of the wings and place it on a person’s nose (who does not have any big spray or sunscreen on them), the males butterflies will often extend their proboscis and sip sweat for a little while. A great photo op!

## Hooks for Programs

by Linda Bailey

### Water Cycle

From a program on the water cycle I titled: “The Water Cycle: An Incredible Journey.”

At the start, I have several ounces of water in a jar. Once everyone has been seated and the program properly introduced, I begin with...

The WATER in THIS JAR could have...

- been slurped up by a Tyrannosaurus Rex!
- been sweated off the back of a dirty Roman Gladiator
- been locked deep in an

Antarctic glacier...

- swirled violently over India as part of a giant typhoon...
- or been a drop of rain in a tropical hurricane!

The water in this jar

- could have cooled the core of a nuclear reactor!
- could have been in snot running down the nose of a little kid like you!

The water in THIS jar could have been **FLUSHED DOWN YOUR**

*(point to several in group)*  
**TOILET!** *(group moans!)*

**(DRINK WATER)** Ahh...that was refreshing!



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### Owl Pellets

“Barnabas the Barn Owl” makes an occasional appearance when young groups (1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> graders) are dissecting owl pellets.

Dressed in a feather-painted old sheet and handmade cardboard barn owl mask, complete with mouth hole for eating mice, “Barnabas” enters the rooms unannounced!

Moving about the group, Barnabas explains that he is on the run from a farmer who thinks he’s been eating his chickens!

He then proceeds to explain that he does NOT eat chickens, but MICE and that any farmer with sense should welcome him!

Barnabas then eats a mouse and regurgitates a pellet. You can create an entire story around this, but the kids are enthralled and learn that a pellet is not poop, but vomit, and contains the entire skeleton of the mouse. They are hooked and eager to dissect a pellet!

For older students (3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>), I dress in a lab coat (old white

men’s dress shirt works well). I tell them they will be junior scientists. There is a problem-- some farmers think owls have been eating their chickens, and we’re out to prove them wrong by dissecting owl pellets. We’re going to use the Scientific Method to do so. We proceed with Please Help Me Pass Out Cookies OR Purpose, Hypothesis, Materials, Procedure, Observations, Conclusion! They are very eager to be junior scientists!

### NAI is Looking for a Few Good Managers

Actually, we’re looking for interpreters with innovative management approaches or programs to submit as concurrent session proposals for the November NAI National Workshop in Reno. It has been a consistent criticism that our national workshop would be more valuable if it included more content for managers. There are three tracks in which to submit: programs, media, and

management; and, by far, programs is the most popular submission track. You can find submission criteria and submit your proposal through the NAI website, [www.interpnet.com/workshop](http://www.interpnet.com/workshop) and clicking on the *Download the Call for Presentations Form* button. If you have questions, you may contact either Deb or Emily at the NAI National Office, [888-900-8283](tel:888-900-8283).

## NAI 2013



Reno, November 6-9

### NAI Region 2 Meetups!

Did you miss the great networking at the National Workshop? Can't wait to catch up with your fellow interpreters? Well, we have a new resource to help you connect! Our new meetup group will facilitate gatherings for fun and professional development, letting us share our skills and our resources with each other. We welcome your ideas for skills you'd like to add and places you'd

like to visit or your offer to host a meetup. We also hope to use this group to facilitate interpretive trips and behind the scenes visits open to NAI members and friends with a small fee as a fundraiser for the region. We hope this will be a fun and rewarding fundraiser that helps you pick up some new skills, see some new places, and meet great people along the way. Just visit

<http://www.meetup.com/National-Association-for-Interpretation-Region-2/> and join the meetup group to join the fun!

Also discuss events at your site of interest to other interpreters on our facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/group/NAIregion2/>



**NAI Region 2:**  
 Delaware  
 District of Columbia  
 Maryland  
 New Jersey  
 Pennsylvania  
 Virginia  
 West Virginia

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We're on the Web!  
 See us at:  
[www.interpnet.com/2](http://www.interpnet.com/2)

## Submitting Material for the Chesapeake Chat

The main articles and the "Tips and Tricks" section will be theme-based for each edition 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.

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)

Pictures should be submitted as an attachment to your email. Other materials

	Deadline	Theme
Spring Newsletter	April 15	Interpreting the Civil War
Summer Newsletter	July 15	Camps and Programs Series
Fall Newsletter	October 15	Partnerships
Winter Newsletter	January 15	

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