

Photo by Larry Reis

National Association for Interpretation
Region 5 Newsletter

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The National Association for Interpretation Region 5 membership consists of interpreters from state parks, county agencies, museums, zoos, park districts, recreation facilities, and many other public and private organizations from Nebraska, South Dakota, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Illinois, Manitoba, and Nunavut.

Our mission is to inspire leadership and excellence to advance heritage interpretation as a profession.

Bob's Bombinations:

What's so Great about the Kratts?

By Bob Carter, Region 5 Director

As I start to write this, my two granddaughters are at Chicago's Brookfield Zoo with their mother, no doubt immensely enjoying a live show by the Kratt brothers. If you have no idea of whom I speak, go fire up your television, or whatever device you use to access your local PBS station, and tune in on a Saturday. The Kratt brothers are oriented entirely to children but I admit to being a fan because they do not overly dramatize nature or make a murder mystery out of every ecological relationship as do so many of our vaunted science and nature channel programs. Sure, they incorporate adventure and mystery into their shows but the bottom line every time is the scientific truth about their topic. In my granddaughters' lives, the two most important non-family things right now are Frozen and the Kratts. Yeah, I know everything about Elsa and Anna, although I like Olaf best. Do you want to build a snowman?

But, why am I jibber-jabbering about the Kratt brothers? Because they get the science right and do not sacrifice facts for sensationalism. What do I mean? Did you see or hear anything about Shark Week this summer? You get the idea. The expansion of subscription television offerings has only made the garbage dump bigger. All of that-crap, (I could have used a different four letter word, and usually do) only makes the job harder for the rest of us as we try to impart facts, truth, and good science or history to our audiences. It doesn't matter whether we are involved in cultural or natural interpretation; we all have to deal with it. James Loewen's Lies My Teacher Told Me should be mandatory reading, more than once, for everyone. And that is just a start.

I haven't been on a rant like this for a while and it feels good. Many of our cultural lies have been exposed and corrected by people like James Loewen, Ronald Wright (Stolen Continents), Dee Brown (Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee), and a host of others. And now, scientists are starting to lash out at the junk science and nature fakery that is being purveyed by the media likes of Discovery Channel and Animal Planet (NPR, All Things Considered, August 30, 2014: When Wildlife Documentaries Jump the Shark). I used to feel like I had to watch some of their shows so I would be in a position to address and refute some of the drivel that oozed from the screen, but no longer. I should thank them for that because I have way better things to do and, these days, if someone asks me about something they've seen on one of those networks I can tell them to ignore that garbage and go look up a PBS show, the Kratt brothers, for example. Way to go Chris and Martin!

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Buffalo Bull is published quarterly by Region 5 of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI).

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2015 Region 5 Workshop Cultivating Creativity March 18-22, 2015 Ames, Iowa

The planning for the 2015 Region 5 Workshop continues full steam!

In addition to a great keynote speaker, concurrent sessions, and entertainment, we also have amazing off-site trips planned to some of the most exciting locations in Iowa. To learn more about the workshop, get a glimpse of the hotel/conference center, and view a few of the off-site sessions, **view the promotional video** at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kGgltv2a7JQ>

Download the workshop flyer for more information on registration fees, overall schedule, off-site sessions, and committee members.

If you are interested in presenting at this workshop, the **Call for Papers** is now available. Share your talents, research, knowledge, and techniques with your fellow interpreters! [Download the submission form here.](#)

Registration packets and more details will be available December 2014.

Don't miss out on this exciting workshop! We hope to see you there!

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Call For Papers: 2015 Region 5 Workshop Cultivating Creativity March 18-22, 2015 Ames, Iowa

The Call for Papers is now available for the 2015 Region 5 Workshop to be held in Ames, Iowa.

The Region 5 Workshop is the chance for you to share your knowledge, experiences and talents through presentations. A strong workshop depends on great concurrent sessions!

All proposals will be considered and are due by October 1st.

[Download the proposal form here](#), or on the [Region 5 website](#).

Please share the Call for Papers with colleagues.

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Submit to Buffalo Bull!

All are welcome to submit to Buffalo Bull. Please read our [publishing policy](#) prior to submission.

Submission Deadlines:

Winter Issue	December 1
Spring Issue	March 1
Summer Issue	June 1
Fall Issue	September 1

Email:
education@winneshiekwild.com



National Workshop Scholarship Applications Available!

By Jenny Sazama

NAI Region 5 National Workshop \$800 Scholarship

For Students and Professionals

Scaling Interpretive Heights

November 18-22, 2014

Denver, CO

All applicants must be current NAI and Region 5 members and live or work within Region 5 states and provinces.

Students should be enrolled at least part-time in a college or university.

Professionals should be working in the field of interpretation.

To Apply:

Each applicant must submit

1. A completed application form (download [here](#) or on the [Region V website](#))
2. A letter of support from a professor, supervisor or colleague
3. A statement of financial need
4. A Haiku (5-7-5) about Enos Mills (<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/text/poetic-form-haiku>)



NAI 2014

All materials must be received by Friday, Oct 3, 2014.

*The scholarship recipient's Haiku will be published in Region 5's quarterly newsletter, *Buffalo Bull*.

Recipient will be notified by mid-October and must follow through with the following required steps to receive the award:

1. Provide the required documentation upon acceptance
2. Attend the entire workshop
3. Volunteer or present at the workshop
4. Within one month of attending the NIW, submit an article to the Region 5 newsletter, *Buffalo Bull*, reflecting on their National Workshop experience, including implementation to their resources or interpretive practice.

Submit Materials to:

Jenny Sazama

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NAI Strategic Plan Comment Period Open

By Bob Carter, Region 5 Director

Calling All NAI Members!

The comment period for the new NAI strategic plan is now open. The team that has been developing the new NAI strategic plan based on over a year of discussions and member input has placed a draft document at: <http://naiplanning.wordpress.com/full-plan-draft/>.

Please read as much of the document as you have time for, or cherry pick the things of most importance to you. Comment freely on it. This is the membership's opportunity to help direct NAI's near and long term future. You may send your thoughts to me and I will forward them or you can comment directly. I have my list started.

In keeping with the new bylaws, Regions and Sections, collectively, are referred to as "organizational units," but that should just about be the only language with which you may not be familiar.

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Radical Rant: It's No Big Deal

By Karen I. Shragg, Ed.d.

On a recent lazy Sunday afternoon I was biking in a park near my home and an osprey flew overhead. Two minutes later a Bald Eagle soared by. It always makes me feel so good to see these two raptors. I am old enough to remember when they were endangered. I recall the day I saw my very first osprey. I was camping and was so stunned that I dropped everything to run and tell my friends that I saw this amazing, nearly extirpated bird. During the next decade or more, I witnessed their long road to recovery with the ban of DDT and tireless work by conservationists. Now eagles and ospreys are ubiquitous in this part of the country. They are so common that no one I know bothers to alert friends when they see eagles or ospreys. It's no big deal. That made me smile even more. I am so grateful to have witnessed this conservation success story. Eagles and Osprey are a part of our landscape now and it gives me great hope for the future.

What did it take to achieve this outcome? Can we apply it to other important issues which now seem so daunting? I think so. First of all, in the case of raptor recovery, it took understanding the full story. We needed to figure out why these birds were disappearing. Next it took bold leaders pressured by grassroots activists to name the culprits. This fight was led by the best scientific data. There was no room for political correctness. Time was of the essence. It took relentless pressure on legislators to get the laws changed, which initiated a full ban of DDT. Without this pesticide in the environment, raptors could once again make enough calcium for successful egg laying.

These steps are the same on all environmental issues we face today. We cannot hide from the truth no matter who is going to lose money and power in the short term. We need to avoid the temptation to hide behind the sticky rules of political correctness. The earth is holding all of the cards and we don't get to change her rules. We are deeply connected to what happens to our planet's life support system, which is threatened by the modern-day actions of 7.2+ billion humans.

Our ancient stories of unlimited resources and the promise of technologies must fade from our public discourse and be replaced by understanding the full unadulterated truth. The whole truth is that we are overpopulated TODAY relative to our natural resources. We are overpopulated by an astounding 5 billion people according to those who keep track of our ecological footprint like the scientists at Global Footprint network (www.globalfootprintnetwork.org).

We are great at counting. We know how much water is being drained from our aquifers and how much copper is left. We know that we are growing by 9,000 people per hour net gain and that society depends on 89 NNRs (non-renewable resources; see Chris Clugston's Scarcity). We also know that 68 NNRs are already scarce domestically. We know that 63 are scarce globally. However, we are not very good at putting it all together into one cohesive sustainable story. We keep using NNRs as if they were UNRs, Unlimited Natural Resources.

Recent reports on hunger ask the wrong question. Journalists pretend that the greatest challenge of our time is to feed the billions expected to arrive on the planet in the not so distant future. It is not about how we are going to feed the next 2 billion, for that will only increase our numbers and we are already over our limit. The questions we need to be asking are, "How do we focus on humanely stopping the madness?" "How do we keep this forecasted growth from becoming a reality and start a downward trend?" The truth is that only with birth rates below replacement (less than 2 children per family) can we start the downward trend in human numbers we so badly need in order to avoid collapse. We can't be afraid of the collective reaction to the truth. I give people more credit than that. If they learn the whole story of our current situation on this planet, they will opt for one child families instead of inescapable famine, disease and early death.

When I can get people to pay attention on this often-ignored issue, a common response is that nature will equalize and take care of things. That is certainly true, but no one will want to be around in that scenario. Nature will send human numbers in a steep downward trend, but her only option is death and destruction. We are the only ones who get the privilege of handling depopulation by the much more humane option of controlling family size.

Just try to imagine 30 Malaysian airliners with 300 passengers on board crashing every hour of every day. That daily horrific tragedy would only take care of our population growth. This would stabilize our population at an unsustainable number. It would not begin to take care of the 5 billion already here consuming resources faster than the earth can produce them.

In 1966, Dr. Martin Luther King said, "the modern plague of overpopulation is solvable by means we have discovered and with resources we possess. What is lacking is not sufficient knowledge of the solution but universal consciousness of the gravity of the problem and education of the billions who are its victims." We can reign in our numbers and get them to a sustainable level without any new inventions. We just need to understand the totality of the problem and find the political will to do it. I believe it is possible if we apply the same

methodologies used to save ospreys and eagles temporarily from extinction.

We have to pay attention to the science, dismiss politically correct challenges, and counter all naysayers with a large dose of the truth: we are overusing the earth's resources and that this is our most urgent problem. We can't solve anything if we skirt around the truth. To stop the collapse of the earth's life support systems, we must try something that hasn't been comprehensively tried before: pay close attention to the ratio between humans and basic resources. With 7.2+ billion people we must stop giving out the message that conservation alone will save us from collapse. We must humanely focus on bringing about less of us. This is the only way we can save the 17,315 species listed as vulnerable or globally endangered by the Union of Concerned Scientists (2010). Even the eagles and ospreys are in trouble if we allow continue to allow overpopulation to rampage, destroying habitat in its wake.

We might try by commemorating August 19 as Earth Overshoot Day. This marks the approximate date each year when humanity has exhausted nature's budget. For the rest of the year, we are in overshoot. We are "eating our seed corn" as the saying goes, for over four months each year.

I am relentless on this issue because I care so deeply about the creatures of this planet that are losing out to our myopic growth and cowardice. I also have a dream. I have a dream someday that future generations will be taught in history classes about the overpopulation problem of the 21st century and will be able to say, "Oh, that's no big deal."

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Calling All Students!

By Laura Kohn, Region V Deputy Director

Part of my job as the Deputy Director is to get more students involved in NAI. We have some student activity in our region, but I would love to get more students involved and increase that activity. I have visions of a student representative on our regional leadership board, showcasing students at workshops, and maybe even an achievement award.

Thinking back to when I was a college student, I didn't exactly know what I wanted for my future professional life, let alone know the benefits of becoming a member of NAI and how that would guide me. I'd like to think that had I been involved in NAI earlier in life, I'd be a better Naturalist than I currently am

As a professional, I know the benefits of becoming part of this organization: networking, professional development, inspiration, comradery, leadership, and so much more. I look forward to the workshop and benefiting from such a great group of people. I want students to benefit from this, too. As professionals, I think we have an obligation to help cultivate the students' sense of self, encouraging them to find their place in the world.

After recalling my student years and knowing the benefits I receive from NAI in my professional years, I wonder, how do I get more students involved? Now follows my call to action: we need more students involved. As professionals, we need to reach out. Students, we need you to speak out. Students, what do you want from this organization? How do you want to be involved? Professionals, what do you want to know or see from the students? What do you need from Region 5 to help you reach out to students? Send me an e-mail at lmkohn3@hotmail.com. I will put your suggestions and advice into use this fall and will be reaching out to students and professionals to help improve and maintain Region 5 as one of the strong organizational units of NAI.

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Around the Region: **Workshops, Resources, and Announcements**

WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES, and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Jewel Cave National Monument is hosting a **Project Underground Workshop** September 26-28. The workshop focuses on educational activities that relate to cave and karst resource sites. The workshop combines a mixture of classroom activities with caving situations and offers participants a wealth of resources for future programs. The workshop is designed for naturalists, interpreters, nature center directors, educators, home school instructors, and other academic professionals that work directly with students. In partnership with the University of Sioux Falls, participants are able to earn graduate credit for their time. For more information, contact Bradley Block, Chief of Interpretation, at 605-673-8330 or bradley_block@nps.gov.

Please join the Zoos, Wildlife Parks and Aquaria section of NAI on September 24th for the annual **InterpNET Virtual Conference!** This year we will be offering three engaging speakers covering the topic of "Interpretation in the Age of Technology." Visit <http://zwpa.wordpress.com/> to learn more and register today!



The Fall 2014 Meeting of the **Iowa Association of Naturalists** will be held November 5-7 at Lake Iowa Nature Center in Ladora. Download the [workshop schedule here](#) and the [registration form here](#).

RESOURCES

New Environmental Education Offerings from Illinois Project Learning Tree! Project Learning Tree (PLT), sponsored in Illinois by the Environmental Education Association of Illinois, has lots of resources to help Interpreters make learning about the environment fun and hands-on for children. Find out about a training in your area - if you attend a workshop, you'll be eligible to apply for a PLT GreenWorks! grant to work with youth on an action project to improve a park or other natural area. Want Project Learning Tree materials, but don't have time for a workshop? For a limited time you can buy PLT's activity guides online - either as e-guides or printed books. For more information about PLT workshops and PreK-12 resources, visit www.plt.org/shop/iloutreach.

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