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The National Association for Interpretation Heartland Region 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:

Spring Things, or, Rantings and Ravings

By Bob Carter, Heartland Region Director

Wow! Spring again. I've commented on the progression of the seasons in past columns but this time around is really special. It's not that I'll be planting peas and lettuce in a couple of weeks, hopefully, or that next week I'll begin refrigerating the Irish Red Ale that I brewed a few weeks ago so that it is properly ready for St. Patrick's Day, which I will also celebrate by burning my prairie, again, hopefully. It's that this will be my last spring in this part of my life. The end of this spring is the end of 22 years at Northern Illinois University. Retirement? That's what they call it here, at NIU, but, good grief. There is no other way for me to slow down the growth of my "gotta do this" list. Too many places to go, too many things to see and to do. So, bye-bye NIU, hello rest of my life.

I bring this up now because preparing for this made me really think about the many life changes that other members of my NAI family have gone through, are going through, or will go through. Some of these events were voluntary, others not. Some were good, others not. Nonetheless, they are all parts of the paths we take. In my case, the departure is bittersweet. I really hate sentimentality but there is no other way to describe it. I love what I teach, and I like most of my students. But, as I said, my list of other things to do is getting way too long-and I'm tired of the commute, and of bureaucracy. Yuck!

But, I have another motive in sharing all of this with you. Somebody I admire greatly in our NAI family just "retired" too. But his retirement came about because his 31-year long position was eliminated for budget reasons-bean counting and bureaucracy. Surprisingly, it wasn't here in Illinois, although it is all too common an occurrence here. In this case, it is not even a Heartland Region member. He wasn't the only one to be cut, but as a public face of this particular site, his forced departure may be among the most noticeable. That thought is borne out by reactions to it in the area's local media that I have seen. That brings me to the bottom line for these

Quick Links

[National Association for Interpretation](#)

[NAI Heartland Region](#)

Buffalo Bull

is published quarterly by the Heartland Region of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI).

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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

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particular ramblings.

In the more than 30 years that I have been actively involved with interpretation, I have seen our fortunes ebb and flow. I have had the pleasure to know of many agencies that prize what we do and work diligently to support it. I have also, many times, been chagrined, even infuriated, at some of the cavalier treatment aimed at members of our tribe, again, mostly by bureaucrats and bean-counters. So, as we move into this new cycle of programs and public contacts, I urge you to find energy in your like-minded colleagues or your passion for the resource you represent, celebrate the value you bring to people's lives, and make it abundantly clear to the bean-counters and bureaucrats that interpreters, and their trade, are just as valuable resources as the things and places they are interpreting. I would really like to see all job changes be positive things and retirements be voluntary and happy. As Enos Mills said at the end of his story, *A Day with a Nature Guide*, "May the tribe increase!"

By the way, if you need a real shot of interpretive energy, come to the 2016 Heartland Regional in Bismarck. Don't need a real shot of interpretive energy? Come anyway. You can help me celebrate my last month in my old life and have a great time to boot.

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"Catch the Spirit" of the 2016 Heartland Region Workshop!

Catch the Spirit

[Heartland Region Workshop](#)

April 6-10, 2016

Ramada Conference Center
Bismarck, North Dakota

The North Dakota planning committee is working hard to ensure that you "catch the spirit" at the [Heartland Region Workshop!](#)

[Concurrent Sessions](#) are now available. Check them out!

Early Bird Registration ends March 15! Get your registration in now to receive the discounted rate!

The workshop kicks off with Keynote Speaker Linda Black Elk, an ethnobiologist, restoration ecologist, and instructor at Sitting Bull College. Her in-depth knowledge of plants and native cultures is inspiring to all. Later that night, five-time nominee for Western Artist of the Year Greg Hagar will bring his stories to life through music that appeal to all listeners. Born and raised in North Dakota, Greg entertains as he shares his successes and struggles of country life, love and faith.



At past workshops, have you ever wanted to attend more than one offsite session? In North Dakota, you will have the freedom to attend multiple half-day sessions with topics including Energy, Nature, and Cultural History.

Still not convinced? Then join us Friday night as we watch Steve Stark perform his magic, bringing history to life through story-telling and drawing before your eyes with great accuracy and speed on 20-30 foot rolls of paper. On Saturday, meet Theodore Roosevelt, portrayed by Arch Ellwein! And, of course, there's always the competitive silent and entertaining live auctions and the amazing Awards Banquet to be held at the newly expanded Heritage Center.

Bismarck is easily reachable by car, train, or plane. Enjoy wildlife watching on one of many highways as you traverse North Dakota's wide open spaces, or utilize the Ramada's free shuttle service to the Bismarck airport. The committee will also organize a shuttle from the Fargo airport (2.5 hours) or Minot train station (2 hours) if there is sufficient demand.

More information on lodging, registration, and the entire workshop can be found on the [workshop website](#). Mail and online registration are both available. Early bird registration rates end March 15!

We are looking forward to seeing you all in North Dakota!

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2016 Awards Announced

By Jeff Boland, Awards Chair

Congratulations to April Vaos the 2016 Heartland Region Master Frontline Interpreter Award Recipient! April works for the Lake County Forest Preserves District in Illinois as an Environmental Educator. The Award will be presented Saturday evening, April 9th at our Regional Workshop in Bismarck, North Dakota. Please congratulate April on her award and for being an outstanding representation of our profession!

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Heartland Region Media Updates

Please update your records to include the new website and social media contact info for the region, reflecting our embracing of "Heartland Region" in place of "Region 5."

- **Website:** <http://naiheartlandregion.weebly.com/>
- **Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/NAIHeartland>
- **Facebook:** www.facebook.com/NAIHeartlandRegion

Heartland Region Member Receives BSA Award

Bradley Block, Chief of Interpretation at Jewel Cave National Monument, was recently awarded the Silver Beaver Award by the Black Hills Area Council of the Boy Scouts of America. It is the highest honor given by a Council to a registered adult leader for activities and volunteer assistance within the BSA. Not only does Bradley serve as a Scoutmaster for a local troop in Custer, SD, he has also implemented a number of Scout-related activities at his work site. He crafted a Cub Scout Belt Loopalooza special event using grant funds from the National Parks Association. He secured funds from the NPS Youth Programs Office in Washington, DC to create a specific Scout Ranger Program at the Monument; this program is the only one out of 409 NPS sites to offer a specialized embroidered patch for Scout participants. He has worked with numerous other public land agencies, like the Black Hills National Forest, Custer State Park, and Angostura Recreation Area, to arrange for Scout Day Camps, setting up numerous activity stations with an assortment of conservation employees.

Bradley is an Eagle Scout, dating back to 1985. His 16-year-old son, Logan, is currently a member of Troop 25, for which Bradley has served as the Scoutmaster for several years. At present, Bradley continues to volunteer his time with the Black Hills Area Council and local troop. He enjoys being active with the BSA, and he continues to seek out ways to engage the BSA and NPS together with additional programs and services.



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

NAI CERTIFICATION and CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) Training Workshops

The Certified Interpretive Guide program is designed for anyone who delivers interpretive programs to the public. It combines both the theoretical foundations of the profession with practical skills in delivering quality interpretive programming to visitors.

National Great Rivers Museum
Alton, Illinois

May 16-19, 2016

For more information, visit the [workshop website](#) or contact Pat Barry at jpatbarry@hotmail.com or (541) 400-0596.

Fullersburg Woods

Oak Brook, Illinois

August 15-19, 2016

For more information, visit the [workshop website](#) or contact Andre Copeland at andre.copeland@czs.org or (708) 688-8845.

Fontenelle Forest, Camp Brewster Lodge

Bellevue, Nebraska

August 22-25, 2016

For more information, visit the [workshop website](#) or contact Debra K. Beck at dbeck@fontenelleforest.org or (402) 731-3140, ext. 1017.

Certified Interpretive Host Train-the-Trainers Workshop

Looking for training that combines non-formal interpretation skills with customer service? Do you want to train/certify staff and others on behalf of NAI? If so, this is the course for you!

Lost Valley Visitor Center, McHenry Co. Conservation District

Ringwood, Illinois

May 3-6, 2016 (non-CIT-certified attendees)

May 4-5, 2016 (CIT/CIG-certified attendees)

For more information, visit the [NAI training website](#).

NAI Webinars

Don't forget about NAI's webinars! [Check them out here!](#)

EXTERNAL WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES, and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Environmental Education Association of Illinois Annual Meeting and Conference

"Restoring and Recharging Environmental Education"

March 11-12, 2016

Spoon River College and Conference Center

Canton, Illinois

Call for Proposals: Due December 15, 2015

For more information, visit www.EEAI.net.

2016 Mid-States Camp Conference

April 7-9, 2016

Pheasant Run Resort

St. Charles, Illinois

For more information, visit the [conference website](#).

Regional Roundtable: Remaining Relevant

A Collaborative Effort of the NE and NW Regional Directors of EEAI

April 13, 2016, 10am-3pm

Prairieview Education Center

Crystal Lake, Illinois

Free but registration required. Learn more at the [NAI Heartland Region website](#).

Children & Nature Network Summit and Conference

"Inspiration and Action for Healthy Communities"

May 25-27, 2016

Saint Paul RiverCentre

Saint Paul, Minnesota

This year's conference will be co-hosted by C&NN and the Minnesota Children and Nature Connection.

[Registration is now open.](#)

2016 Illinois Invasive Species Symposium May 26, 2016

Champaign, Illinois

Save the Date: More details coming soon!

Midwest Early Childhood Educator Symposium

"Second Nature: Reintroducing Children to the Outdoors"

Saturday, June 4, 2016

The Morton Arboretum

Lisle, Illinois

Registration opens February 1, 2016

Visit the [Morton Arboretum website](#) for more information.

The **Environmental Education Association of Illinois** has a calendar of a wide range of training opportunities, including Project Learning Tree, Project Wild, and more. Visit [their website](#) for a detailed list.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources' ENTICE (Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education) educator workshops are scheduled for 2015! These workshops include hands-on activities, lessons, and supplemental resources. For more information, dates, and to register visit <https://www.enticeworkshops.com/>.

RESOURCES

Does your area have **Green Drinks chapter**? These lively mixtures of like-minded folks get together monthly to network, share ideas, and be inspired. They are informal, organic, self-organizing networks. Learn more and see if there's one near you, or start one yourself! <http://www.greendrinks.org/>.

The mission of the **University of Illinois Extension: Master Naturalist Program** is to provide science-based educational opportunities that connect people with nature and help them become engaged environmental stewards. The training will prepare volunteer Master Naturalists to more effectively participate in local environmental stewardship. Find more information at

<https://web.extension.illinois.edu/mn/who.cfm>.

Looking for a job or internship? Don't forget to check out these great resources from NAI and Region 5!

[NAI's Career Center](#) (National Office)

[NAI Heartland Region Job Board](#)

[SEEK](#) (Minnesota)

[MyCountyParks](#) (Iowa; seasonal and full-time)

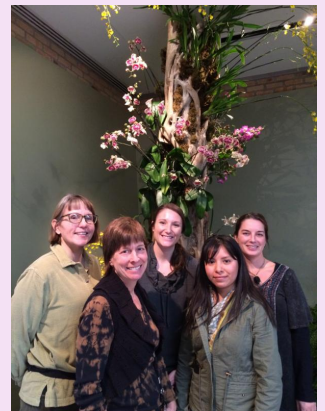
Call for Articles: InterpNEWS

If you are interested in submitted articles and/or research to this free, international heritage interpretation e-magazine, please contact John Veverka (CIT, CIP, NAI Fellow) at jvainterp@aol.com. [Click here for more information on InterpNEWS.](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Minnesota will not be hosting the 2017 Regional Workshop, but will be in 2018. All Minnesota members, please begin pooling resources and brainstorming host locations as the start of the planning process!

Kristie Webber hosted five interpreters at the Chicago Botanical Gardens in early March. It was a wonderful opportunity for Illinois interpreters to catch up and make new friends! They received a tour of the grounds and got to enjoy the beautiful Orchid Show. Stay tuned for details on the upcoming April field trip and contact Jessica Preston if you are interested in joining or hosting a visit to your institution (jlpreston12@gmail.com)!



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