



National Association for Interpretation
Buffalo Bull: Heartland Region
Newsletter

Spring 2017
Volume 29, Number 1

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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

Bob's Bombinations

By Bob Carter, Heartland Region Director

In my last column for the *Bull* I complained about snow. Now I am going to complain about no snow. That is because the fluffy white I was expecting while I was writing that previous column never materialized, at least not enough for shoveling. I did go out and try to push some of what did land around a bit so I could feel like I earned my hot chocolate by the fireplace, but no such luck. There wasn't even enough accumulation for a broom let alone a shovel, so I went back in and had my hot chocolate by the fireplace anyway. As with gift-giving, it's the thought that counts. Besides, someone sweeping snow off of a driveway looks incredibly goofy. That's something Felix Unger from *The Odd Couple* would do, not me, who is prone to letting two or more inches of it sit until what is left after repeated passes over it by our cars finally melts away in the spring sunshine.

I know my complaints are based on local weather, and that parts of our region have gotten slammed by winter weather over the last few months, but all in all, this is one of the sorriest excuses for a winter I have seen in this part of the country, so, since spring insists on showing up, I'm going to start looking at spring things.

Foremost on that list is our Heartland Region Workshop. This year's workshop of course, is in Deadwood, SD from April 5th to the 9th. Yahoooo! For 2018, the workshop will be held in Minnesota. In 2019 it will be Wisconsin's turn and planning for that should be starting in a few months. My all-time favorite regional was in Wisconsin in 2003.

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.

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:

Manitoba is up to bat for 2020, and that should be really interesting because it is also Canada's sesquicentennial. So there is my spring calendar for the next few years, and yours too I hope. If you call Minnesota, Wisconsin, or Manitoba home, please consider helping out with the Heartland Region's premier annual event. And don't forget SD, as workshop volunteers are always needed.

See you soon! Somewhere.

Bob Carter

Heartland Region Director

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2017 Heartland Region Workshop

"The Future is Now...

The Rest is History"

2017 Heartland Region Workshop
April 5-9, 2017

Deadwood, South Dakota

The 2017 NAI Heartland Region Workshop is coming to South Dakota this April! Have you registered yet???

At the workshop in historic Deadwood, we will be surrounded by the northern Black Hills, nestled into one of the state's most historic resources and surrounded by some beautiful landscapes. Deadwood is home to frontier characters like Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, Seth Bullock, and Wyatt Earp. Nearby are Spearfish Canyon Scenic Byway and Roughlock Falls Nature Area, engulfed of course by the Black Hills National Forest, making for some of the best natural scenery in the Heartland Region.

Please join us at Cadillac Jack's Gaming Resort for a workshop full of excellent networking, wonderful concurrent sessions, exciting off-site sessions, entertaining keynotes and night life full of history and fun. Check out the [NAI Heartland Region Workshop Facebook page](#) for information and fun facts. We would love to see you in Deadwood "Where the Future is Now and the Rest is History!"

For more information or registration packet, please contact Lydia.Austin@state.sd.us or jody.moats@state.sd.us.



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

Email:
education@winneshiekwild.com

[Register online here.](#)

Learn more and download the workshop packet at the [workshop webpage](#).

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Membership Grants for Full-time Students

By Jenny Sazama, Scholarship Chair

NAI is a great organization full of opportunities for students who want to network, find employment and gain professional skills in the field of interpretation. The Heartland Region wants to encourage students to become members to take advantage of these opportunities and benefits like mini-grants for projects and scholarships to workshops by providing grants on a first-apply basis. Awardees will be selected by the Scholarship Committee through a lottery.

To be eligible for an NAI student membership grant the student must be at full-time status and must submit the following:

- A letter from a university/college faculty or staff verifying that the student is full-time
- A 200-word statement on why he/she wants to be a member of NAI

Submit these documents along with your contact information to:

Jenny Sazama
LCFPD-EE Services
1899 W. Winchester Road
Libertyville, IL 60048
jsazama@lcfpd.org.

Questions? Contact Jenny at 847-968-3482.

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2018 Regional Workshop Planning Underway

By Vicky Wachtler, Workshop Chair

I am pleased to announce that Minnesota will be hosting the Region 5 Workshop next year! We don't have too many of the details yet, but here's what we can say: the workshop will be held in **Austin, MN** and we are looking at the **first week or two in April!**

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Powering Up for Program Plans

By Alex Palmer

When I was first informed that we were now going to be asked to submit official program plans for our nature center education programs, I couldn't help but cringe a little bit. Another piece of paperwork to fill out? I even noticed my coworker roll his eyes a bit. But when I thought about it for another moment, I began to understand why our agency was taking the initiative to have their staff develop written plans for their education programs.



Program plans, or program outlines, offer a summary of what you have planned for your interpretive program, including themes, materials, where you'll conduct the program, and other pertinent information. A good program outline allows someone to pick it up and know right away what the program is about and what materials and preparation tasks are necessary to conduct the program successfully. But what is a program plan supposed to look like? It seems like all of my coworkers have their own way of planning a program. I like to write detailed, verbatim outlines that are more like a script, while the other naturalist I work with simply jots down some bullet points on a piece of scratch paper. Another naturalist doesn't even bother to write an outline because he already feels comfortable enough with the topic! Because it has been optional for my organization's staff to write program outlines, we have never really had to worry about other people looking at them or needing them - until now.

Why go through the extra trouble of writing a program plan? For one thing, it's important to remember that many of us work for public service agencies, such as park districts, nature centers and museums whose core values include accessibility for all. Our work is not usually copyrighted nor meant to be proprietary. As paid staff of our organizations, we are obligated to contribute to our organization's egalitarian mission by providing educational services to our respective constituents. Therefore we should allow our work to complement our organization's mission and act as educational resources ourselves. We can also contribute to the success of our colleagues and coworkers by allowing them to "CSE" (copy and steal everything) so that they can improve their interpretive programs (but of course give proper and due credit to those who generated the original ideas!).

So what does an ideal program plan look like? There are many variations on program plans, and NAI has a rigorous outline format for planning interpretive programs as part of their CIG training. But you don't necessarily need to follow their outline format completely. At a minimum, your program plan should generally include your title, your audience, the location of your program, your objectives or your overall theme, materials needed, your introduction, body, and conclusion, and

perhaps any special notes or remarks about your program before or after you go through with it.

Title

You don't need to get too hung up on this part, but your title should be catchy and reveal the program's topic. A program on maple syrup could catch people's attention with a title such as: Maple Sugar Time!

Audience

What is the intended age group for your program? Try to be specific and avoid general categories such as "families" or "general audience." Examples include "for Pre-K and K" or "for ages 12 and up."

Location

Give the specific location or locations for where your program will take place. Do you have an indoor location as an alternative if there is inclement weather? And is your location accessible to persons with disabilities or the elderly? Include any pertinent information about your program's location in your plan, and be specific: "the outdoor learning circle" is a better description of your location compared to "the nature center." Your location doesn't have to be set in stone, but for planning purposes it is a good idea to factor in what kind of space you will utilize for your interpretive program and where those spaces are.

Objective or Theme

One of the major criterion focused on during CIG training is whether or not the interpreter can demonstrate developing a sound theme or set of objectives that captures in a single sentence what the outcomes will be for participants after attending your program. A program on deer could have a theme statement such as "After this program, audience members will have a greater appreciation about and will show more support for managing deer populations in urban areas." [NAI's CIG training manual provides excellent tools for developing interpretive program themes and objectives.](#)

Materials Needed

List what supplies you'll need or think you'll need. A preschool program on coyotes might require a coyote pelt to see and touch or perhaps a colorful picture book featuring coyotes. Or if you are leading a long hike, you might want to include a first aid kit as a program item if you are going to be a good distance from a visitor center.

Introduction, Body, and Conclusion

You can either format this part as bullets or verbatim, whichever you are most comfortable doing. As long as whoever might pick up your outline can understand generally how you intend to format your program, you'll have plenty of flexibility here.

Your introduction should include what actions you will take to get your audience situated, such as giving an overview of what they will be doing or pointing to the location of the restrooms. Your body is the content of your program, and this would be a good time to mention how or when you are going to use your materials as well as stating your subthemes. This section could include statements like "pass around coyote fur for audience members to touch and ask them why they think coyotes have such thick fur" or "tell a story about how maple syrup is made." Your conclusion should wrap up your theme and you should state what type of closing remarks or actions you might take, such as promoting an upcoming special event or passing out program evaluations.

Special Notes and Remarks

I like to occasionally include some "heads-up" information, like what to do if trail conditions are not conducive to your program, or any special notes about how to address any controversial topics that might be included in your program (e.g. global warming, slavery). You don't necessarily need a separate section to your program plan for special notes, but they are definitely nice to include somewhere in your program plan.

Reflection

Program plans are meant to be dynamic rather than static documents. The forest preserve district that I work for requests any feedback for improvements in the "reflections" section of their program plan template. If there is something that could have been improved, something you wish you would have included, or if there was something that went exceptionally well, you can include your remarks in your program plan after it is over. For one presentation I did on snakes, I wish I would have included a longer nature walk following the presentation, since my audience really seemed to enjoy walking on the trails with a naturalist. I would include this remark in my reflection so that the next time I do (or somebody else does) this program they could include a longer hike.

To some degree, interpretation is an art, and many interpreters understandingly like to claim a certain level of "ownership" over their creative work. My coworker is considered the expert on salamanders and has a very specific format for his salamander programs, even including his own photos and self-produced hand-outs. But what if my coworker called in sick that day and I was called on to do his program, or what if he quit and decided to work somewhere else? I know enough about salamanders to conduct a quality interpretive program, and being able to turn to his program plan at the last minute would serve as a critical reference. Or, what if another naturalist in my agency wanted to do a similar program at their nature center? They would have a fantastic in-house resource to turn to as would other environmental education agencies with a similar mission. Well-composed program plans could serve as the foundation for developing and delivering quality interpretive educational programming.

So power up for program plans! They're not just another form that you have to fill out. They are a critical resource for your colleagues and others that support your organization's mission.

--

Alex Palmer is a naturalist at Sand Ridge Nature Center in the Forest Preserves of Cook County.

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Heartland Region Media

Find out more about workshops, scholarships, mini-grants, and the Heartland Region in general! Please note the sites below now reflect our embracing of "Heartland Region" in place of "Region 5" and update your records accordingly.

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

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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.

Lake Superior Maritime Museum March 20-23, 2017

Duluth, Minnesota

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

Cincinnati Nature Center

August 22-25, 2017

Milford, Ohio

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

Brookfield Zoo

August 28-September 1, 2017
Brookfield, Illinois

Visit the workshop website for more information.

CIG Train-the-Trainers

May 15-19, 2017

Henry Doorly Zoo and Aquarium

Omaha, Nebraska

Visit the workshop website for more information.

NAI Webinars

Don't forget about NAI's webinars! Check them out here!

EXTERNAL WORKSHOPS, CONFERENCES, and PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

NatureStart Course

April 24-29, 2017

Brookfield Zoo

Brookfield, Illinois

This week-long professional development program is for informal educators providing play-based nature education in zoos, aquariums, and nature centers. Learn more and register here.

Inspiring Nature Play: Inside Out

4th Annual Professional Development Event

Wednesday, May 3 - 9am-3:30 pm

Chicago Botanic Garden - 1000 Lake Cook Road, Glencoe

\$52. Register at chicagobotanic.org.

Save the Date:

Midwest Environmental Education Conference

October 14-17, 2017

Q Center

St. Charles, Illinois

From climate change and local/regional environmental advocacy, to grant writing, NGSS, and the facts about GMOs...MEEC 2017 will provide an all-inclusive experience of local to global EE! Embrace the opportunity to engage with captivating regional and national speakers, diverse concurrent sessions, exhilarating off-site field studies, meaningful workshops, and lively social gatherings! Call for Proposals and Call for Exhibitors coming early 2017.

ENTICE Professional Development Workshops

The Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education

are professional development workshops sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. A variety of workshops are being planned for 2017 and 2018 and can be viewed here. Additional workshops will continue to be added, so check back often.

RESOURCES

Check the events calendar for **Chicago Environmental Network** for a full list of fun events (free and paid!) around the Chicago area.

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.](#)

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