



# THE CENTER

## The Center

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE NATURE CENTER DIRECTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS SECTION

WINTER 2009

Dear Naomi,

### Road Show '09 is in the Bag!



This year, Connecticut played host to the National Interpreter's Workshop and the [Interpreter's Road Show](#). Highlights include:

Westmoor Park is a demonstration farm. Their focus is environmental education and passive recreation. They are contracted with the public school district in the Town of West Hartford to do programs for all of the 2nd graders, 3rd graders and 4th graders in the public school system. The schools pay a fee for their students to attend and the lessons are based on the state standards and build on one another.

The Roaring Brook Nature Center is a private, non-profit organization now affiliated with the Children's Museum of West Hartford. They have completely remodeled their exhibits and utilize every square inch of

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#### Section Officers

##### Travis Williams

###### Director

Outdoor Discovery Center  
A-4214 56th Street  
Holland, MI 49423  
616-393-9453  
[travis@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:travis@outdoordiscovery.org)

##### Amy Roell

###### Deputy Director

Hamilton County Park District  
4760 Highbridge Avenue  
Cincinnati, OH 45238  
513-521-7275

space from floor to ceiling. They used murals, dioramas and live animals at all heights to create facades. The material they used was called 'Wacky Wood' which is bendable plywood. The computer touch screen monitors they use are set at a height for older children and adults and are completely self-contained.

At the Harriett Beecher Stowe (HBS) House we found that their typical visitor was female between the ages of 45 and 75. To expand and reach new audiences, they developed new programs and other tours such as the Children's Tour, The I Spy Tour and first person tours featuring HBS's daughters and self guided tours of the site, not the house. Since the house doesn't change, the story they tell each month does. HBS wrote 30 books, she was an artist, business woman, etc. so they feature different aspects of her life each month.

At Connecticut's Dinosaur State Park we learned that their Friends Group runs the bookstore and raises money for their programs and other supplies. The money the Friends raise does not come with strings. One of the program pieces the Friends purchased was an audience participation clicker system to use during Power Point presentations. They ask the audience a question and each audience member can press the button of the answer they think is correct. When time is up, the program will calculate how many people choose each answer, it is completely anonymous. It cost about \$4000 for 60 clickers, a 'chalkboard', the software to run it and technical assistance. The company is called E-Instruction.

"You'll learn more on the Roadshow than at everything else at the National Workshop"

## Fake like you were a part of the Roadshow.

The Interpreter's Roadshow always gives out some fantastic bags.

This year's bag is a fantastic orange, a little smaller and comes with a handy side pen pocket and under-the-flap zip pocket.

Amy Roell, NCDA Deputy Director, has a few bags left. If you are interested, contact Amy at [aroell@greatparks.org](mailto:aroell@greatparks.org). She is selling them for \$15. Only checks please.



## What is the Enos Mills Fund?

Perhaps more so than any other field within the conservation profession, interpreters have touched the lives of countless visitors to natural and cultural heritage sites across the country.

For over 50 years, the National Association for Interpretation has served as the professional family for interpreters. As a member, your investment in NAI and the profession ensures our ability to maintain quality services

[aroell@greatparks.org](mailto:aroell@greatparks.org)

### Jon Brown Treasurer

Arkansas State Parks  
2428 Marina Road  
Russellville, AR 72802  
479-880-1710  
[jon.brown@arkansas.gov](mailto:jon.brown@arkansas.gov)

### Randy Smith Secretary

Sandy Creek Nature Center  
390 Forest Heights Dr.  
Athens, GA 30606  
706-613-3615 x233  
[RandySmith@co.clarke.ga.us](mailto:RandySmith@co.clarke.ga.us)

### Naomi Thompson Website/Newsletter Editor

Stone Mountain Memorial  
Association  
PO Box 689  
Stone Mountain, GA 30086  
770-498-5619  
[n.thompson@stonemountainpark.org](mailto:n.thompson@stonemountainpark.org)

### The Center deadlines

**Spring: March 1**  
(New initiatives, your thoughts)

**Summer: July 1**  
(Roadshow PR)

**Fall: September 1**  
(articles about member sites)

**Winter: December 1**  
(NIW recap)

### Did you know?

Past issues of The Center and highlights from past Interpreter's Roadshows can be found at the NCDA website  
[www.interpnet.com/about\\_nai/regions\\_sections.shtm](http://www.interpnet.com/about_nai/regions_sections.shtm)

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and enhance your connections during these challenging economic times.

Beginning in 2008, the Enos Mills Fund provides a way for NAI to build capital reserves through individual member donations. The Enos Mills Fund embraces any size of contribution. Members can submit donations at any time that works best for their schedule (and pocket book). Any contribution you make this year or in the future that is a donation above your annual membership cost goes into the Enos Mills Fund in your name and accumulates. When it reaches \$1500, you become a Life Member with no need to pay annual dues to stay involved at the Professional Plus level.

How is the additional funding used? NAI currently lacks surplus funds "in the bank," so money is borrowed during part of the year until revenue fully covers expenses. Building cash in the bank to cover low income periods early in each year will eliminate the costs of borrowing, free up more funding for member benefits and provide protection from unexpected losses. Some members may wonder why NAI simply does not increase the cost of memberships to build this cash operating fund. With a struggling economy, an increase in dues may cause some members to either reduce their membership level or quit NAI altogether.

Member support is desperately needed to make this program a success.

You can donate through the NAI website by going to [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com) and clicking on Becoming a Donor on the left-hand menu. If you want to become a Life Member immediately, you can indicate your commitment and make a pledge to pay it off in two years by credit card at only \$62.50 monthly online. Instructions are on the donor website. We hope to bring 200 more members into the Life Member family in the next three years and will recognize those who make this commitment to their professional development as part of the Trailblazer 200 within the Enos Mills Fund Campaign.

Thanks for joining us in this important effort to keep NAI and your professional family healthy and growing.

Bradley Block  
Enos Mills Fund Campaign Chair

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## Join us on Google Groups

You have to be invited to join the group by me as the administrator of the group page.

Group home page: <http://groups.google.com/group/ncda-section>.  
Choose 'Sign in and apply for membership'.

You can also contact me at [n.thompson@stonemountainpark.org](mailto:n.thompson@stonemountainpark.org). I can invite you to join the group.

We have already had some discussions and exhibit pieces are posted for sharing.

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Center Directors and Administrators section of the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). The NAI mission is to inspire leadership and excellence to advance natural and cultural interpretation as a profession. Visit: [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com) for more information.



## Skill Bank

Would you be willing to be a resource for our Skill Bank? This is an effort to make it easier for NCDA section members to get specific help from specific NCDA members.

Please send a short biography (2 paragraphs), your contact information, and what skills you are willing to share (technology, management, budget) to Travis Williams, NCDA Director, [travis@outdoordiscovery.org](mailto:travis@outdoordiscovery.org).

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## Be sure to be a part of the NCDA Section

The NCDA Section sends out a newsletter, The Center, 4 times a year, maintains a website, offers the Interpreter's Roadshow as a pre-trip to the National Workshop and strives to present a roundtable discussion session at the National Workshop. We have great leadership that keeps this Section strong. We are constantly seeking new ways to communicate with you and connect you with relevant information for you as a director or administrator. Plus, it doesn't hurt to have the ever popular Roadshow as the star of our section.

If you are receiving this newsletter, you are a part of the section. Please note though that when you renew your membership, you are only automatically put in a region. Professional Basic and Student members must select the NCDA Section and pay \$10 extra with your renewal.

Pass this information on to others so NCDA Section gains more committed members.

**NCDA Mission: To provide leadership and inspire excellence in nature center administration**