



# THE CENTER

March 2014

Dear Naomi,

Welcome to *The Center*, the newsletter of the Nature Center Directors and Administrators Section of the National Association for Interpretation.

## Director's note...

Volunteers.

That one word can evoke a host of feelings and opinions, both good and not-so-good. While reliance on volunteers can be tricky at times, let's face it, they are critical to our organizations, to our success at making connections between our guests and our resources. I can't even begin to count how many people in the greater Cincinnati, Ohio region have been touched by one of the volunteers for the Great Parks of Hamilton County. Volunteers do just about everything for us - monitor park boundaries, facilitate park clean-ups, staff our visitor centers, assist with programs, detangle fishing poles, clean stalls, data entry and file and that is just a few of the jobs they perform for us on a daily basis.



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## Upcoming Events

[NAI National Workshop](#)  
November 19-22, 2014

Volunteers really are very generous people - giving of their time, talents and treasure. Just like employees, they need guidance, nurturing and recognition. A volunteer program that is successful has a plan in place to provide all three of these components and staff members that buy into the value of investing in volunteers. I am sure that you have not only used volunteers, but have been one at some point in time. Use that knowledge to help you work with your volunteers, shape your volunteer program or revitalize it. A strong volunteer corps not only helps you get so much more work done, but is also a strong pillar of support for you organization.

Of course, an issue on volunteers would not be complete without a reference to the fact that NAI and NCDA are both successful because of volunteers. There is a definite benefit to becoming a volunteer with NAI - you build a network of support for yourself and your career. If you are interested in getting more involved with NAI or NCDA just reach out to one of the [officers](#).

There are numerous things you can do, some that take very little time, others that take a bit more. Writing articles, serving as an officer or the newsletter editor are just a few examples of what you can do. I look forward to hearing from you!

Amy Roell  
Section Director  
[www.interpnet.com/ncda](http://www.interpnet.com/ncda)



## Section Scholarships

### Interpreter's Road Show Attendance Scholarship

NCDA Section members are invited to apply for a \$500 scholarship that can be used to cover costs to attend the Denver Interpreter's Road Show in November, 2014. This year, the NCDA Section will offer two \$500 scholarships.

Denver, Colorado

The Center is published quarterly by the Nature 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.

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The Interpreters Road Show provides an intensive behind-the-scenes, two-day tour to a variety of nature centers, visitor centers and other interpretive facilities. Read about the [2013 Roadshow](#).

[Roadshow Scholarship Online Application form](#)

Recipients will be chosen based on involvement in NAI and the interpretive field. Applicants must be individual NAI members and a member of the NCDA Section. Grant applications must be received by May 10. Applications will be evaluated and recipients will be notified of their award the last week of May.

*Note: If you are awarded a scholarship, you must plan to register by July 15 for the National Workshop and Road show. No scholarships will be processed after this date.*

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## CIM Certification Grants 2014

NCDA Section members are invited to apply for a grant that will pay for the cost of one certification packet (value \$125), per individual in the CIM category. This year, the NCDA Section will offer two grants. Recipients will be chosen based on financial need, NAI involvement, and/or the desire to become certified.

Once the recipient receives the packet, he/she must complete the written certification test and provide evidences of performance to the NAI Certification Program as required. Certification is granted upon successful completion of the test and successful review of the required evidences of performance. (The NCDA Section is not responsible for evaluating or granting certification.)

Applicants must be individual NAI members and a member of the NCDA Section. Certification Category/Packet is for the Certified Interpretive Manager only.

[CIM Online Application form](#)

Grant applications can be submitted at any time during the current (2014 postmark) calendar year. Applications are evaluated as received and grants are awarded until the total dollars budgeted for the years are distributed. Applications submitted after certification grant funds for the year have been exhausted must be updated and resubmitted in the next calendar year.

Contact Amy Roell, 513-521-7275, [aroell@greatparks.org](mailto:aroell@greatparks.org) with any questions.



## **Volunteer sign up: Go Online**

*So easy a chicken can do it.*

Top 10 Reasons to Use [VolunteerSpot](#)

### **NO MORE REPLY-ALL EMAILS**

no spreadsheet juggling or phone calls to get organized

### **EASY TO SET UP**

schedule jobs, shifts and things to bring like food and supplies

### **MORE PEOPLE SIGN UP TO HELP**

online 24/7 and smartphones too!

### **MORE PEOPLE SHOW UP TO HELP**

thanks to auto-reminders and sync to e-calendars

### **CLIPBOARD COMPATIBLE**

make assignments from lists or for people without email

### **FLEXIBLE**

invite by email or a shared link in a newsletter, web site, Facebook or Twitter

### **SAVE TIME**

track hours, run reports, send alerts, export data

### **PORTABLE**

iPad Clipboard by VolunteerSpot - quickly signup your group, in person

### **COLLECT CONTRIBUTIONS**

easily collect money for your cause, group gifts and fees

### **IF YOU CAN SHOP ONLINE YOU CAN USE VOLUNTEERSPOT!**

it's that easy!

You may also try [www.eventbrite.com](http://www.eventbrite.com), [www.volunteersignup.org](http://www.volunteersignup.org), or [www.ivolunteer.com](http://www.ivolunteer.com).

## Assessing Volunteers

When we visit different sites during the Interpreter's Roadshow, one of the biggest questions is about volunteers. Everything about volunteers. One of the biggest needs is to develop an application and interview process that helps you assess whether potential volunteers meet the requirements that you have for your site. Stephanie D'Arcy is the Volunteer Manager at the [Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum](#) in Reno, NV. During our Roadshow visit in 2013, she freely shared her expertise on volunteer programs.



Stephanie now has been kind enough to share her volunteer materials with us too.

[Volunteer Handbook](#)

[Volunteer Flyer](#)

[Volunteer application package](#)

[Teen Volunteers](#)

[Orientation Agenda](#)

[One day event sign in](#)

[Daily Volunteer sign in](#)

Check out how the website states very clearly that work of volunteers helps support the Discovery Museum's mission and the CONTRIBUTIONS from volunteering are prominently listed on the [Discovery Museum's volunteer page](#).

## Your contribution to The Discovery and your community

- Assists the museum in providing quality educational and fun experiences for children of all ages in our community;
- Helps others experience the joy associated with learning by play and creating environments that keep young minds thriving;
- Serves as a model to all citizens that we need to "give back";
- Provides opportunities to expand educational programming and special events for families in our area;
- Helps supplement the time and ability of the full-time staff to achieve museum goals and obtain additional resources;
- Provides opportunities to share your own experiences, knowledge and enthusiasm with the museum's visitors.

## Super Moon Night Hike: Volunteering At Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook

By Jenny Comperda

Whoa. I heard the bass in my face as drove into Baldwin Hills Scenic Overlook, [a California State Park located outside Los Angeles], the night of our full moon hike. There was a graduation party that was winding down in our reception hall. Juan from National Parks was in true ranger form outside our visitor center with near 100 people gathering to see this once a year phenomenon, the super moon. The only time of year when the moon, on it's elliptical orbit, is closest to earth, appearing to be very big. He did a great job of corralling the large group as Diana the intern and I swept up the rear. We stopped just short of the over look for some straight up moon talk. He spoke about the sun and moon's daily cycle and how most animals are more active at night, when the moon



comes out. He had the kids hold up pictures of owls as he talked about the barn owl, great horned owl and the great gray owl. He even whipped out owl pellets and took them apart and showed us the contents in his hand. Dedicated Diana held the contents of the owl pellets in her hand for the whole length of our hike, not knowing what to do with the thing.

[Read the blog post.](#)

Come out to your local CA Park in 2014 and celebrate the 150th anniversary of California State Parks!



## Empowering volunteers to drive guest engagements at the South Carolina Aquarium

With a team of over 350 volunteers (with 150 as docents), the South Carolina Aquarium is able to utilize our diverse team to better engage our guests. We have 150 Exhibit Guide volunteers (docents) who directly serve our guests on the frontline. This crew is now primarily responsible for staffing the touch tank, various cart programs, behind the scenes tours, and animal handling. To keep our volunteers motivated, our team arranges various field trips, socials, and appreciation nights. We are now focusing our efforts on providing our volunteers with additional trainings. We have already seen a better visitor experience and a larger sense of empowerment with our volunteer team.



### Connecting all year long

Join us on NAI's facebook page. Everyone at the NCDA section meeting thought this was easiest way to post and discuss information on exhibits, resources, and concerns. This way our question goes out everywhere so we are sure to have many more minds helping us. If you don't already have a page, sign up today.

<https://www.facebook.com/NAIinterpret>

### Newsletter contributions needed

Spring newsletter theme: Training (and words of wisdom) for current and future Interpretive Managers. Send articles, tips, and helpful training courses to Naomi by March 31 to include in the April, 2014 newsletter.

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