

**Great Lakes Region 4 Regional Board Meeting  
Pokagon State Park Interpretive/Nature Center  
450 Lane 100 Lake James, Angola, IN 46703  
January 10, 2020 at 9am  
All Meeting are on Eastern Standard Time**



**Present:** Deb Nofzinger, Renell Roebuck, Jill Vance, Bob Dispenza, Sara Heney, Aaron Douglass, Jennifer McDowell, Michelle Fournier, Jenn Kirts, Laurel Zoet, Jason Szostek, Hannah Teshka, Marie Laudeman,

**Absent:** Cookie Ferguson, Victoria Zablocki

**Director—Debbie Nofzinger**

- National Updates
  - They will be doing a SWOT Analysis, reaching out to membership as a whole as well as special groups.
  - The National Board will also be attending the RIW and having their board meeting there.
  - The Canadian provinces have been removed from the map, but will remain present in their communities/regions.
  - The Journey Home Campaign is completed and the surplus funds have been dedicated to scholarships. We need to let people know that they can apply for regional scholarships, but that national has a set of scholarships as well.
  - Deb is the Program Chair for the Advisory Council, which is the group of directors for all of the Communities.
  - Journal of Interpretive Research – It is now being outsourced to Sage Publishing. They will be adding a section on how to use the information in interpretation.
  - Next year's conference in St. Augustine, FL (2020), then Palm Springs, CA (2021), and then Cleveland, OH (2022). The folks from Cleveland Metroparks who worked to get the conference, are no longer there. Deb Nofzinger and Terrie Joyce will be co-chairing the workshop and will be working on developing the committee. National is planning to start in January 2022, but Deb and Terrie will begin working on it in the next few months.
  - The upcoming International Conference will be in South Africa in Kruger National Park.
  - National will also be hosting a small (15ish person) Interpretive Dialog which is an intense training experience – this one will focus on inclusivity, diversity, generational trauma, etc.
- Procedures Manual Updates
  - Deb has been working on updating this and hopes to complete it before her term is over. She is working on consolidating and streamlining it. Each committee will have its own mini manual and each position will have a one-page description.
- Amendment to Executive Board requirements & descriptions
  - We discussed this yesterday at the Executive Board meeting. Deb shared the updates with the board.
  - **Jenn Kirts moved to approve the revised requirements for officers. Bob Dispenza seconded. Motion passed.**
- Amendments to Committee Chair requirements & descriptions
  - Deb will update these and pass them to current committee chairs to get input. They will then be passed to the Executive Committee to vote on them.
- Review of Strategic Plan
  - Marked off things that were complete.

- Laurel will write up suggested edits to Outstanding New Interpreter to include part-time and seasonal and adjust Sandy McBeath to include a minimum number of hours worked in the field to make it a more “advanced” award.
- 40 Second 4 Thought participation
  - Each committee member and exec committee member needs to submit something to the four Thought annually.
- Budget discussion
  - Submission deadlines
    - The budget year starts in June now. So the deadlines will have to be adjusted and will need to be submitted and ready to be discussed during the March phone call meeting.
  - Approval date
    - They will be approved by the executive committee after discussion during the March meeting.

### **Deputy Director—Jennifer McDowell**

- Regional Interpreters Workshop – April 20-24, 2020; *Dazzle the District with Interpretation*
  - Cleveland OH, Crowne Plaza
  - Co-Chairs Becky Parkin and Renell Roebuck
  - Paul Caputo permitting regional ads for Legacy March/April edition – free of charge
  - National Board will be in attendance, strategic planning (fly in Monday, leave Thurs afternoon)
  - Crowne Plaza Room Rate \$141 w/ valet parking with a charge
  - Registration \$350, \$40 for mobiles (including lunch)
  - Schedule
    - Monday evening gathering
    - Tuesday – morning on Nautica Queen, afternoon concurrent sessions, evening Auction
    - Wednesday – mobiles, evening Awards Dinner
    - Thursday – concurrent sessions, evening Lolley the Trolley tour
  - Sponsorships
    - Rent-a-Rambling Naturalist, Wil Reding, \$100
    - Acorn Naturalists, Jennifer Rigby, \$250 and \$100 certificate for auction
    - Platform Brewery – Charity Night at the brewery March 24, 2020
  - Auction Donations
    - Nature Watch, Harold Gordon, \$100 certificate and catalogs
    - Focus on Photography, Debbie DiCarlo, print for auction
    - Cleveland Zoological Society, Jackie Zassick, gift for auction
    - Blackbook Audobon, Trevor Wearstler, raffle items auction, \$ not yet determined
    - Educational Insights, Sally Lovell, 96 kidnocular donation auction
    - Safari Ltd., Cristina Ramos, miniature animal giveaways auction
  - Keynotes
    - James Bader – Director, Center for Science and Mathematics Education, Case Western Reserve University
      - Tuesday, 4/21 while on the Nautica Queen, aquatic ecology – interactions that determine community structure in small systems
    - *Authentic Community Engagement begins with a Conversation*: Erika Brown, Stephanie Thompson, Nelson Beckford - Cleveland Foundation
      - Thursday, 4/23
- Concurrent Sessions

- Deadline for submissions was 9/27. Total 32 sessions accepted.
- 3 blocks Tuesday afternoon
- 5 blocks Thursday
- Mobile Workshops – transportation all by committee members organizations!!
  - Best of Unique Cleveland Museums – Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Cleveland Museum of Art, Maltz Museum, Mitchell’s Ice Cream
  - Finding Cleveland Culture Outdoors – Lakeview Cemetery, Cleveland Art Museum for lunch, Cleveland Cultural Gardens, Terminal Tower
  - Urban Birding Adventure
  - Cleveland: A Foodie Town – Cleveland Convention Center, Rust Belt Riders, Great Lakes Brewery, Westside Market
  - Top of the Tower, Bottom of the Gulch – Holden Arboretum
- Other – Possible Wil Reding hike on the Towpath Trail beginning April 14 and end in Cleveland on April 20 – join anywhere on the route
- Renell added that they are still seeking funding to support the workshop.
- Regional Interpreters Workshop – March 22-26, 2021 in Grand Rapids, MI
  - Co-Chairs – Kaitie Janecke Soltesz, Melinda Robinette and Jeanette Henderson
  - Calvin College Prince Conference Center with rooms on property, as well as dorm opportunities at Calvin College. Calvin’s Ecosystem Preserve and nature center are just behind the Prince Center.
  - Margo reviewed contract, confirming some info
- Regional Interpreters Workshop – 2022 - REMINDER – NO REGIONAL WORKSHOP, NATIONAL WILL BE IN CLEVELAND IN 2022

Beginning to look for co-chairs for 2023-2024 upcoming workshops:

- 2023 – Indiana – Jen will reach out to Patrick Halter about hosting in Brown County near Bloomington.
- 2024 – Ontario??
- 2025 – Ohio
- 2026 - Michigan

### **Treasurer—Bob Dispenze**

- We looked at the 2018-2019 comparison chart. The 4<sup>th</sup> quarter isn’t finalized yet, but we should have about \$2,000 of revenue overall in 2019 putting our balance at . We have been intentionally spending down over the last several years, but we do need to maintain a minimum so that if we have a “crash and burn” regional, we are able to recover.
- NO money transitions go directly from you to National. It should ALL go through Bob. As much as possible, have them grouped.
- Everything should be documented in the OneDrive so there’s a paper trail in that committee folder.
- The budget from National has only five categories in revenue and expenses. We break it down further internally in order to track different committee revenue and expenses. Deb talked through the budget in detail.
- Deb discussed the need to tie income to expenses directly.
  - Budget items that do not have revenue tied directly to them:
    - Interpretive Project Grants
    - Student Involvement Committee dollars – RIW Scholarships, Howdy-Szabo Scholarships
    - Complimentary Memberships
    - Administration Expenses

- We would like to approach National about where the interest from our balance goes.
- Sarah will create a survey to send out via the 40 Second Four Thought regarding what people are interested in learning from the workshop, costs, etc. She will have it ready during the RIW.

### Secretary—Jenn Kirts

- Motion to approve October 2019 minutes – Deb moved, Jennifer McDowell seconded. Motion passed.

### Committee Chair Reports

- **Archives – Cookie Ferguson** (absent)
  - Acquired almost all, if not the complete a set, of Forethought Newsletters from 1988-2008
- **Awards – Laurel Zoet**
  - 2019 was the end of Marie Laudeman’s 3-year term. Paul Cypher will be taking her place.
  - We will be having nominations from November 1 – February 1 so we have a full three months of nomination time.
  - Laurel updated the Award Form to reflect that nominators do NOT need to be a member (However the recipient needs to be a member) as well as allowing the Outstanding New Interpreter can be part-time or seasonal and that the Sandy McBeath is part-time or seasonal with at least 5 years’ experience.
  - She wants to hand things over in the summer to the next committee chair.
- **Interpretive Project Grants – Victoria Pendred-Zablocki** (absent)
  - Two new committee members joined the IPG committee this August and September, Jim Witter (Wood County Park District, Ohio) and Nicky Ball (Indiana DNR). Kelly Bentley (Toronto Zoo, Ontario) has remained on the committee providing us with one representative from each state/province. Interpretive Project applications were distributed in October to each of the committee members where they were evaluated and returned to the chair in November for final tallying. Four establishments were awarded grants from \$500-\$1000 each for their proposals.
  - Dawes Arboretum (Newark, Ohio) was awarded the requested \$1000 for their project entitled *Rediscovering the Dawes Arboretum Discovery Center*. The funds will be used in coordination with funds from other providers to work with a local design firm to rework their discovery center space including furniture, newly printed signs and templates for future signs.
  - Blendon Woods Metro Park (Westerville, Ohio) was awarded the requested \$937 for their project entitled *Winter Wonderland Forest Adventure*. The funds will be used to create an indoor, interactive winter forest to help drive visitors to the center during the slower winter season.
  - Columbus Metro Parks: Glacier Ridge and Homestead (Westerville, Ohio) was awarded \$500 for their project entitled *Virtual Immersion*. The funds will be used to purchase a GoPro camera and Virtual Reality goggles to create a traveling digital exhibit to bring nature to people.
  - Darke County Parks: Bish Discovery Center (Greenville, Ohio) was awarded \$500 for their project entitled *Property of the Pollinators*. The funds will be used to purchase new interpretive signs for their pollinator field and herb garden.
- **Membership – Renell Roebuck**
  - 4 comp memberships were awarded. Recipients were Cindy Fitzwilliams-Heck, Eileen Boekestein, Emily Vogelgesang, and Troy S. Dunn. Three were from MI and one from OH
  - April 30 is the new deadline for the next round.
  - The Bird-a-Thon will be May 1-3, 2020. We will raise money at regional again.
  - Ontario won the Bird-a-Thon in 2019.
  - She is seeking new committee members.
- **Communications-- Aaron Douglas**

- We have reached the limit of free emailing via mail chimp. To avoid spending \$30/month we will purge the list and replace it with the current member list following the RIW.
- The most opened emails were as follows:
  - Chippewa Full Time opening – 30.2%
  - Scholarships Past + Future – 27.7%
  - Job Boards - 27.5%
  - One Program – 26.9%
  - New Ways and Means Chair – 24.7%
- The industry average is 19% and we consistently achieve that or surpass it. In the summer time, the open rates decrease to as low as 14%.
- The website has been mostly updated except for the 2019 IPG recipients. Additional info is needed for 2017 and 2018 winners as well.
- We've been getting a lot more engagement and have reached more people through FB since the 2019 RIW.
- In one year we are up to 111 followers on Instagram thanks to Katie Janecke Soltesz. She has been the source of 99.9% of our Instagram posts. She's also cross posted some of those to FB as well. Try to get pictures of interpreters doing their job.
- Overall, I would say our communications for the Region is the best it has been in my tenure.
- Jill added committee members to Facebook as editors.
- **Scholarships and Grants – Jill Vance**
  - The committee is fully staffed.
  - We are in the middle of the 2019-2020 cycle. There was no national conference scholarship this year.
  - The 2020 RIW Scholarship is posted. We are offering five \$340 scholarships.
  - We are in the middle of the professional development scholarship with a total of \$300 available. We have given out \$115 to a member for an NAI online workshop. This was determined as it was the average amount the committee thought she should get. Aaron will send out an email reminder.
  - 2020-2021 have already been allocated for scholarships.
  - For 2021-2022 Jill proposed that we do one \$750 National Scholarship, \$300 for the professional development scholarship for 2021-2022 and no 2022 RIW scholarship. Then the balance will be forwarded for use in the 2022 National Workshop. Jenn Kirts moved, Deb Nofzinger seconded and it was approved.
- **Student Involvement – Jason Szostek**
  - Jason is the new student involvement chair.
  - There is \$500 allocated to get students to the Regional Workshop this year. Jason needs to put together an application for this.
- **Ways & Means-Michelle Fournier**
  - She is looking for additional members of the Ways and Means Committee.
  - She sorted bins of materials that she received and she sent them along to Archives.
  - We have boxes and boxes of the interpretive booklets. Complete sets will be sold or auctioned. Individual ones will be given away in the RIW packets.
  - A survey was sent out via the 4 Thought for the stickers. Another round of surveys will be sent out this spring.
  - Michelle is pursuing warm hats with logo
- We discussed placing the mission of the organization on the home page of the website.

## Upcoming meetings

- **Monday, March 9 at 3pm EST** (Budgets must be submitted prior to this meeting – due March 2.)
- **Thursday, June 4 at 3pm EST**
- **Wednesday, October 21 at 3pm EST**