

Choices: Who Are You?

As living, breathing, and conscious humans we are forced to make choices each day. Some of our choices can be very simple, like what we decide to eat, while other choices are complex and define who we are. This may seem like an odd topic for an interpretive organization but stick with me as we look at it deeper.

I'd like you to consider the following. I was recently at a store and ready to check out. As I approached the checkout lanes, I discovered I had to make a choice. One checkout clerk was doing their job efficiently, but was not smiling, and seemed to have a "I hate my job" attitude. The other clerk was doing the job efficiently, but was smiling, laughing, and joking with customers. Even though the line was longer, I chose to go to the clerk with a positive attitude. As I walked out of the store I began to realize the huge impact that clerk was having.

Some of you may recall an article I wrote for the AMIgo focusing on staff and volunteers who are on the 'front line' at our visitor centers and parks. They don't necessarily carry the title of interpreter or even attend the AMI conferences, but their role is critical. I'm referring to the men and women that greet a visitor with a smile and say, "Hello, how can I help you". Those that take extra time to show a young child the amazing features of a hummingbird. Visitors at our sites want to feel appreciated and they desire

a connection. It's a powerful *choice* to smile and be positive.

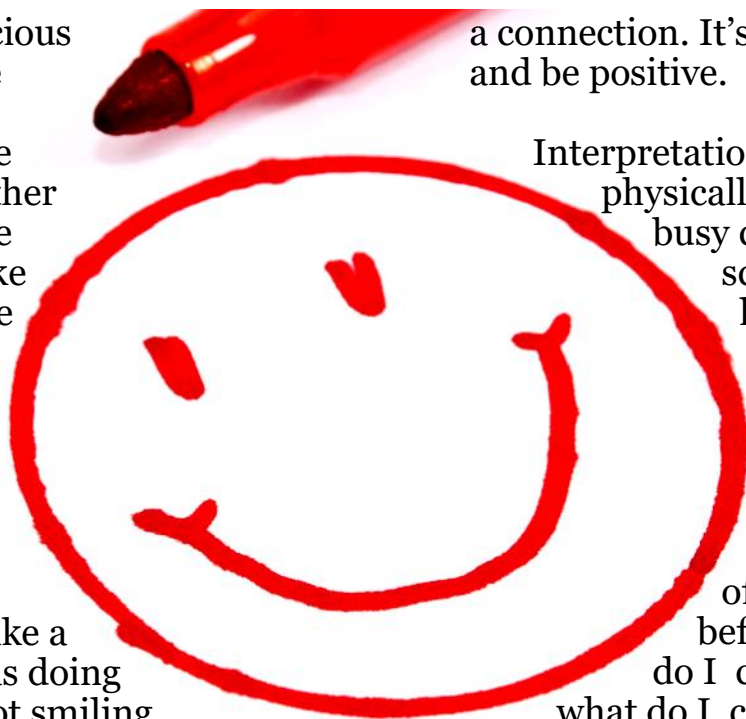
Interpretation can be mentally and physically draining for many of us. A busy chaotic summer ends and the school programming season looms on the horizon.

Colleagues may need us to help or do tasks for which we do not have the time. When we finally see a chance to come up for air the cycle begins again. Each of us has a choice to make before we begin our day. What do I choose to commit to, and what do I choose my attitude to be? It's a simple choice that will define who you are and will have an impact on the people around you.

I encourage you to read [the mission of the Pike Place Fish Market](#). It is a story of their commitment to be world famous. A choice to be positive and to strive to be who they say they are. As we gather for the annual AMI

conference at Echo Bluff I would challenge you to follow this example and be world famous. Make a choice to be positive and share a smile or two. As Pike Place would say: *"The secret to our success lies in our choice to being who we say we are."*

Steve Jacobsen, AMI President



Links to Help You Reconnect with Yourself and Your Visitors

1. [How to Be More Likeable as a Tour Leader](#)- From Be A Better Guide, a website and business dedicated to improving tour guides (you don't have to lead tours to get something from some of the videos).
2. [What Reality Are You Creating for Yourself?](#)- A TED talk about the illusions we create for ourselves.
3. [Connecting with Visitors](#)- Practical advice for new museums (or any interpretive site) on putting visitors first.
4. [Time to Excel at Interpretation](#) - A handout from Shelley Flanary and Tara Gillanders from the 2014 National Association for Interpretation Annual Workshop. Check out page 2 for the Interpreter's Creed.
5. [Strangers, Guests, or Clients?](#)- A Smithsonian Institute study on visitor experiences resulting from how visitors are seen by the facility they are visiting.

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Cross the Streams: Bringing Interpretation and Education Together to Accomplish Shared Goals

•Lodging:

- **Echo Bluff:** Make your reservations NOW! Time is running out but space is still available. Facilities at Echo Bluff range from lodge rooms (queen and king) to suites, multi-bedroom cabins, and bunk/loft cabins that can be shared. Call 1-844-322-3246, mention AMI to receive a discounted rate.
If you need a roommate email conference chair [Jamin Bray](#), and she'll get the word out.
- **Camping:** If you prefer to camp make reservations NOW! Reserve your site through the [Missouri State Parks website](#) or call 1-877-422-6766. Tent & RV sites are available.
- **Other motels and campgrounds:** There are several other locations in the Salem/Eminence area if you would prefer another location.

•Schedule:

Monday: Pre-Conference Field Sessions (three options)

Tuesday: Registration, Workshop Kick-off with Keynote Speaker: **Ted Cable**, internationally renowned expert on Resource Interpretation and Professor of Park Management and Conservation at Kansas State University; Concurrent Sessions, Banquet and Awards Ceremony

Wednesday: Workshop Field sessions, Scholarship Auction

Thursday: Concurrent Sessions, Business Meeting

Whatever your strengths and passions, be a part of what will be a fun and transformative experience!

For More Details and to Register, [Visit Our Site](#).

Looking forward to crossing the streams with you this September,

Jamin Bray, Salem, MO- 2018 Conference Committee Chair

Concurrent Session Preview

Please note these sessions are subject to change.

Lining up with the Missouri Learning Standards

Nature Printing: Art, Craft, and Science

Water Safety: Interpretation to Change Public Behavior

Tilden's 6th: Developing Age-Appropriate Programs for Your Littlest Learners

Never Say NO to Mike Again

Searching for More Meaningful, Personal, Outdoor Experiences?

More than Stuffed Animals: Creating a Successful Community Nature Center

Hiking Through History: A Data Collection Field Trip

Learning Through Takeaways

Project-Based Learning at Johnson's Shut-Ins State Park

Designing the Perfect Field Trip to the River

The Mentor in All of Us

Want to Save Some Green?

Pie Suppers, Play Parties, and Pedagogues

What's the Story? Unleashing Creativity Using Ordinary Objects

Employment Changes

Kim Banner, long time educator at the Springfield Conservation Nature Center, is moving to **Shoal Creek Conservation Education Center** (formerly known as Wildcat Glades). Kim has a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Conservation & Management from Missouri State University and is a Certified Interpretive Guide through the National Association for Interpretation (NAI). Kim is scheduled to make the move on October 1st.



John Miller, Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery & Conservation Center, has announced his retirement as of October 1, 2018. Join us for a celebration of his career on **Sunday, October 21st, 2018 from 1-4 pm** at the Dewey Short Visitor Center in Branson, MO (just a 5 minute drive across Table Rock Dam from the Hatchery). A time honored tradition at Shepherd of the Hills Hatchery is to swim with the trout on your last day. John will take the plunge into our large display aquarium on September 28th; if you are in the Branson area feel free to stop by and watch the show late that afternoon.

John was also recently featured as a **Shining Star for NAI's "30 for 30"**, celebrating interpreters all over the United States.

Conference Pictures and Submissions Needed!

Please take lots of photos at the conference!

Photos of conference activities, guest speakers, members, and more would be helpful for the November issue. Please send any photos to my email address.

Remember, **YOU** are an important part of our organization. Please share your insights with the rest of us. We are always looking for submissions. Articles, site updates, and upcoming trainings are all important things to share with our members.

We also have a new feature, "Getting to Know You". We want to help our members feel connected to one another and to our sites. This is an opportunity to share your site with all of our members. If you would like to be featured please send me an email and I'll send you a questionnaire.

Contact [Jordi Raos via email](#) with submissions or questions.

Next Submission Deadline: October 16th

Upcoming Trainings

- Sept. 10-13– [Annual AMI Conference-Bringing Interpretation and Education Together](#)
Echo Bluff State Park
- Sept 25– [Fostering a Growth Mindset in Interpretation– Webinar](#)
12 PM
\$30-55
- Nov . 27- [NAI National Conference](#)
Dec. 1- \$225-\$605
New Orleans, LA
- Dec 13– [NAI Zoos, Wildlife Parks, & Aquaria Internet Conference](#)
Online only
12-5 PM
- Feb. 24-27- [NAI Region 6 Annual Conference](#)
Keepers of Interpretation
Wichita, KS
- Jan 30– [Reflecting on Practice Workshop](#)
Feb 1 9 AM– 5 PM
\$250
St. Louis Zoo, St. Louis, MO

Looking for Stuff

Do you remember that old commercial for storage bins and closet organizers?

Scene 1: *A cluttered house, with stuff everywhere. "We have too much stuff!"*

Enter: **Super-Organizer**, complete with mask and cape, bearing stacks of plastic bins

Scene 2: *Clutter-free home with stacks of beauty fully-organized items, with space to spare. "We need more stuff!"*

You have too much stuff, we (AMI) need more stuff.

Yes, it's time for the annual AMI scholarship and stipend auction.

Your stuff will help us raise money to provide academic scholarships for several students, and assist members to attend trainings for professional development.

Gently-used items, books, paintings -- everything sells. So look through your stuff and bring us some goodies.

And guess what... This won't be just any ordinary auction. We have some surprises in store, starting with a local celebrity auctioneer, Rick Mansfield. Rick will bring along his "unique technique" for making the most of your stuff. You can help... if so inclined, bring along some home-made cookies, pie or other baked goods for Rick to use to work his magic.

Know a business that would be willing to donate something to our auction? They can! The more great stuff, the merrier. Check out this [donation letter](#) which will explain the benefits and how to donate.

Join us!
Questions? [Contact Janet Price](#)