

directions

The journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

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Certification – Who Needs It?

Lisa Brochu,
Associate Director N.A.I.

The National Association

for Interpretation asked that question for over two decades before coming to any agreement on the answer. The issue was studied, discussed, and just plain cussed for much of that time. Some members felt it was necessary for the profession to be recognized, some were afraid they would be forced to fit a preconceived mold of perfection, and others thought it might just be a good idea to have options for testing and recognizing their abilities as long the program was voluntary.

In 1998, NAI responded to growing requests and launched its certification program with four professional categories that recognized existing professional-level skills in management of interpretive sites, interpretive planning, personal and non-personal interpretation, and training of interpreters. These were chosen based on a job analysis of NAI's professional membership at the time. Each requires

that the applicant have a minimum of either a four-year degree or four years work experience (paid or volunteer) in the field. As we continued to collect data on the interpretive profession, we discovered that although there are an estimated 20,000 full time paid interpreters in the U.S., there are also an estimated 500,000 docents, volunteers, seasonals, and part-timers who are in the trenches doing interpretation with little or no training or education beyond learning about the specific resources of their site.

To help improve the services these front-line folks provide, NAI developed the Certified Interpretive Guide training program in 2001. This 32-hour program focuses on philosophy and technique of delivering programs, guided tours, and presentations rather than content so that it augments on-site training provided by any agency or organization. NAI trains Certified Interpretive Trainers to deliver the CIG program at sites worldwide. The program has proven successful in a number of ways, yielding benefits to the individuals who participate as well as their employers.

(continued on page 3)

Everybody needs beauty...places to play in and pray in. - John Muir

Directions is a quarterly publication of the Association of Nature Center Administrators, distributed to members of ANCA as a membership benefit. ANCA is a private, non-profit organization, dedicated to promoting and supporting best leadership and management practices for nature and environmental learning centers.

For more information on ANCA
call our toll-free number:
1-800-490-ANCA (2622)
www.natctr.org

Directions Editor
Larry Brown
lbrown@audubon.org

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ANCA Board of Directors

PRESIDENT

Ruth Lundin
Jamestown Audubon Nature Center
rlundin@netsync.net

V.P. - DEVELOPMENT

Elizabeth (Buffy) Cheek
Schlitz Audubon Center
echeek@sanc.org

V.P. - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Wayne Clark
Ft. Worth Nature Center & Refuge
Wayne.Clark@fortworthgov.org

TREASURER

Bill Rose
Kalamazoo Nature Center
brose@naturecenter.org

SECRETARY

Annie Guion
Kroka Expeditions
annieguion@earthlink.net

Kathleen Brady
Birdsong Nature Center
birdsongkat@aol.com

Carolyn Chipman-Evans
Cibolo Wilderness Nature Center
cce@texas.net

Bobbi Geise
bobbijo@imt.net

Bo Glover
Environmental Nature Center
boglo@aol.com

Bob Mercer
Silver Lake Nature Center
ramercer@co.bucks.pa.us

Ann Rilling
Durango Nature Studies
ann@durangonaturestudies.org

Tim Sandsmark
Lookout Mountain Nature Center
tsandsma@jeffco.us

Saul Weisberg
North Cascades Institute
saul_weisberg@ncascades.org

ANCA Headquarters
Charity Krueger, Coordinator
Larry Brown, Publications &
Communications Manager
lbrown@audubon.org

President's Message

Ruth Lundin,
Executive Director

Jamestown Audubon Society



As the new President of ANCA, I want to thank everyone for a very successful Summit. We now have over 400 members, and 120 of you attended the 9th Summit—a strong indication of its usefulness to each of us personally and professionally. It seems that even in a time when our budgets are pinched, ANCA provides services that are highly valued by our members.

Financial concerns in general,

and the strains they put upon administrators in particular, were a recurrent theme during the Summit, both in sessions and informally, during breaks and social times. For many of us, struggling with our budgets is a very lonely, onerous task. We are accustomed to working long hours to meet programming requirements, support our staff and respond to Board expectations, but on balance, the results are rewarding. We see visitors enjoying our programs and learning, employees growing personally and professionally and our organization planning to better meet community needs.

In recent times, however, many of us have found that our efforts have been to avoid backsliding, or worse, deciding what programs or people to cut. This is not rewarding work. In such times, it is important to touch base with others facing similar challenges, both to commiserate and to seek new ideas. Most of us are not fortunate enough to have other nature center directors nearby. It's not just a matter of picking up the phone and meeting for lunch. That's where ANCA can be of assistance. Use the listserv to ask others how they are handling issues

that you are facing. Use the membership list to arrange meetings with other directors in your area. In western New York, we try and meet quarterly, sometimes with the educators, other times just with the administrators. As times get tough, I feel like I have less time for this—but I need it more!

We are planning several articles in Directions outlining issues and ideas from the Summit. However, there is very limited space and only a few topics can be addressed within its pages. We encourage you to make use of the ANCA networking opportunities, both to find useful tools for these tough times and to find the support you need to face the challenges head on.

Are there other ways that we can serve you? Please call or write and let us know.

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Certification

(continued from page 1)

This program only scratched the surface

of a much larger training need. Think about your nature center. How many of your volunteers actually give programs? Many more are probably meeting and greeting the public on your behalf, but aren't giving formal presentations. Working with a grant from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, NAI developed the Certified Interpretive Host program in 2003 that combines customer service training with informal interpretation. Every person who has public contact can learn how to turn those contacts into interpretive opportunities, helping support the organization's mission. This 16-hour training program is designed specifically for receptionists, sales clerks, maintenance workers, security personnel, and others faced with answering questions from the visiting public at any time.

Almost everyone can benefit from participation in the certification program.

This program can help you take stock of and perhaps improve the job skills you use on a daily basis. It is a voluntary program, although many employers are now suggesting or requiring NAI certification. Workshops are available for each of the six categories, although only the CIG and CIH categories have required workshops, since they were designed as training programs. Workshops for the professional Certified Interpretive Manager, Certified Interpretive Planner, Certified Interpretive Trainer, and Certified Heritage Interpreter categories are optional, but provide the opportunity to complete some of the requirements for certification and get some additional training and new perspectives along the way.

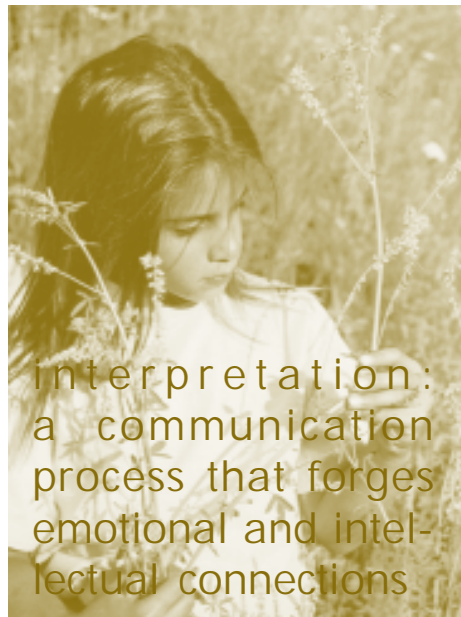
Each of the categories should hold some interest for nature center administrators. The CIM (manager) category focuses on supervisory, management, and leadership skills. The workshop for this category helps you learn how to build a business plan, how to deal with your board or agency managers, and how to use interpretation to help manage people so that they in turn help you manage your resource.

The CIP (planner) category has a very direct benefit for nature centers. Host sites are needed for CIP workshops on a regular basis. The workshop, for fifteen to twenty-one people, is a hands-on experience with participants divided into

small groups to work on a planning project provided by the host site. Findings and recommendations are reported on the last day and the host site receives all materials generated, as well as a debriefing by the instructor. Host site applications can be found on the NAI website.

The CHI (interpreter) category recognizes skills in both personal and nonpersonal interpretation. The workshop helps hone presentation techniques and provides pointers for developing exhibits, signs, publications, and interpretive writing.

The CIT (trainer) workshop is required for those who want to teach the CIG or CIH curriculum to their own staff or volunteer force (which represents a significant cost savings over contracting an instructor to come in and do it for you). The 5-day CIT workshop focuses on the overall program and the CIG curriculum. A follow-up 2-day trainers workshop is also required to add the CIH curriculum.



NAI's certification program offers opportunities for anyone involved in delivering interpretive services of any kind at any site. It is deliberately designed to focus on technique rather than content. Techniques used come from a variety of leading sources in the field today, including the National Park Service and a host of authors representing collective wisdom of the last fifty years in the field. Requirements include an open-book exam, an essay exam, and both written and physical evidences of performance (documents and video).

The cornerstone of NAI's certification program is our definition of interpretation: a communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource. Conservation of our heritage of natural and cultural resources begins with communication and creating those connections are paramount to success. Certification is not required for membership in NAI, and you do not have to be a member to be certified. Who needs it? That may not be for us to say, but if you think you do, we may have a category that's right for you.

For more information on NAI's certification program, visit our website at www.interpnet.com (click on certification program) or contact Associate Director Lisa Brochu toll-free at 866-326-4642 or naiprograms@aol.com.



ANCA

LEADERSHIP AWARD PRESENTED TO CHARITY KRUEGER

Ruth Lundin, Executive Director Jamestown Audubon Society In a fitting culmination of the 9th Summit on August 23rd, Charity Krueger, Executive Director of Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm in Dayton, Ohio received the Professional Leadership Award, ANCA's highest award. The Leadership Award recognizes individuals who have made a major contribution to the success of a nature center or centers and who have made important contributions to the profession through professional organizations and through support and mentoring of other nature center leaders.

In nominating Charity for the Leadership Award, Mike Riska, Executive Director of the Delaware Nature Society and last year's recipient, noted, "I have long admired the contributions of Charity Krueger and have learned much from her because of her willingness to share materials and program ideas with me and many others throughout the country. She is an educator and leader extraordinaire and has contributed much to the nature center profession on the local and national level."

Charity, the 4th recipient of the Award, has been Executive Director of the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm since 1982. Aullwood is one of the thirteen founding Audubon Centers operated by the National Audubon Society or local chapters throughout the United States. She has built Aullwood into a 350-acre sanctuary that provides environmental and agricultural

education programs for 80,000 visitors a year. She recently led the Nature Center through a major expansion. A board member of ANCA from 1991 to 1999, Charity currently oversees its administrative offices. She has also been recognized by the National Audubon Society, Inc. with its highest employee award, the ACE Award which she has received three times, once in 2000 for the expansion of the Aullwood Audubon Center and in 1994 for her contributions to the Strategic Planning Team. She also was recognized in 1991 as one of the "Top Ten Women in Dayton, Ohio."

The ANCA Leadership Award is given out annually to a leader

who makes a contribution to the profession over a period of years through professional organizations and by networking, supporting and mentoring individuals; who leads their nature center through positive change; and who demonstrates years of commitment to the field of nature center management. The funding for the Leadership Award has been through the generosity of Lisa Peterfreund and Joshua Peterfreund of the Merrill G. and Erita E. Hastings Foundation. The award carries with it an award to be donated to a nature center of the candidate's choice in addition to one presented to the awardee. It is presented annually at the Summit. Anyone interested in nominating an individual for the award should contact the ANCA office. The deadline for nominations is January 31st. It is

encouraged that nominations be accompanied by letters of support from people whose careers have been directly impacted by the nominee.

Past recipients have been:

Dr. Lewis Batts, who established three nature centers, including Kalamazoo Nature Center in Kalamazoo MI, was a nationally known ornithologist and was a founding trustee of the Environmental Defense Fund.

Dr. Robert Thomas who founded the Louisiana Audubon Nature Center and was on the founding Board of ANCA and who has provided assistance to multiple nature centers through ANCA and the MAPS process of the AAM.

Michael Riska, Executive Director of the Delaware Nature Society and past ANCA Board member.

Remarks of Acceptance

Charity Krueger, Executive Director, Aullwood Audubon Center & Farm There is something nature center and residential learning center directors have in common. We all CARE very deeply about what we do. Our profession is integral to our lives. I remember years ago when I was an undergraduate student, a professor said to me, "To be happy, make your avocation your profession." I followed his advice and my love for nature led me to this profession. Many times I don't know whether I am working all the time or playing all the time. But I do love what I do. So many people don't have that luxury.

(continued on page 5)

Award

(continued from page 4)

We wouldn't be here if we didn't CARE about growing our profession. There is no other organization that is more caring than ANCA. It is an organization that models a belief that I hold very dear - that everyone is a learner and everyone is a teacher. After a Summit like this, we all are refreshed! We depart with more good ideas than we could implement in five years and many suggestions on how to deal with some of our persistent problems.

I would like to use that simple but powerful word, CARE, to illustrate what this profession and ANCA has meant to me.

The C in CARE represents the challenges that we face every day in our profession. That's why I have been a director at Aullwood for 21 years. I love challenges. Perhaps its because my parents instilled in me at a young age the belief that I could accomplish anything. I am a firm believer that challenges become opportunities if you give them a chance. Without a doubt, challenges enable us to grow professionally. ANCA provides the foundation for us to meet challenges better than any course I took in college. I'm always amazed at how much I don't know, but I do know where I can find answers and solutions — from my colleagues in ANCA. What a powerful team we become with our common bond of being ANCA members.

The A in CARE represents the awareness and appreciation we all feel for the Earth. This appreciation drives us forward in actions that protect the planet. We lead by example, teaching stewardship with our actions. ANCA teaches us how to do this through our newsletter and other publications.

The R in CARE has so many meanings — the respect that we feel and show for one another. The respect our institutions receive in our communities. When Aullwood selected an architect for our center expansion, one of the candidates shared that the previous night he had been working on his presentation. His little daughter asked him what he was doing. He said he was developing a plan for a nature center. "What's a nature center?" the girl asked. He replied, "It's a place where children and families



Charity Krueger, center, with husband Lonny and ANCA President Ruth Lundin

come to learn about plants, animals, and birds. A place where nature lives." "Oh Daddy," the girl said, "you are working on a very important building!" And finally I am proud of the respect and resources that ANCA has brought to our profession by publishing the Director's Guide to Best Practices.

The E in CARE represents energy. Whether you're bright or talented, it means very little if you don't have the energy to push projects through to completion. We see successes each day at our centers based on the drive of our staff and volunteers. What an amazing amount of energy ANCA's founding, past and current boards have expended to make ANCA what it is today - an

organization with nearly 450 members. An organization of dedicated volunteers that offers consults around the country to help our profession grow.

When I learned that I was receiving the ANCA Leadership Award, I was nearly speechless. I am very honored and touched by this tribute. I would like to thank ANCA for this honor by helping ANCA to grow and prosper. I can think of a dozen ways to spend the \$1,000 gift that comes with this award. My board knows that the \$2,000 gift that Aullwood receives would help us reach more children. But the best way to use this \$3,000 gift is to help our profession grow. The Friends of Aullwood Board and I would like to return this \$3,000 award to ANCA with the challenge that the \$3,000 be matched with \$6,000 raised from our membership over the next year. The \$9,000 that is raised will be used to print monographs on topics that are central to our profession. I am very grateful for the opportunities that ANCA has provided me and Aullwood. Remember as the nature center profession grows, so will we all thrive!

ANCA is seeking NOMINATIONS!

Do you know someone who is outstanding in the Nature Center field? If so, they probably deserve to be nominated for the ANCA Leadership Award.

For more information contact:

Ann Rilling at
970-375-7090

ann@durangonaturestudies.org

anca

Profiles: ANCA's Officers*

PRESIDENT: Ruth Lundin



Ruth Lundin has been a member of the ANCA Board of Directors since July 2000. Since March 1999, she has been the President of the Jamestown Audubon Society, which runs a nature center in Jamestown, New York. Ruth attended the first ANCA

Summit in 1995 when she was an intern at the Aullwood Audubon Center and Farm in Dayton, OH. At that point, she had three months experience working at a nature center, but knew she had made the right decision to change career paths - such a committed, friendly, and fun group of people.!

Before deciding that running a nature center has to be the best job bar none, Ruth worked for twenty years in manufacturing, receiving an MBA from the University of Oklahoma along the way. A commitment to children, the outdoors, and the protection of the planet provided the impetus to make the career change, and the people she found in ANCA made it stick.

V.P. - DEVELOPMENT: Buffy Cheek



Buffy is the Executive Director of the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center in a suburb of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She has been at the Center for 11 years and has recently achieved two major goals of hers: to build a new building, and to start a nature preschool.

The new building was completed in May, 2003, after a \$8.25 million campaign. Buffy is hoping that it will qualify for a national LEED award for its "green-ness." The building is being used as a teaching tool for sustainable buildings, and a volunteer corps of tour guides are helping groups of people learn about it. The building has also been a nudge for the center to better incorporate the principles of sustainability into many of their classes, from kindergarten through high school. In addition, architecture students from the local university are attending classes at the building to learn principles of energy savings and green architecture.

The new nature preschool is in the new building, having opened in September, 2003. As a new venture, it has had amazing success. Both rooms are full, and there is a waiting list. The premise behind the school is that pleasurable, sensorially rich early childhood experiences with nature are conducive to the formation of creative, caring individuals who are likely to carry into later life a love, respect, and awareness of the natural world.

The kids are learning to love nature and having lots of fun in the process!

V.P. - PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: Wayne Clark



Wayne grew up in North Central Texas roaming the prairies and creeks. Hunting, fishing, girls, and fast cars were my passion when I was a teen. Knew from about the time I was nine that I wanted to be a wildlife biologist. Never had heard of a nature center because they did not exist in Texas in the 50's

and early 60's. I was introduced to nature centers in college and taught herpetology to local kids. Spent my first year out of college working as a seasonal biologist for the USFS in what is now the Frank Church Wilderness of No Return in Idaho. Came back to Texas for graduate school and took a part time job at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge.

I found in nature centers the ethics and philosophy that was missing in my education and work along with an unending opportunity to learn about the infinite varieties and complexities of living organisms. Nature centers also allowed a hands on use of my exhibit building, welding, fence building, heavy equipment driving skills (just like a circus, even the performers help erect the tents). I had found a home in nature centers and received the opportunity to build a new nature center in 1975 at the Armand Bayou Nature Center where I spent seven years. In 1981 I had an opportunity to return to the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge as a naturalist. I spent the next 12 years leading groups, recruiting volunteers, building trails, and working on landscape restoration projects before becoming director of the FWNC&R. It has been a little over ten years since I became director (and first came to an ANCA Summit) and it has definitely been a challenge.

The hardest thing in my job has been dealing with the governing agency over my nature center. Because of our large acreage (4,000) the city had no real understanding of natural resource management. It has been a real fight to implement a naturalistic style of resource management within an organization nurtured on turf management and manicured parks. It is a fight that I have slowly won. My most recent accomplishment was a master site development plan that will guide the FWNC&R into the future. Nature centers are a passion for me now as are those early teen passions that still drive me.

* Bill Rose and Annie Guion will be featured in the next issue of Directions.

from the field: NEWS, NOTES & NATURAL HISTORY

The Song of the Dodo

by David Quammen

A Book Review

Gordon Maupin,
Executive Director
The Wilderness Center

This book is a crash course in island biogeography, a terrific history of scientific thought, and a fascinating travelogue. *Song of the Dodo* will impact how you think about land stewardship at your nature center.

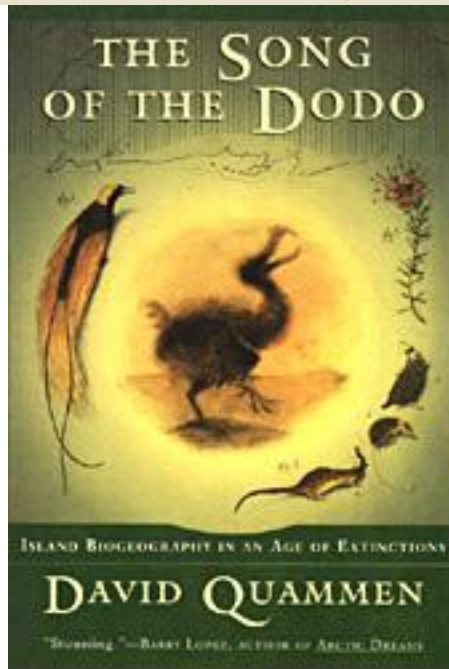
The last Eastern Box Turtle quietly disappeared from The Wilderness Center in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Stories collected by our first interpretive naturalist include cattle stepping on Box Turtles in a field we have subsequently converted to prairie.

There were complex reasons the turtles were extirpated from what would later become The Wilderness Center. Obviously, cattle along with habitat loss, collecting, and chipmunk predation were direct causes. The great underlying cause, however, was probably the size and isolation of our "island."

The Wilderness Center currently hosts one or two nesting pairs of Pileated Woodpeckers in our mature forest. We never have more than two pairs. Their population does not increase. If hard times hit them, they might disappear from our woods as well. Who knows how long it would take for new birds to immigrate to our land, our island?

Every nature center leader needs to understand these dynamics. Quammen provided "one stop shopping" for that knowledge. Every nature center leader, board member, and naturalist should read *Song of the Dodo*. If you haven't already discarded out dated "fish and game" management in favor of a biodiversity stewardship, you will after reading this book.

Song of the Dodo opens by following the life, travels and thoughts of the great naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace. Wallace is remembered for two things. "Wallace's Line" which he drew on maps of the Indonesia where the wildlife of Asia and Australia collide, and, with Charles Darwin, he discovered the uni-



fying principle of all the life sciences: evolution by means of natural selection.

Wallace's work in biogeography is the jumping off place for this book. *Song of the Dodo* takes you around the world and forward through time and thought to the revolution in conservation biology started by Robert MacArthur and Edward O. Wilson in the 1960s. The predictions in MacArthur and Wilson's technical book *The Theory of Island Biogeography* have become all too true. In a biogeographical sense, the continents have disappeared. We live in a "World in Pieces." Nature Center leaders must understand these principals to provide effective stewardship of natural land. The understanding you glean from this book will affect the day-to-day

decisions you make, the shape of your strategic plans.

At 702 pages, the book is not a daunting read. Quammen is a journalist, not a scientist. Still, the science he presents (minus the calculus and differential equations) is high-quality. The journalistic style makes for fun reading. *Song of the Dodo* is intellectual candy.

I recommend this book to all your staff, board members, your members, and, of course, you. It is a Touchstone Book published by Simon and Schuster. Order it for yourself and your gift shop. Tell people about it. Read it.

DON'T MISS THIS!!

ANCA Summit X

August 12 - 14, 2004



ISLANDWOOD

Seattle, Washington

Director's Guide to Best Practices

The Director's Guide includes chapters on five essential areas: leadership, strategic planning, boards, staff, and fund raising. ANCA developed this book for busy directors and staff people with many roles and responsibilities. It is a handbook for those new to the profession and will also challenge and inspire the most experienced directors and their staffs. ANCA members have also found it valuable to give to board members, and volunteers. Directors from 23 states and 40 different facilities reviewed and commented on the chapter drafts and evaluated the book's effectiveness.

Order Your Copy Today!

Price of the book is \$60.00 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling.

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Where is Best Practices Volume 2?

Bob Mercer, Director
Silver Lake Nature Center

If you ever notice that on The Directors Guide of Best Practice, it says Volume 1? Certainly you have been wondering and waiting for a Volume 2 to be finished. Why hasn't there been one yet? The problem has been securing funding and an author. As the grants were written and rejected, it became painfully clear that ANCA could not pay someone what they truly deserved to do the project from stem to stern.

At the Board planning meeting in February 2003, it was decided to attempt a different approach (after all we are always admonishing our staff to "think out of the box"). The first approach was to go to the membership to locate the skills and talents to author monographs. These are short papers on single topics. When all were finished, they would be compiled into a complete book. The many authors could be compensated for their efforts from an unspecified funding source. The second idea was to approach our members asking them to become the funding source, to assist with the publication as part of their dedication to enhancing the profession.

At the ANCA Summit in August, both of these ideas developed



buds and started to grow. By then, several people expressed interest in possibly authoring monographs and the board wrestled with identifying a funding source.

When Charity Krueger, a long time supporter of the Manual 1 and 2 projects, was presented the Leadership Award, she set out the challenge. Charity promised to donate the \$3,000 award IF (and notice that is a big "if") ANCA could generate double that, or \$6,000, by the next Summit. When asked, the many members attending the ANCA Summit agreeing with Charity on the importance of the project stepped forward and pledged \$4,035.00 - more than 2/3 the way to the goal.

Every ANCA member knows the process of fund raising. They know how the first 60% of the gifts are the easy ones. They also know that the only way to get money is to ASK! Our president, Ruth Lundin, is sending a letter to you shortly. That letter will ask all those who were not at the Summit, or had not yet made a pledge, to consider making their contribution.

In future issues of Directions, look for updates. Also, anticipate the efforts of the Board to convince every member the value of an incredible resource written for You addressing your daily concerns. Anticipate the begging, cajoling and arm-twisting that is such a major component of any project fund. You know from your own fund raising efforts, there will be those who will support the project immediately. There will be those who "plan to get to it." There will also be some who will have difficulty supporting the project with their hard earned cash regardless of how great it is. As a dyed in the wool fundraiser yourself, remember when the letter arrives to be one of those who generously support the goal! With proven support from our membership in hand, convincing foundations and other potential funding sources should be more productive!

Will your name be on the published as a sponsor for the Best Practices 2? Say, "YES."

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ANCA offers consulting assistance

to nature centers and other environmental education organizations at very reasonable fees. The charge includes the cost of transportation, lodging and meals for the team, plus a \$2,750 fee that goes toward supporting ANCA's professional services and planning. Our Board of Directors, and members, provide these services with no personal financial gain, while you gain the advantage of advice and guidance from some of the profession's most respected and experienced leaders.

What can be covered? Well, just about anything involved with planning, funding, and operations. Some topics include:

- Assistance with long range and strategic planning
- Review education programs, exhibits, or trails
- Mission focus
- Fundraising and fiscal management
- Facility planning
- Starting a center
- Management strategies and use planning

To find out more about

ANCA's Peer Consults, contact any ANCA board member or Wayne Clark at
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- Special Publications
- Admission to ANCA Summits and Workshops

Institutional Memberships allow for two staff members to receive benefits. Questions? Call 1-800-490-2622.

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Your literary contributions are needed for Directions.

- **Profiles:** Highlights people who put their efforts toward improving the profession. Send a paragraph or two about their background and accomplishments and a picture.
- **From the Field:** Features news, notes, and natural history from your nature center or beyond.
- **Articles:** The best articles come from you - the members. Articles need to be 1-2 pages (500 - 1,200 words). Technical language can be used as needed, but, remember your audience may not have your level of expertise in the subject. Fun, light-hearted, and inspirational articles are always welcome as well.

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articles to:

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