

Informally Speaking

The E-Newsletter of Informal Science Education Association Summer 2002 Edition

Summer Camps

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Welcome to the Summer 2002 Edition of Informally Speaking, the E-Newsletter of Informal Science Education Association. Our mission is to support partnerships among informal and formal science educators to improve science education in Texas.

As we recover from a summer of camps and day long programming, we look forward to our visiting school children and families, and new projects.

Congratulations!

Christy Youker is now a Ph.D! She began graduate school and started working with ISEA 5 years ago, so many of us know Christy and have met her children as they arrived. Her defense on July 19th was for her entitled dissertation "Teachers' Perspectives of Why and How They Use the Resources of Informal Science Education Sites". Call Christy for your copy today!

Use the membership form at the end of this newsletter (See page 8) to encourage other institutions to join. The individual bringing in the most

Message from the President

At our recent meeting at McKinney Roughs Environmental Learning Center near Bastrop, Texas, board members recounted accomplishments of this past year. We will soon be an approved 501c3 organization, which will facilitate funding efforts. ISEA now has a web site and a web mistress. Sue Shore has created an attractive, easy to use site. If you're asked for information about ISEA, you can give the site location www.statweb.org/isea. (ISEA history and membership forms are available.) A benefit of being an affiliate of the Science Teachers Association of Texas (STAT) is that the ISEA web site is hosted on the STAT web page.

Other topics of discussion at the summer meeting were the ISEA presence at the Conference for the Advancement of Science Teaching (CAST) in El Paso on November 6-9, 2002. ISEA will co-host a reception with the Texas Science Education Leadership Association for Informal Educators on Wednesday night from 6-9 at the Insights Museum in El Paso.

All informal educators are invited to the reception. ISEA will also sponsor a booth for distribution of Informal Sites information for teachers and coordinate a session on summer job opportunities for teachers at informal science sites.

Board members are very excited about the ISEA Conference 2003 to be held at McKinney Roughs on March 4-6, 2003. Our Keynote speaker will be Larry Lowery from the Lawrence Hall of Science who will speak on "Understanding Learners". Holding our meeting at the site where the conference will be held allowed us to see the spaces and visualize how things will work in this setting. Early March will be a beautiful time to be at McKinney Roughs.

Hope to see many of you at CAST in El Paso and hope to see all of you at the Conference 2003 on March 6-9.

Janice

Treasurer Update

Well it looks like we are on the way to becoming an official independent non-profit entity! We have money in our ISEA account (Thanks to STAT for its \$500 start-up money for new affiliates and from membership dues for 2002.) We have our ISEA identification number and are approved for incorporation in the state of Texas. The paper work for non-profit tax status was finished, with help from Janice and Vanessa, and mailed to the IRS in early summer. With any luck we will have news about the status of our 501c3 by the end of August.

Debbie

ISEA Funding Workshop

Funding an innovative informal science program can many times be the most challenging aspect of the program's development. In response to many requests from its members, the Informal Science Education Association is sponsoring a Funding Workshop on October 21, 2002 at the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum from 10am - 4pm. The workshop fee is \$50.00, with all proceeds going to support ISEA. Participants will be given free admission to the museum immediately following the session, from 4pm to 6pm.

The workshop will be a hands-on session designed to build participants' ability to target and craft funding requests to foundations and government agencies. The workshop's agenda includes:

- Steps towards developing a competitive funding proposal
- An overview of specific funding opportunities available to Texas informal science educators
- A presentation highlighting the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Cooperative Grant Program
- An overview of NSF Informal Science Education Program with specific examples of successful NSF grants included.

Registration information will be sent electronically to all ISEA members in early September, so mark your calendars now. If you have any specific questions, contact Charlie Walter at charlie@fwmsb.org.

Regional Informal Association Updates

San Antonio Area Informal Education Association

In June 2002, the Cibolo Nature Center presented BEGINNING RESEARCH TECHNIQUES FOR ELEMENTARY TEACHERS to 12 San Antonio teachers. We used the inquiry model presented by Dr. Marian Martinello in her book Pathways for Inquiry that features techniques for student centered inquiry teaching and learning across the fields of study.

Jan Wrede, CNC Director of Education and Dr. Kathleen Ward of Our Lady of the Lake guided the week-long workshop on the banks of the Cibolo Creek. Teachers, in grade level teams, chose their inquiry topics after a "wonder and wonder" session along the creek. Their chosen explorations began with these questions:

1. Why are so many clams living in the Creek?
2. What makes the creek flow faster in one place than another?
3. What parts of the creek have the most clams?

Teachers report, "We all had FUN and got first-hand experience with the inquiry process through a topic that caught our interest. The weather was hot but the shade and water kept us comfortable. Our porta-potty came late but it did not stink!"

Coastal Bend Informal Educators

The Coastal Bend Informal Educators meet monthly at various informal facilities. On March 13th, the Education Service Center Region II provided a special session on the TEKS and the TAKS for 16 CBIE members. We received resources and much insight into the standards and tests to use when developing programs for school groups. CBIE greatly appreciates formal education's involvement in our group, and especially ESC Region II's time for this special professional development session.

Plans are under way for the 2nd Annual Educator Resource Extravaganza, to be held at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History on October 1, 2002. Thirty-three informal education organizations will share their resources with regional elementary educators. We look forward to a fun and successful evening! Funding for the event is being provided by the Coastal Bend Bays & Estuaries Program.

For more information on CBIE, contact Tara Schultz , Director of Science Education at the Texas State Aquarium, (361) 881-1218 or tschultz@txstateaq.org.

Seven ISEA members participated in the TxCETP May Forum, made available to informal sites by Kit Price Blount of Texas A&M Corpus Christi. While in Austin, participants learned more about what TxCETP faculty are doing with inquiry in university undergraduate courses. Sixty participants collaborated to generate a vision and self-reflection tool for assessing the level of use of inquiry in college courses. This tool may be useful to ISEA members in assessing their programming. It can be found at: <http://www.sci.tamucc.edu/txcetp/cr/> Click on "TxCETP Vision for Effective Learning and Teaching". Questions? Contact Kit Price Blount, TxCETP Project Director at kpblount@tamucc.edu.

Houston Informal Science Coalition

Houston's Informal Science Coalition has continued its collaboration with the Houston Independent School District's NSF-funded program, Houston Urban Learning in a Networked Community (HU-LINC). The coalition has continued to offer dynamic programs to the schools through Family Adventures. Over 8,000 family visitors from HI SD schools were served through the Family Adventures program in the 2002-03 school year! The Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Museum of Health and Medical Science offered professional development opportunities for elementary teachers in HI SD through HU-LINC this summer.

The Informal Science Coalition also spent time this summer in workshops offered by HU-LINC Science Specialists developing an understanding of the TAKS test and how that influences the programming that is provided to the schools. In partnership with HU-LINC, the informal science coalition is in the process of developing a parent information tool with resources about museums, zoos, nature centers, and other family learning opportunities throughout Houston.

The Houston Informal Science Coalition welcomes new members. Contact Angela Scott, The Children's Museum of Houston, 1500 Binz, Houston, Texas 77004, 713/522-1138x220, ascott@cmhouston.org for more information.

Check out the Informal Science Coalition's website at <http://com.houstonisd.org/hulinc/>.

South Plains Educational Resource Collaborative (SPERC)

SPERC has partnered with Barnes and Noble in Lubbock to sponsor an Educator's Appreciation Open House on October 24. Teachers throughout the Region 17 area will have the opportunity to meet informal educators and learn about programs offered for schools by participating organizations. A web site also is in the works, and a program guide has been produced for regional schools. Contact Sue Shore, Lubbock Lake Landmark, 806-742-1116, susan.shore@ttu.edu for more information.

Galveston Area Informals

On October 10th, there will be the second annual Galveston Independent School District Community Fair and Educator's Expo that will feature informal sites. Last year 15 informal Galveston educational sites were present. An informal sites catalogue to make area teachers aware of the educational opportunities available to students. was produced by the Galveston

Historic Foundation and funded with a grant. Three thousand were distributed to teachers across Region 4. In return, the school district wrote curriculum K-12 for all of the sites, shifting the trips to these sites from "field trip" to "co-curriculum". Once a teacher reaches a certain point in curriculum, the class goes to the informal site for the next part of the lesson. With additional grant funds, each class in the school district had monies to go to at least one site. Of the 9,000 school children in the district, 8,500 children participated in grant funded field trips this past year. The teachers then had to complete a comprehensive evaluation on the site in return. These evaluations will be used in the next funding process. For more information, contact Lydia.Miller@galvestonhistory.org at the Galveston Historic Foundation.

Austin Collaboration of Cultural and Educational Sites with Schools

ACCESS had a successful 3-day Summer Museum Institute with teachers and educators giving high marks to the participating sites and visiting lecturers. The subject focus was Art, Science and History, with a total of 8 sites hosting the participants. ACCESS is sponsoring a lecture series at member sites through the school year, as well as three general meetings for teachers and informal educators. Contact Donna Vliet at 512-471-6346 or donna.vliet@mail.utexas.edu for more information.

Conference Preview

Our ISEA conference "Understanding Learners", will be March 4-6, 2003 at McKinney Roughs Environmental Learning Center near Bastrop, Texas. Go to <http://www.lcra.org/lands/roughs/> to visit the site online. Large bunkhouses are available for all guests, and included in the registration fee, which also covers the cost of meals from dinner on Tuesday through lunch on Thursday. The cost will be similar to last year's program. Some side trips and add-on programming will be made available by the staff at McKinney Roughs for an additional cost.

Our keynote speaker is Larry Lowery, a renowned researcher in the science of learning. We are requesting session proposals, due October 7th. Please share your experiences and knowledge with other sites and staff. Fill out the form on page 11.

One topic that was consistently reviewed on the member evaluations for the 2002 ISEA Conference at Sea World was the weather! Although we won't be guaranteeing the

temperature, we can promise that ISEA's 2003 conference will have warm places to sit and all the sessions within shouting distance.

Museum and School Partnerships

Martha Kolbe, Director of Education and Programs

John P. McGovern Museum of Health and Medical Science

Do you need some new ideas to strengthen your partnerships with school districts? A popular session at ISEA annual conference held at at Sea World in San Antonio this spring focused on this topic. A diverse group of small museum and large museum educators asked a lot of questions and shared ideas.

Standards-Based Curriculum

There was some discussion whether or not standards-based curriculum was a great thing for museums or if it diluted our unique type of programming. Get to know your school districts and find out where the fit is between the TEKS and TAKS objectives and your mission. You don't have to cover all of the standards in your programming and you may find out that what you already do IS standards-based. You can be instrumental in showing your school audience a different way to meet those objectives.

Getting to Know Your School District

Some of us have long established relationships with our local school districts and some of us want to know how to form relationships. If you have a relationship, then ask to attend some of their meetings with principals, science coordinators or lead science teachers. Get to know what their needs are and offer to solve some of their problems with your school field trip programs, school outreach programs or professional development programs for educators. Often we have partnerships in the community that we can bring to the table which will get programs to the school district that positively impact student achievement. Get some synergy going between you, the school district and others in the community (medical professional, geologists, etc.) and good things can happen fast! If you don't have a relationship with local school districts yet, then read on!

Leverage Who You Know

Do you have a board member who has close ties with their local school district? Ask them to connect you with decision-makers at high levels in that district. Is there someone on your staff who volunteers in their school district and knows principals or central administration staff? Do you have summer camp teachers who teach in area school districts who can advise you on who to go to or how to use channels of communication in their school district? Do you have a community partner who can connect you with upper administrators? Utilize everyone you know!

Starting From Scratch

Don't know too many people? Have you thought about nominating someone from your local school district board to serve on your museum board? Someone on your board probably knows someone on a local school district board. Consider hiring an experienced, influential teacher in your local school district to be a part of your Education staff for at least a few years. Sometimes school districts will allow you to pay a teacher's contract on a yearly basis in order for them to be on your staff. This may appear costly, but it can really jump-start your relationship with the school district. Experienced teachers have the kind of access to decision makers that you wish you had! Cold calls can be made to decision-makers in school districts in order to introduce your programs. It is helpful if someone from your development department gets involved with these efforts, as they may know citizens in the community who would like to fund museum programs. School district with a need + museum program with a solution + identified funding source = success!

These ideas just touch on the powerful ideas that informal science educators get excited about when they gather together. You'll want to attend the ISEA conference next spring so that you can continue this conversation with colleagues from all around the state!

Nominations for Board Members

If you would like a person from your site, or know an involved educator that works with informals, or if you yourself would be interested in being on the board, please use the form to nominate a board member. Board members serve for a three year term. Please verify the nominee is interested in filling this position. ISEA rotates members off each year and is committed to maintaining diversity in site representation, geographic location and cultural background.

Nomination Form

I would like to nominate the person below for an ISEA board position.

I am interested in running for an ISEA board position.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Fax # _____

Email address: _____

Informal Science Education Association member yes no

Science Teachers Association of Texas member yes no

Informal Science Education Association of Texas

Membership Application

Please complete one form per person.

Date _____

Name: Last _____ First _____ M. I. _____

Position _____

Institution/Business/School & District _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Day Phone _____ PM Phone _____ FAX _____

E-mail _____ ESC Region _____

(Most correspondence from ISEA will be delivered thru email!)

Mark all that apply:

Organization

- Aquarium
- Art Museum
- Botanical Garden
- Business/Industry
- Children's Museum
- College/University
- Government
- History Museum
- K-12 Educator
- Nature Center
- Science Center
- Science Museum
- State Park
- Zoo
- Other

Job Description

- College/Univ. Professor
- Consultant
- Department head
- Educator
- Exhibit Design
- Interpreter
- Student
- Supervisor
- Teacher
- Retired
- Other

Ages Taught

- Infants
- PreK-5
- 6-8
- 9-12
- College/University
- Adults

I provide the following:

- Family Learning Events
- Informal Education Programs
- Internship Opportunities
- Professional Development Opportunities
- TEKS-aligned materials

I would like more information about:

- Family Learning Event Training
- Professional Development Opportunities
- TEKS implementation

(Check One:)

- New (\$10.00)
- Renewal (\$10.00)

Recruited By: _____

Amount Paid \$ _____

Remit one check or money order for dues made

Payable to ISEA. Do not send cash. ISEA is not able to accept payment by credit card.

Mail form and payment to:

Charles Dana Center, UT at Austin

ATTN: Peggy Evans

2901 N. IH-35, Suite 2.200

Austin, TX 78722

The Informal Science Education Association's

SESSION PROPOSAL FORM for 2003's conference "Understanding Learning"

To further explore the conference's keynote address, consider presenting sessions in research on learning, reaching all developmental stages, incorporating learning styles in exhibits, or finding tools to measure learning. Other topics might include answers to the questions; how can museums support children and families along the lifelong learning continuum? How might technology facilitate learning across all ages? What partnerships have created successful dynamics for community learners?

Please use this form or a copy and type your proposal.

Your Name: _____

Title: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

Email: _____

Session Title: _____

Subject Area(s): (Please check no more than two.)

Format: (Please check one.)

Leadership/Management

Inspirational Speaker

Exhibits/Environments

Workshop

Development/Marketing

Research Presentation

Programs/Education

Roundtable Discussion

Visitor Services/Operations

Interactive Session

A/V Requested:

VCR/Monitor

Slide Projector/Screen

Overhead/Screen

Flipchart/Markers

Audience and audience size: (Please describe the intended audience below.)

Description: (Describe the session on an additional page. What are the goals of this session? What is the content focus and does it relate to the conference theme? Model best teaching practices in delivery of your session.)

Please return this proposal by October 7, 2002 to: ISEA Conference Committee, GCSNA, 12861 Galm Rd., San Antonio, TX 78254 or to siri.lindholm@tpwd.state.tx.us