

Informally Speaking

Newsletter

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Message From the President

Another school year has come and gone, and that old notion of summer break seems like a forgotten land to many of us as we transition to summer camps, curriculum designing and planning for the coming school year.

Summer has also become the prime season for professional development. As schools and informal institutions evolve to meet the professional learning needs of diverse adult audiences, so too is the look of PD, which now includes one-to-one training, webinars, and other platforms.

ISEA is always striving to meet these diverse needs for our members and we also continue to reach out for increased and improved partnerships and resources, as well as to highlight the great informal education programming throughout Texas. Our most recent board meeting was filled with conversation about how to diversify our conference offerings through new or previously absent session formats - so stay tuned!

I invite you to take a look at the impact of the 2017 conference, to peruse our board picks segments, and to meet our newest board members in this edition of Informally Speaking.

Best regards,
Dustin Miller

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ISEA in Texas

[Message from the President](#)

[ISEA Conference](#)

[Rigor's Picks](#)

[ISEA Board](#)

Check out BRIT!



The 2018 ISEA Conference will be in Fort Worth. If you happen to be in the area or live nearby, visit the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. The institute is an internationally recognized scientific research and learning center. There are private and public tours.

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ISEA Conference 2017

Members of ISEA Texas descended on New Braunfels during a gloriously beautiful week of February this year. The 2017 Annual ISEA Conference had almost 120 educators come together at the T&M Bar Ranch Resort for the twentieth anniversary of the annual conference. Every year the organization sets aside funds for a conference scholarship, and members apply to attend that would not otherwise be able to travel



due to fiscal challenges. A great group accepted and attended this year. The conference included three prominent speakers, informative sessions, and creative field trips.

The scholarship recipients were asked three questions about what impressed them about the conference, what was the take away, and how will the experience impact their work back at their own facility. Some of the favorite parts of the conference for newbies included the poster sessions, speakers, and collecting new ideas for programming for the sessions. The overwhelming feedback was the opportunity for networking and sharing of information. Robert Ford appreciated the sense of comradery evident through the sessions and how easily we rolled over into fulfilled evening social events. Christopher Johnson had a pretty cool idea. He suggested a Volunteer Day. A way for ISEA members to invite each other to their facilities to volunteer for a day and learn more about what each of us do to support our communities. Great idea - a great topic to bring up at the 2018 Annual Conference at the Botanical Research Institute of Texas.

Each year, ISEA members come together to network and share ideas. We promote the importance of informal education through our dedication and commitment to the craft. Informal education programs foster learning experiences through inquiry, incorporating creativity and invest a lot of hard work to make discovery and investigation accessible for all learners. You make a difference and are vital to your communities. We look forward to seeing you again next year. Fort Worth Bound!

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Rigor's Picks

Recommendations to support you

We are fast approaching the summer break for our teachers and other formal educators. Here are some recommendations for you.

[CKWRI's Wild Bird Conservation Curriculum Workshop](#)

Free 2-day workshop where you get trained on kit-based lessons and also get hands-on experience with live birds.

[ME by the SEa 12th annual regional conference of mathematics education and science education](#)

Many informal educators within our ISEA community have been exploring the ability to form partnerships between formal and informal education. In the Coastal Bend, the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History has been able over the last few years forge a partnership with the science and math education departments at Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi in creating a unique teacher workshop program. The Me by the Sea conference is an annual event every June which serves as a keystone teacher workshop for the local teachers in the area, and three years ago the planners asked Sarah Coles, Education Director at the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History, to be a keynote speaker during the workshop. This soon blossomed into Sarah sitting on the planning committee and extending the reach of the conference to many other informal educators. Now the conference is a great place for informals



to train teachers in techniques they use in their programs as well as spread the word about programs they do. In addition, when looking at surveys from the previous years this incorporation of the informal science sphere has been well received and teachers are looking for more information about what we can offer at our sites.

[Reflecting on Practice](#) is a professional learning program that immerses novice and experienced science educators in informal environments in discussions about, reflections on, and applications of research and theory in learning and teaching science. The ideas and tasks in the program create and strengthen a shared knowledge base and professional language among educators within an institution. It makes public the practices of all educators through greater understanding of, and reflections on, their beliefs, goals, and actions. There are three primary goals for the program:

- Build shared language and understanding through delving into the literature on learning and teaching;
- Engage practitioners in habits of reflections through observing their own teaching, as a means to develop their practice and make it public; and
- Nurture a tradition of continued professional learning, and thereby build a professional learning community within an institution.

[Texas Aquatic Science 2017 Summer Educator Workshops](#) - Coming Soon to a City Near You! Educators who have participated in TAS training have expressed a great interest in becoming facilitators of the TAS curriculum. the following are the cities and dates for this summer.

- Austin, June 15, 12-5pm, Texas Parks & Wildlife HQ
- Dallas, June 22, 12-5pm, John Bunker Sands Wetland Center
- Houston, June 30, 12-5pm, Texas Parks & Wildlife Region IV HQ (Adjacent to Sheldon Lake State Park)
- Rio Grande Valley, July 18, 12-5pm, McAllen High School
- San Antonio, June 16, 12-5pm, Guadalupe River State Park

Krista Tippett with [On Being](#) podcasts talks with Robin Wall Kimmerer who grew up a citizen of an indigenous tribe and is also a botanist. She shares two very unique perspectives of viewing the natural world in discussing her relationship with plants and the earth in ***The Intelligence of all Kinds of Life.***

[Texas Master Naturalist Program](#)

is a great way to volunteer and learn through outdoor experiences. Check out the program and see what is going on in your area.

[Nature Rocks Texas](#). Play Explore and Connect with Nature Near YOU!

Rigor's Picks is just a snapshot. If you have any recommendations you would like to share in the fall newsletter email nicki.sohn@sbcglobal.net. Remember to go to our Facebook page to check out even more that is going on around Texas as well as throughout the country.

ISEA Board *We serve You!*

The ISEA Board Members are a group of volunteers who have committed to being part of a team to provide a space for informal educators to come together to share resources and network with like-minded individuals. Each year, the ISEA officers and board members come together to strategize and plan the annual conference. Who are we? Follow the link below and find out more about who we are and why we do what we do.



Read more

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ISEA Texas



