

The AMIgo



Have YOU Considered Becoming an Active Mentor?

By: Jo Schaper
(Freelance interpreter and old person)

"Who will hold the sky up/Now the big trees are down?"
-- Song of the same name by Douglas Wood

I've reached the age where my mentors are dropping like insects. Critters who live only for a few days (mayflies). For a few weeks above ground, who shine brightly the whole time (lighting bugs). Whose colorful brilliance make up for the fact that they live only for a season (butterflies.)



I know most of you are not yet there. But passing your information and your craft secrets along can start at any age and you should start thinking about it at least by the time you are 30. To visitors, sure. That's your job. But how about becoming a resource for your peers? And others?



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Editors Corner

In order to have a quality newsletter it is important to have articles, photos, site and region updates, interpretive tips and more from you as members. Deadline dates for each newsletter cycle are listed below, however you may certainly send submissions at any time. Thank you for allowing me to be your AMIgo editor and I look forward to seeing your future submissions.

Steve Jacobsen, AMIgo Editor
steve.jacobsen@mdc.mo.gov

Newsletter Submission Deadlines:

Fall 2026
October, November, December
Deadline: September 15th, 2026

Winter 2027
January, February, March
Deadline: December 15th, 2026

Spring 2027
April, May, June
Deadline: March 15th, 2027

Summer 2027
July, August, September
Deadline June 15th, 2027



2026 AMI Officers

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sarah.s.jones@dnr.mo.gov

AMI Regions



Please remember to log onto the AMI website and update your profile to reflect which region you are in. This will help with future communications from your Member At Large.

AMI Members At Large

Adam Brandsgaard – NW Region Member at Large
adam.brandsgaard@mdc.mo.gov

Chris Edmondson – Central Region Member at Large
chris.edmondson@dnr.mo.gov

Connie Weber – SE Region Member at Large
connie.weber@dnr.mo.gov

Lauren Baker – NE/St. Louis Region Member at Large
lauren.baker@mdc.mo.gov

Sam Grove – SW Region Member at Large
samantha.grove@dnr.mo.gov

2026 AMI Conference

AMI 2026 CONFERENCE UPDATES

→ **Register Now at MOInterp.org** ←

WE CAN'T WAIT TO
SEE YOU THERE!

Conference details:

Pre-Conference: Saturday, September 12th

Conference: Sunday, September 13th - Tuesday, September 15th

Location: Camden on the Lake Resort - Lake of the Ozarks

Full Registration: \$180 Student Registration: \$100 One Day: \$80

SEEKING GUIDES FOR THE JOURNEY! CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS EXTENDED!

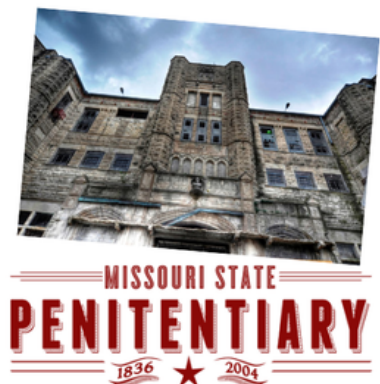
Interpreters who have ventured into uncharted territory are invited to share their discoveries at the 2026 AMI Conference. If you've experimented, explored, or uncovered insights from the edge of the map, consider leading a breakout session. Your stories, tools, and hard-won wisdom will inspire others to confront dragons and explore boldly!



Submit your proposals through the conference page of the AMI website now! Presenters chosen for breakout session will receive a 20% discount on full registration or a refund of 20% if they have already registered.

CAN'T WAIT FOR THE ADVENTURE TO START? JOIN US FOR A PRE-CONFERENCE EXCURSION TO THE STATE PENITENTIARY.

Join your AMI pals for a captivating tour of the Missouri State Penitentiary! Prepare to explore Jefferson City's intriguing history as you walk through the prison's dungeon cells and hidden corners. You can catch a ride from the hotel or meet us at the penitentiary gates. The tour is 2 hours long and tickets are \$40 per person. Keep an eye out for more details when you register for the conference!



MISSOURI STATE
PENITENTIARY
1836 ★ 2004

2026 AMI Conference

**DURING THE CONFERENCE,
PARTICIPANTS CAN CHOOSE TO
EXPLORE LOCAL HISTORY AND
CULTURE OR LEARN A NEW SKILL,
WITH PREVIEWS OF THE
ADVENTURES AVAILABLE BELOW!**

RAMBLING WITH RIVER DRAGONS: JEFFERSON CITY ADVENTURES



Your journey begins at the historic Lohman Building before embarking on a unique tour around the Missouri State Capitol grounds and Adrian's Island. After lunch in downtown Jefferson City (on own) and time to explore the Missouri State Museum exhibits, the group splits into two paths: a trek to Clark's Hill Historic Site, where sweeping views and archaeological echoes invite you to imagine the dragons that once marked the edges of early maps, or an art-and-culture experience at JC Museum of Modern Art. The full fellowship reunites for a sweet reward at Central Dairy before returning to the hotel; a fitting end to a day spent navigating both familiar landmarks and the unknown realms of interpretation.



**When registering, please be sure to mark the
specific afternoon option you prefer.
Option HIKE or Option ART**

COST: Lunch and Central Dairy On Own

**Leave: 8:30 AM
Return: 5:00 PM**

LURING THE DRAGON: BENNETT SPRING EXPERIENCE

Journey into the cool, clear waters of Bennett Spring State Park for a hands-on exploration of one of Missouri's iconic outdoor traditions. Begin with a behind-the-scenes look at the hatchery renovations, then learn the art of fly tying; the delicate craft of creating lures that tempt even the wariest river-dwelling "dragons." After lunch at the park restaurant (on your own), watch expert anglers demonstrate the rhythm of casting and reading of the water before trying your own hand at fly fishing. Whether you're a seasoned adventurer or a curious first-timer, this trip invites you to navigate new skills, follow the currents of interpretation, and discover what stories a river can tell. Valid Missouri Fishing Permit is required but Daily Trout Tag will be covered.



COST: Lunch On Own

Leave: 7:30 AM Return: 5:00 PM

2026 AMI Conference

LEGENDS AND LIMESTONE: OZARK CAVERNS AND CAMDEN COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Explore the natural and historical heart of the Ozarks with a guided hike along Coakley Hollow Trail, where rare fen ecosystems mark the edges of the map. Then venture into Ozark Caverns to uncover underground wonders early explorers might have labeled with dragons. Afterward, enjoy lunch and an engaging overview at the Camden County Historical Society before exploring exhibits that trace the region's evolving stories. A day of landscapes, legends, and newly charted realms.



Leave: 8:30 AM
Return: 2:30 PM

COST: None - Lunch Included

STORMING THE CASTLE: HA HA TONKA STATE PARK

Discover the wild edges of the map at Ha Ha Tonka State Park, where towering bluffs, castle ruins, and spring-fed waters set the stage for a day of exploration. Begin at the visitor center before a guided birding trek, a chance to spot feathered "dragons" gliding through the Ozark canopy. After lunch near Spring Brook Trail, we'll review the basics of kayaking during a land-based demo, then launch into the park's quiet inlet to navigate its winding waterways. This trip blends science, skill-building, and adventure and invites you expand the edges of your map.

COST: \$12 Catered Box Lunch - You will be contacted for ordering preference/dietary needs

Leave: 7:30 AM
Return: 2:45 PM



HOW TO HUNT A DRAGON: SPORTING CLAYS & HUNTING HISTORY

Step into the evolving story of hunting in the Ozarks with a morning that bridges centuries of skill, survival, and interpretation. Begin by meeting first-person interpreters who bring historic hunting to life through demonstrations of tools, techniques, and the cultural values that shaped them. Then shift into the modern era with hands-on sporting clays instruction using contemporary shotguns. Whether you're learning the basics or refining your aim, this experience invites you to test your focus, follow the arc of a clay bird across the sky, and consider how traditions adapt over time. It's a journey through craft, culture, and the ever-changing ways humans navigate "dragons" of their environment. All shooting equipment and supplies will be provided.

COST: None

Morning only Program!
Leave: 8:30 AM Return: 12:45 PM

Have YOU Considered Becoming an Active Mentor?

By: Jo Schaper
(Freelance interpreter and old person)

I know some of state park spring training involves mentoring. There are people in and retired from MDC that do as well-- think John Miler. Most of you come from biology or parks and rec backgrounds, and you all have known of people with NAI who are go to folks. I know mostly people now retired from state parks-- John Cunning and Mike Duane with history. I'll never know everything, but it sure helps to know who knows what I lack.

It's now been almost four years since we lost George Kastler, who mentored, helped and pushed far more young people in both interpretation and geology than I can count.

I've been very lucky to have had unrelated people in my life who have taken the time to share what they have learned, and what they have experienced. These names may not mean much to you, as most are geologists, hydrologists or cavers: Jerry Vneyard. Don Rimbach. Jane Fisher. (At one time, Jane held the US record for fastest time climbing a rope using single rope technique for a woman over 70. She spent her funeral money to go to mainland China. We could tell Jane stories for hours.)

Since February, Eugene and I have been to services for three men whose knowledge I consider irreplaceable: our caver friend Earl Hancock, who changed dozens of cavers' lives, mentoring more than just caving technique. Art Hebrank, who was at Missouri Mines for over 33 years (if it were Missouri geology or mining and he didn't know it, chances you wouldn't need to know it either. But he always took the time to share if he could.)

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Have YOU Considered Becoming an Active Mentor?

By: Jo Schaper
(Freelance interpreter and old person)

We spent 10 hours in my car yesterday to go to Protem, Missouri for a celebration of life for Tom Aley--a transplanted Californian hydrologist, who literally wrote the book (Ozark Hydrology) and spent a career explaining how karst groundwater works to high schoolers, college students, and as an expert court witness--through serious science, dry humor and even with his guitar: "Clear, Cold but Not Pure," https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=n9vw_pk1-GY At the same time, he curated most of a cave's watershed (Tumbling Creek Caverns) with his wife Cathy.

Ok, cheese, what ramblings of an old person. Riding home, I remember the song at the top of this article: "Who will hold the sky up?" One of my dear friends (also now gone) had that carved on his walking stick.

And there is only one answer to that question. Us. Including you. I'm still kicking, as is Eugene, but as we lose people 15 years our senior, due simply to old age, we see that glow on the horizon ahead of us. More famous stanzas pop up. The poem was about war, but the message can be applied to life in general:

..." We are the Dead. Short days ago
We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders fields.

"Take up our quarrel with the foe:
To you from failing hands we throw
The torch; be yours to hold it high.
If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields."

-- John McRae



What can you do to become a mentor to others? Even though, as all of us do, we have the individual lifespan of an adult cicada?

From The Anvil

AMI President Section



By: Tim Smith, Office Supervisor, Shoal Creek Conservation Education Center
AMI President

Why “From the Anvil”? Because an anvil is more than a block of metal. It’s a foundation—solid, steady, and built to shape raw material into something purposeful. But an anvil can’t do the work alone. It needs the force of a hammer and the heat of a fire to soften metal and make it malleable.

We’ve all had moments where we feel like we’re pounding away at cold steel, hoping something will change. And yes, with enough heavy blows, you might see a little movement. But add heat—real heat—and suddenly the metal responds. At a bright yellow glow, it bends, stretches, and transforms into whatever the blacksmith envisions.

Change works the same way. It’s uncomfortable to be the heat or to stand in it. We’re creatures of habit, and comfort can quietly dull our passion. But sometimes the heat pushes us out of what’s familiar and into a place where our spark returns. Other times, we become the heat for someone else—challenging, encouraging, and helping them uncover the leadership and potential already inside them.

My hope is that these “From the Anvil” articles will help reignite your passion—whether as an interpreter, a leader, a colleague, or simply as a person striving to grow. I promise not to beat you over the head or toss you into the fire, but I do hope you’ll take time to reflect on where you are and where you want to be.

From The Anvil

AMI President Section



History

By: Tim Smith, Office Supervisor, Shoal Creek Conservation Education Center
AMI President

As our nation marks its 250th anniversary this month, it's worth pausing to reflect on where we began and where we are headed. In 1776, the land we now call Missouri looked very different. According to the Missouri Secretary of State, only four established settlements from that era have survived to the present day. Yet long before those communities appeared, the Missouri and Osage peoples had already built villages, were stewards of the land, and shaped the cultural landscape we inherited.

After the Revolutionary War, the young United States faced the challenge of compensating its soldiers. With limited cash on hand, Congress turned to land grants of vast tracts stretching west of the Appalachians, in some cases all the way to the Pacific. Veterans and their descendants followed these grants into Missouri, laying the foundations for many of our earliest towns and counties.

As we reflect on why these places were chosen and how they grew, we should also consider what we are doing today to ensure that future generations can enjoy the same natural and cultural resources that have sustained so many before us.

AMI was founded in the spring of 1983 by visionaries like Glenn Weaver and George Kastler, who recognized the need for an organization dedicated to uplifting and strengthening the interpretation profession. As we approach our 45th anniversary, we must ask ourselves: **What are we doing now to ensure AMI remains relevant, resilient, and forward-thinking?** Reflection is important, but action is essential. This is our moment to shape AMI into the strongest professional organization for interpreters — not just for today, but for decades to come.

I look forward to seeing each of you at our AMI Conference at the Lake of the Ozarks, September 13–15, 2026, as we continue this work together.

AMI Election

AMI Offices on September 2026 Ballot for Upcoming Term

AMI Vice President

The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President in the President's absence. The Vice President also shall oversee the Workshop Committee.

AMI Treasurer

The Treasurer shall receive all dues, workshop fees, auction receipts and other moneys paid to the Association, under direction of the Board of Directors shall disburse all funds of the Association and shall keep an account of all funds. The Treasurer shall submit to the members at their annual meeting (a) a annual financial report regarding the previous fiscal year and the current fiscal year up to a date within 45 days of the members' annual meeting.

All nominees must submit their name and brief bio by August 13th to be included on the election ballot.

Send your name, bio (with photo if possible), and office you are running for by email to:

Carrie Hammond, Elections Chair
Missouri State Museum/JLSHS
Office: (573) 522-9019
Email: carrie.hammond@dnr.mo.gov

AMI Election

AMI Election Information Per AMI By-Laws

Article V Directors and Officers

Section 1. Officers. The officers of the Association shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Chair.

Section 2. Directors. The five officers specified in Section 1 of this Article and the immediate Past President shall be the Directors of the Association and shall constitute the Board of Directors.

Section 3. President. The President shall be the presiding officer of the Association and shall preside at all meetings of the members and at all meetings of the Board of Directors.

Section 4. Vice President. The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President in the President's absence. The Vice President also shall oversee the Workshop Committee.

Section 5. Secretary. The Secretary shall keep the corporate records of the Association, including records of all meetings of the members and the Board of Directors. The Secretary also shall chair the Audit Committee.

Section 6. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall receive all dues, workshop fees, auction receipts and other moneys paid to the Association, under direction of the Board of Directors shall disburse all funds of the Association and shall keep an account of all funds. The Treasurer shall submit to the members at their annual meeting (a) a proposed annual budget for the upcoming fiscal year for consideration by the members and (b) and an annual financial report regarding the previous fiscal year and the current fiscal year up to a date within 45 days of the members' annual meeting.

Section 7. Membership Chair. The Membership Chair shall be responsible for the oversight of membership solicitations and the Members-at-Large and shall maintain a membership directory.

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AMI Election

Section 8. Terms of Office. All officers shall be elected for a term of two years and shall not serve more than two terms consecutively except as otherwise provided in this Section. The elections shall be staggered as follows:

a. The President, Secretary and Membership Chair shall be elected in odd-numbered years to serve beginning January 1 of the next year.

b. The Vice President and Treasurer shall be elected in even-numbered years to serve beginning January 1 of the next year.

In the event that no one is elected to succeed an officer at the end of that officer's second consecutive term, (a) that officer may continue until a successor is elected if that officer consents to the continuation and the continuation is approved by the members, and (b) a successor may be elected for the balance of the term specified above by the members at any meeting of the members through the process for election of officers set forth in Sections 9 and 10 of this Article except that the election shall not be limited to an annual meeting.

All officers shall use the period between the election of their successors and January 1 of the next year to transfer all pertinent files and documents to the officers succeeding them.

Section 9. Nominations. The procedure for nominations shall be as follows:

a. Nominations shall be submitted to the Nominations Committee by members, in writing (which may be by email or other electronic means) at least two weeks before the publication of the newsletter that precedes the annual members' meeting. The Elections Chair shall make contact with the nominees to verify willingness to serve.

b. Each nominee shall supply a written statement, which shall be published with the ballot in the aforementioned issue of the newsletter. Any nominee unable to attend the workshop shall be eligible for the ballot if their signed statement is on file.

c. Nominations from the floor may be allowed at the discretion of the President. Any such allowance shall be announced at the annual members' meeting.

Section 10. Elections. The election of officers shall take place at the annual members' meetings in the years specified in Section 8 of this Article by the methods prescribed by the Board of Directors. The Elections Chair shall oversee the counting the votes and announce the results at each election.

Sam A. Baker State Park Anniversary

By: Michelle Soenksen, Park Naturalist
Sam A. Baker State Park

Sam A. Baker State Park is one of the oldest and largest parks in the Missouri State Parks System...and a destination worth going out of your way to visit! And what better time than in 2026 when the park is celebrating 100 years!

On June 13, we celebrated the park during a one-day special event. Our theme: embark on a journey through time celebrating a 100-year legacy of history, resilience, and discovery.

When the park was dedicated in 1928, Governor Samuel A. Baker addressed over 6,000 people, the Cape Band played the National Anthem and the flag was raised. We kicked off the event by recreating this event with the Whitewater Bluegrass Band playing the Star Spangled Banner and the local Scouting America group from Camp Lewellan conducted the flag procession. The keynote speaker was a local resident and president of the Wayne County Historical Society, David Bollinger.

The event also included guided shuttle tours to the firetower on top Mudlick Mountain, bluegrass music, discovery tables and demonstrations, door prizes, letterboxing, a self-guided tour through the CCC Lodge, and so much more.

This celebration would not have been possible without the hardwork and commitment of our more than 60 volunteers. We extend our sincere thanks to all who generously gave their time and support to help make this event a memorable success.

Thank you!



AMI Region Updates

Southeast Region

By: Connie Weber, Member At Large

Sam A. Baker and Montauk State Parks celebrated their 100-year anniversary! I had the privilege to help with both events, and both were very well attended.



Echo Bluff State Park hosted their annual Birds and Blossoms Festival in June.

George Kastler School For Interpretation



What Is It?

Do you know what it is and its purpose??

Hint: It moves like bellows.

By: Janet Price



AMI Awards

Award Category (check one)

- ☐ Interpretive Giant
- ☐ Outstanding Service
- ☐ Outstanding Professional Interpreter
- ☐ Outstanding New Interpreter
- ☐ Outstanding Interpretive Volunteer
- ☐ Outstanding Interpretive Media
- ☐ Outstanding Interpretive Effort

Nominee's Name(s) _____

Telephone _____ Title/agency _____

Email _____

Address _____

☐ *Must be a current member of AMI at the time of submission, except for volunteer and new.
(Check with Rachel Mandi at Rachel.Mandi@mdc.mo.gov or 816-228-3766.)*

Nominator's Name _____

Telephone _____ Title/agency _____

Email _____

Address _____

☐ *Must be current member of AMI at the time of submission.
(Check with Rachel Mandi at Rachel.Mandi@mdc.mo.gov or 816-228-3766.)*

Please submit nominations and accompanying documents by email if at all possible. Send **seven (7)** copies of printed materials (posters, brochures, etc.) that cannot be scanned to the address below postmarked by July 15th. Faxes will not be accepted.

Lee Wilbeck, AMI Awards and Scholarship Chair – lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov
Northern Regional Office, PO Box 314, Brookfield, MO 64628

DEADLINE is July 15th



AMI Awards

AMI Interpretive Giant Award

*AMI's highest honor for an individual that has **guided** and/or **changed** the field of interpretation.*

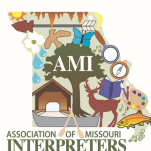
"If I see further than others it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants."

Isaac Newton, 1675, referring to earlier philosophers

Change the spacing as needed below. Please limit submission to above cover letter (1 electronic or paper page); this form (2 electronic pages, or front and back on paper); and 3 mandatory letters of support (6 electronic pages, or front and back or 3 paper copies).

Each nomination will be scored by the criteria below with the emphasis on interpretation, not lists of information. The score must be 90% or higher to receive the award.

1. **AMI membership required.**
2. **How has this person guided and/or changed the field of interpretation?**
3. **What makes this person a Giant in interpretation?**
4. **Explain how this person inspired, motivated, and mentored you and others.**
5. **Describe any outstanding programs, projects, and/or written material.**
6. **Explain any consulting and teaching activities.**
7. **List any known activities in AMI and other professional organizations. Include offices held, committee work, and workshop involvement. Provide professional certifications, awards, scholarships, recognitions, and/or honors.**



AMI Awards

AMI Outstanding Service Award

*An individual, group, or organization that has provided **a single outstanding service** such as a committee chair, conference committee, newsletter editor, collection of auction items, etc. to AMI. This award is open to any AMI member at any stage in their career; it is not a lifetime service award. May be given more than once for a different service.*

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Each nomination will be scored by the criteria below with the emphasis on a service, such as a board member, officer, newsletter editor, committee project, etc. The score must be 80% or higher to receive the award.

- 1. AMI membership required.**
- 2. Describe the outstanding service to AMI (only a single service needed).**
- 3. Explain how this person, group, or organization has contributed to the growth, improvement and/or stability of AMI through this service.**



AMI Awards

AMI Outstanding Professional Interpreter Award

An **individual** with more than five years of experience as a front-line interpreter that performs outstanding interpretation.

Change the spacing as needed below. Please limit submission to above cover letter (1 electronic or paper page); this form (2 electronic pages, or front and back on paper); and 2 mandatory and 1 optional letters of support (6 electronic pages, or front and back for 3 paper copies).

Each nomination will be scored by the criteria below with the emphasis on interpretation, not lists of information. The score must be 85% or higher to receive the award.

1. **AMI membership required.**
2. **Provide the number of years working in interpretation _____ (must be more than 5 years).**
3. **What makes this person an outstanding front-line interpreter?**
4. **Describe the nominee's involvement in interpretation such as programs, special events, and projects.**
5. **Explain how this person inspired you and others.**
6. **How has this person supported the field of interpretation?**
7. **List any known activities in AMI and other professional organizations. Include offices held, committee work, and workshop involvement. Provide professional certifications, awards, scholarships, recognitions, and/or honors, if known.**



AMI Awards

AMI Outstanding New Interpreter Award

*A part-time, full-time, or seasonal **individual** with five years or less in the interpretation profession that demonstrates outstanding potential, skills, and commitment to the field of interpretation.*

Change the spacing as needed below. Please limit submission to above cover letter (1 electronic or paper page); this form (2 electronic pages, or front and back on paper); and optional 3 letters of support (6 electronic pages, or front and back for 3 paper copies).

Each nomination will be scored by the criteria below with the emphasis on interpretation, not lists of information. The score must be 80% or higher.

1. AMI membership not required.
2. Provide number of years in interpretation _____ (must be 5 years or less).
3. What makes this person outstanding as a new interpreter?
4. What potential do you see for this person?
5. Describe the nominee's participation and any improvements in the site's interpretation. What initiative has this person demonstrated?
6. How does this person show a passion for interpretation?
7. Explain how this person affected you and others.
8. List any known activities in AMI and other professional organizations. Include offices held, committee work, and workshop involvement. Provide professional certifications, awards, scholarships, recognitions, and/or honors.



AMI Awards

AMI Outstanding Interpretive Volunteer Award

*An **unpaid individual** conducting outstanding front-line interpretation.*

Change the spacing as needed below. Please limit submission to above cover letter (1 electronic or paper page); this form (2 electronic pages, or front and back on paper); and optional 3 letters of support (6 electronic pages, or front and back for 3 paper copies).

Each nomination will be scored by the criteria below with the emphasis on interpretation, not lists of information. The score must be 80% or higher to receive the award.

- 1. AMI membership not required.**
- 2. Provide location and hours normally worked by volunteer.**
- 3. Describe the volunteer's job duties and services performed to further the site's interpretation.**
- 4. What makes this person an outstanding interpretive volunteer?**
- 5. Describe any outstanding interpretive programs or projects.**
- 6. Explain how this person affected and inspired you and others.**



AMI Awards

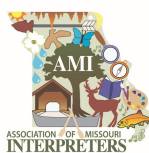
AMI Outstanding Interpretive Media Award

*Any interpretive **media**: article, book, poster, video, display, brochure, song, etc., that is outstanding in its message and effort for an emotional and intellectual connection to a resource.*

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Each nomination will be scored by the criteria below with the emphasis on interpretation. The score must be 80% or higher to receive the award.

1. **AMI membership required.**
2. **What are the medium, the location, target audience, and purpose?**
3. **What makes this medium unique?**
4. **Describe how this medium affected and inspired you and others.**
5. **How does this medium meet the definition of interpretation and demonstrate interpretive principles?**
6. **What about this medium benefits the field of interpretation?**
7. **Describe how this medium rates on clarity, accuracy, completeness, and interest. Is it on an important subject? Does it have a focus, consistent theme, or message?**



AMI Awards

AMI Outstanding Interpretive Effort Award

*An individual, group, organization, company, etc., for a **single effort** such as a special event, outreach program, day camp, etc., or support, financial or otherwise, of a site or program, that is outstanding in interpretation or the support of interpretation*

Change the spacing as needed below. Please limit submission to above cover letter (1 electronic or paper page); this form (2 electronic pages, or front and back on paper); and optional 3 letters of support (6 electronic pages, or front and back for 3 paper copies).

Each nomination will be scored by the criteria below with the emphasis on interpretation. The score must be 80% or higher to receive the award.

1. **AMI membership required.**
2. **What is the effort, the location, the target audience, and the purpose?**
3. **What makes this effort unique?**
4. **Does it have a focus, consistent theme, or message?**
5. **Describe how this effort affected and inspired you and others.**
6. **How does this effort meet the definition of interpretation and demonstrate interpretive principles?**
7. **What about this effort could benefit the field of interpretation?**





George Kastler

Association of Missouri Interpreter's Scholarships

George Kastler Graduate Scholarship Aubree Schmid Undergraduate Scholarship



Aubree Schmid

WHO:

The scholarships are open to students in Missouri colleges and universities or permanent Missouri residents attending colleges or universities in another state or country. Applicants must be studying in the field of interpretation (biology, environmental education, parks and recreation, wildlife management, history, etc.). Scholarships will be awarded to undergraduates currently in their junior or senior year and students currently attending graduate school.

WHAT:

The Association of Missouri Interpreters (AMI) wants to assist and inspire students by offering \$1,000 scholarships and attendance to the AMI Conference. AMI will pay for the conference registration fee (which includes a one year AMI membership), one conference field trip, and lodging (site determined by committee). *Conference attendance is not required, but strongly recommended.*

WHY:

The scholarship provides you with educational funding and allows you to network, learn at the conference, and improve your resume.

WHERE and WHEN:

Lake Of The Ozarks, September 13th - 16th, 2026

HOW:

The attached application and required documents must be emailed or postmarked by **July 15th**.

Do you have QUESTIONS for the Scholarship Committee? Contact any of the members below:

Lee Wilbeck, Chair

lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov

Jalen Holloway, Northwest

jalen.holloway2@mdc.mo.gov

Rebecca Rodriguez, Northeast

Rebecca.Rodriguez@mdc.mo.gov

Michelle Soenksen, Southeast

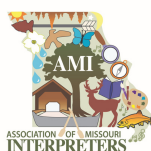
michelle.soenksen@dnr.mo.gov

Cyndi Cogbill, Southwest

cyndi@pawpawpatchproductions.com

John Cunning, Central

cunningjd@hotmail.com



Association of Missouri Interpreter's Scholarships

George Kastler Graduate Scholarship Aubree Schmid Undergraduate Scholarship

Scholarship includes \$1,000, conference registration, one field trip, and lodging during the AMI Conference.

Date _____ (must be emailed or postmarked by July 15th)

Applicant Name _____

Local Address _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Phone (_____) _____ Best Time to Contact: _____

Permanent Address _____

Phone (_____) _____ Best Time to Contact: _____

Name of School Currently Attending _____

Check the appropriate level: Junior _____ Senior _____ Graduate Student _____

Major Area of Study _____ Minor Area of Study _____

Cumulative Grade Point Average _____ Name of Academic Advisor _____

Email and phone of advisor _____ (_____) _____

Applicant Requirements:

- must attend a Missouri college or university or be a permanent Missouri resident, and
- must be an undergraduate junior or senior, or graduate student.

Your application will be scored on the following documents and their appearance. Please submit the following:

- this application,
- current college/university transcript (unofficial is acceptable),
- resume with references,
- an essay (at least 500 and no more than 1000 words) on why you are interested in the field of interpretation, and
- up to three (3) letters of recommendation relating information on your interpretation classes and/or experience.

For an application to be considered, it must be emailed or postmarked by **July 15th.**

Please submit your application, letters of recommendation, and accompanying documents to:

Lee Wilbeck - AMI Awards and Scholarship Committee Chair

PO Box 314

Brookfield, MO 64628

lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov

660-258-4950



Association of Missouri Interpreter's Lou Clairmont Interpretation Grant

WHO:

Members of the Association of Missouri Interpreters (AMI)

WHAT:

This is an opportunity for AMI members to apply for funding that would aid in the creation of interpretive programs. The winners will receive funding to offset the cost of goods or services needed for their new or existing programs.

WHY:

This generous donation in honor of Lou Clairmont will assist AMI members in providing interpretive programs highlighting Missouri's natural and cultural resources.

WHEN:

The application must be received via email or postmarked by **July 15th**.

HOW:

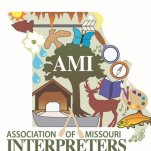
- Submit an Interpretive Outline complete with Theme and Title of Program
- Provide two additional examples of themes you could use while utilizing the purchased goods or services (in addition to the above outline)
- Include material list with specific costs just like you would for a grant
- Explain the need for financial assistance
- Recipient will be required to submit an article to the AMIgo describing the Interpretive Program created from the received grant within one year of receiving the funding

Submit application to:

Northern Regional Office
Lee Wilbeck, AMI Awards and Scholarship Chair
PO Box 314
Brookfield, MO 64628
Email: lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov

Do you have QUESTIONS for the committee? Contact any of the members below:

Lee Wilbeck, Chair	lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov
Jalen Holloway, Northwest	jalen.holloway2@mdc.mo.gov
Rebecca Rodriguez, Northeast	Rebecca.Rodriguez@mdc.mo.gov
Cyndi Cogbill, Southwest	cyndi@pawpawpatchproductions.com
Michelle Soenksen, Southeast	michelle.soenksen@dnr.mo.gov
John Cuning, Central	cunningjd@hotmail.com



Association of Missouri Interpreter's Lou Clairmont Interpretation Grant

AMI members may apply for one Lou Clairmont Interpretation Grant, per year. Grant funding each year will be capped at \$500. Multiple grants can be awarded each year. Applicants must adhere to the requirements listed above. Grant funds will be given to the individual applicant, therefore items cannot be purchased using state office tax exempt qualifications. A detailed purchase list of items is required. Each item will need to be accounted for at exact cost. In addition to purchase price of all items, please include taxes and shipping cost as well.

All applications will be scored using the criteria below by the AMI Awards and Scholarship Committee, and will remain confidential. Applicants must receive a score of 80% or greater to receive grant funding.

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Place of Employment _____

Scoring Criteria:

1. Program Outline including Theme and Title
2. Additional Themes
3. Detailed materials list including cost analysis
4. Explanation of financial need

If any of the four criteria are not met, the application will not be scored.

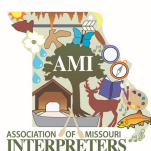
Submit completed application by **July 15th** via e-mail (preferred) or postal mail to:

Northern Regional Office

Lee Wilbeck, AMI Awards and Scholarship Chair

PO Box 314, Brookfield, MO 64628

lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov



Association of Missouri Interpreter's Professional Development Stipend

WHO:

Members of the Association of Missouri Interpreters (AMI)

WHAT:

One stipend, per person, per year up to but not exceeding \$500.00.

Funds for stipends will be split into two time periods, January 1 through June 30, and July 1 through December 31 with an adjustable amount of \$1000.00 available. A single stipend will not exceed \$500.00 and only be available when the AMI scholarship fund exceeds \$3,000.00.

WHY:

The stipend will assist members with AMI or NAI conference attendance and professional development to further their knowledge and skills in the field of interpretation.

WHEN:

The application must be received at least 1 month prior to the event.

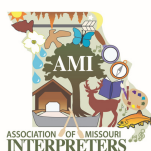
HOW:

Send your application, essay, and letter of support by email (preferred) or postal to:

Northern Regional Office
Lee Wilbeck, AMI Awards and Scholarship Chair
PO Box 314
Brookfield, MO 64628
Email: lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov

Do you have QUESTIONS for the committee? Contact any of the members below:

Lee Wilbeck, Chair	lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov
Jalen Holloway, Northwest	jalen.holloway2@mdc.mo.gov
Rebecca Rodriguez, Northeast	Rebecca.Rodriguez@mdc.mo.gov
Michelle Soenksen, Southeast	michelle.soenksen@dnr.mo.gov
Cyndi Cogbill, Southwest	cyndi@pawpawpatchproductions.com
John Cunning, Central	cunningjd@hotmail.com



Association of Missouri Interpreter's Professional Development Stipend

AMI members may apply for one professional development stipend, per year, to attend an AMI or NAI conference or professional development training. Stipends may be requested up to one month prior to the event. Individual stipends will not exceed \$500.00 and only be available when the AMI scholarship fund exceeds \$3,000.00.

All applications will be scored, using the criteria below, by the Association of Missouri Interpreter's (AMI) Awards and Scholarship Committee, and will remain confidential. Applicants must receive a score of 80% or greater to receive a stipend.

Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____ Cell _____

Park/Site (if applicable) _____

Training/conference _____

Training/conference Date _____ Location _____

Fee for conference or professional development _____

Attach an essay on the following:

1. Why you wish to take this training or attend a conference.
2. A financial breakdown of what the funds will be utilized for.
3. How you would use this event to benefit your site and the field of interpretation.
4. Your interpretive knowledge and experience.
5. Your service to AMI.

Optional: A letter of recommendation from a supervisor or colleague

Applications for financial assistance must be emailed or postmarked no later than 1 month prior to the training/conference.

Submit completed application by e-mail (preferred) or postal mail to:

Northern Regional Office

Lee Wilbeck, AMI Awards and Scholarship Chair

PO Box 314, Brookfield, MO 64628

lee.wilbeck@dnr.mo.gov

