National Contract Effort Shows Strong Support

By Greg Jackson, Western Lodge President

Show of interest surveys in parks across the country show remarkable support for forming a collective bargaining unit for park rangers.

No significant advertising or promotion campaign has been undertaken for collective bargaining, yet rangers in every NPS area surveyed showed support for the FOP’s action to move toward a national contract. These include:
- Death Valley showed unanimous approval, with two abstentions
- Partial returns from Lake Mead show unanimous approval.
- Grand Canyon shows near unanimous approval with most votes in.
- Yosemite shows 90 percent approval.
- Eastern Lodge parks report over 90% in favor.

The election will be done in two stages: First, a form will be sent out to all L.E. rangers to sign, petitioning the Federal Labor Relations Authority (FLRA) to hold an election to determine the exclusive representative for rangers. If 30% of all eligible rangers sign these forms the FLRA will conduct an election. In the FLRA conducted election, if at least 50% plus 1 of us vote to have the FOP as our representative, Park Rangers will join with the majority of uniformed officers in Federal service to be represented by collective bargaining.

Existing FLRA regulations determine what our “community of interest” is and who can be included in that group. Our proposed unit will consist of “law enforcement Park Rangers [who] do not devote a preponderance of employment time to supervisory duties.”

Meeting With National President Highlights California Conference

Western Lodge President Greg Jackson, Guard George Durkee, and another delegate attended the California State Conference representing Lodge 23, the fourth largest lodge in the state.

During the conference, Jackson and Durkee met with FOP National President Dewey Stokes for nearly two hours discussing collective bargaining.

President Stokes also re-emphasized his commitment to continue active FOP support for ranger housing in Congress.

Inside This Issue:

- Collective Bargaining Works At Blue Ridge
- FOP President Takes On NPS FLSA Violations
- Do We Need A Rank Program?
- How To Apply For Back Standby Pay
- It's Time For Sensible Uniforms
- FOP Goes To Washington
- Required Occupants Due Tax Refund

Yosemite Rangers Get $300K+ In Standby Pay

Yosemite rangers are collecting big settlements for their claims for standby pay for time spent on call.

A subdistrict ranger collected over $40,000. A ranger now with maintenance collected $42,000. Another collected over $60,000. The list goes on. The average settlement is for $10,000, totaling well over $300,000.

The settlements come from a practice still used in many NPS areas. Yosemite rangers in some districts had been placed "on call." That is, they were assigned a duty night at which time they were supposed to be at home or nearby, by the phone, ready to respond to emergency call out because the park did not provide 24-hour patrol coverage.

The back pay rate for these claims includes overtime, night differential, plus interest.

The standby pay issue came to the limelight during the Yosemite tenants association suit, when the government pressed its claim for back rent, claiming that ret was rent, and pay was pay. The FOP brought the illegal on-call practice to the parks attention, and said that it would not advocate back pay claims if the government relented in its efforts to claim back rent. The government sent out back rent checks, and FOP members and others pressed their claims for back pay.

Those claims are now paying off, much more than the bills for back rent.

"The back rent bills affected a relative few rangers," said Greg Jackson, FOP Western Lodge president. "The back pay claims will affect possibly hundreds of rangers in parks across the country. Some parks still use an on-call system."

The lodge advised the Director of the park service three years ago that placing rangers in a status where they were engaged to wait at their homes for callout was in violation of federal labor law, and urged Washington to comply immediately. Washington replied that they had sent out a memo a few years prior and believed the problem was under control.

The lodge recently published guidelines for seeking back pay for time spent on call. (Reprinted in this issue.)

Basically, if employees were scheduled to be on call, by the phone, ready to respond, they were eligible.

In addition to Yosemite, other parks that may have similar on-call systems in violation of the law include Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, and Glen Canyon NRA.

The limitation for claims goes back six years.

Anyone wishing more information on filing a claim, or wishing to report parks where unpaid on-call goes on, or who are being pressured not to file a claim, should contact the Western Lodge at 209/372-9216, or by writing FOP, P.O. Box 944, Yosemite, CA 95389.
President's Report
By Greg Jackson, Western Lodge President

National News

Pay: OPM Pay Task Force was supposed to have draft recommendations to members in September, with comments back in October, to be passed on to Congress in November. That did not happen. OPM will bypass the comment process and go directly to Congress. Cross your fingers.

Upgrades: The plans for upgrading rangers to the 5/7/9 possibly 11 level are still going through. Expect to see implementation in target parks first to see how it goes. Cross your fingers.

Differentials: Washington has wholeheartedly embraced the lodge's proposal for pay differentials. I brought this to the attention of Dick Martin in March, and to John Grammer, the FOP representative on the OPM Task Force. WASO is recommending pay differentials for extra skills. Among their recommendations: Firefighting -- 6%, EMS -- 6%, Technical rescue -- 6%, Search Management -- 6% (during the search), Boat ops -- 3%, Horse Patrol -- 3%, Interp -- 6%, SET Team -- 3% (when activated). Other skills such as investigations and resource management will be cross referenced to other series. This is on to the Director, then DOI, then OPM. Cross your fingers.

Badges: The reproduction in our last newsletter is indeed a replica of the new ranger badge. Thanks to your FOP membership, you saw it here first. The new badges will fit on a shirt, but are supposed to be worn only in the credential case (for now.)

Seasonals: Expect big cuts in the future, and a push to subject to furlough status. The lodge will be pushing for direct conversion and assuring fairness.

Western Lodge News

Elections: Ballots are out and the winners will be known just as this goes to press. The election was scheduled for March, yes, March. This was not a coup, as I had nothing to do with the election process. I do apologize, however. If you want an explanation of why it was delayed, contact me. I am confident that the next election will occur on time.

Meeting: The November all-lodge meeting in Las Vegas was postponed for logistical reasons. We'll go for one in the spring. Details later.

Santa Rosa: The largest seasonal law enforcement academy may be going out of business. Class sizes are decreasing. The average age of enrollees has skyrocketed, from 23 now up to 33. There is talk of setting up training at the Presidio, as SRJC is probably going to be losing their campus location on Sonoma Highway.

Good News, Bad News

For a moment, let's think the unthinkable. Park rangers are 5/7/9/11's with enhanced retirement, plus pay differentials, plus the law enforcement pay increases that will hopefully be passed by Congress. Salaries may, just may, be in the $35-40,000 range.

The bad news is, there's no sign that any extra funding will be appropriated for any of it.

That means no Seasonals, no vehicles, no computers, no overtime. The usual, but this time, very real.

Now is the time to look ahead, and that's what we're doing.

We need to look at ways of anticipating the effects on the new wave of understaffing, and finding ways to increase staffing to an effective level.

Our resource protection initiative is our primary focus. There will be others. Base funding is the key problem in our next five years, and increasing it must be a priority.

Bargaining At The Blue Ridge
by Ron Heeren, Blue Ridge Parkway, Chief Steward, AFGE

Perhaps the major issue facing non-management rangers service-wide is the decision to form a national bargaining unit and negotiate a national contract. We have had a union contract through the American Federation of Government Employees on the Blue Ridge Parkway since 1978 and it has improved the work environment markedly. Our AFGE local is headquartered at the VA hospital in Asheville, NC, and we have our elected work unit leader automatically become a Vice President of the local. We also have had a ranger serve as shop steward in both the VA and NC units of the Blue Ridge.

Here are some of the negotiated items in our contract:

- A union representative is automatically on all Blue Ridge committees that deal with issues that affect rangers: Housing, law enforcement, uniform, training, EO, resource management, etc.
- Our contract mandates quarterly union/management meetings. Inadequate training, equipment, housing, overtime, lack of out-of-park fire assignments and everything else that can affect the home and work environment can and has been discussed. Sometimes progress has been slow, but management is required to meet with us, and consider, in good faith, our requests. To refuse is to commit an unfair labor practice.
- No local, regional, or national policy can be implemented unless and until it's been subject to negotiation with us.
- If a ranger feels that a meeting with a supervisor can result in discipline, that ranger has a right to have a union representative present.
- Minutes from labor/management meetings are printed and distributed which gives us a record of promises made and deadlines set.
- The union has gotten management action on such housing issues as radon, asbestos and water quality which were not being previously addressed. We negotiated the required occupancy policy which documents the circumstances when a member can be relieved of required occupancy.
- We stopped management's promoting of "unqualified fair-haired children" into jobs without announcing them competitively.
- We have an article in our contract on intra-park transfers that has benefited several rangers.
- We have a negotiated grievance that can send a grievance to an independent, non-government specialist for resolution.
- We have had input on local policies under development like EMS standards, Red Card policy, defensive equipment, body armor, etc.

We negotiate on virtually all issues, large and small. For example, management put forward a new policy on time keeping that would have resulted in overtime for the last five days of a Pay Period not being paid with that check but showing up one to three checks later. Since we were affected but not given the chance to comment, we notified management that we would grieve this oversight. Management withdrew the policy and it's not been implemented. We have also stopped, temporarily at least, the proposed requirement that rangers in one of our districts be required to wear paging devices when off duty.

There is a lot of work involved with running a union but it gives us some significant control over our day to day jobs that we would not otherwise have. We have support from the AFGE professional staff at the regional and national level. As Steward, I take part, on NPS time, in both labor/management and representational meetings.

Just consider the issues which confront us and realize how much better it would be if management had to negotiate with the commissioned rangers nationwide before implementing a policy. NPS-9, NPS-57, random drug testing, Heptavax, housing, uniforms and others would all be negotiable on a national level if we had a bargaining unit under the Fraternal Order of Police.
Lodges Announce T-Shirt Contest

The Eastern and Western lodges have announced a contest to design the official lodge T-shirt. Submissions may be full color, one or two sides. Entries should be near-camera-ready. Submit entries to FOP T-Shirt Contest, c/o Steve Clark, Box 1 Star Rt. Columbia, NJ 07832. Deadline is January 15, 1993. The winner will receive a royalty from each shirt sold.

Chapter News

Chapters should send reports to their parent lodge.

Western Lodge
Lake Mead: The chapter now has 38 members. A committed met with the Assistant Chief Ranger and Dispatch Supervisor to discuss problems with dispatch and the radio system. The Highway across Hoover Dam was adopted, signs are in place, and members staged the first clean up effort. Hoover Dam Police (BOR) receive permission to join chapter, to join soon.

Grand Canyon: Continues to support of emergency responders in required occupancy in dispute with management.

Death Valley: Adopt A Highway signs up.

Yosemite: Meeting in early December.

Sequoia/Kings Canyon: December 1 meeting to discuss actions.

Rocky Mountain: No report.

Glen Canyon: Meeting December 8. New members increase lodge activity.

Southern Arizona Group: Organ Pipe members trying to contact Saguaro and other parks.

Golden Gate NRA: Chapter possibly forming.

Southern Utah Parks: Chapter possibly forming for Zion, Bryce, and Capitol Reef, and other areas parks. Interested members should contact Pat Buccello, Zion NP.

Eastern Lodge:

Blue Ridge Parkway: Near 90% membership.

Philadelphia: Ready now to move with collective bargaining

Smoky: Lodge/chapter action has helped get people out of required occupancy. Near 90% of rangers belong.

Delaware Water Gap: 95% of rangers belong.

Natchez Trace: No report

Cuyahoga: No report

South Florida: Regrouping after the hurricane, the chapter is putting on a party after the EMS refresher. Membership continues to grow.

Lodges Announce Housing Contest

The Eastern and Western lodges have announced a photo-essay contest to document poor housing conditions. This is at the request of congressional staffers and the FOP National President Dewey Stokes, who wish to use the photos and essays in upcoming hearings. Submit a color slide or slides of your poor housing along with a short description of your housing situation and problems to Housing Contest, c/o Steve Clark, Box 1 Star Rt. Columbia, NJ 07832. Deadline is January 15, 1993. The winner will receive a cash prize.

Lodges Seek Aid Recipients

The Eastern and Western lodges are seeking the stories of rangers who are receiving public aid, such as food stamps, or other public assistance. This is at the request of congressional staffers, who wish to use case stories in upcoming hearings. Use of your name is optional, but encouraged to assist in the cause.

If you are receiving public assistance, send your story to Assistance, FOP, c/o Steve Clark, Box 1 Star Rt. Columbia, NJ 07832. Deadline is January 15, 1993.

Now Is The Time To Form An FOP Chapter In Your Park

There are two FOP lodges for park rangers. The Western lodge is for rangers west of the Mississippi. The Eastern lodge is for rangers, you guessed it, east of the Mississippi.

The lodges have formed chapters -- work groups of lodge members within parks. The chapters participate in lodge conference calls, and receive information from the lodges in addition to newsletters. They also have input into lodge affairs.

To start a chapter, contact the Eastern or Western Lodge. Basically, you need 6 members at a minimum, you need to elect officers, set up by-laws (which we can supply), and that's it.

Most chapters begin with a meeting to gauge interest. You put up posters, talk it over, and see who comes. If you have six interested members, and agree to form a chapter, your next step is to elect officers. Most chapters have a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer. The secretary/treasurer job can be combined.

The Eastern or Western lodges can help you in every step of chapter formation, from electing officers to setting up by-laws and finances.

Hospitality by Fred Harvey

Death Valley is certainly one of the World’s Natural Wonders and should not be missed!

for accommodations:
P.O. Box 1, Death Valley, CA 92328
(619) 786-2345
National President Acts To Stop Illegal Labor Practices At Yellowstone, Glen Canyon

The lodge has received repeated reports of violations of the Fair Labor Standards Act at Yellowstone and Glen Canyon. These reports indicate that rangers are being placed in a standby status, "On Call," and are not being paid, even though they are engaged to wait at home ready to respond.

Further, rangers at Glen Canyon are reported to be not receiving pay for emergency call-outs, if the call-outs are for less than 15 minutes, such as for a false report. The rangers are encouraged to accumulate the time and submit it when two hours are tallied.

The lodge wrote to the Director two years ago about FLSA violations in the National Park Service, and received a reply that parks had been made aware of the Act. Just this year, lodge representatives met with Ranger Activities personnel and reminded them of standby pay violations.

The lodge has asked National President Dewey Stokes to directly intercede to stop the willful violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act at these two parks.

Stokes has written a letter to Labor Secretary Lynn Martin, asking that the Labor Department investigate possible FLSA violations at Yellowstone and Glen Canyon. If violations are found, the FOP has asked that they be immediately stopped, that back pay be promptly obtained for affected employees, and that the Labor Department take customary enforcement actions.

What's An EMT-TC?

Popular at several NPS areas, after a pilot program at Lake Mead, is the new EMT-TC certification. The TC stands for traffic control. Upon arrival, the veteran ranger sees an injured patient and immediately applies a traffic vest to himself and begins deploying flares, waiting for seasonal help to arrive. The ABC's for TC's are Alibi ("If I didn't direct traffic, you'd have a dozen cars piled up"), Busy (Keep arms waving even though no cars are near) and Coffee (kept in a thermos in the EMT-TC jump kit with the flares and traffic vest.)

A higher level certification is the EMT-LZ, also known as the veteran ranger who runs to take the landing zone when Flight For Life arrives (even though Flight lands themselves), again leaving the patients in the able hands of seasonals and VIP's. (Apologies to P.G. Lagerstrom)

Still higher on the qualifications list is the EMT-DS, for Drive Slow. The selfless EMT-DS fills the role of the Field Training Officer, allowing less experienced personnel to arrive first and handle the patient, thus improving their field skills.

The Definitive Study On Ranger Shootings

Now in its second printing with more pages, Use of Deadly Force By—Deadly Assaults Upon Federal Land Management Law Enforcement Officers by Paul Berkowitz gives detailed accounts of all known incidents of deadly force used by and against Park Rangers, BLM and USFS rangers. This should be required reading for every ranger. Order your copy from the Western Lodge. Send your name and address with a check or money order for $12.50 (FOP members), $13.50 (non-members) to FOP, P.O. Box 944, Yosemite, CA 95389.

The Protection Ranger

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Our Lodges are committed to improving the Ranger profession by joining Rangers together in a spirit of camaraderie to seek a cooperative relationship with management, with the goal a safe working environment, with fair and competitive pay and benefits. FOP is a non-profit organization.

Application For Membership

I, the undersigned, a full-time regularly employed law enforcement officer, do hereby make application for active membership in the National Park Rangers Lodge, FOP. If my membership should be revoked or discontinued for any cause other than retirement while in good standing, I do hereby agree to return to the Lodge my membership card and other material bearing the FOP emblem.

Name:
Signature:
Address:
City:
State: ZIP:
DOB (required):
Associate membership (non commissioned) □
Please enclose a check for one year membership. (Western lodge $27, Eastern Lodge $20)
Renewal (check here) □
Enclose a copy of your commission.

Mail to:
Fraternal Order Of Police, Box 944, Yosemite, CA 95389
or
Eastern FOP Lodge, P.O. Box 151, Fancy Gap, VA 24328

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Is It Time For A Rank Structure?

By Phil Hibbs, Glen Canyon Chapter

In 1976, Congress attempted to solve some of the problems related to how law enforcement was performed in National Park Service areas by passing a new authorities bill. Since then, a great deal has been accomplished by improving training, weapons and equipment policy.

But personnel management and organizational structure for law enforcement has continued to languish. The necessary changes have not occurred. What needs to be done is not a mystery. There is no need to re-invent the wheel. Law Enforcement in this country has evolved over 200 years, and we can find examples of acceptable organization and personnel management procedure in local, state, and federal organizations all across the country.

It is not the purpose of this discussion to tackle all of the changes that need to be made in the area of organization and personnel management, it is intended to address only one specific area, the establishment of a rank system.

In many peoples' minds, a rank system is no different than our present system, except for the establishment of titles and the appearance of rank insignia.

My argument is that the purpose of a rank system is the development of professional expertise and the maintenance of standards, and it can not be created by the direct conversion from grade to rank.

You can not talk about rank without talking about a promotion system.

In our present system there are no established ranks, instead grade is the hidden emblem of a loose command authority.

Background:
Since 1976, there has been resistance to establishing a separate uniform and/or separate badge for law enforcement rangers. The argument against doing so has been based on maintaining a particular public image and the need to not differentiate between interpreters, resource management personnel, and law enforcement personnel.

In the case of resource management personnel, for some time, they have seen that it is in their interest to distance themselves from rangers and to stake out the sobriquet of professional.

The present image of rangers that we present to the public is a reflection of the management perception of rangers. The present uniforms of rangers do not reflect that an employee is a law enforcement officer or that an employee is not a law enforcement officer. Generally speaking, the national park service has maintained that law enforcement rangers are not law enforcement officers but instead are employees with commissions, and law enforcement just happens to be one of their functions.

This has led to a great deal of confusion about authority and function. Over the last two decades I have heard non-law-enforcement personnel express that they are rangers too. This point of view has generally been used as an excuse for direct interference in law enforcement and other emergency service incidents and operations by non law enforcement personnel.

During the last couple of decades a great deal of effort has been made to solve various problems related to the ranger series, including development as a professional series, inadequate pay, conflicts between the concept of the ranger and the technician, etc. All efforts have come to no avail. These efforts have not even been able to define the problem adequately, bound as the 025 series is, with several functional areas, resource management, interpretation, and the broad area of law enforcement and emergency services.

We will never be able to come to any conclusions about the 025 series as long as we try to define rangers in such broad terms. This failure to define personnel by strict functional areas has resulted in the failure to develop personnel as law enforcement officers and to develop law enforcement expertise.

Further, law enforcement personnel are promoted without having developed basic law enforcement skills and knowledge. Parks do not receive the quality of protection they could receive, because the park service does not strive to develop law enforcement expertise.

The present personnel management objective, though unspoken, seems to be, to develop employees as supervisors and managers and not to develop subject matter expertise. This leads to a well developed bureaucracy, but not operational capability. This all reflects on the need to re-create our personnel management system as it relates to law enforcement.

The purpose of a well developed rank system ought to be to insure development of expertise prior to promotion. It should also demonstrate establishment of service-wide standards of procedure, operation, and organization.

There currently is no service-wide set of standard procedure or organization, aside from general guidelines represented by NPS-9. Each park or area develops its own way of doing things. This is sometimes necessary based on local knowledge and circumstances, but often times it is a reflection of lack of expertise and inefficiency. This lack of standards and organization is projected to the public.

By not having a rank system, we reflect our own selfish perception of rangers. We have not paid attention to the perceptions of the public. Members of the public, with a need to talk to someone in authority, can not tell whether or not they are talking to a supervisor or to an old law enforcement officer who was never able to get promoted. Also members of other agencies have difficulty determining who is in charge of a scene or incident when several rangers are present, or in matters of protocol when developing policy. This is especially critical in multiple agency and concurrent jurisdiction areas.

Promotion Systems:
Under our present personnel management system, employees who desire to be promoted simply file an application in response to a position announcement. Personnelists develop a list of applicants based on established rudimentary grading criteria, and supervisors select nominees from this list, after a short investigation of background experience.

Very often the process does not provide applicants with exceptional experience or training, let alone adequate credentials for promotion. And our present system does not prepare a potential applicant for promotion with an organized ranger supervisor training program.

It is apparently not evident to park service management that supervision training which is adequate for an office bureaucrat may not be adequate for rangers.

The hiring official simply has to hope for the best. The promotion system which hires and then hopes to develop supervisors, but does not address subject matter expertise and experience, leads to a credibility gap between field level personnel and supervision.

One common point of view is that we need to hire and promote by examination, that we could better evaluate a person's abilities through a written examination. It is probably true that people who excel at taking examinations are often bright, but it demonstrates very little about their leadership capabilities. The examination process does select people that at least have book knowledge of their profession, but it is difficult to evaluate all the complexities related to law enforcement by written exam, and it says nothing about whether law enforcement officers would work for a given supervisor without soon tending toward insurrection.

Another promotion system, which is commonly used among other agencies and the military, is the aspirant system. In this system aspirants apply to be considered as a candidate for promotion. If they are accepted, they are given the necessary training, and their careers are directed through the experience necessary to prepare them for a supervisory role. In this system, there are indeed examinations, but they are related to the training candidates have received; and experience and performance are also evaluated. (Continued next page)
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Being accepted into the supervisory candidate program does not guarantee that candidates will be promoted. They first must complete requisite training programs and compile established minimum levels of experience, and be evaluated by a promotion board. They are then placed on the promotion list. Supervisors are selected from the promotion list. This process is repeated for each level of promotion. This is a rigorous system, but it provides leadership that, field level people recognize, has done it all.

Basic Concepts:

Something that needs to happen, either before or when the park service enters into a rank system for law enforcement rangers is the establishment of an adequate base pay. This is needed to maintain experienced personnel in the field. No agency can constantly promote experienced personnel out of the field and not suffer from a degeneration of capability. Also field officers deserve to be paid a wage they can raise a family on and face retirement without progressing through the rank system. One of the rigors of the aspirant promotion system is the necessity of permitting a personnel development bureau or board to decide the transfers and positions needed by a candidate for his or her development. The last mean that some candidates will be assigned to parks they would not themselves have selected. The purpose of designated transfers is to place candidates in parks where they will gain needed intense law enforcement experience. However, some rangers may decide that they do not want to participate in this kind of rigorous system during some periods of their career.

Many rangers who are in favor of a rank system, believe that a given grade level should just translate to a corresponding rank. This is not necessarily the best way method, and to do so would risk inflating a new system with too many supervisory level ranks, especially sergeants. In the present GS grade system we have far more GS-9's than we have supervisory positions. And many were promoted because of skills, knowledge, and duties related to non law enforcement and non emergency service subjects or functions. Many GS-9 level rangers hold positions in which they supervise seasonalior or are subordinate or district rangers and operate with a degree of independence, but do not supervise three FTE's, and they may have obtained these positions without having demonstrated a well developed knowledge and experience level. Many GS-9 positions are graded because of their staff duties and the complexity or knowledge level they are supposed to obtain. The same could be said of other grades.

Looking at it from the other point of view, within a rank system there would nevertheless be positions that deserve higher than journeyman level pay even though the position does not supervise a base level of FTE or permanent officers. Examples of the kinds of positions that deserve a higher pay level than is established for journeyman level officers are Field Training Officers, Subdistrict Rangers (even if they don't supervise three FTE), detectives and investigators, etc.

What needs to be done to implement a rank system in the national park service? First we need to understand that this is a complicated issue and can not be undertaken by a single individual. It is an issue that deserves a working committee composed of personnelists and experienced law enforcement officers, who preferably already have experience with a rank system, whether in the military or in other law enforcement agencies. Also we need to understand that a rank system can not exist simply as rank distributed among select officers positioned in the kind of disparate, multifunction ranger divisions we now have, such as I & RM, RM & VP, and Visitor Services Divisions. In the present system, command authority is capped at the park level with a loose organizational connection to a regional office. This leaves smaller parks with lower graded chief law enforcement officers with inadequate supervision and oversight. This could and possibly should be corrected by a supervisory umbrella that overlaps arbitrary park boundaries. Closer oversight could be provided by lieutenants and captains in larger parks. Something a single regional law enforcement officer could not possibly do. Rank goes along with a single function and a single command structure in a service-wide branch. It is a fantasy to believe that each park could maintain a separate, almost autonomous ranger force and also develop a meaningful rank system. Nor should we want to.

Transition to a Rank System:

The following is a list of tasks that would need to be undertaken to provide a transition between our present system and a rank system:

1. Research the rank and promotion systems used by selected agencies. The US Park Police is an obvious example, since it already functions in the federal government under the national park service. Another typical kind of agency is state highway patrols. They are generally medium or large organizations, which nevertheless organize their officers into various sized substations. County sheriff's departments are another example of model agencies, especially those that also perform search and rescue with their own officers. Perhaps the ideal example would be public safety agencies, whose officers perform as law enforcement officers and fire/rescue personnel.

2. Identify parks and positions. This is something that should have been done a long time ago. Parks need to be measured as to their real law enforcement personnel needs. Along with that effort, law enforcement positions need to be identified. The responsibility for doing this should not be left up to the parks. There is too great a potential for a local point of view to interfere with a standard criteria. Setting criteria and evaluation of parks and positions needs to be done by committees formed by the regional and Washington offices, and composed of experienced law enforcement officers.

I am not saying the committee should be composed primarily of regional or Washington staff members. Frankly, I believe, the best expertise on how the world really works can be found in the parks. This effort involves differentiating law enforcement positions from other places whose incumbents secondarily hold commissions, but whose primary duties are in other areas, such as interpretation or the biological sciences. Employees secondarily holding commissions also need to come under an umbrella of law enforcement oversight. Also, positions must be identified that are law enforcement positions, but do not provide certifying experience for promotion purposes (perhaps this is stated backwards, the reverse is to identify positions that provide certifying experience for promotion). Potential field training officer parks need to be identified, and positions established. In many cases these may need to be new positions, but that is okay, because we are talking about creating a new organizational structure. Criteria for the kinds of positions and experience needed to be eligible to be a sergeant, as well as subsequent ranks, needs to be developed.

3. A rank structure needs to be developed. This would be based on the review of the number of law enforcement positions needed and the numbers and positions found within specific parks and offices. Determining the needed supervisory links would provide the basis for the number of sergeants and other ranks and their designated positions.

4. A testing system needs to be established. This may not require anything more than studying how the park police does it.

It could involve establishing benchmark exams or simply passing requisite training courses. A good start would be to hire rangers by test and interview, instead of the present use of registers.

5. Employee development boards and oral boards need to be established. Our present system leaves the future of the ranger force in the hands of personnelists. Our future ranger force needs to be based on developed technical expertise, and not left to the chance of random selection. Aspirants need to be screened and assistance provided in developing their expertise through selected experience.

6. Aspirants need to be identified. This can only happen when we are ready to progress into a new organizational structure and rank system. (Continued next page)
All employees will not necessarily want to be considered for supervisory rank. Certainly before we progress very far toward a rank system, the park service will need a better pay system for law enforcement personnel. No system can work well if one has to make grade in order to feed ones family. Also grand-fathering personnel in specific positions as part of the transition to a rank system needs to be considered. Certainly all persons in supervisory positions should initially be considered as aspirants. But do you automatically give them the rank of their incumbency or do you provide some degree of review for these personnel as well. Automatic advancement to incumbent rank provides the advantage of a ready made rank structure. The advantage of some degree of review for present incumbents is that of credibility. One scenario for incumbent review is to automatically advance personnel to one rank below their incumbent position and then review their credentials among others in that level aspirant pool. If this should be done, it should include no threat to ones current position or threat of reduction of pay below what is presently obtained from the present GS system.

7. Screening: After aspirants are identified, they must be afforded the opportunity to take promotion tests. Their experience will need to be reviewed. Those who need further training and experience will be referred to the employee development board. When aspirants have made it past the first two hurdles they would be given the opportunity to meet with an oral board. It should not be suggested that all aspirants will be passed through the screening process. The process should permit aspirants to be looped back for further training or experience at any point of review. The purpose of the screening process should be to insulate those who do succeed will be successful and will benefit the ranger force. The purpose should not be to indefinitely thwart aspirants from promotion. All stages of review should be based on established criteria.

8. A pool of qualified candidates would be established from the list of those who passed the screening process.

9. Promotions and assignments would be made from the list of qualified candidates.

Study Needs To Come First:

Until a study is made of the structural profile of law enforcement positions in the national park service, no one could make an estimate of the number of sergeants, lieutenants, captains, etc. that would be needed. Again, it would be a mistake to inflate the number of supervisory ranks. However, I advance the following formula:

a. The number of commissioned officers should be determined by the needs of the parks (some parks need more than they have now, and some parks do not need primary duty law enforcement personnel).

b. Resident ranger positions should be identified (I identify a resident ranger as a ranger who is expected by his position to independently operate within a geographic or functional area; such as a subdistrict ranger or perhaps even a senior patrol officer with perquisite independent operations. Resident rangers, however, do not supervise the requisite number of FTE to be a sergeant). Resident rangers and FTO's should receive a pay level that is higher than the base ranger and/or journeyman ranger (I note that in some rural county sheriff's departments, resident deputies are paid the same as sergeants, due to the required level of responsibility in their areas. They are not however given the chevrons or the title of sergeant). It should also be organizationally accepted that resident rangers would be detailed to sergeant positions when there is a shortage of sergeants.

c. There should not be more than one sergeant for every three to seven officers (and sergeants could be rarer still once resident rangers are averaged in).

d. The need for staff sergeants needs to be evaluated for more complex parks and offices. Certainly parks with large shift structures or with a combination of shifts and subdistricts should be considered fertile ground for a senior sergeant(s).

e. There should not be more than one lieutenant for every 20 officers. And I fear that lieutenants should be much rarer. It is very important that criteria be established to support lieutenants and captains, etc. I am not convinced that supervision of numbers of personnel is enough. There definitely needs to be a requisite experience level to include patrol supervision and experience as a criminal investigator. Lieutenants could definitely be responsible for supervising more than just patrol operations. In a ranger structure that involves multifunction responsibilities such as fire, rescue, and EMS, as exists presently in our parks, a lieutenant could be responsible for more than one function. We must also recognize that some of our parks are very understaffed. Some supervisory positions are responsible for very complex operations, but they are not afforded the staff to properly administer all functional areas or the staff needed to support specific ranks as I indicate by this formula. Though the need for oversight of law enforcement procedure and operations in smaller adjacent parks could be factored in.

f. There should not be more than one captain for every 45 to 80 officers. Everything said in reference to lieutenants could be extrapolated up for captains.

Besides the needs of parks, the needs of regional staff positions and special investigation groups should also be considered.

I am very much in favor of a rank system for the ranger force of the national park service, just as I am for development in other personnel management areas. We very much need to structure our ranger force on a service wide basis. We are too far into the history of the national park service to continue to act like it is every park for itself. Our present practice in promoting personnel does not provide for a consistent standard of technical proficiency. We promote personnel to supervisory positions who have not gained necessary experience at lower levels. We promote people the same way we hire people: we review a list of people who simply demonstrated interest in a particular job and select one of them, whether or not they are qualified. Production of good supervisory personnel should be based on progressive development of technical proficiency in law enforcement.

Changes At NPS FLETC Classes?

The park service is looking at alternatives to the current Basic Law Enforcement for Land Management class system at FLETC.

Part of the problem is the traffic accident investigation portion of the class. BLM, USFS, Fish and Wildlife and others do not routinely investigate traffic accidents, and would like to remove that segment from the class.

One proposal is to put rangers into the U.S. Park Police training program.

The FOP will continue to monitor the situation.
Have You Been "On Call?"
Here’s How To Successfully Apply For Your Back Pay

Would you be interested in making several thousand dollars for work you have already done, and have yet to be compensated for? If so read on.

It may be possible that you have thousands of dollars due in back pay for being assigned what the Park Service refers to as on-call duty.

This duty was assigned on a schedule and required that you remain at home near your telephone when you were off duty. You were expected to respond promptly to any number of law enforcement incidents, medical emergencies or search and rescues. Because of the nature of these emergencies you could not drink alcohol, or take prescription drugs that would impair your abilities. You had to be prepared mentally as well as physically.

The Fair Labor Standards Act defines this duty as "standby duty". According to FPM letter 551-14, standby duty is compensable when the employee’s living quarters is designated as his duty station and the employee’s whereabouts is narrowly limited; the employee's activities are substantially restricted; and the employee is required to remain in a state of readiness to answer calls for his or her services. This is the law according to 5 CFR 550.143(b)(3). Duty stations are usually listed as your park or the area in which you work within your park. If your quarters are within these areas you are at your duty station when you are home. Check your Notification of Personnel Action for your listed duty station.

Here is how to file for your standby duty backpay.
Exempt employee's file directly with the Park Superintendent. Non-exempt employee's can file with the Office of Personnel Management for your region or directly with your park. For non-exempt employee's, I recommend filing with OPM and giving a copy of your packet to the park. This way your park cannot put your claim in the back room.

Obtain an FLSA complaint form from the OPM regional office in your area. Fill out the form and take the original to your personnel office and have them stamp it received with the date.

Keep the original, make two copies. Give one to your personnel office and mail the other along with your packet to the OPM office. FLSA complaints have a six year statute of limitations. You can only claim six years back from the date on your stamped FLSA complaint form. The longer you wait the more money you lose, especially if your park has discontinued standby. In Yosemite employees were able to write a memo of intent to file for backpay and give it to the personnel office. Personnel then recorded the memo, stamped it with the date, and gave a copy to the employee. This effectively stopped the clock on the six year statute of limitations. The employee was then required to turn in his completed packet within a reasonable time period.

The next step is to gather documentary evidence that proves your claim. This evidence should bring out the elements of standby duty. These would be limits on whereabouts, restricted activities, and the requirement to remain at your quarters in a state of readiness. The best documentary evidence is the schedule. Try to find copies of the old schedules for the six year period you are claiming. This may not be as difficult as you think. Many supervisors save old schedules. If you check in your district files you may find copies of old schedules going back several years. I was able to obtain about 97% of the schedules for the covered period from the above resources. You do not have to have all the schedules. The burden of proof is on the government to show that you were not on call for the hours you claim.

Next you should try to get a written affidavit from your supervisor or supervisors for the claim period. This affidavit should explain what your duties were when you were scheduled for standby at your residence. It should explain the type of calls you responded to and the time within which you were expected to respond after being contacted by phone. If there was an emergency vehicle parked at your residence, this fact should be included. If you were required to keep your uniform, defensive equipment, EMS gear, drug box, or search and rescue gear ready for immediate response, this should also be noted in the affidavit. It was my experience that most supervisors were more than willing to write an affidavit for me, as they were also filing for backpay.

Then you should write a narrative explaining your case. You should add up the number of hours of standby duty you are claiming and include it in the narrative. I also calculated the amount of pay, at the overtime rate, for the hours which I claimed, and included it in the narrative. You can elaborate on the facts in your supervisors affidavit and refer to FPM letter 551-14 and 5 CFR 550.143(b)(3) and explain how the law covers you. The FPM letter and a copy of 5 CFR should be available at your personnel office.

The next step is to make up your claim packet. This should start with a copy of your stamped FLSA complaint form. Next is your narrative with affidavits and copies of all the schedules you can get your hands on. You should highlight your name or number wherever it appears on the schedule. Finally, non-exempt employees should mail your packet to the OPM office covering your region. Give a copy of your packet to your personnel office. Exempt employees should give their packet directly to the park in which their claim originates. Be sure to keep the original stamped FLSA complaint form.

The address for the San Francisco Regional Office Of Personnel Management is:
United States Office of Personnel Management
San Francisco Region
211 Main St., 7th Floor
San Francisco, Ca. 94105
Phone# (415) 744-7252

This procedure was very successful for me and resulted in a favorable finding in the amount of $4000 for standby duty backpay. Others have used this formula to get tens of thousands.

Good Luck!

MOVING? Remember to send us your new address
A Call For Sensible Uniforms

By Greg Jackson, Western Lodge President

I work at Lake Mead NRA. On summer days, it gets well over 120 degrees in the shade, but there is no shade. If you saw a visitor boating the lake in long polyester pants, you'd think "what an idiot!" At Lake Mead, the idiots were the park rangers. They made many comments such as, "I always wondered why they didn't let you wear shorts."

In short, we looked like the competent professionals that rangers are expected to look like -- prepared for their environment. The basic public reaction was that nobody cared.

Nevada Department of Wildlife followed our example, and next year, they will be in shorts.

Another story, this time without a happy ending. A search and rescue in Yosemite in bad weather. One person, everybody goes home and gets out of their uniform and into old Patagonia gear (long sleeves, tie, felt stetson hats) and summer uniform (short sleeves, straw stetson hats). The world did not come to an end. The public did not panic. They continued to recognize them as NHP officers.

The NHP criteria: if it's cold outside, you wear the winter uniform; if you're warm, you wear the summer one. All this while rangers are wondering which day of the year to change.

Hold your hats -- Yosemite Valley and a few other parks have been wearing winter and summer uniforms side by side for years. A winter ranger right next to a summer. If you're cold, you wear the winter, etc. Some people even wear the turtleneck on really cold days. The world has not come to an end. The public has not panicked. They continue to recognize us as park rangers.

How about duty belts? In some parks backcountry rangers are now wearing nylon webbing duty belts. What! No heavy beat-up old cordovan? Instead, something light enough to actually wear, nylon in some cases. Leather may be for you.

Every once in a while Washington requests input on uniforms. The lodge has made suggestions, as have members as individuals. The reply letters are similar. "Thanks for the ideas."

Nothing changes officially.

Rangers tend to be an independent sort, however.

Rangers on a river-running park have T-shirts with the words "Park Ranger" stenciled on them because the traditional shirt does not meet their needs for safety and utility. Rangers have come up with their own raid jackets, patches and camo uniforms. All work well, and all have brought wrath.

What we have is a uniform policy that is more concerned with the utopian ranger image that the public does not share than a view of real needs of the field for safety, utility and comfort.

Look at the Canadian mounties. They have a great image with basically the same park service uniform in color changes. But not all of the RCMP goes to work like that.

Here's an idea. Let's come up with a uniform policy that works in the real world. The general uniform is great for most all patrol applications. There are minor changes we have suggested such as flashlight pockets (with the "thanks for the idea" response), but all in all, it's fine. Mixing winter and summer uniforms is fine.

We need a polo type uniform shirt for bicycle/river/jet ski patrol. We also need outerwear of quick drying pile and light Goretex.

We need SAR uniforms available. Bright colors, reflective tape, weather resistant, and marked in a uniform manner so we don't look like the Patagonia rescue brigade.

Shorts should be considered an integral part of the uniform in hot climates. Making a slightly longer short of a durable cotton is one possibility.

Hiking boots and brown socks look stupid with NPS shorts (on most people.) I've seen NPS bike patrol with white shoes and socks, and white socks and black shoes. They all looked just great, and resulted in no park visitors asking for refunds. Work on the footwear requirements.

Make using nylon gun belts and/or fanny pack holsters a more acceptable practice in boating, bicycle, and backcountry use.

In a nutshell, lighten up and get real.

The future of the park service does not reside in everyone wearing the exact same traditional uniform in all circumstances. The future of the park service is in a group of professionals who project themselves as properly equipped to work in their environment in a uniform that meets public expectations for quality and professionalism.

Again, the traditional uniform is fine 90 percent of the time. When it comes to special needs, look at what makes sense.

Incidentally, uniform items, when it comes to comfort and safety, are negotiable during collective bargaining! Contact George Durkee c/o Lodge 23 or call him at (209) 586-1652.

FOP Invited To Washington D.C.

by Chris Cruz, National V.P.

Officers of the National Park Ranger Lodges of FOP were invited by OPM to come to Washington and speak with the Director of the OPM Law Enforcement Pay Reform Task Force, Phyllis Foley. Ms. Foley is also on the Ranger Futures work group as well.

Since we were in Washington, additional meetings were set up with Dick Martin, Ranger Activities, and with Congressman Bruce Vento's Professional Staff of the National Park and Public Lands Committee. Vento is the Chairman of that committee. We were also able to talk to Mike Hill, Legislation; Marsha Lee, NPS Personnel; Paul Berkowitz, Ranger Activities; Robert Birdsong, Contractor (Information Spectrum); Larry Hines, Special Entitlements Branch, OPM.

The invitation was a result of meetings I had with the Ranger Futures work group that was in Yosemite in August 1992. I was able to talk to the group on behalf of the Lodge, and to some individuals. The Ranger Futures Work Group is made up of 1/2 OPM Career Professionals and 1/2 NPS Professionals. Their goal is to improve how our positions are classified, thus resulting in better pay and working conditions. They are committed to improving our situation as employees.

While in Washington, Bob Martin and I first met with Dick Martin, Chief of Resource and Visitor Protection. He discussed the following issues with us:

OPM LAW ENFORCEMENT PAY REFORM TASK FORCE:

Pay Enhancements:

The last meeting of the task force was July 25, 1992. Dick Martin represented the NPS on this group. In the last meeting, Martin proposed that special pay differentials be provided to Commissioned NPS Rangers for various duties, e.g., SAR, Fire, and EMS.

We asked Martin when the concept paper on the Ranger of the Future would be completed and he hoped that it would be done...
Eastern Lodge News

Collective Bargaining: Strong support has been voiced from all areas. Philadelphia chapter ready to move now.

Resource Initiative Expanded: The resource protection initiative position paper has been expanded to include cultural resources.


Elections: The Eastern Lodge is having an election. They have followed the Western Lodge in going with two vice presidents. The Eastern Lodge has developed a Vice President for Internal Affairs, and Vice President for External Affairs.

Seasonal News

by George Durkee, Seasonal Rep., Western Lodge

Although the House bill -- allowing seasonals with two years cumulative service time in a five-year period to apply for permanent jobs -- did not make it out of committee last year, it will be reintroduced during the next session of Congress, according to aides to both Congressmen Pat Williams (Montana) and Paul Kanjorski (Pennsylvania). Both assured me that their Congressmen are serious about this issue and will continue to work on it. One staffer also said they will investigate legislation to ensure that seasonals can get retirement credit for previous L.E. time so they can be easier access to permanent federal service.

Committee assignments for the relevant committees have not yet been made, so letters are not yet needed. However one staffer emphasized that we’ll have to dump “1,000 letters” on key members of Congress to get their attention on this one. Both the ANPR and the FOP have been very supportive in pushing these issues. Stay tuned.

Ranger FOP National Conference Rescheduled To Spring, 1993

Western Lodge President Greg Jackson announced the rescheduling of the Ranger FOP National Conference until the Spring of 1993.

The Conference is to be sponsored by the Lake Mead Chapter. There is no cost for attending. RSVPs are strongly suggested. To get on the mailing list for exact conference dates and location, contact Joe Hayes at Lake Mead NRA 602/767-4229 or write Lake Mead FOP, POB 60455, Boulder City, NV 89005.

Required Occupants: The Park Service Has Withheld Too Much Social Security -- Here's How To Claim Your Big Refund

The following is an update from an earlier edition on how to claim refunds on withholding of social security taxes. This update’s source is the newsletter of the Grand Canyon Chapter. Also, the Lodge wishes to credit Yellowstone’s Mary Taber for her research in this matter, doing all the legwork, and for bringing it to the Lodge’s attention.

Several people have called or written explaining that the Internal Revenue Service has so far been unwilling to process their claim for refund (Form 843). The IRS is telling people that the NPS must make these refunds or supply a statement to the IRS stating that the agency will not be processing any refunds reference required occupancy Social Security tax deductions.

Ranger Tabor contacted the IRS and learned the following: When you file your claim for refund, be sure to file a copy of your year end (pp#25) Leave and Earnings Statement which shows your yearly total required occupancy housing deduction. (A W-2 is not sufficient). If your park is willing, obtain a statement from the housing office explaining that the NPS has no current plans to issue refunds for over-taxation as a result of the improper social security tax deductions associated with your required occupancy.

The Grand Canyon chapter is in the process of advising WASO about the need to correct the way required occupants have their rent deducted from paychecks. We are hoping that the NPS has PAYPERS reprogram the payroll computer so that quarters deductions are made prior to calculating income and social security taxes.

According to IRS Circular E (Employers Tax Guide Publication #15, page 20) "Lodging is normally taxable unless lodging is provided on employers premises for the employees convenience." This circular then points the agency in the direction of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). IRC Section 119 (A) paragraph 19 & 31-21(a) states that employees required as a condition of employment to reside in government quarters are excluded from paying all income taxes.

CSRS and FERS employees have social security taxes deducted on the basis of federal taxable earnings. The quarters deduction should be treated like the thrift savings deduction, that is, the amount you pay for housing should not be part of your taxable income.

1. Use IRS form 843, Claim For Refund and Request For Abatement, one form per each tax period (one form per year.) 2. You can file retroactively back until 1989 by April 15, 1993.
3. You must be a required occupant, and include supporting documentation with your claim. 4. You must pay social security taxes, meaning FERS and seasonals qualify (CSRS permanent pay 1%, you can file for a refund if you like, but it will be a very small amount, about $20 a year.) 5. To compute your refund, multiply the amount you paid in rent in one tax year by the individual Social Security tax rate for that year (.0751 for 1988 and 1989 and .0765 for 1990 and 1991). 6. On the line on the claim form that says "Amount to be refunded," put the amount and the w 7. Your letter supporting your required occupancy claim should state that 1) lodging is furnished on the business premises of your employer, 2) for the convenience of your employer, and 3) as a condition of your employment, you are required to accept it. It should document your required occupancy rent amount for each tax year. 8. Mail the form and supporting documentation to the same IRS processing center that you file your income tax return to for faster service.

For more information, contact Mary Taber at 307/242-7539.
by the end of October. Jim Brady is continuing work on the benchmark PD’s.

The same due date was assigned for NPS-57 to be distributed to the field. The Physical Fitness Standards have been signed off on. We received a copy of the briefing statement. This program consists of five components, aerobic capacity, muscular strength, muscular endurance, body composition, and flexibility.

The program emphasizes participation, incentives for achievement (no punitive action), and it is age and gender adjusted. NPS has trained 160 Health and Fitness Coordinators and has spent $250,000 on training and research. Guidelines will include requirements for physical exams. No money will come with the program, but Superintendents will be urged to give priority with ONPS funds.

6C RETIREMENT COVERAGE:

We have asked that Ranger Activities pursue 6C current coverage for positions that we know have been approved by DOI and forwarded to OPM. Rangers are concerned about transferring to non-covered positions. NPS Personnel hopes to have all CSRS 6C Coverage Packages sent on to DOI by the end of the year. FERS packages have yet to be evaluated.

Weapons:
The Sig-Sauer P229 (.40 caliber double action) was the weapon selected for use in the NPS. The weapons have been ordered and the money has been obligated. There is one catch and that is RUGER is challenging the decision because they were the low bid. The bid process is currently being reviewed. Transition will not start until the situation with Ruger is cleared up. FLETIC is ready to go with the transition and training when the decision is affirmed. We do not know when this will be resolved. Martin emphasized that we should hold off on getting weapons until the case with Ruger is resolved. He also stated that once the weapon issue is resolved that we should all be using the same weapon for ease of transition and safety. $200,000 dollars were set aside from the conversion.

NPS 9:

Work is continuing with a goal of having the Draft out to the field after the first of the year.

We asked again that unpaid on-call be discontinued and that a memo be sent out. We updated Martin with the most current figures at the time for back pay claims in Yosemite and warned that if unpaid on call is not stopped in other parks, it could cost the NPS a lot of money which we have less of all the time. We also suggested that WASO review the way required occupants have their rent deducted from pay checks. Quarters deductions should be made prior to calculating income and social security taxes. (Dan Kirchner at Grand Canyon has sent a letter to WASO on this issue.)

Collective Bargaining:

We informed Martin that the lodge is continuing to pursue collective bargaining and provided him with a copy of our collective bargaining brochure. We explained that from the chapters that have had local votes that the approval goes from 70% to 90% in favor of collective bargaining.

Natural Resource Protection Program:

Bob Martin presented our plan to Dick Martin with all the supporting documentation. For more detailed description of plan refer to July/August Newsletter. Bob Martin has done a tremendous amount of work on this program and is to be commended. This was a topic that Greg and I had discussed with Dick Martin and Jim Brady in Las Vegas in March. WASO is pleased with the progress that has been made on this issue and are currently using some of the information we have provided on this issue in their future planning.

OPM Meeting:

We met with Phyllis Foley, Director of OPM Law Enforcement Pay Reform Task Force and her assistant Jeff Miller. They informed us that they would be forwarding their recommendations to their OPM Director and Office of Management and Budget. We indicated that NPS Rangers do not fit into any classification categories that currently exist. Ms. Foley indicated that they are making several recommendations to their Director concerning NPS Rangers. We also discussed pay enhancements and they supported the idea but needed a recommendation which I provided after my return to Yosemite. Bob Martin described to them the entire investigative process required to complete a resource protection case. The connection was clearly made between law enforcement and resource protection. The description included photographs and detailed case information. Bob’s presentation stated our case well.

John Grammer, FOP representative also discussed the following ideas: raise initial uniform allowance, premium pay during training, and that 6 C Retirement Coverage needs to be addressed before Congress as it continues to be a subject of major concern. Grammer discussed these ideas in the last meeting of the Task Force.

Meeting with Chairman Vento’s Professional Staff of his National Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee of the House.

This meeting on Capitol Hill started with Vento’s staff reassuring us that the Chairman was supportive of field rangers. We asked about the GAO Study that was called for and they told us that the Chairman said that S1704 did not cover all that needed to be addressed and that he wanted to strengthen it, emphasizing the issues facing rangers include pay as well and not just housing. We shared our resource protection plan with them and they said it was coming in a timely fashion. The bill they will be pursuing in the 103rd Congress HR 5738 "National Parks and Landmarks Conservation Act", includes resource protection. This bill would also take the NPS out of DOI and would require a State of the Parks report every 3 years.

We also showed them our press briefing book and they were impressed with the collection of information we had and have requested copies of some of the information. We were also provided with good information on how to work with Congress. It was a very good meeting and Chairman Vento’s Staff showed a genuine interest in what was happening to field rangers.

Since I have been back in Yosemite, I have spoken to Marion Mosher from Information Spectrum. Mosher represents a contractor the NPS has hired to independently study our positions and provide a report to NPS. Ranger Activities is taking a three prong approach to improving our situation: 1. Participation in OPM Pay Reform Task Force, 2. Ranger Futures Work Group, 3. Independent Contractor. Jim Brady and Dick Martin are committed to improving or situation in the field, their most important goal is to see that our pay and classification is improved and retirement issues are resolved. This work will take time, but is a positive step toward improving the NPS.

We as individuals need to take the time to thank the managers and supervisors who have had an active role in this process and continue to educate the others who are still unsure of changing. We must also continue to clearly state our case when the opportunity arises and provide accurate information. In more than one case, we were reminded on this trip that our continued efforts with the Press have kept the issues alive. We must prepare for the upcoming session of Congress and also follow through in our efforts to obtain a collective bargaining agreement help us in our current efforts and to ensure that rangers of the future do not have to fight these same battles. We were well received by those we met and appreciate their efforts. I would especially like to thank Bob Martin for his efforts in Washington and with this report.
Lodge Continues Its Commitment To Quality Member Service With Money-Back Guarantee

The lodge is renewing its commitment to member services. Postcards will be sent immediately upon receipt of membership applications to acknowledge that you have been placed on the roster. Membership cards and decals will be issued in a timely manner to members. Letters will be replied to promptly. Calls will be returned in a timely manner.

Membership satisfaction has been given the highest priority. If you have a problem with your membership, whether it is through not receiving membership cards, newsletters, etc. let us know. If we cannot fix the problem to your satisfaction, your membership dues will be refunded.

You can help us help you by taking a few important steps.

EXPIRATION? RENEW EARLY: Your membership expiration date is on the mailing label of this newsletter. Renew before this date by sending your check for full annual dues to your lodge. We're trying to save money, so don't expect a warning note in the mail. Renew BEFORE your expiration date!!! Send a check for full annual dues directly to the lodge.

TELL US WHEN YOU MOVE: Give us your new address ASAP. It's critical. Write or phone the lodge. This is by far the number one reason people do not receive newsletters, membership cards, etc. Bulk mail is not forwarded. Please let us know when you change address.

TELL US IF THERE'S A PROBLEM!: You should be receiving a newsletter from the lodge every other month, a state Journal (now twice a year), and the National Journal (2-4 times a year). You'll get a membership card when you join, and at the beginning of each year. (Cards take several weeks, so be patient. If its been three months, there's a problem.) Vehicle decals are sent out at the beginning of the year. If you are receiving multiple newsletter copies, tell us and we'll save money. Some members go for months quietly upset about service. Tell us, we'll fix it fast!!!

WE'RE HERE FOR YOU: Write the Western Lodge at P.O. Box 944, Yosemite, CA 95389, or phone it 24-hours a day at 209/372-9216. If your problems aren't resolved, or you wish to contact him for any reason, Western Lodge President Greg Jackson can be called or faxed at 702/458-5845, or sent CompuServe mail at 702557,360.

Contact the Eastern Lodge at P.O. Box 151, Fancy Gap, VA 24528.

$15 Membership Sale Ends Dec. 31!

Now is the time to join the FOP! Membership for commissioned rangers, seasonal and permanent, is now only $15 in either the Eastern or Western lodges. Regular membership in the Eastern Lodge is $20. Western Lodge dues normally $27 for permanents, $18 for seasonal.

Be a part of the force that's changing the service. Help us help the ranger profession.

Your growing membership (up 25% again this year) means a growing voice for us all.

Your membership makes a difference. Join now. Complete the application on page 4.

FOP/Sprint Phone Card Gets You Low Rates, Sends Money To FOP

The FOP and U.S. Sprint have announced the FOP Phone Network.

FOP members who join receive a custom Sprint calling card. When you use Sprint, you get regular low Sprint rates, up to 15 percent below AT&T rates. And 15 percent of your phone bill goes directly to the FOP. There is no additional cost to you.

Of that 15 percent, ten goes to the state lodge, and five goes to the National FOP.

FOP members, their families, friends and supporters can join the FOP phone network at no charge.

To join, call 800/FOP-4321. When you join, Western Lodge members should indicate that they want funding to go to California Lodge 23.

New AIDS Insurance Program

Currently, you may not be covered by workers comp, disability or health benefits if you acquire the HIV virus. The FOP is offering an insurance program that pays a $125,000 lump sum if you become infected. The cost is $33 a year, which may or may not be a good value depending on your potential exposure (number of EMS runs a year, etc).

For more information, call 800/833-7234.

Correction:

Our last issue announced that the Lake Mead Chapter of the Western Lodge requested your assistance for park ranger Gary Sebade of Lake Mead, and that Sebade's son in San Diego requires frequent medical attention due to an automobile accident. The actual cause was an assault by a subject with a bat. Sebade's expenses to commute to San Diego each weekend are still mounting. You can still help by sending donations to the chapter c/o Joe Hayes, Lake Mead NRA, 601 Nevada Hwy, Boulder City, NV 89005.

Please renew before the expiration date shown: