



# PLEA



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT.....

I have just returned from the National Park and Recreation Association's annual conference, held October 4-7, in San Antonio, Texas. I found San Antonio to be a very beautiful, hospitable city. The conference, as always, was very well managed and organized, and some excellent educational sessions were offered. I always try to attend several educational sessions that deal with areas of our park profession, just to keep a proper perspective on the whole picture.

As you may, or may not be aware, our organization takes the opportunity to not only present educational sessions at the conferences, but we also set up booths in the exhibitor's halls. This gives us the opportunity to have direct contact with representatives from park agencies across the United States. Many times, we have visits from commissioners and directors. They often show a great interest in our display, and most always take the time to inform us that someone in their agency is a member of P.L.E.A.

Manning these booths for long stretches at a time obviously takes a great deal of manpower. Often, we have to depend on our local host members to assist us. From time to time, a past president or Board member will stop in to help, but for the most part, R.J. Steele, our editor and Board member, is the workhorse. He deserves a big pat on the back for his efforts. Thanks, R.J. We will soon begin looking for a colorful and handsome display module to use at the conferences.

Our co-host for the 1996 conference, Texas Parks and Wildlife Division, and the Lower Colorado River Authority, are busy planning for our annual workshop, which is scheduled for February 21-24, Austin, Texas. Make plans now to attend. These conferences are educational, and fun as well. If you haven't received information about this conference, give us a call. Our membership has been increasing, thanks to Newell Rand, our Secretary for the past year. He has been mailing out a questionnaire to many members who had allowed their membership to elapse. As a result of his contacts, we have been able to re-enlist some old members and some new ones as well. Good job, Newell.

We encourage you to participate in your association. We can always use articles for the newsletter; you can start a state affiliate, or get a friend to join. Be a part of it.

**Plan Now to Attend the 17th Annual P.L.E.A. National Conference  
February 21-24, 1996 in Austin, Texas.**



Co-hosts for the 1996 P.L.E.A. National Conference are:  
**Texas Parks and Wildlife Law Enforcement Division, and the Lower Colorado River Authority**

NATIONAL RECREATION  
AND PARK ASSOCIATION

PLEA IS AFFILIATED WITH THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

# JOURNAL OF THE PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

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### CALL FOR PUBLICATIONS

The Park Law Enforcement Association (P.L.E.A.), an affiliate of the National Recreation and Park Association (N.R.P.A.), invites you to submit articles for consideration to *PLEA: the Journal of the Park Law Enforcement Association*. P.L.E.A. was established in 1984 to improve park law enforcement, natural and visitor resource protection services in park, recreation and natural resource areas through professional development, thus ensuring "quality of life" leisure opportunities in local, state, and national park, recreation and natural resource settings. P.L.E.A. serves individuals and organizations interested in the advancement and support of park and natural resource law enforcement services. Membership includes park rangers, forest rangers, park police, park patrols, park security, game wardens, conservation officers, park and recreation board members, administrators, educators and other interested park, recreation and natural resource professionals.

*PLEA* is published quarterly and attempts to provide timely information to the membership concerning the association and articles specifically aimed at the park and natural resource law enforcement audience, with the goal of providing educational information for our membership, facilitating an exchange of ideas, and to generally promote professionalism within the field. Articles should be from three to ten double-spaced, wide-margined pages and should include a short biographical sketch, listing the author's agency affiliation. Photographs, charts and tables are highly desired. Upon publication, the author will receive a copy of the issue his article is printed in for his/her records. Please submit articles to the Editor for review and consideration. Thank you for your interest in *PLEA*. We look forward to receiving your articles.

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## JOURNAL OF THE PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

# A UNIQUE TEAM OF PEACE OFFICERS PATROLS THE HEART OF TEXAS

by Don Welch, Chief Ranger

The Texas Colorado River twists and turns 500 miles from San Saba County in Central Texas through Austin, the Texas capital, and down to the Gulf Coast. It's a Texas-sized policing job for a unique team of licensed peace officers called the LCRA Rangers. The LCRA is the Lower Colorado River Authority, a multi-purpose agency of the State of Texas.

The LCRA Rangers are difficult to put a label on. They aren't Texas Rangers; nor are they Park Rangers. In some ways they are similar to game wardens and deputy sheriffs. But in other ways their roles are far different.

What makes the LCRA Rangers different from other peace officers is the uniqueness of the LCRA itself. The LCRA was created by the Texas Legislature in 1934 as a conservation and reclamation district with statutory authority covering 10 counties along the river. LCRA's primary job at the time was to build a series of dams north of Austin to control floods and to generate electricity to bring power to the rural Hill Country.

Over the years LCRA's responsibilities have grown. Today, the LCRA maintains and operates a series of six flood-control and water-supply dams on the Colorado, provides low-cost electricity for 800,000 Texans, operates parks and recreational facilities, helps protect the quality of the river and assists communities in promoting tourism and economic development.

One thing that makes the LCRA Rangers such a unique law enforcement entity is that the LCRA does not levy taxes and in fact has no taxing authority. The funds used to operate the LCRA - and the Rangers team - come from the sale of electricity and water and other services the LCRA provides.

The LCRA organized its team of Rangers 14 years ago, with the primary objective of protecting LCRA's power production facilities. These include fossil-fueled plants in three Central Texas counties and more than 2,000 miles of transmission lines and 200 electric substations scattered over 58 counties.

In recent years the Rangers have taken on expanded responsibilities. These include patrolling more than 20,000 acres of LCRA-owned park and recreational lands, the river and the six Highland Lakes created by the LCRA dams on the river.

The lands and waters under the jurisdiction of the LCRA serve a rather transient

recreational public of about one million a year. With this many people, the Rangers routinely investigate crimes such as assault, theft, drug-trafficking and even an infrequent murder. In summer months, they are often kept busy patrolling the busy Highland Lakes and enforcing the state's water-safety rules. Part of the expanded role of the Rangers has been to enforce an LCRA ordinance prohibiting littering and illegal trash dumping near and along the river. Over the past two years, a dump cleanup program administered by the Rangers has resulted in the elimination of more than 100 dumps along the lower Colorado River. The campaign to date has removed more than 300 tons of trash and collected 4,000 tires and 165 tons of metals for recycling.

To do all this work, LCRA's 15 Rangers spend much of their time on the road and on the water. They use four-wheel drive vehicles, boats and even personal watercraft for their patrols. Each Ranger has a four-wheel drive vehicle equipped with two-way radios, shotgun, cellular phone and safety equipment. Within the next two years, the plan is to have each Ranger equipped with a laptop computer to write reports on in the field and send them to LCRA's central office by modem.

With such a broad mission and extremely large geographic area, the Rangers face some real challenges. Response times to outlying areas can take hours. As a result, the Rangers have developed a very close working relationship with local enforcement authorities.

To help maintain that relationship, the LCRA assists other enforcement agencies in training and sharing



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Kawasaki  
Personal  
Water Craft  
used by  
Rangers on  
Lake and  
River patrol



LCRA  
Rangers  
hosted a  
"Hostage  
Negotiation"  
school for  
agencies in  
the LCRA  
service area.



LCRA 19'  
Sea Ark  
Patrol Boat



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resources. The Rangers also help in emergencies. For example, when a tornado hit the City of Marble Falls last year, LCRA Rangers moved quickly to assist local police in directing traffic and keeping the calm.

Also, in the past year, the LCRA Rangers have provided training in firearms and a week-long Hostage Negotiations School to law enforcement agencies in LCRA's 10-county statutory district. The Rangers also have been training local agencies, prosecutors and judges in litter and illegal dumping regulations. LCRA's female Ranger, who has considerable experience in dealing with victims of violence, is available to area enforcement agencies when the need arises.

As the Central Texas area continues to grow and as increasing numbers of people flock to the great outdoors, the LCRA Rangers will continue to play an important role in protecting the public and LCRA property throughout the heart of Texas.



## BOOK REVIEW

by Hans L. Erdman, Lead Park Ranger  
Anoka County Parks Dept., Andover, MN

**"A SUPERIOR DEATH"**  
by Park Ranger Nevada Barr  
(c) 1994 G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York

Anna Pigeon is back. Actually, she's back twice, but I haven't read *Ill Wind* yet. (I'm hoping Mom will get it for my birthday next week, like she did last year for *A Superior Death*.) She has left the desert of the southwest for Isle Royale National Park, twenty miles off Minnesota's Lake Superior Shoreline, (although technically part of Michigan) and given up cougars and antelope for wolves and moose. As with *Track of the Cat*, Isle Royale is another park where Nevada Barr worked as a seasonal law enforcement ranger, and her experience there shows in the detail found in her books.

As in her earlier book, *Superior...* deals frankly with the politics and personalities of the National Park Service, good, bad and indifferent. As an island, much of Isle Royale's patrol is done by boat, which, along with diving to some of the area's famous ship wrecks, moves this story along. When a new body shows up in a ship that still contains most of its dead crew, Pigeon has to plunge into both Lake Superior's dark waters and Park Service politics to unravel the case. To further complicate things, the ranger who should be helping Anna most, seems determined to keep her at a distance.

*A Superior Death* is well written and well crafted, but it seems to have a very dark quality which I did not sense in *Track of the Cat*. Pigeon is still searching for herself, and still in grief over her late husband. In addition, some of the characters in this book are quite "quirky." Anna's friends Christina and Allison have also make the move from the Texas high country, and provide her with some of the support she lost when her husband died. We have to wonder if they'll show up at Mesa Verde as well.

Once again our fellow ranger, Nevada Barr, has come up with a hit...a very readable mystery that left me guessing right up to the end. Because she is a ranger, Barr's writing is technically accurate, and the characters are well developed. I hope someone in Hollywood is paying attention, because I, for one, would like to see Anna Pigeon make the leap to (at least) the TV screen!

## P.L.E.A. COMING EVENTS

### 1996

February 21-24. P.L.E.A. 17th Annual Park Law Enforcement Assn. National Conference. Austin, TX. Sponsored by the Texas State Parks. Contact P.L.E.A. Board of Directors for details - P.L.E.A. Board of Directors Meeting.

October 26 - 30: National Recreation and Park Association Congress, Kansas City, MO. Contact N.R.P.A. for further details concerning registration at (703) 820-4940. - P.L.E.A. Informational Booth in Trade Show: - P.L.E.A. sponsored presentations in Education Session. - P.L.E.A. Board of Directors Meeting.

### 1997

March P.L.E.A. 18th Annual Park Law Enforcement Assn. National Conference. Durham, NC. Sponsored by Durham Park Rangers. Contact P.L.E.A. Board of Directors for details. - P.L.E.A. Board of Directors Meeting

October 29 - November 2: National Recreation and Park Association Congress, Salt Lake City, UT. Contact N.R.P.A. for further details concerning registration at (703) 820-4940. - P.L.E.A. Informational Booth in Trade Show: - P.L.E.A. sponsored presentations in Education Session. - P.L.E.A. Board of Directors Meeting.

# JOURNAL OF THE PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

## Where the Grass is Greener

*Despite popular opinion, park police aren't just kicking back, riding around on horses and enjoying the sunshine. They're actually working hard to preserve the law - and the land.*

by Sheila Burnette

It's a slice of American life, a scene straight from a Norman Rockwell painting: In a green, tree-filled park, Dad turns the hamburgers on the grill while Mom sets the picnic table. Little Billy tosses a Frisbee to Frisky, and Susie collects bugs and flowers from the woods. At the lake, senior citizens fish and feed the ducks, while teen-agers slip down the water slide and young adults spray the shoreline with their speedboats.

But wait a minute - do idyllic scenes like this still exist in our jaded society? Yes and no, according to park law enforcement personnel.

Yes, because these activities and hundreds more occur daily in the millions of acres of public parklands across the country, usually without incident. And no, because behind the fun, activities of a darker sort take place.

Many people believe that park law enforcement officers have a job that requires little more than tooling leisurely around the great outdoors, occasionally answering a camper's question. But park personnel will argue vehemently against that notion.

"Whatever takes place in a city takes place in a park," said Stan Spadoni, chief of the Missouri State Park Rangers. "Traffic accidents, drug and alcohol incidents, domestics, animal problems, assaults - they all happen."

"The main difference," he added, "is that they take place in an outdoor setting. The ranger doesn't have a street name and house number to go by."

### TAKING A PROACTIVE APPROACH

Park law enforcement officers - also dubbed rangers, ranger police, conservation police, park police or wardens - are simply cops whose beats are greener and cleaner than the average cop's. They're not to be confused with interpretive rangers, who function as guides and informative personnel to park visitors.

Like municipal law enforcement, park law enforcement work varies according to city, state, county or federal lands. However, there's one common thread that marks the major difference between park and "traditional" law enforcement:

"We are proactive rather than reactive," said Tim Curtin, chief of police for the DuPage County Forest Preserve District in suburban Chicago. "Our people generally don't spend their time responding to calls from a dispatcher; they make their own calls."

"Community-oriented policing," Curtin added, "may have originated with park police. Things are not as black and white here as in regular policing."

Perhaps in the past, park law enforcement was a job you retired to - instead of from - but no longer.

"We usually have one or two murders each year," said Jerry Venable, chief of the Rockford (Ill.) Park District Rangers. Venable, Curtin and other officials noted that in most cases, victims of violent crimes who are found in their parks were not assaulted there; rather, the crimes took place elsewhere and the victims were dumped in the parks.

### DEVELOPING MUTUAL RELATIONSHIPS

While most departments have investigators on staff, most do not have the manpower to do extensive investigations, such as cases involving murder. Instead, the park police will turn the cases over to the appropriate local law enforcement agency. All departments contacted said they have great working relationships with the locals; many have "mutual aid" pacts with them. And, while most rangers only have jurisdiction within their parks, some, like McHenry County (Ill.), are deputized and have full authority within their counties.

Having such authority can be advantageous, since most rangers travel several miles daily - from park to park - in order to do their jobs. DuPage County, for example, has 17 sworn officers covering 23,000 acres of parkland, which comprises about 10 percent of the county, in 43 different preserves. The state of Missouri has one park alone that encompasses 16,000 acres. Thus, being spread thin with backup slow-to- come can be a major problem for some.

Others, however, enjoy comparative luxury. Venable, who oversees the second largest city park system in Illinois, has 12 full-time rangers and 80 part-timers (35 sworn peace officers) working year-round. Together, they patrol the system's 5,000 acres of parkland, which includes 180 parks, museums, a water theme park and numerous special events hosted by the city. (One such event is the "On The Waterfront" celebration, which attracts some 400,000 spectators.) The Hamilton County (Ohio) Park District in Cincinnati, on the other hand, comprises 27 full-time and 15 part-time rangers patrolling some 13,000 acres.

On the flip side is Moreno Valley, Calif., a 10-year-old city of 130,000 located 60 miles east of Los Angeles and Orange counties to the more affordable areas of Moreno

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Valley and other nearby cities. But the cities weren't able to keep up with the growth, nor could they always offer much-needed services. As a result, the city only has 200 acres of developed parkland, and the city's three-year-old Park Ranger Program has merely three positions.

However, the city is augmenting its force with volunteer reserves, modeling its program after a successful one already in place in Orange County, Calif. Mark Adams, Moreno's parks manager, expects the program to expand once the city is financially equipped to add areas like equestrian and multi-use trails throughout the city.

## WATCHING THE BUDGET

The Moreno Valley Park rangers currently function as a "force multiplier" for local police, said Richard Stewart of the Moreno Valley City Council. This frees up officers, since the rangers deter potential problems and handle such things as ordinance compliance, vandalism and graffiti problems. And, the rangers represent quite a savings to the city.

"An officer costs \$77 an hour," said Stewart, whereas the three rangers cost \$78,000 per year. Also, since the rangers have the time to interact with parkgoers, "Public response is positive - it's a great deal of value for the money and a good investment for the community," said Adams.

Since park rangers serve as a separate entity from regular police officers, they can give more individualized attention to citizens and react quickly to stave off problems before they occur, officials say. If people don't feel safe in their parks, then the park and surrounding areas will soon face a deteriorating situation.

While most park officials agree that "there's no such thing as an adequate budget," most felt they did a good job within their monetary confines. Venable enjoys a \$600,000 annual budget (excluding vehicle purchases), while Curtin oversees an \$850,000 budget. Salaries take up the majority of monies and are comparable - or better - than many municipal agencies.

## MAKING A LIVING

For example, DuPage ranger police on patrol level make \$27,879 to \$41,819 a year, with raises based on merit. Sergeants earn from \$31,542 to \$47,314; lieutenants, \$35,688 to \$53,532; and chiefs, \$38,432 to \$57,648. Hamilton County rangers earn \$30,000 on up, according to Capt. Gary Hoffman, while Rockford rangers start at \$11 an hour for full-time positions.

Those in basic ranger positions for Missouri begin at \$1,721 per month, while their sergeants make \$1,929; captains earn \$2,111, and chiefs bring home an annual salary of \$30,000 or more.

Some of the perks enjoyed by most park law enforcement personnel include take-home vehicles, homes on park and preserve lands for nominal fees (which can be a drawback, since the homes are usually identifiable, and people aren't hesitant to knock on the door), and a beat which includes scenery that the average city cop can only find on vacation.

Rangers also play many other roles. Spadoni added that rangers provide good public relations to both public and other agencies they must work with, such as cities, counties and the highway patrol.

Contrary to popular opinion, park law enforcement work is fast paced, which helps to keep rangers around. "Most of our applicants want to be street cops," said Venable, "and we've had problems keeping people. However, it hasn't been as bad lately - our salary and benefits are competitive with anyone's. But although the job is perceived as slow-paced, if a young person comes and puts in 20 years here, it'll be a happy 20 years."

"It's not a kick-back job," added Capt. Howard Brewer, Region II Commander of the Illinois Conservation Police Officers (CPO's). "It requires a strong, self-motivated individual. In some sense, you're your own boss."

In fact, as Hoffman explains: "Our people are better able to execute preventive patrol. We have the right to know what everyone's doing on our land," he says. "If we do our job right, we shouldn't have many arrests, because we anticipate problems and take action to eliminate them before they occur."

## BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

The duties of CPO's differ somewhat from the average park ranger's. They oversee law enforcement in the Illinois state parks as well as conservation laws throughout the state, according to Brewer.

The CPOs work in assigned areas with the state's five administrative regions, with duties varying significantly according to the season and geographic area. For example, the northeast region has numerous state parks, including the Chicago area, so problems range from fishing without a license to gang altercations. In other parts, violations of deer hunting, snowmobiling and ice fishing laws are numerous. In southern Illinois, there's not much snow and ice, so officers see more violations involving goose hunting laws and commercial fishing regulations.

CPO equipment is also unique to their area. Vehicles include squad cars, 4X4's, johnboats, canoes and even a 38-foot Boston Whaler in Lake Michigan.

Like the Illinois CPO's the U.S. Park Police - a unit of the National Park Service - is another department with duties expanding beyond that of the average ranger. They have jurisdiction in all National Park Service areas, includ-

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ing the Gateway National Recreation Area in New York City, the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco and the national monuments located in Washington, D.C. They are also frequently requested to provide protection for dignitaries, including the president and foreign heads of state, and assist the National Park Service and other agencies as needed.

## FIT AND ARMED FOR DUTY

All departments provide uniforms and standard equipment for its personnel, including weapons and body armor. The weapon of choice varies from department to department. DuPage provides Smith and Wesson Model 681 revolvers, but it's considering going to the Glock 9 mm (ranger police may carry their own 9 mm if they wish). Illinois CPO's just began carrying the .40 Smith and Wesson, replacing the Model 66 .357, which had been issued since 1978. Missouri rangers are issued Glocks, while Hamilton County rangers carry Glock .40 semiautos. Rockford provides Smith and Wesson .357s or .38s, but rangers may carry their own weapons. Shotguns and other weapons are also provided as required.

Training is similar - in some cases identical - to that of municipal law enforcement officers, with most departments sending their rangers through state-accredited academies. Follow-up training, however, usually emphasizes problems unique to the ranger, such as land management, animal welfare, rescue, first aid, and swimming and lifesaving techniques.

Qualifications are also similar, if not identical, to most law enforcement agencies. Most are now requiring bachelor's degrees, with at least some course work in recreation studies (which is preferred), or a combination of schooling and law enforcement experience. Many departments have numerous personnel with master's degrees.

Prior to hiring, most departments go through the standard procedures of physical and psychological testing, written tests, interviews and medical exams. Some conduct interviews first, since "bad test scores don't mean you'll be a bad officer," says Curtin. Some departments also mandate drug testing; most departments require regular fitness testing on an annual or semi-annual basis as well.

## SPECIALIZED PARK WORK

As with municipal law enforcement agencies, there's specialization within park law enforcement. There are units for investigation (and specialization with that as well, such as arson and auto crimes, for example), K-9, search and rescue, and dive teams to name a few. Although these units are usually not large, the opportunities are there.

"There are opportunities found here that aren't found in municipal law enforcement," said Curtin. "You

have to have a lot of initiative, like the outdoors and be able to perform without a lot of supervision." The lack of tight supervision seen in municipal law enforcement is unfortunate but necessary, according to Spadoni. "I don't have daily contact with our personnel because we're spread all over the state," he said. "I don't see officers daily, nor the first-line supervisors. Command, control and communication are important, but there is no answer to this situation." Luckily, supervisors report few problems with personnel not performing, which they attribute to the fact that the field attracts self-starters with a genuine interest in preserving the law, as well as the outdoors.

## A SOFTER EDGE

Although several departments have had horse patrols at one time, they've discontinued them in favor of bikes due to the lower maintenance costs. The bikes are just a part of the "softer" approach that park police generally take toward law enforcement. This means interacting one-on-one with park visitors who are there to have a good time - not commit a crime. Curtin estimated that his rangers only write about 18 percent of the tickets they could write.

"The public comes to our preserves to recreate," said Curtin, "and it can ruin their whole experience by being stopped. So, we work to balance their interest in enjoyment with the interests of the district and not take a heavy hand." For instance, if someone is found fishing without a license, his driver's license will be held by an officer while he obtains a license at a nearby vendor. "That way, everyone's happy," said Curtin.

But in many cases, checks on unlicensed fishermen reveal that violators are also wanted on warrants, with offenses ranging from unpaid parking tickets to murder.

In addition to fishing and hunting violations, other problems found in parks and preserves include graffiti and vandalism, violations of alcohol regulations (most parks either do not allow alcoholic beverages or allow them only in designated areas), persons off-roading or snowmobiling where not allowed, domestic disputes, vehicle break-ins and thefts, and strangely, people dumping their garbage and lawnclippings there. Also, most officials report that certain areas within their jurisdiction have become popular areas for sexual activity - a recurring problem.

Curtin and DuPage report yet another problem: People who own land adjacent to the preserves expanding onto county lands, placing swing sets and sandboxes, gazebos and garages - even building tennis courts, pools and driveways on preserve property.

Still, as leisure time becomes more precious - and more important - to Americans, our public parklands are seeing more and more use. Today's parkgoer may not be able to recreate a Norman Rockwell scene, but at least they can escape to greener pastures for a while.

# JOURNAL OF THE PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

## A PARK BOY IS BORN

*Yosemite Needs You came the rumbling call. With a crisp salute, our gung-ho correspondent rushed head-long into the summer-job fantasia of weed pulling, suitcase lugging, kamikaze tourists, and underpaid underlings who cower before the stiff-brimmed silhouette of Ranger Rick. A grunt's-eye report.*

By Jack Barth

It's a torrid Friday night in Camp Six, a dusty, tent cabin Hooverville in the heart of Yosemite Valley. A full moon hovers above Half Dome. The air is redolent with the great good scent of DuraFlame campfires. Furtive, furry creatures loiter on campsite perimeters, waiting to snatch scraps of food. Their greedy eyes glow iridescently.

For an exhausted youth we'll call Park Boy - indeed, for each of the 130 young Yosemite employees bunking here in Camp Six - it's been a long week of scooping ice cream, shoveling manure, and "polishing the porcelain," all to give Yosemite National park's 20,000 daily visitors a breathtaking and sanitized-for-their-protection experience. But today was payday, and now it's time to knock back some frosty brews and swap gripping yarns with coworkers.

When Park Boy first signed on here, he knew that, as tough as the job might get, the camaraderie with his peers would pull him through. And, he thought, who knows? Maybe there'd be a Park Girl. Maybe two! Well, that hasn't happened yet, but now, as the clock ticks toward midnight, Camp Six is Partyville, USA. People are dancing, drinking, and laughing, and someone is blasting R.E.M. just a tad too loud for that cheap stereo. Park Boy always hated R.E.M. - bunch of posers - but here is the wilderness, all senses intoxicated, their distorted riffs sound prophetic indeed. "Yeah," he thinks, "maybe I am 'losing my religion.'"

Suddenly, his reverie is smashed as two sets of headlights sweep across the camp. Tires skid to a halt; clods of dirt rain against canvas tents. Like hypnotized chickens, Park Boy and his fellow grunts stare dumbly as the invaders swoop in.

"R-r-r-rangers!" someone shouts. But it's too late. Friday is payday for the men in gray, too, and they're in a mood to party - ranger style. Moving with cruel, practiced efficiency, they zero in on sweet, baby-faced Tina, who's sitting on a tent cabins' wooden steps, clutching a bottle of Sierra Nevada.

"Let's see some ID!" roars a goon as he slaps the ale from her trembling mitt. Tina sobs. The ranger scoops her up like a puppy. She shrieks and pumps her arms furiously, futilely, as he pops open the lid of a bear box with his foot. Campers are supposed to store their food in these, but tonight the only "item" inside will be Tina.

"Hey!" Park Boy protests. Uh-oh. Four Maglite beams converge on his face. It's his turn now...

With a sweaty shudder, Park Boy wakes up realizing that he's had the nightmare - again. He's been in Yosemite less than a week and hasn't witnessed any such goings-on, but the folklore-generating resentment of the drones has invaded his brain. He rolls over on his musty cot and punches the pillow. Think of waterfalls, trees, cuddly creatures, he commands himself. Think of that girl from Chico State. But it's no use. As soon as he drops off, his subconscious mind will start unspooling the terrifying second half of a movie called *It Came from Park HQ*.

In the morning, crusty with dried perspiration, Park Boy makes a vow: Ignore outlandish horror stories told by bitter malcontents. An as long as you're making vows, how about never again mixing s'mores with the Schlitz Malt Liquor Bull after 10 p.m.? Whoa.

Call me Park Boy. And know that, like literally millions of Americans, I've always been fascinated by the inherent romance of working in the grand, green, throbbing expanse of a national park - the ultimate escape from our miserable urban lives. And I've wondered: What sort of people are drawn there? What exactly do they do? Can they get cable?

Hence my plan: to spend a manic week performing a wide variety of scruffy tasks at one of the system's true showstoppers, Yosemite. In the process I'd get behind the scenes to ladle out runny Stroganoff, fluff pillows, gingerly pick cigarette butts out of urinal screens, and rub shoulders with the locals, students, and drifters who stoke Yosemite's mighty engines.

I was also on a mission. As the week progressed, I'd scramble up the power ladder, ideally climbing into the ranks of rangerdom itself. By doing so I would surely gain insight into several important themes of national park sociology, including one that became apparent within hours of my arrival. Namely, that many of Yosemite's cowering proles regard the rangers as bully boys - a cross between Big Brother and Eddie Haskell. Could it be? Could the rangers' obvious need to maintain order in a park that is buffeted by two kinds of people pressure - from both its hordes of urban visitors and its often rambunctious, sometimes criminal workforce - have created a cadre of control freaks? Or was it all a gross exaggeration? As a quest it had everything, including a grail. Before I left, to make sure I really understood where the rangers were coming from, I was determined to rise high enough to behold myself in a mirror,

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standing tall and wearing the ultimate symbol of in-park clout: a snazzy, stiff-brimmed ranger hat.

There are two avenues to employment in a national park: the National Park Service and the local concessions company. Park Service jobs include administration, maintenance, and rangering. The 1,800 summertime concessions jobs at Yosemite run the gamut from piloting a shuttle bus to bellhopping. I want to do it all, so by telephone I contact Yosemite Concession Services and Park Service officials. Keith Walklet, the information services manager for the concessions company, takes to the project with gusto, speaking excitedly of the various uniforms I'll get to wear. The Park Service folks are eager to help, too. Lisa Dapprich, a public affairs officer, tells me that I'll need a pair of green pants and appropriate shoes for my Park Service duties. The park will provide a shirt and - I'm jumping the gun here, but I have to ask - a totally happenin' ranger hat?

"No, I'm sorry," she says. "That would be a federal offense."

I grumble "we'll see" and ask if I can staff an entrance station, work the desk at the visitor center, fight a fire, and, best of all, ride along with rangers on action-packed night patrol.

Yes, yes, no, NO. "The rangers are kind of funny about that sort of thing," Dapprich says in a measured tone. "Would you like to shovel manure at the stable instead?"

"That would be...great," I say. And I mean it. I am at the trail head of my adventure.

I arrive at Yosemite early on a Monday morning in midsummer. There's plenty of glorious scenery - trees, dirt, rocks, other stuff - but my senses are more attuned to the fact that, even at this hour, the blazing heat has already sucked the crispness out of the air. At the administration office in faux-rustic Yosemite Village, I'm loaned the rest of the motley uniform that I'll wear while on Park Service detail: a belt, a cap sporting the Park Service shield, and a woman's gray shirt.

As a team player, I make no comment about receiving a woman's shirt, though I do ask one last time about my ranger hat. (Same reply.) Then I don the uniform and set out jauntily for the concessions operations center; en route, I'm accosted by jabbering foreign tourists who mistake me for an authority figure. Where ees la toilette? Vhere ist der El to dal Kapitan? Hustling inside to safety, I meet the concessions company spokesman, Keith, a friendly guy in his thirties. He plunks me down in a spartan classroom with three other new hires for an orientation session. Along with general blab about lodging and dues for the employee union, we're told:

No drinking or liquor-buying is permitted in uniform.

Men are allowed only one earring. Men with long hair must tie it in a ponytail - no unsightly Doug Henning shags.

Although we've already passed a drug screening just to get this far, we have at our disposal a "wellness center" that offers substance-abuse counseling and four Alcoholics Anonymous meeting per week, along with monthly AIDS testing, free condoms, and weekly smoking-cessation workshops. There are also talent shows, dances, barbecues, and intramural sports.

Overall, it's like summer camp for older kids, with maybe a bit more drudgery and 12-step than we'd like.

Next, Ranger Ron Hamann, a sinewy community-relations specialist, pops in for a more pointed presentation. At first, it's as if we're on the same side: In a martial voice, he says we can be his "eyes and ears." He recounts horror stories about impatient campers at Wawona intimidating the weak into prematurely vacating their sites, about sedans tearing across innocent meadows...

But then, when Ranger Ron shifts to the topic of drugs, it becomes clear that his visit is also a warning: Just say no, or else. "We had drug dealers living in Boys Town," he says, referring to one of the workers' camps. "Boys Town!"

During the Q & A, to keep the discussion spirited, I ask him if the rangers follow a live-and-let-live policy toward "backpackers waaaay out in the woods lighting up a joint." Mistake. He looks at me hard. Later, at lunch, the ambient pollen that can make being outdoors so disagreeable is causing my nose to run, and I'm sniffing. "Allergies?" Keith asks with cocked eyebrows and a smirk.

I arise early the next morning and don the powder-on-navy blues of the shuttle-bus driver. Actually, my first job is as a shuttle-bus driver's "assistant," which is, in fact, no job at all. Luckily, the driver, Jack Peters, an upbeat 47-year-old with an unlined face and graying hair, is one of the more interesting guys at Yosemite. As the free transport merrily rolls past dewy meadows and sylvan groves and rigidly enforced no-parking zones, Jack describes park life.

He's been here since 1981, working four days a week and pounding backcountry trails the rest of the time. Jack spends his winters surfing throughout Asia. "People I know who started when I did are cynical and jaded now," he says. "It's because we're bombarded by tourists. To a solitary guy like me, having all these people in your face is a nightmare."

I brace for a bulging human phalanx, but the early-morning shift is dozy: hikers on their way to Half Dome, campers coming into town for supplies, staff heading to work. The bus fills steadily, though, and eventually people are crammed in the aisles. At one point, as Jack is making an announcement, a German woman thrusts her meaty face into his and interrupts with a question. He looks over his shoulder, flashes me a see-what-I-mean smile, and then politely answers.

Later, bus emptied, I commend Jack for his cool under large-lady fire. He shrugs. "To me, a real unsung

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hero is a guy like Tony, who's been washing dishes for like 37 years." Jack illustrates by making zombie dishwashing motions. "Never complains, perfectly happy washing dishes." His shuddery body language says it all: not me.

After my shift, I return to the Park Service office to hook up with Rita McMurry, Yosemite's volunteer coordinator. While I'm waiting, Marla Shenk, a public affairs official, introduces herself with a frown. "You must respect the uniform," she says, glaring at some hairs that peep manfully over the top button of my blouse. Before I'm abused further, Rita shows up, and we drive to a distant campsite in the Yellow Pines picnic area, there to have a look at the lowest of Yosemite's low: kids, ranging in age from 18 to 23, who are working in the Park Service as "volunteers" in exchange for a tent site and perhaps a tiny stipend. Surveying the towheads and their mean accommodations, I ask Rita if she'd take 'em younger.

"Younger becomes a problem," she says. "There's a lot of drinking going on in the camps. And have you met many kids who are mature enough to say no to a drink? I haven't."

And it's here, among the wet-nosed thistle-pullers and trailmenders, that I'm forcefully reminded of my debased status. For two days I've been a bit puffed-up that everybody keeps calling me a VIP. Now, as I imagine that I'm interfacing with Rita on a colleague-to-colleague level about the problems of wayward youngsters, she informs me with a helpful smile that this means Volunteer in the Park.

Properly stung, I decide it's time to pull up on the bootstraps by doing some actual work. Hence, at six the next morning, I head out for a long, hard day of weeding, recycling, and hash-vending. First stop: the Park Service barn - a simple structure a stone throw from Yosemite Falls - where I shake the callused hand of Bob Slater, a civil-service cowboy wearing a naughty novelty cap that reads BEN DOVER. As we wrestle about in the shadows of towering granite walls, most of the valley is still as lumber. The only sounds are the snorting of the horses and their firehose-like urinations.

Bob explains that the horses and mules are used for rescues and trail-crew supply. Today, we're packing a mule train with sacks of concrete needed by bridge builders on Merced Lake. Bob, who speaks in a gruff, Wilford Brimley manner, lets me load 90-pound sacks onto a sweet old mule. Being a puny City Boy in real life, I almost pass out, so I swallow my pride and ask for help. Bob is cool about it; he heaves to and doesn't hose me down with ridicule.

Groping for a job that I can "hack," Bob has me scoop up manure left by the mule train. Good, earthy labor, this. Heading for a shower afterward, I'm stopped repeatedly by tourists. Once they catch a whiff, though, they decide to look for a more fragrant ear to chew. Say...I silently debate whether to stop bathing for the duration.

But bathe I do, bright and early the next day, I also step into a cloud of talc and a stylish work suit whose earth-tone hues would be labeled "Taos" in a mail-order catalog. It's service sector time for your humble Park boy, and I'm bespiffed for a morning stint as a bellhop at the Ahwahnee, a stately, art deco ultralodge whose serene grounds are redolent of mint, fir, and that other cultivated green stuff - money.

I hook up with senior bellman Domingo Serrano, a 24-year veteran who shows me the ropes. This morning is downright hairy; two tours are departing within a half-hour of each other, and the only scheduled bellhops are Domingo and the Boy. As we hustle from room to room, a profusely seating Domingo teaches me how to save my back by using my leg as a lever to heft luggage onto the cart. Another bellman, Steve Harding - who has the placid, open demeanor of the hippie teacher on Bevis & Butt-head - comes to the rescue just when it looks like we'll never finish in time. When we're done, I ask him to name some stars who have stayed here:

"Stars? Let's see, there was O.J., Carlos Santana, Robert Redford, Chuck Woolery..."Woolery!

This, however, was just a warm-up for my big question. One especially famous piece of Ahwahnee lore has it that when Queen Elizabeth visited in the early seventies, she brought her own royal toilet seat.

"Not true," he says, attempting a cover-up.

My next chore is scooping ice cream at Degnan's, a fast-food emporium in the Valley's urban center. Here I'm under the tutelage of senior scooper Morgan Kreamer, stocky undergraduate from the University of Southwestern Louisiana. As we coax half melted lumps out of the so-called freezer, Morgan regales me with harrowing tales of life in the camps.

"I've been here over three months," he says. "I'm staying at Camp Six. Tow people tried to hang themselves in their tents there this year. One, who just broke up with a girl, died. The other didn't even close his door, and someone saw him and saved him. Also, two people hung themselves in Boys Town this year." Morgan takes a much-needed breath. "At Camp Six, half the people drink every night till they pass out, the other half don't drink at all."

"Which half are you in?"

"Well, at school I'd be in the drinking half, but here liquor is so expensive, and we get so little money..." Letting that thought drift, Morgan shifts ground and hits me with a good Scary Ranger anecdote. "One morning these rangers came into a guy's tent and handcuffed him. We asked why, and they said, 'He was late for work.'"

This sounds dubious, but Chelsea, a perky teen scooper standing nearby, says she was present to witness it: "I remember thinking, 'It's really not a good idea to be late for work here.'"

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"They knew he smoked dope," Morgan chimes in, "so they used being late as an excuse to enter his tent."

Of all the themes recurring in the Park Boy saga - You Don't Want Rangers in Your Face, Generation X-ers Moan Frequently - the one that recurs most often is Irksome Encounters of the German Kind. Later that day, passing the check-in desk at Curry Village on my way home, I hear a German man asking a female clerk if the trail to Vernal Falls would be tough for someone with an injured leg.

"Oh, yes," she replies confidently. "It's a steep, strenuous trail to the falls. It's difficult even for me."

Instead of saying, "OK, I'll skip it," the man sizes her up as a typically lazy, unmotivated American. "Yes," he continues, "but would it be difficult for a German man with a bad leg?"

"Oh, yes, I would advise strong against it."

"How many miles is it?"

It dawns on the clerk that she's being ignored. "Around, uh, two miles."

The guy wrinkles his face, practically clicks his heels, and departs without thanking her.

Like one who has mastered a video game, Park Boy has earned admission to the next level. It's quasi-ranger time! I make my debut on the firing line: the visitor center information desk. Susan Gonsher, the manager of the field interpretive staff, set me up for a four-hour shift behind the island-style structure, which is ground zero for ranger-public interface.

"Four's the maximum," she says. "More would be too stressful." After 20 minutes, I can field 90 percent of the questions, since just about everybody asks, "What's good to do here?" I ask them to define their parameters, which are almost always (1) I have two hours to spend, max, and (2) I don't want to move my butt at all.

Tourist slothfulness is a running joke. Smartalecky young volunteers pass the desk and mimic their questions. "I have five minutes in the park," they prattle. "What should I do?"

"Buy a coke," comes the reply.

"Shoot some video of the parking lot," says Park boy.

At the info desk, I also meet the overtly disgruntled Keith Bischoff, a grungy young man who sells books and souvenirs in the center. Here's a selection of Bischoffian gripes.

On rude park guests: "When I worked in housekeeping this angry guy asked me to tell the frogs to stop mating and be quiet."

On employee dating: "The ratio of guys to girls here is five to one. If you're a fat, ugly girl, you'll do great."

On his "friends," the rangers: "On Friday night, payday, the rangers come over to the camps and hassle the employees. One ranger tore up a hand-rolled cigarette and sniffed it. They made the guy lie in the dirt."

Keith continues. "Another ranger shot himself and said some criminal did it. They had a massive manhunt, closed down the park. Everybody knows he shot himself, but nobody did anything. I don't think he's here anymore."

Whew! And you wonder what inspires Park Boy's nightmares. Verifying Keith's tales would rob me of valuable toilet-swabbing time, but I can tell you that the last rumor is based on events of July 1993, when ranger Kim Aufhauser received a flesh wound in one of his legs during a still unsolved episode that launched an ultimately fruitless manhunt. The search for his assailant involved 180 rangers and local cops and required clearing more than 1,000 visitors from a 53-square-mile area.

As Keith tells it, Aufhauser was an uberranger, able to levitate up sheer cliffs, wingshoot mosquitoes with a pistol, and eat rocks. He was forever campaigning for rangers to be equipped with automatic weapons and FBI-style protective gear. Fearing that his pleas were falling on deaf ears, he allegedly decided to dramatize the rangers' plight by staging a criminal attack and wounding himself. After the incident, he left the Park Service, but among Yosemite worker bees, he'll live forever - fairly or not - as an eerie symbol of ranger "enthusiasm."

The rangers at my next big post, the Arch Rock entrance station, a humble hut at Yosemite's southwestern access point, are a friendly bunch known to other park workers as "fee-kees" - affectionate slang for "fee collectors." The entry fee booth is air conditioned, but whoever has to lean out and take the cash is pretty much roasting in the sun. The hut boasts a carbon monoxide monitor, a traffic counter, and a peculiar air-circulation system that looks like a home made job taken from Popular Mechanics.

I'm here with three lively women: Julie Crossland, Amy Ronay, and Lynette Mangus. I ask them about people blasting through the gate without paying, and they smile confidently. There's a ranger station three miles to the west, so we can ambush anybody coming or going. A surprising number of people do try to zip through, they acknowledge, mostly "confused" foreigners.

At the moment, there's a lull: no cars for several minutes. This indicates that the next vehicle will be an RV or a bus followed by many grumpy car drivers. I take this opportunity to ask about the perception among Park Service employees that concessions people are ruffians. Ranger Amy, who has worked in both capacities, says that while it isn't easy to get hired by the Park Service, it's "a piece of cake" to get hired by concessions. "Except that nowadays they're drug-testing," she says, reconsidering, "so most people fail."

"Yes," Ranger Julie says, mulling the point, "the younger kids working concessions do seem more well scrubbed since they started the testing."

A car pulls up to the hut's exit side, where I'm stationed. The driver is agitated. "Stop that guy in the RV

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behind me!" he shouts. "He's been weaving all over, running people off the road."

I alert the rangers and halt the RV. The couple in the car behind it furiously beckon. "That guy should be arrested," says an angry woman, pointing at the RV. "He smashed into an oncoming car and kept on going. Took the side mirror off!"

Ranger Julie tries to question the offending driver, but he is - yes! - an uncomprehending German. Luckily, I'm totally fluent in the language, so I translate. Ranger Julie asks me to tell him to pull over and wait for an enforcement ranger. "Pullen Sie over, mein Liebchen," I sprechen to him. "Remainen Sie hier, jawahl!" He is quite put-out, pretending not to understand and yakking away angrily to his pals. When the ranger cop arrives, packing heat, one guy in the RV suddenly learns to speak English sehr gut. The veil lifts - oh, you mean that accident. As the dust swirls, I derive much pleasure from the swagger of authority and linger at the entry hut beyond my shift, sniffing and preening like Deputy Barney Fife. Is there perhaps a connection between my sudden surge in job satisfaction and the power that I am able to wield? Yes. I want more power, more, more! And the Hat.

Of Course, I don't get either. As expected, the Park Service PR flacks never line me up for a live-ammo ranger strut- along. They do, however, offer me a chance to join walkie talkie-toting Ranger Brent Taylor on his bike patrol of the campgrounds. On a beautiful summer afternoon, me in my most- a-ranger garb, we pedal briskly among the various drive-up campsites. Although I'm psyched to break up knife fights and the like, Ranger Brent cools my jets by reciting the hit parade of typical infractions: improper food storage, loud music, and too many people at a campsite.

Sensing my disappointment, Ranger Brent shares a stemwinder from the bikepatrol files. "One time there were these foreigners," he says, "and they had 12 people. We told them there was a limit of six per site. They said OK, drove away, then cam back with just six. We looked on the roof of the vehicle, and under all the stuff piled up there we saw all these legs and arms sticking out."

A riveting tale, but overall, if Bike Ranger were a TV show, it would be pretty humdrum. The campgrounds, though fully booked, are dead. We coast past goldenagers loafing under canopies in lawn chairs. They grin nervously as we wave, eyes darting about their campsites for some petty violation that might raise ranger dander. As I prepare to ride into the sunset, a beautiful young woman wiggles up in a microbikini, brandishing a Coors.

"Help, Mr. Ranger, help," she exclaims with sing-song irony. "I was rafting on the river, and I don't know how far I floated. I can't find my campground." Ranger Brent's eyes widen, and he shoots me a look that says: "It's all right, Park Boy. I can handle this one. Good-bye, Good luck. Get lost."

I leave him to it. He's got The Hat, and I haven't

got a chance.

Thwarted in my efforts to walk like a lawman, I decide to wind up my stay with a final night on the other side of the thin gray line. So on Friday, armed with a six pack of truth serum, I head for Camp Six, where the scariest campfire stories you'll hear are about the camp itself.

Morgan, the ice-cream man, lives here with a roommate in a tent cabin. There are hardly any trees in the camp, and even with the sun a distant, orangish blob, the tents are stifling. A few years ago, Morgan explains, a tree blew over during a storm at Camp Six and killed an employee. "So they cut down a bunch of trees, and now it's all hot and sunny with no shade.

Morgan takes me on a tour, proudly extolling the Ping-Pong table, laundry, and easy access to the Merced River. Under questioning, however, his pride crumbles. He admits that this is considered the worst of all employee housing, and that almost everyone here is on the list to move elsewhere.

He introduces Tammy and Jason, a young married couple. They live in Tent 69 ("Easy to remember, ha ha!"), aka the Tent of Death. This is where a Camp Sixer hanged himself earlier this year. Things could be worse, though. A friend of Tammy's who's waiting to get hired is illegally camping down by the river. This morning, Tammy says, she woke up surrounded by coyotes. Needless to say, she's getting a little anxious about that job.

"When you first start working here," says Morgan, "they usually start you out with just 15 hours a week. Food is so expensive, you can barely hang on."

And with that, Park Boy's sympathies begin to shift back to the have-nots. Sure, judging by the not-so-heinous ranger behavior I witnessed, it's probably true that the kids working here whine too much, but at some point you have to ask, What about the little guy? The plight of the Yosemit

peons calls to mind the hapless Okies in *The Grapes of Wrath*, laborers forced to spend their meager salaries on overpriced goods at the company store. And just as the Joads waited nervously for the union busters, Park boys and Girls await the avenging rangers. Why, it's an outrage.

After sundown, as the alcohol emerges, no one person is assigned as a lookout, but all seem attuned to a special ranger-alert frequency. Someone offers me a chaw of tobacco, and I tear off a hunk and jab it inside my cheek. Bad idea. Shortly, as the nausea kicks in and I'm reeling about the camp, I stagger past youngsters engaged in pathetic flirtations, mostly involving smutty double entendres. The stage is set for a ranger raid: booze, loud music, wannabe fornicators groping wildly, a green-faced Park Boy reeling and moaning. So where's John Law?

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Just then...hold on! A jeep is swerving noisily into camp. Is it time to face the cold brutality about which I have only quakingly dreamt? Nah. It's just some acned bacchanalians on a beer run. With an agonized groan, I stagger miserably into the night...

Later, his stomach still in turmoil from tobacco juice, Park Boy has the dream again, but with a twist. After manfully wrestling baby-faced Tina from the ranger's grip, he hot-wires a truck and makes a break for the Yosemite boundary. Pursued by a host of cackling demons - foaming rangers, demanding tourists, and a purposeful German man with a bad leg - Park Boy almost makes it, but he's thwarted at the gate by a circling blockade of eerie, driverless RVs. Murmuring ominously, a tightening ring of rangers unsheathe their batons, and one grinning fiend closes in to administer the coup de grace. As wood splinters on his skull, park boy catches a final glimpse of his attacker's face. And the face is...his own!

Park Boy groans happily and smiles contentedly in his sleep. Tonight, Morpheus's embrace will be sweet indeed. For he is finally wearing The Hat.

## Crowd Control

*With a pilot program at Arches National Park, the National Park Service is charting a promising new course for visitor management.*

by Todd Wilkinson

A quarter century ago, a young Utah woman named Jayne Belnap wanted to escape all traces of civilization, so she drove her four-wheel-drive vehicle to the end of a dirt road in Canyonlands National Park. She set out alone into the labyrinth of pink slick rock known as The Maze, one of the most remote wilderness peneplains in the lower 48 states. Over the course of her two-week trek across the Colorado Plateau, she never saw another person.

But when Belnap returned on the anniversary of her soul-searching journey 25 years later, she passed a startling stream of vehicles, encountered 20 people on a trail in the span of an afternoon, and was buzzed by a dozen aircraft making low passes above her camp-site. The last straw came when she found evidence of fragile plant communities being trampled by human foot traffic.

"There are places in Canyonlands where, even ten years ago, you wouldn't meet anyone else," says Belnap, a respected soils biologist with the National Biological Service at Moab. "This is supposed to be one of the most solitude-laden parks we have, and still it is getting trampled."

After decades of ignoring the warning signals, some national park managers are finding the challenges of protecting natural values and part aesthetics to be perplex-

ing in the face of ever-growing visitation. The popularity of parks has become an instrument to their own demise.

According to Park Service figures, visitation systemwide increased by 30 percent in the 1970s and climbed another 35 percent in the 1980s. Officials predict that by the end of the century, another 60 to 90 million people, above and beyond today's record 275 million, will descend annually upon the national parks.

Yet there may be hope in sight. In the last four years, at a park just up the road from Canyonlands in southeastern Utah, a quiet revolution has begun to change the way decision makers nationwide approach the conundrum of overcrowding. At Arches National Park, a program called Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) is being pioneered by the Park Service, charting a promising new course for visitor management. Before the decade is out, VERP may be used to save many of America's crown jewel wildlands now buckling under the strain of humanity.

Arches was selected as a proving ground because it recorded some of the highest increases in visitation over the last decade and its specialized environment is imminently threatened. "This is a landscape that has to be seen to be believed and even then, confronted directly by the senses, it strains credulity," wrote Edward Abbey. Indeed, Arches is home to the largest collection of natural sandstone arches in the world, some 2,000 in all. Despite its barren, otherworldly appearance, the land is coated by a fragile crust upon which an ancient forest of fungi, bacteria, and moss grow barely an inch tall. Wildlife in the park ecosystem, from insects to deer, has evolved to graze and extract nutrients from the Lilliputian canopy. Although these plant communities have endured scorching sun and erratic rainfall over millennia, they are highly vulnerable to the softest soles of hiking boots.

In the wake of extensive front - and backcountry inventories, Belnap estimates that 80 percent of the native plant communities close to the park's icon arches are deteriorating, and 20 percent may be impaired in the wilderness, miles from the nearest road. Once they are damaged, they can take anywhere from decades to centuries to heal, if they can recover at all.

"The first footprint is what does 80 percent of the damage," Belnap says. "It's the first step that we are trying to avoid because it gives way to the herd."

VERP, Belnap says, is essential because it is the first sincere attempt the agency has made to channel the flow of the masses. "All the parks should have done this years ago, and we should be chastised for not acting sooner," Belnap says. "What VERP does is decide what is acceptable in terms of visitor impacts on the resource and set out a strategy for measuring and monitoring those impacts. It bases management decisions on science rather than...hunches."

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For almost a decade, the National Parks and Conservation Association has pressed the Park Service to address the “carrying capacity” issue. Carrying capacity is an approach to park management that establishes how many people can enjoy a park without harming the resources that drew them there. VERP is a hybrid of NPCA’s model for implementing carrying capacities known as Visitor Impact Management (VIM), and the U.S. Forest Service’s initiative called Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC), which seeks to protect primitive values in federal wilderness areas, says Marilyn Hof, lead VERP coordinator with the Denver Service Center, the Park Service’s official planning arm.

Hof says that VERP does several things: it establishes a range of management zones that are designed to deliver differing degrees of solitude and visitor services; it sets in place inviolate thresholds that protect the physical and scenic environment; and it backs up the words with teeth, although the latter has yet to be tested.

If need be, VERP, in theory at least, can even turn back the clock on resource degradation and give park managers a chance to correct mistakes of the past. “When we hit the point where thresholds are surpassed, management is required to take action to come back into compliance,” she notes. “That could mean any number of things, from implementing a backcountry permit system to shrinking a parking lot so that the number of people visiting a site is limited. Or it might mean allowing only so many people to enter a park at any one time.”

Terri Martin, director of NPCA’s Rocky Mountain region, has been instrumental in coaxing western park superintendents to address the issue of people management, and she praises the VERP team for taking the initiative. “VERP answers the question of what kinds of activities are appropriate where in the park and at what level,” Martin says. “The old way of doing business was simply to expand the infrastructure to accommodate even more people when conditions started getting crowded, which only exacerbated the aesthetic, biological, and social problems.”

Hof says there is no certainty that political meddling or lawsuits filed by interests seeking financial gain from park visitation could not usurp the scientific process. However, the consequences of not acting are far more risky. VERP gives managers a basis for making tough decisions.

“Ultimately, the superintendent and the regional Park Service director will take any of the heat,” she says. “But they are far better off now than before. In the past, whenever we were taken to task for some kind of decision about visitor use—whether it was to increase it or control it—we were faulted [because] we didn’t have a process that we could defend. Now we do.”

Until the latter part of the 1980s, the Park Service had a single-minded approach to coping with surging crowds that were inundating parks, Hof says. The asphalt trucks were called out, and millions of dollars were spent building

bigger roads and more parking lots. More crowds, more asphalt—it became a self-perpetuating cycle that pressed some resources to the brink of collapse.

Many park superintendents realized that in the face of political pressure to increase visitation, it was far easier, and certainly less risky professionally, to keep a costly construction juggernaut going than to actually address the root of the problem, which was too many people putting too much stress on sensitive resources. Few park managers had the inclination to impose limits, and as park aesthetics suffered, environmental groups threatened to sue the agency for failing to protect its resources.

Belnap says part of the problem is the transitory way that park management operates. Superintendents generally do not stay at a given park longer than a couple of years, and each one comes in vowing to draw a line in the sand. “What they don’t realize is that the superintendents before them did the same thing, and each successive manager allows the infrastructure to expand a little more,” says Belnap, who has worked in parks for 12 years. “Within the short span of a single superintendent’s tenure, the growth may appear small and acceptable, but if you weigh the long-term cumulative impacts and consequences of each new superintendent drawing a new shifting line in the sand, the resource loses out.”

Current Arches Superintendent Noel Poe is credited with being the first to take a hard line on carrying capacity by embracing the rather innovative ideas that VERP represents. Brushing aside praise from conservationists such as Martin and fellow managers within his own agency, Poe says he had no choice.

“Often, managers didn’t have firm ground to stand on,” Poe says. “If ever we were called to court, the first thing they attack is the process by which you arrived at your conclusions. If you’re on the witness stand and testify that your actions were based on a gut feeling that allowing 30 people at Delicate Arch is appropriate, you’d get crucified.”

From 1974 to 1984, annual visitation at Arches grew from 238,000 to 345,000, but in the next ten years it more than doubled to 777,000. Poe sees no reason why it might not double again by the end of the century. By the late 1980s, Arches already was bulging at its seams, and the prime remedy proposed by park officials was to again expand parking lots at key trailheads and other visitor destination.

“I was appalled,” says NPCA’s Martin. “They were planning to do what they had always done. Meanwhile, soils and aesthetics were getting trashed, the parking lots were overflowing, and visitors were complaining. I credit Noel Poe with being able to step back and admit that something had to change.”

In 1992, VERP’s pilot program was initiated without fanfare and on a shoestring budget of just \$400,000

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to cover a planning team of six. Jim Hammett, a VERP team planner, says that historically parks have always built their infrastructure and then tried to fill it to capacity with people, having little idea what the consequences would be on the resource or the visitor experience. VERP, he says, begins with three things: first, it re-examines the legislation that created the park to gain a feel for the original intent of Congress; second, it involves the completion of a biological inventory and identifies certain plants or animals to serve as indicators of change; and third, it surveys visitors to gain an accurate reading of what they expect.

Shown photographs of Delicate Arch and other popular destinations with varying numbers of people in each picture, visitors were asked to rate the images on a scale of acceptability. By asking a series of objective questions, VERP planners were able to discern that 30 people at Delicate Arch was the threshold, and any number beyond that began to erode the experience. At the area known as The Windows, 20 people gathering in one place at one time was deemed to be the upper limit, and Poe intends to draw the line at that number.

Visitors at Arches were also surveyed to see how they felt about ways to limit visitation. Strong support was shown for such measures as restricting parking to designated spaces and requiring permits for off-trail hiking. A survey conducted by NPCA and Colorado State University this spring confirmed that people are generally in favor of placing limits on visitation if necessary, even if it means that immediate access to parks may not always be possible.

Martin believes the methodology being implemented at Arches will revolutionize park management because it broaches a subject that previously has been taboo, defining how many people can be doing what, when, where, and how; and then, if need be, imposing limits to ensure that the resource and visitor experience are protected.

"The beauty of this process is that it's defensible because it isn't arbitrary, nor is it based upon what some perceive to be the agenda of an elitist conservation group," Martin says. "When a congressman calls a superintendent and says, 'What do you mean you're limiting the number of people at a given site in the park?' You can go to their office on Capitol Hill and spread out these photographs and show them that the management plan is based on what the visitor wants and expects. VERP has given credibility to the management process."

The real test of VERP's strength will come when parking lots fill up, gridlock ensues, and politicians begin demanding that the asphalt trucks be brought out again. "VERP gives [park managers] some rational measures by which they can defend their management actions," says Denis Galvin, the Park Service's associate director for planning and development. "We can assert that the South Rim of the Grand Canyon is crowded and the system is overloaded, but generally we don't have visitors' views to

substantiate that, nor do we have a measurement of the impacts. Ideally, VERP gives us both of those things.

Currently, the Park Service has a \$350-million proposal to overhaul the transportation infrastructure at Grand Canyon, which is unlikely to be approved by a cost-cutting Congress. "My fear is that even in the unlikely event that we get the money, by the time we have everything in place, the visitation may have doubled or quadrupled and we'll be back to where we began," says Galvin. "VERP forces us to be more creative."

Four years after the VERP process began, arches has amassed the largest data base in the country on visitor attitudes about overcrowding. Poe realizes that parking lots enticed large crowds and had direct bearing on the condition of biological and aesthetic resources. If you limit the number of vehicles, he says, you can effectively regulate the number of people - and that doesn't mean necessarily that you limit the number of people entering the park.

"Park visitations up 13 percent this year over last year's record-breaking pace. I am convinced more than ever that we must come to grips with increasing use of the park if we are to achieve our dual mandate of conserving park resources unimpaired for future generations and providing opportunities for the public to enjoy these resources," Poe wrote in Arches' 1994 newsletter. "The VERP process will help us do this."

Astounding to VERP officials is the demand for their pioneering arches study. Most of the first press run of 2,000 copies was reserved months before the document was released in June, and Hof has fielded requests for copies from park managers in Europe and Latin America. "Within the planning community, the word is out," she says. "I think park managers everywhere realize that the models we've used for years aren't working in the face of increased visitation."

In 1996, several parks across the country will begin amending portions of their general operating plans and have elected to incorporate the VERP process. Those include Mount Rainer, Yellowstone, Grand Teton, Glacier, Acadia, and Isle Royale. "I think VERP is extremely important because it forces us to think ahead. We need only look at other parks to see what happens if you don't control growth," says Doug Barnard, superintendent at Isle Royale. "I think VERP is extremely important because it forces us to think ahead. We need only look at other parks to see what happens if you don't control growth," says Doug Barnard, superintendent at Isle Royale. "If we had done this 80 years ago in Yosemite Valley, we wouldn't be crowding about smog and pollution and resource degradation. That's the advantage that VERP gives me at a place like Isle Royale. We can anticipate the future and take appropriate measures to safeguard what we have."

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## PROTECTING PARKS FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES

*The one major remaining gap in the resources protection program that has received little attention on a national or programmatic basis within the Service is the threat to park resources from environmental crimes.*

by Einar S. Olsen

The National Park Service's resources protection program has traditionally focused most of its attention on wildlife and archaeological resources. Most recently, surveys have been conducted to determine program needs concerning the protection of plant and paleontological resources.

The one major remaining gap in the resources protection program that has received little attention on a national or programmatic basis within the Service is the threat to park resources from environmental crimes. This is a relatively new area of environmental protection. Within the National Park System, only a few parks have become fully involved in addressing these threats.

Environmental crimes cover the full range of illegal discharges, dumpings, and emission of pollutants. Threats to parks include discharges of pollutants into waterways from active and inactive oil and gas, mining and other industrial operations; discharges of used motor oil; dumping of used tires and batteries; illegal taking of migratory birds due to cyanide use at mining operations; improper transportation and disposal of hazardous wastes and other solid wastes; illegal landfill operations; ocean dumping of garbage and medical waste; and emission of air pollutants that exceed permit limitations. These types of incidents likely will occur more frequently in the future as landfills close and permit requirements and associated costs increase for the disposal of various types of wastes.

The criminal enforcement of federal and state environmental statutes is a relatively new concept. Not until the early 1980s did government agencies begin to dedicate financial resources to enforcement activities. Up until that time, emphasis was placed upon the promulgation of regulations to implement statutes. There also existed the misconception that the promulgation of regulations would result in automatic compliance.

A full range of federal and state authorities are available to the Service to address environmental threats. These federal authorities include:

Clean Water Act (CWA)

Rivers and Harbors Act to Prevent Pollution from Ships (APPS)

Ocean Dumping Act Oil Pollution Act (OPA)

Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA)

Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)  
Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA)  
Federal Insecticide Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)  
Clean Air Act (CAA)

In addition to these statutes, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Lacey Act have strong applications to environmental pollution. The federal property depredation statute (18 U.S.C. 1361) also has been used successfully on general solid waste dumping cases. Further, various provisions of the Federal Criminal Code (Title 18) are used on more complex environmental cases. These address conspiracy, aiding and abetting, mail and wire fraud, false statements, obstruction of justice, and racketeer-influenced and corrupt organizations.

These authorities provide for administrative, civil and criminal penalties for noncompliance. Within the past five years, the criminal penalties have been enhanced from misdemeanor to felony status to promote greater compliance. In addition, there is a full range of financial penalties that may be assessed.

At the federal level, the Environmental Protection Agency, Coast Guard and Federal Bureau of Investigation have primary responsibility for enforcement. It is most important that the Service take enforcement actions against those who commit these crimes because of the financial implications. Failure to identify the responsible parties will result in the Service being liable for waste cleanup costs. These costs will increase as the disposal requirements become more stringent.

In order to address the threats to park resources, the Service recently established an environmental crimes initiative within the Ranger Activities resource protection program. To date, our efforts have been limited and sporadic. Individual parks and offices have initiated training and investigations as they deemed necessary. Yet, there is a large number of resource threats going unaddressed. Training efforts have been limited. Small portions of natural resources law, minerals management and law enforcement refreshers have addressed the basics of environmental crimes. These efforts have resulted almost solely because of the interests of certain individuals who were conducting the training. Institutionalization of environmental crimes investigations needs to occur Servicewide.

Closely associated with these efforts, several other program areas in the NPS are building capabilities to protect parks from environmental pollution. The Engineering and Safety Services Division is managing RCRA and CERCLA programs aimed at ensuring the proper management of NPS generated hazardous and solid waste clean-up of abandoned hazardous waste sites. Also, the Environmental Quality Division has established the Oil and HAZMAT Emergency Response program to improve the NPS response to spills. This program implements various provisions of the CWA,

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OPA and CERCLA. Biological resource damage assessments associated with spills are coordinated by the Wildlife and Vegetation Division. All of these efforts have provided valuable assistance to the environmental crimes initiative.

In March 1994, the National Capital Regional Office coordinated the first Servicewide environmental crimes investigations training course. This course was conducted in partnership with the FBI at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Va. Twenty-five NPS law enforcement officers and 25 FBI agents completed this 30-hour training. The training was made possible by major financial contributions from the FBI and the National Park Foundation.

A second Servicewide course was conducted in March 1995 for parks in the eastern U.S. Fifty-six law enforcement officers from the NPS, FBI and Coast Guard attended. Training for the western U.S. is tentatively scheduled for later this year.

Investigative efforts Servicewide have been limited. The greatest efforts and successes have occurred at New River Gorge National River, Allegheny Portage National Historic Site, Padre Island National Historic Site, Padre Island National Seashore, Cape Cod National Seashore, Everglades National Park, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and Whiskeytown National Recreation Area.

Yet, environmental crimes investigations are complex and time consuming, and thus, most parks have limited their efforts. Currently selected criminal investigators and special agents in the Service are dedicating a portion of their time to environmental crimes. In certain areas the Service is joining environmental crimes task forces for the purpose of information exchange and pooling investigative resources. Also, the Service is enlisting the support of the FBI and EPA to work on selected cases nationwide.

An important question facing the Service is where we should proceed with our environmental crimes efforts and how we will get there. At the Servicewide level, options range from doing nothing to developing a fully funded program, with dedicated funding for positions, training and costly investigations.

Environmental crimes investigations have many similarities with archaeological resource theft investigations. Both require close coordination among investigators, technical specialists and prosecuting attorneys. Also, the individuals conducting archaeological theft investigations must have a sound investigative background.

Future NPS efforts in environmental crimes should address three major issues; training, development of case investigative expertise and interagency relations, and funding.

There are many options to address training. These include fully funded, dedicated 40-hour Servicewide courses, comprised solely of Service employees or together with other agencies; the same 40-hour course but separate ses-

sions for East and West regions of the country; separate courses in each NPS region as deemed necessary and funded by the benefiting region; or eight-hour blocks of instruction in advanced resources protection courses being developed at the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center (FLETC). Other options include having four to eight-hour blocks of instruction in the 11 LM Basic Law Enforcement for Land Management Agencies course at FLETC; addressing the issue as part of the legal update in the annual law enforcement refresher courses; or taking no action other than encouraging individuals to attend training offered by other agencies.

Under these options, the audience would vary depending upon the approach used. As a minimum, all journey-man level rangers, criminal investigators and special agents should have some knowledge of these types of investigations. If the Service decides to develop its own courses, a dedicated effort will be needed for curriculum development and administrative support for each course session.

To develop investigative expertise and interagency relations, functions would include participating on task forces and exchanging information on incidents and cases. In order to provide attention to these types of cases, NPS also should fund the upgrading of ranger positions to criminal investigator positions so that they may concentrate their efforts on environmental cases. Also, NPS should provide funding to parks that become involved in large, complex cases which extend beyond the financial resources of the parks.

None of this will be possible without adequate financial support. Efforts so far have been possible only through a \$20,000 grant from the National Park Foundation and approximately \$30,000 in covered costs for instruction from the FBI. In order to institutionalize this effort, it will need to be funded similar to the drug and Archaeological Resources Protection Act programs.

The Service is at a decision point on how to proceed with its efforts to combat environmental crimes degrading park resources. Park needs must be addressed.

### EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS AT N.R.P.A.

The deadline for submission of proposals for educational sessions at the N.R.P.A. National Conference is January. The 1996 Conference will be held in Kansas City in October. P.L.E.A. has had considerable success in getting sessions on the agenda and this is an excellent, highly visible way to showcase park law enforcement before our Directors. For more information and an application contact: Dr. Bruce Wicks, Department of Leisure Studies, 104 Huff Hall, 1206 South Fourth Street, University of Illinois, Champaign, IL, 61820, 217/333-4410

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## MURDER, SHE WRITES

Law enforcement ranger Nevada Barr uses the National Parks as a backdrop for her mystery novels.

by Linda M. Rancourt

While hiking the backcountry at Guadalupe Mountains National Park in Texas several years ago, Nevada Barr thought generally about the ways a person could die there and specifically about some people she thought would be better off dead.

Out of this macabre thinking came Barr's first mystery novel, *Track of the Cat*. Set in Guadalupe Mountains, the book introduces Anna Pigeon, a wine-drinking, tough-talking law enforcement ranger who ran away from Manhattan to join the National Park Service. As the story unfolds, Pigeon finds something she did not bargain for during a walk in the backcountry: a fellow ranger's body, seemingly pawed to death by a mountain lion. Nagging doubt and persistent investigation lead the dogged Anna to a different conclusion.

Since *Track of the Cat*, which won both the 1994 Agatha and Anthony awards for best first novel of 1993, Barr has written two more mysteries set in national parks. In *Superior Death*, Anna Pigeon is relocated from the desert with its "star scraped skies" to Isle Royale National Park in Michigan, an island park in the middle of Lake Superior, where - even though the lake water is just two degrees warmer than a block of ice - divers come looking for adventure. In this story, at least one diver finds more than he bargained for among the park's world-renowned sunken ships.

In Barr's recently released third novel, *Ill Wind*, Pigeon finally gets warm and dry again among the Anasazi ruins at Mesa Verde National Park in Colorado, where a contractor is putting in a water line despite protests from archaeologists and other conservationists. A story of life, love, and death among the ruins, *Ill Wind* puts Ranger Pigeon in harm's way when she discovers a fellow ranger dead, seemingly by his own hand, with hat and shoes at his side.

The *Library Journal* says that Barr's books contain "spectacular descriptions, psychological insight, and a refreshingly independent heroine." *The New York Times Book Review* states that "Ms. Barr's sternly beautiful style is best displayed in natural settings like her eerie underwater landscapes of sunken ships and floating corpses -where life makes itself scarce."

Her novels show a regard for the landscape, stunning descriptions that only a nature lover could paint, but also reflect Barr's strong opinions about the National Park Service. The books include a heavy sprinkling of grievances about the federal agency: the low pay and morale, the deadly red tape generated by Washington, D.C., the politics of a large bureaucracy, and the tensions between seasonal and permanent employees.

In *Track of the Cat*, Barr writes: "Everyone pretended there was no wall between permanent National Park Service employees and the seasonals. And everyone knew there was. A veritable bureaucratic Jericho with no Joshua in sight. Everyone was transient. Seasonals came and went like stray cats. Even permanent employees seldom stayed in one place more than a few years, not if they wanted to advance their careers. People who 'homesteaded' - stayed in one park too long -tended to come to think of the place as theirs; they developed their own ideas of how it should be run. The NPS didn't care for that. It made people less tractable, less willing to follow the party line dictated from half a continent away."

It is descriptions such as these that some Park Service staffers believe demonstrate a disregard for both the agency and the people who work in the parks depicted. But Barr says the main purpose behind the novels is not to criticize, educate, nor facilitate change, but rather to entertain.

"I want people to love the parks," says Barr. "I point out the problems with the Park Service because I write about what I know, and what is true. I want the public still to believe that we're heroes, because I think everybody needs heroes. Why not let them be us? But I do think [the Park Service] needs to be deglamorized to the point that people realize that there are needs."

She also admits that her characters are composites of people she has met during her tenure as a law enforcement ranger. She joined the Park Service seven years ago, when she was 36, after pursuing an acting career for 18 years. She performed in off-Broadway plays with the Classic Stage Company as well as in corporate training films. Since joining the Park Service, she has worked at a variety of parks. Most, not coincidentally, have become backdrops for her mysteries.

Besides Guadalupe Mountains, Barr has served at Isle Royale and Mesa Verde. Currently at Natchez Trace Parkway, the author says readers should not look for an Anna Pigeon adventure at the Mississippi parkway. "I'd like to write one about the Trace, because I love the country, the animals, and the people. But it's a road, and a road doesn't hold any mystery for me," she says.

Barr, an attractive, pixieish woman, followed her then-husband from the theater into the Park Service, not only to be with him, but to be in the parks. "We were both interested in the environmental movement, and he just decided he could not be in theater anymore," she says. With a masters degree in acting, Barr says interpretation seemed an obvious choice. But "I thought that's like being an underpaid actor, and I don't want to do that. And also I don't know enough to be an interpreter." She turned to law enforcement, because they "got to do all the good stuff: the emergency medicine, search and rescue, all that stuff. I like the work. You get to strap on your car and your gun and go pester folks," she jokes.

Her first job was boat patrol at Isle Royale, where, like Anna Pigeon in *Superior Death*, she patrolled solo in a power boat "and drove like a puppy dog with my head out the window and the chart on the windshield." Like Anna, Barr kept her gun in her briefcase, because dying of the cold was more likely than getting shot, she says.

In addition to working boat patrol at the island park, Barr shares other characteristics with protagonist Anna Pigeon. Like Pigeon, Barr is a law enforcement ranger in her early 40s who worked as a seasonal for a time and has a sister named Molly. Unlike Pigeon, Barr is divorced, not widowed; and her sister is an airline pilot for USAir, not a psychologist in Manhattan. And Barr says most of her working hours are spent writing tickets and saving visitors from themselves, not solving murders.

"Obviously, I have done a lot of the same things as Anna, but not all of them," says Barr. She has not, for instance, done any diving in the frigid waters of Lake Superior. The realistic, spine-tingling descriptions in *Superior Death* came with

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the help of Dan Lenihan, chief of the NPS Submerged Cultural Resources Unit. For his help, Lenihan earned a note of special thanks at the beginning of the book.

"She can really get into someone's head when she is trying to create a scene in something she is not familiar with," says Lenihan. "She has a facility for opening up and listening. It came across that she really knew what she was talking about. The way she put it together was remarkable."

Barr began to pursue writing seriously in 1978 - well before she joined the Park Service. Among her motivations for writing was a desire for "women to do more, to move along the plot more, because all the women I knew were movers and doers. I decided I would write a book, so I could star in the movie," she says, laughing.

Described by one of her colleagues at Isle Royale, Anna Pigeon is someone with a "heart of gold, body of iron, and nerves of steel." For a fast-thinking, strong-minded woman with an insatiable curiosity, Anna does manage to get herself into and out of a heap of trouble. Barr says the women in her life provided strong role models as heroines.

She grew up in Susanville, CA, 80 miles northwest of Reno at a small mountain airport where her parents were pilots. Her mother, who was also a mechanic and carpenter, still has a ranch in the area, which is on the east side of the Sierras and on the edge of the Smoke Creek desert. Besides her mother, Barr mentions her Aunt Peggy, who taught third grade in a New York City public school, and her grandmother, a "fighting Quaker Democrat" and globe-trotting missionary. "These women did not come in at the second act to fluff up the pillows and leave," says Barr.

Although Barr began writing seriously nearly 20 years ago, she earned little income from it until the Anna Pigeon series, which is published by G.P. Putname's Sons in New York City. Before they mysteries, Barr wrote historical novels, only one of which has been published so far.

The books in the Anna Pigeon series have sold well here and abroad, finding their way onto bookstore shelves in Britain, Japan, Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands. Although the National Park System is considered one of the United States' greatest exports, some within the Park Service are not as keen to have Barr's image of the agency going overseas. Even so, most critics recognize and accept the stories for what they are: fiction.

Sarah Craighead, assistant chief of interpretation and visitor services and also public information officer at Mesa Verde, says she enjoys the mysteries, but the books are hard for her to read. "In general, I enjoy the stories, but some of the cynicism about the Park Service makes me feel like I'm at work," says Craighead, who has been with the Park Service for 16 years. She has not yet read *Ill Wind*, although a copy is making its way around Mesa Verde. Craighead says Barr's latest mystery "is not really a topic of discussion. We have other things to worry about...like a 10-percent budget cut."

At Guadalupe Mountains, Larry Henderson, who has served as superintendent of the park for five years, remembers Barr from his first summer there in 1990. He enjoys Barr's stories and says he does not fault the author for taking license with her descriptions of the Park Service. "Some people are ultra-sensitive about things, but you have to remember what it is. It is a mystery novel," says Henderson. "She took a core of information that was basically true, and expanded it and manipulated it. She was not

reluctant to use pieces of real people and then lump them with other pieces to create something."

Henderson would not say whose pieces he recognized in the books, but added: "We're going through some tough times now - we've gone through some tough times before - but the parks are not sacred places that people cannot take a pen to."

Barr has many fans among current and former Park Service employees who believe the author pulls no punches and gives an accurate description of what it is like to work for the federal agency. Carol Aten, senior vice president of NPCA and a Park Service employee for 21 years, says Barr "really captures the culture and the essence of the Park Service in her books. She also captures the real affection or passion...that Park Service people feel about the resources." Barr says she has a "tremendous amount of respect for the hierarchy in the Park Service. And if I had any hope for these books delivering a message, it would be to help them tap back into what the rank and file are doing."

If the books are any indication, the rank and file love working in the parks but could do with a little less interference from Washington. Lenihan says: "I think she paints a realistic and appealing picture of park rangers. They have one of the more glorious jobs in the world, but being able to see the seams, to me, makes it even more intriguing."

Besides opinions about the frustrations of working for a large agency, Barr weaves opinions into her stories about big and little concessionaires and sportfishing. On concessions: Barr writes in *Ill Wind*, "Anna often wondered how much money the hapless taxpayers had forked out in overtime so fully armed rangers could shoo mice out of the Hostess Twinkies. With the monies concessions pulled in they could easily afford Pinkertons."

Barr does not equate big concessions with the smaller businesses, similar to the diving operation run by twins Hawk and Holly in *Superior Death*. These small operations provide a service that NPS cannot. But, she says, referring to the big businesses in the parks, "There should be some recompense to pay for the crime that concessions bring in and the midnight forays to chase the mice out of the Twinkies."

And sportfishing, Barr says, is not something that should be allowed in the parks, just as hunting is prohibited, except where allowed through legislation. In *Superior Death*, Barr writes: "Despite Tinker and Damien's wishes, [Isle Royale] simply was not a hotbed of crime. The only deaths were those of innocent fishes and that was deemed not only legal but admirable. So much so, it surprised Anna that it was not written into every ranger's job description that he or she was to ooh and ahh over the corpses of what had once been flashing silver jewels enlivening the deep."

Barr's fourth Anna Pigeon book will be released next spring and finds the law enforcement ranger on assignment in northern California at a fire camp on U.S. Forest Service land near Lassen Volcanic National Park. Descriptions of life in the camp will be fashioned after those experienced by Barr while she was based at the Horsefly fire camp in Idaho.

The National Park System will no doubt continue to provide fodder for Barr's books. She says she plans to stay, perhaps, until retirement. And, if she has worn out her welcome at any of the four sites where she already has served, she still has another 364 park units from which to choose - although if the current Congress has its way and park closures are authorized, her choices may be narrowed somewhat.

**PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION  
MERCHANDISE  
ORDER FORM**

RETURN ADDRESS	
NAME _____	ADD \$1.00 FOR XXL _____
ADDRESS _____	ADD \$2.00 FOR XXXL _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP _____	POSTAGE AND HANDLING <u>\$2.50</u> _____
PHONE _____	GRAND TOTAL _____



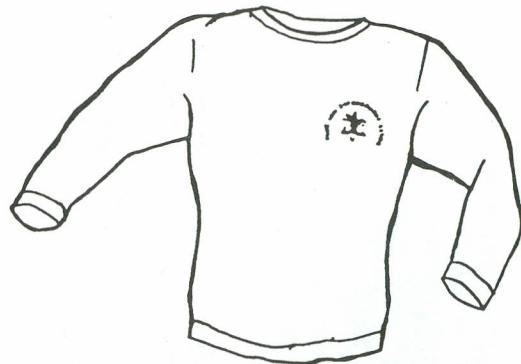
**MAIL TO:**

Stephen Pokrywka  
Chief Ranger  
Wyandotte County Parks  
3488 West Drive  
Kansas City, KS 66109  
913/299-0550  
913/299-9051

#### **Guarantee:**

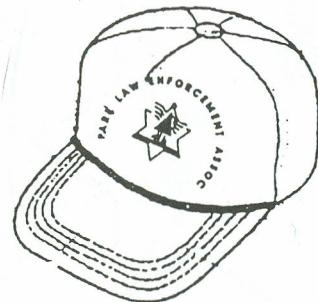
If not completely satisfied with your purchase  
please return within 30 days for a refund  
or replacement  
We will accept personal checks, cashier's checks  
or money orders payable to P.L.E.A.  
Allow 2-4 weeks for delivery.

**Item #1 Embroidered Sweatshirts**



Heavyweight 9oz Sweatshirt available  
in forest green, red, navy, and black  
s-xl \$ 18.95  
size 2xl \$ 20.95

**Item #2 Embroidered Golf Hats**



Available in white or black,  
One size fits all  
\$ 9.95

**Item #3 Embroidered Golf Shirts**



Hanes 100% Cotton Pique Knit,  
Available in white, red, ash, black,  
navy and forest green  
s-xl \$ 22.95  
2xl \$ 24.95

**Item #4 Embroidered Golf Shirts**



Outer Banks 100% cotton pique knit  
w/contrast collar Colors: red body  
w/navy collar & forest placket, jade body  
w/ royal collar & concord placket,  
wine body w/navy collar & forest placket,  
concord body w/ navy collar & jade  
placket  
s-xl \$ 24.95  
2xl \$ 26.95

**Item #5 Silk Screened T-Shirts**



100% Cotton, available in white  
and black  
s-xl \$ 10.95  
2xl \$ 12.95  
3xl \$ 12.95

**Item #6 Embroidered Cotton Poplin Jacket**



Color: forest green w/ tan lining  
s-xl \$ 55.95  
2xl \$ 57.95  
3xl \$ 59.95



# PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION



## \* APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP \*

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ INDIVIDUAL \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE \_\_\_\_\_ AGENCY \_\_\_\_\_

AGENCY/FIRM \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS (Street/POB) \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

WORK PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ NEW MEMBERSHIP \_\_\_\_\_ OR RENEWAL \_\_\_\_\_

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES



## CURRENT MEMBERSHIP NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_

Individual	\$ 20.00
Agency	\$ 70.00
State Affiliate	\$150.00 1st Year
State Affiliate	\$ 70.00 Renewal

VISA AND MASTERCARD ACCEPTED \_\_\_\_\_

ACCOUNT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MC \_\_\_\_\_

EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

ACCOUNT NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

## MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION (NRPA)

PAT CARTRIGHT  
 NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION  
 2775 SOUTH QUINCY STREET, Suite 300  
 ARLINGTON, VA. 22206-2204  
 800/626-6772



P.L.E.A. IS  
 AFFILIATED WITH THE  
 NATIONAL RECREATION  
 AND PARK ASSOCIATION

## AGENCY MEMBERSHIPS

Recently requests were made of the P.L.E.A. Board of Directors to establish Agency Memberships. The stated reason for this move was to assist agencies in joining officially. Many agencies have little trouble paying for an "agency membership" but balk at paying individual memberships, even though these memberships are in strictly professional organizations. By designing a new membership category many agencies were able to join en masse. Because of the inequities in agency size across the nation, benefits had to be strictly managed in this category. Thus the following benefits are offered to Agency Members: (1) Full membership privileges to the agency as in individual memberships, and (2) Reduced rates for official P.L.E.A. functions (Conferences, Educational Events, etc.), for all agency employees without the need for each employee to join P.L.E.A. individually. Because of the cost of printing and distributing PLEA only one copy of PLEA would be sent to Agency Members. Though the Board of Directors authorized reprinting and distribution by these members. P.L.E.A. membership is decidedly inexpensive when compared to other professional organizations. The Agency Membership allows agencies to financially support P.L.E.A. and receive benefits from that membership.

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIPS

- (1) One vote per membership on official P.L.E.A. issues.
- (2) Four issues per year of PLEA: Journal of the Park Law Enforcement Association.
- (3) Membership I.D. Card.
- (4) P.L.E.A. Patch.
- (5) P.L.E.A. Window Decal.
- (6) Bi-Annual Park Law Enforcement Agency Directory.
- (7) Reduced Rate for P.L.E.A. Sponsored Conferences and Educational Events.
- (8) Access at a reduced rate (or free as available) of special P.L.E.A. sponsored publications.
- (9) Eligible for election to the Board of Directors and appointment to various committees.

## STATE AFFILIATES

State Affiliates are groups within states which have organized along the guidelines established by the P.L.E.A. Board of Directors. State Affiliate receive one seat on the Board of Directors automatically and take an intimate role in developing the future of P.L.E.A. There is a \$150.00 affiliation fee. If your state is not currently an affiliate contact the President of P.L.E.A. for details on how to start.



# NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

2775 South Quincy Street • Suite 300 • Arlington, Virginia 22206-2204

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

CLP  CLA  CTRS  CTRA   
(Check if Applicable)

CIRCLE ONE (Mr., Mrs., Miss, Ms., Dr., Sen., etc.)

LAST NAME (If not enough space, spell out above address) FIRST NAME AND M.I.

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE OR POSITION (Abbreviate if necessary)

EMPLOYER OR ORGANIZATION (Abbreviate if necessary)

MAILING ADDRESS (Street or post office box)

CITY STATE ZIP (in the US)

FOREIGN COUNTRY (Abbreviate if necessary)

PHONE (Check One)  Home  Office      

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 AREA CODE 

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 PREFIX 

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 NUMBER

(Check One)  NEW MEMBER  RENEWAL  STATE ASSOCIATION MEMBER

### Membership Category and Dues

Professional (Based on salary)

Annual Salary	Annual Dues
<input type="checkbox"/> 0-14,999	\$ 45.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 15,000 - 19,999	65.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 20,000 - 29,999	90.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 30,000 - 39,999	130.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 40,000 - 49,999	160.00
<input type="checkbox"/> 50,000 and over	215.00

- Retired Professional 45.00
- Student (SB is primary affiliation) 30.00
- Associate (Limited to those not employed in field) 50.00
- Citizen Board Member 35.00
- Corporate 240.00
- Nonprofit Association 185.00

If your agency is an agency member of NRPA with a special package, you are eligible for reduced dues

- Professional\* 60.00
- Student\* 25.00

\*The following must be completed to use the reduced dues structure.

Organization Name \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Number \_\_\_\_\_

For information on special package, contact Membership Dept. NRPA

Friends of Parks and Recreation (Annual Fee) 15.00  
(Includes Friends of Parks and Recreation Newsmagazine only)

Also available on a subscription basis 15.00

Friend/Associate 25.00

Friend/Contributor 50.00

Friend/Supporting 100.00

Friend/Benefactor 250.00

Friend/Patron 500.00

Friend/Fellow 1,000

(All friend categories limited to those not employed in the field)

### Send Information On:

- NRPA Insurance Programs
- NRPA Certification Program
- Latest Publication Catalog
- State Society Membership
- Ethnic Minority Society
- European Recreation Society
- Park Law Enforcement Association
- MLDA Long Distance Service
- Alamo Rent a Car Program

### Check One Branch or Section of Choice

(One branch or section is included with membership. If you desire affiliation in more than one branch or section, number in order of preference and add \$15 under Optional Fees for each additional branch or section.)

- American Park and Recreation Society (APRS)
- Armed Forces Recreation Society (AFRS)
- Citizen and/or Board Member (CBM)
- Commercial Recreation and Tourism Section (CRTS)
- Leisure and Aging Section (LAS)
- National Aquatic Section (NAS)
- National Society for Park Resources (NSPR)
- National Therapeutic Recreation Society (NTRS)  
(Therapeutic Recreation Journal included in Professional Membership Services.)
- Student Branch (SB)  
(This branch is automatically the primary affiliation of NRPA student members. To be included in any other branch, student must pay for additional branch.)
- Society of Park and Recreation Educators (SPRE)
- Friend of NRPA

### Optional Fees

Must hold membership to purchase:

National Job Bulletin (\$35.00)

PIN (\$18.00)

Recreation . . . Access in the 90's (\$25.00)

Journal of Leisure Research

\$25 — Domestic

\$20 — (SPRE Member)

\$28 — Foreign

Recreation and Parks Law Reporter (\$50.00)

Legal Issues in Recreation Administration (\$50.00)

Membership Certificate (\$7.50)

Professional members only

Print name as to appear

Membership Laminated Walnut Plaque

Professional members only (\$37.50)

Print name as to appear

Additional Branches (\$15.00)

### Form of Payment

#### Overseas Postage

If mailing address is outside U.S. ADD \$6      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total payment enclosed (Do not send cash) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Bill to:  Visa  MasterCard

Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expires Mo. \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

TO ACTIVATE MEMBERSHIP BY PHONE WHEN USING VISA OR MASTERCARD  
CALL TOLL FREE 1-800-626-NRPA

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

### RATES

Your dues support the many NRPA programs and services that are designed to expand the park, recreation and leisure movement. These include subscriptions to NRPA publications: Parks & Recreation magazine —\$18.00. Therapeutic Recreation Journal \$6.00. Your membership category determines which of these publications you receive.

NOTE: THESE RATES ARE NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

### FOR NRPA USE ONLY:

KEY NO. \_\_\_\_\_

JOIN \_\_\_\_\_

EXP. \_\_\_\_\_

### ETHNICITY INFORMATION (RESPONSE IS VOLUNTARY)

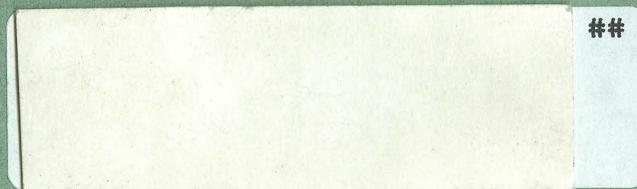
American Indian  White  Male  
 Asian  Hispanic  Female  
 Black  Other

This information will assist NRPA to develop a profile of our membership.



PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION  
AN AFFILIATE OF THE  
NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION  
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Arlington, VA 22206-2204

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