This summer my wife and I travelled to Scotland and had an opportunity to visit two parks where Countryside Rangers work. We visited the Iona Nibheis visitor center at the base of Ben Nevis. Ben Nevis is the highest mountain in Britain at 4400 ft and is often covered in snow. The second park was the Clan Donald Centre on the Isle of Skye. After talking with rangers at each park I realized how much I had in common with them job wise.

Iona Nibheis was a brand new state of the art interpretive center. I learned that the administration had spent their budget on the center and didn't have funds to print brochures. Sound familiar? The story gets better. At the entrance there was a sign stating that you couldn't access the Ben Nevis trail from the visitor center, but had to travel another another 1/4 mile down the road. I found out that there was a dispute with a private land owner over the trail easement. The story sounded very familiar to me.

The Clan Donald Centre's ranger facility was a small nature museum staffed by two rangers and filled to capacity with information. The Clan Donald's lands are 20,000 acres and I really got the feel for being short staffed.

Another job problem that the rangers were working through was that their program had just changed from being administered by the Countryside Commission and was now under National Heritage. Their program had been switched from one national department to another. The bureaucracy sounded confusing yet familiar to me.

The Countryside Ranger Program is very young and began in the early 1980's. The rangers do not wear uniforms but only an ID badge. When I asked a ranger about uniforms he said that they didn't want to wear them as people are more likely to talk to you when you are digging a ditch. Sometimes I think that he is right. I do not think that the rangers have law enforcement duties, but concentrate on environmental education, resource management, and maintenance.

I found that we shared many feelings about our jobs. We were not looking forward to the busy summer months. We were concerned about our immediate job security. We felt that there was some confusion regarding the direction from the public and administrations of our respective Ranger Programs, "A ranger is everything to everyone." Finally, we shared a love of our profession along with a healthy respect for its limitations.

Another benefit of my visit was trading things. I traded patches and brochures for posters, a door sticker, and ID badges. I think that I scored "big time." Overall I found out that California park rangers have more in common with Scottish rangers than I could have imagined. It really is a small world.
Surviving In a Down Economy
by Dave Lydick

In a recent phone survey of valley park agencies, I found that we rangers have weathered the budget crisis extremely well (so far). Some agencies have taken significant cuts in maintenance and administrative staff but I was somewhat surprised and happy to find that permanent ranger positions have been saved from the budget axe. We should all feel good about the support given to our ranger programs from the public, which is why we are still employed.

The same phone survey, as well as news stories that I have recently heard or read, does have some disturbing information. In several agencies, park use has declined at the same time that increased revenues from user fees are needed to offset declining general fund monies. Whether the decline in park use is an effect of the economy, or of increased user fees, or a combination of the two, is a question that you may need to answer if your agency is going to make accurate revenue estimates. Sacramento County Parks implemented across the board increases in day use fees in July of 1992 with an estimate of a 25% increase in revenue. The result of that increase however, was a decrease in revenue from the previous year. We are now responding to suggestions made by a consultant to add additional user fees and wonder whether the possible implementation of these would mean a further reduction in day use revenue.

I believe that in these trying economic times we must look at our fee structures in a very business like manner. How many donut shops would stay in business if when their sales dropped off they raised the price of their donuts? Some parks that have historically filled on summer weekends are no longer doing so. Have we priced ourselves out of the market, or are we doing a poor job of marketing our parks? Two T.V. newscasts this summer reported that Folsom Lake S.R.A. was not being heavily used even though the lake was full for the first time in years. Commentators also made remarks about the $6.00 entrance fee possibly being the reason for the low attendance. These are not normal economic times and decisions to raise or add new fees should be weighed heavily against not only the willingness of visitors to pay but also the support you may lose from your contingency, the park user.
A Commentary by Pam Helmke

It would be to see you again...

I remember were I was when I heard about Kim. I was sitting on my horse trying to listen to my trainer. The people who know I'm a ranger started asking questions that I had no answers for.

A minute or two later Tom Smith walked up and asked if I had heard. As we talked we both knew in our hearts that it was Kim. So much for my training session.

For those of you who may have missed it: Kim is Kim Aufauser, National Park Service Ranger and West Valley College Park Management Instructor. He was shot while on patrol in Yosemite National Park. I'm also thankful to report that Kim is well, he was wearing his body armor and it worked. Unfortunately the shooter got away.

It's been a long time since anyone shot a ranger in California. A few have been shot at, but thankfully the bad guys were also bad shots. But somehow Kim's incident seemed different, maybe because it was someone I knew, someone I liked, and someone I shared chocolate with. It also made me think about my own job. Like most PRAC members I am an unarmed ranger. I've had my officer safety training and I even get yearly updates. But after Kim's shooting I started to think how I do my job: Working late, often alone. Stopping to help strangers in isolated areas. I also started to realize how lax my personal safety had become, and I noticed the same problem in my colleagues. How many of us, armed or unarmed, wear body armour if your department issues it? When you stop to assist a citizen in an isolated area do you tell dispatch? Do you remember and use cover and contact principles when working with a partner?

Armed or unarmed, your officer safety skills are your best survival tools. Attention to surroundings, telling someone where you are, balanced stance, safe distance, constant awareness. I've been brushing up on them the last year or so, I hope you'll take some time to think about your officer safety. If you don't think it's important, stop by West Valley College and ask Kim.

Salmon Creek School Adopt-A-Beach
by Tom Meyskens, Supervising Ranger, Doran Park
Reprinted from the Sonoma County Regional Sparks

On May 12, 1993, the entire student body of the Salmon Creek Junior High School, with staff and parents, ventured to Doran Regional Park in what promises to be an exciting new experiment in mutual cooperation.

Similar in some respects to the highly successful Adopt-A-Highway program of California's highway network, Salmon Creek School is "adopting" Doran Park.

The program is designed to mutually benefit both the students and the park.

The students will come periodically to the park throughout the school year. They will be picking up litter, be involved with ecology of the park. In general, they will feel responsible for and be partial custodian of part of their natural heritage at Sonoma Counties' best known and well loved beach.

On the morning of May 12, 1993, 160 students divided into ten groups to work on both park cleanup and resource enhancement projects. Along the bay shore and in marsh areas, non-native species that are competing with native plants were removed.

In the afternoon, a variety of workshops were offered to students.

The program goal will be to get the students involved with the park, increasing their awareness of ecological principles and to promote a sense of stewardship of local parks and ecosystems.

For further information, please contact Tom Meyskens, Park Ranger at (707) 875-3540.
Rangers on Bikes
by Bill Trunick

It seems as if more and more agencies are getting out of their vehicles and onto mountain bikes. This is great from the public relations aspect and seen as “environmentally correct.” One of the problems that faces many rangers and public is—what to do when things go pop, clunk, or thud. Well here are some quick fix it yourself solutions on some minor maladies you may encounter.

The bike skips gears all by itself: If you are pedaling when this happens, you may have a sticky link or the chain is stretched out. A tight link is easy to spot, it is the link that is not in line with the rest of the chain. If you lubricate the link well it usually fixes it. If you do not see a tight link and you have oiled the chain and it still shifts by itself get out a ruler. On a new chain twelve links equal one foot (one inch on center per link). If there is more than an 1/8-inch difference you will need to replace the chain.

Sticky brakes: First check the brake shoes if they are not too worn but are grabbing, because of uneven wear, file down. If they look bad go buy new brake shoes.

Squeaky brakes: The brake shoes should be toed in. That way the front of the shoe hits the rim first when the brakes are applied.

A squeak-squeak as you pedal: Check for side to side play. If you turn on the opposite side of where the wheel veers into the brake shoes. (Personally I’ve ruined rims doing this by tightening it too much so be very careful or take it to a shop.)

Shifter clicks but will not climb to the largest gear sprocket: Try adjusting one of the screws on the rear derailleur. On some derailleurs it is marked with a “L.” A turn or two counter clockwise should do the trick. The other screw on the derailleur marked with an “H” is for the other side of the gear cluster. So if it will not move to smallest sprocket of the gear cluster adjust this screw.

I came across eight rules to remember concerning bike care which hold true for patrol bikes and for all mountain bikers. Forgetting your helmet may cause you a huge headache in more than one way. Remember to pre-ride inspect your bike; check tire pressure, spin the wheels, test the brakes and shift the gears. Lubricate your chain weekly. Wash your bike after each ride but do not jet spray you hubs. Respect all noises and rattles, and track them down to find the problem. Lubricate pedals, derailleurs, brake and shift cables, brake pivots and free wheel monthly. Replace cables annually.

Carry a tool kit which includes and adjustable wrench, Allen wrenches, patch kit, spare tube, chain tool, spare cables, links and a pump.

I hope that this will help you in your adventures of the two wheel patrol.

Initiative Update
by Dave Lydick

In recent weeks the C.P.R.S. Board of Directors voted to support a modified draft of the motor vehicle fee initiative, entitled (or formerly so) the “Keep Your Parks Open and Safe Act.” I have not gotten the latest draft of this initiative but the major changes made, were to allocate a percentage of the money to “field sports” and that State Parks would charge a day use fee but at a reduced rate. The field sports addition was written in to gain the support of the recreation districts so that the C.P.R.S. board would endorse the initiative, (C.P.R.S. board voted no on the initiative support in May). This is tentatively planned on being ready for the Nov. 94 election.

CALPAW 94 is proceeding along with 60% + of the sig-
CAL Ranger Foundation Minutes

• Minutes of the CAL Ranger Foundation Meeting held in Petaluma at noon on Sunday, September 12, 1993.

• Present were Directors Tom Smith and Mary Angle Franzini, Inez Cook, Secretary/treasurer, Doug Bryce, Executive Manager, and President Rick Parmer.

The Board was advised that Director Dave Lydick has resigned his position on the Board of Directors. Dave was a very valuable member, and we will miss him a great deal. PRAC will need to appoint another member for the Board as soon as possible. Those from PRAC who would like to serve on the Foundation Board are asked to contact President Bob Donehue.

• Secretary/Treasurer Inez Cook reported that the Foundation had total liabilities and equity of $1,480.92.

• The new Foundation brochure has been reviewed and Doug has had 500 copies made for distribution.

We’ve Come a Long Way Baby!

Jack C Deaton

Boy oh boy, haven’t we! It’s been a long time since we made our first presentation at Yosemite (March 1990 Conference). Thanks to Doug Bryce, Executive Director of PRAC, the Long Beach Park Ranger Gang Unit was evolving into a polished, professional team. When we came to make our presentation we were known as urban or cement rangers because of our location—17 miles south of Los Angles. Before we left we were known as PRICs (Park Rangers in Cities). Jokingly of course we refer to mountain rangers as HMROIDS, (High Mountain Rangers Only Interested in Deer Shit).

All kidding aside, all of us need to take pride in what we do, who we are and make the Park Ranger profession the best that it can be. Here in Long Beach, gang activities in the City’s 71 parks, greenbelts and golf courses are on the decline. California Gang Investigator Norm Sorenson recently told the Los Angles Times, “Because of the intense patrols in Long Beach by the City’s Park Rangers, parks and community centers have seen a decrease in anti-social behavior by area gangs.” Our staff and our gang unit takes a lot of pride in that statement. I want to thank our Director, Ralph S. Cryder for allowing the gang unit to form and grow.

During the past two years we have traveled up and down the state of California with our presentation. Because William Penn Mott Jr. caught our first presentation and told the National Park Service about our presentation, they have seen a decrease in anti-social behavior by area gangs. Our staff and our gang unit takes a lot of pride in that statement. I want to thank our Director, Ralph S. Cryder for allowing the gang unit to form and grow.

The idea is to produce some software using Word Perfect that could be sold to agencies that could be used in a like program in their parks. Tom volunteered to produce a generic model of such a program using the Pinnacles program as a guideline. We will attempt to interest a foundation to fund its development and to market the product. A program will also need to be developed for State parks. We will have to enlist someone from State Parks to take this on. Although the Pinnacles Program is not covered by copyright, Tom said that it is professional courtesy that we attempt to get Pinnacles to agree to having us use their idea. He will call the Pinnacles Superintendent to get their blessing.

• The contract with the Executive Manager was approved.

• The need to recruit new members for the Board was discussed. There is a real need to make our Board larger for us to be effective.

• Meeting was adjourned at approximately 2:00pm. Thanks to Rick for the pizza.

The Signpost
I am the 1993 scholarship recipient for the following reasons: I have set goals, in need of financial aid, energetic, enthusiastic, and motivated.

My goals are an extension of present work experience and education. They encompass college and university degrees, "on the the job" training, and agency academies.

In chronological order:
• A.A. degree from West Valley College, May 1993
• 1993 summer employment
• Start Humboldt State University, Fall 1993, majoring in wildlife management
• Continue volunteering with State and Federal agencies
• Complete Emergency Medical Technician training, College of the Redwoods, Eureka
• Complete Basic Peace Officer Standard Training, College of the Redwoods, Eureka
• California State Park System Academy, Mott Training Center
• Permanent position as Park Ranger, Off Highway Vehicle Division

To achieve my goals as a Park Ranger I have participated in the Park Management program at West Valley College for the past three years. Through the management program I have been certified in Wildland Fire Fighting, Search and Rescue, and CA Penal Code 832—laws of arrest.

It has been recently that I have been able to use my skills on the job and see the results. The thrill and excitement of saving someone's life from extreme weather, injuries, or fire is enough to pay for my time that I have invested in school. As my skills become more relevant to the job, my willpower to seek new information has increased. To be the best in a career you must find a position that is your greatest pleasure. I feel through Park Management I have found my niche and will strive to be the best.

With the park internship classes and the programs involvement with surrounding agencies, I have worked with many people and had the chance to be involved with different projects.

My academic achievements are many. After completing 68.0 units with 17 units, this current semester I still have the willpower to succeed. I have received a grade of A for one unit and an A- in another. I have completed all the requirements for my A.A. degree from West Valley College. I have been accepted to Humboldt State University for the fall of 1993 and I have set goals to complete my A.A. degree.

I have taken many classes with the Red Cross including Standard First Aid, Adult CPR and Infant & Child CPR, Basic Life Support (Advanced CPR) and Introduction to Disaster. I have devoted my extra time to keeping all of these certificates up to date and in good practice. All of these classes have paid off in personal experience.

As a volunteer, I have worked with the United States Forest Service, Santa Clara County Department of Parks and Recreation, Society of American Foresters, City of San Jose Department of Parks and Recreation, and California State Parks System. With these agencies, I have been on conservation projects, Park Patrol teams, Internships, and Children's Nature Walks.

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I am the best candidate for your scholarship because my academic achievements, community involvement, set goals, financial need, and motivated personality.

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As a member of California Association of 4Wheel Drive Clubs, Fiddle Footed 4Wheelers, Park Rangers Association of California, and Hollister Hills Off Road Association, I have had exposure to many situations which are very political or life threatening.

I feel that I can enhance the visitor experience as well as their awareness of the importance of parks. I believe that more and more of the public is becoming aware of the danger we are in of taking parks (of any kind) for granted. With this growing concern people are going to want to participate in the preservation of their parks. I want to be there to help. These are the things that I would use any endowment awarded me for. They are listed in their order of priority.

The purchase of text books and school supplies. Transportation expenditures are next, I live approximately fifteen miles form school. Even though my children are of school age, I find that they never seem to be in school when I am, so child care is a concern for me as well. Any consideration that you can give me will be greatly appreciated.
Thanks You, Gracias, Mahalo, Kudos for Bob
by Jack C. Deaton

I would like to thank PRAF President Bob Donohue for speaking to the Long Beach City Council this past summer. On behalf of myself and my fellow Park Rangers (Carlos says Gracias and Ioene says Mahalo) thanks Bob, for your superb presentation, which was well received. The presentation enhanced the City Councils' awareness of our program and in turn made us a viable resource in our community.

We not only survived cut backs, we were given some additional patrol time and equipment for the Gang Unit. We are still feeling residual effects from the presentation.

Again, thanks and it would behoove any agency facing cut backs or layoffs to personally contact Bob for a possible strategy presentation for your city council, board or advisory group. As a resource for other agencies I will be sending Bob a video tape copy of his presentation to the Long Beach City Council.

Region 4 News
By Lt. Donald B. Watstein

A big hello form Region 4, Southern California. "It is our duty to protect and serve all park users so that they are able to enjoy themselves in a peaceful atmosphere while they have fun at any of the parks."

On Friday Sept. 17, 1993, front page of the Simi Valley Enterprise newspaper this article appeared.

Park Rangers Ask To Be Armed
By Alisha Semchuck, Correspondent

Rangers want weapons while on duty at area park sites.

At least that's the message Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Chairwoman Bonnie Carpenter conveyed to her colleagues on the board during their meeting Thursday night.

Carpenter said she informally posed the question of arming park ranger to Simi Valley Police Chief Paul Miller. The police chief advised Carpenter to draft a letter to him, giving time to contemplate the issue.

The board gave a green light to Carpenter to send the police chief a letter weighing the pros and cons of armed rangers.

Al Church, assistant general manager at the park district, said he has "mixed feelings" on the issue of armed rangers. He said, from Day 1, when rangers are hired, they're told to "get out, if they ever feel danger" in a situation.

Church contended if the ranger carried weapons, they would be more apt to confront dangerous situations.

"We have people who rattle gates, who rattle keys, stop drinking in the parks," Church said, in reference to the rangers' duties.

But, Carpenter pointed out, all the rangers employed by the park district are retired Los Angeles police officers, trained to use guns. Also, Carpenter noted, nowadays there are "more random acts" occurring in parks than the typical mischief which kept ranger busy in past years.

"The incidents they're encountering are changing," said Carpenter.

Carpenter said she doesn't want to alarm area residents. But, she noted, "groups from Oxnard are coming into our parks." As of late, the park district has been plagued by more instances of graffiti, a trademark of taggers.

Board member Jim Meredith said he knows of one district whose board members are rangers "and they are armed."

District Vice Chairman Mark Johnson said half the districts he knows of "do have armed rangers."

"Professionals don't get...in trouble," Johnson contended. "They avoid dangerous situations."

Meredith said of the issue: "I do think it should be explored. The next few years, we will be spending more money on ranger programs."
The Signpost is published by the Park Rangers Association of California (PRAC). The Association mailing address is P.O. Box 292010, Sacramento, CA 95829. The Signpost Editor is David Brooks. Articles of 1,000 words or less are welcome. All submissions become property of PRAC and may be edited without notice.

Submissions should be mailed to David Brooks, 560 Hillcrest Dr., Ben Lomond, CA 95005. Information can also be submitted by telephone at (408) 336-2948. Submission deadlines are the last day of January, March, May, July, September, and November.