I have made some contacts for leaders of various workshops which include:

1. Mountain Lion Workshop
2. Trail Maintenance and Building
3. Coastal Sagebrush Ecosystem Management and Interpretation
4. Native American History and Interpretation
5. History of the Anza Area Early Settlers

If you are in Region 5 and can suggest a good site for these workshops please contact me. Also, I could use some help for someone in Orange, San Diego and San Bernadino Counties to help set-up these workshops. The success of the workshops depends on your enthusiasm and commitment!!

Contact Paul Pettit (909-940-5644) to volunteer just a little of your time and assistance.

You make a living by what you get,
you make a life by what you give.

-Winston Churchill

On the weekend of September 15 through the 17th, I had the opportunity to take a Basic Tracking Course at Lake Hemet located in the San Jacinto Mountains in Southern California. The course was taught by Survival Tracking Service and the Executive Director is Viki Mason (Orange County Reserve Sheriff Deputy) who knows her stuff. The course can be set up for P.O.S.T. credit.

The art of tracking is more of a science than I ever expected. During the Basic Course you learn terms, how to recognize tracks and what to look for in a particular incident. You receive a full tracking kit which is yours to keep. You spend the first night recognizing tracks on slides then early the next morning you begin tracking down one of the instructors. You are taught how to track using the sunlight to your advantage and how to use a flashlight at the right level for maximum effect at night.

You practice the art of tracking in teams of three, you track in the morning, in the afternoon and at night. The instructors are patient and well equipped for all emergencies such as when you the tracker start to get frustrated. This can happen as you lose tracks, but the instructors (Viki, Carole, and Steve) have a great sense of humor and can get you back on track or tracks as the case may be. Rangers may have an easier time with tracking as we are use to looking at the ground, thru the brush and seeing signs in nature. But tracking is not easy. The Survival Tracking Service offers three courses and perhaps at the end of the third course you can consider yourself a tracker. But even after the Basic course, you can’t help but keep your eyes on the ground.

If you and/or agency is interested in setting up a course, give Viki a call at (714) 771-4460. The Fax number is (714) 771-7025. Both are 24 hour numbers and she is willing to travel up north to conduct a course. Group discounts are available and courses are taught year round. If you are interested in having PRAC set up a course, give me a call in Region 4.
From the President’s Desk

When I was elected President last year I set two primary goals for myself and the organization. First, I wanted to increase our membership, over the last few years the number of regular members has remained fairly constant, some people join....some leave but we stay right around 125 members. (Currently PRAC has 130 regular members, 39 student members, 8 associates, 22 agencies and 3 honorary members for a total of 202.)

The second goal I set was to have PRAC become more politically active. One of the stated goals of this organization is to “...educate agencies and the public as to the role of the ranger.” Educating the politicians that set the mandates and budgets that we, as field professionals, have to live with should be a very high priority on any park rangers’ list.

Both of these goals are strongly interconnected. As a statewide professional organization PRAC can and should be a loud voice in our government. Our combined membership provides that voice, and at 125 members we are just beginning to be heard.

Over the last year PRAC, through your Board of Directors, has moved on two significant issues before our state legislators:

Assembly Bill 787, recently signed into law by Governor Wilson, amended California Penal Code Section 630.6 to include reserve park rangers. This allows agencies to appoint volunteers as peace officer park rangers to supplement paid staff. PRAC, along with CSPRA supported this important change.

Senate Bill 28 (Leslie), still before our legislators, would change existing state law to reclassify the Mountain Lion as a game mammal and authorizes the sport hunting of these animals on all public lands including federal, state and local parks. The bill also seeks to move up to $100,000 a year from the states’ Habitat Conservation Fund to the Department of Fish and Game to support sport hunting. CSPRA has chosen to oppose this bill.

These are just two of the many important issues before our elected officials at all levels of government. Now is the time for park professionals to speak out, to educate the public and our politicians about the irreversible damage being done to our public lands.

PRAC can become a stronger voice, but only if we chose to work together. I hope that each member will take the time to talk to other rangers about PRAC. If every current member found one new person to join we could double our membership in a very short time and increase our political voice. Think about it.

Pam Helmske

Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District Rangers To Be Armed by Lt. Don Watstein

Fire power capable of deadly force will be within arm’s reach of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD) rangers by mid November.

Vice Chairman Don Funk said his convictions led him to vote in favor of the resolution. “It’s prudent, logical and safe to give rangers something to equalize the dangers out there.”

Richard Harrison, the Park Operations and Maintenance Administrator said, “The next steps will be to purchase firearms and train the rangers in their use.”

Under the new policy, rangers will be able to choose from a variety of guns but they will no longer be allowed to patrol unarmed. A gun will be a requirement.

Harrison said rangers need guns, not only to protect themselves but also to protect the public they serve. Rangers also will be required to wear bullet-proof vests.

Ken Beldon, (RSRPD) who is a FBI certified Range Master, will be the instructor for the new policy and on the shooting range.

The Signpost
An Exchange of Ideas
Regarding Transients in the Parks
by Dave Sloan

I received a telephone call from a park ranger with another agency the other day. My guess is that this ranger got a copy of the PRAC Directory and decided to call similar agencies. The ranger was surveying other agencies to determine how they dealt with the problem of transients/homeless in their parks. Evidently a new transitional housing shelter opened up next to one of this ranger’s parks. The shelter opens at night and its clients must leave in the morning until the next night. During the days, when the shelter’s clients are not allowed in the shelter, the homeless/transients are coming over to the park which is located next door.

Those of us who patrol parks that are visited by transients can guess what some of the associated problems are that this park ranger is now facing. We can also guess how the “tax-paying” park visitors view this situation. While being homeless or dirty or living out of a back pack are not crimes, the homeless do bring their own set of problems to a park.

I gave the inquiring park ranger ideas that we use in Roseville: transient camp sweeps, city municipal code ordinances, and the like. I knew that I could not "solve" the parks problems in this ranger’s jurisdiction related to transients. (I can’t even solve transient related problems in Roseville’s parks.) I did enjoy exchanging ideas with the ranger. In fact, that is one of the main elements of being a member of PRAC that I enjoy.

All of our agencies are different and we all go about solving our park problems in different ways. By exchanging ideas we can learn from each other’s successes and failures. That is one of the main benefits of joining a professional organization such as PRAC.

While speaking with this ranger I began thinking that the Signpost would be the perfect forum for a regular exchange of ideas between agencies. Transient related problems in the parks would also be a good first topic for such a forum. If PRAC members will send me innovative ideas on how their agencies deal with transient problems in their parks, then I will compile an article for the next edition of the Signpost so that we can all learn from each other.

I would also like to receive any other information regarding issues that other agencies are having to deal with in order to throw them out for the members of PRAC to offer suggestions. If I receive common ranger related issues from enough agencies it might result in a future PRAC workshop.

If you have any “solutions” to the transient problem in parks or any issues for future discussion groups or workshops, send them to me at:

Dave Sloan
401 Vernon St., Suite B
Roseville, CA 95678
FAX (916) 773-5595

Water Safety: Take the News Media Along
by Park Ranger Keith Willis
USACE Lake Kaweah, CA

This spring for my water safety programs at a Corps of Engineers lake in southern California, I tried something new—taking a news reporter into school classrooms with me. Two years ago I helped with water safety instruction at Lake Kaweah but neglected to tap the news media. Here’s the what and how of my water-safety message this year, and the resulting news coverage.

First I picked a target group in the elementary schools that Lake Kaweah reaches out to. I chose the fourth grade and tried to limit my audience size to three classes of students or less for better hands-on participation. Two combined classes proved to be a good number to work with, active and fun but controllable.

My programs began with students trying on lifejackets (I brought about twenty for that purpose, donated by a local marine dealer) as well as lifejacket demonstrations with the youngsters I then covered the basics of reach-throw-row-go, followed by a short movie, either Longfellow’s Whale Tales or Wet’n Safe. Next came a 10–20 minute general water-safety discussion with the students, using visual aids. A wheelchair volunteer, victim of a diving accident, would speak next if she was available. Her story had strong impact on the student. When she spoke, everybody listened. Time permitting, I finished with stories from the students using a bullhorn which the kids love. The length of the program could flex from 45–60 minutes.

In each city where I did water-safety programs, I also contacted the news media. Inviting and taking reporters into the school classrooms resulted in water-safety newspaper articles in every city that I visited. Water-safety talks by another Kaweah ranger and myself to 3,500 classroom students this spring reached tens of thousands of newspaper readers this way. Cost to the Corps of Engineers for the news coverage was nil. Extra time and effort by me, the park ranger, getting the news coverage was minimal. I also followed up with a letter to the editor printed in each of those newspapers concerning Corps of Engineers water-safety programs.

My guess is that a majority of newspapers will be willing to attend water-safety programs in local elementary schools. Visiting the newspaper office in uniform and speaking with the editor was more effective for me than calling on the phone and talking to a reporter. Newspapers need not be feared I might add; they do not write about the quality of a ranger's speaking performance. Their articles and pictures will focus on the subject, students and other benefits.
P.O.S.T. Commission Approves Changes to Level I Reserve Training Requirements
by Paul Pettit

At the April 20, 1995 meeting, the Commission approved changes to Penal Code 832.6 (Senate Bill 1874). The changes took effect July 31, 1995. This will require that non-designated Level I reserves appointed after January 1, 1997 must complete the Regular Basic Training Course. Hires before then will not need to meet this requirement. Transfers between agencies will be subject to this requirement if they transfer after January 1, 1997.

There is an exemption process for agencies to request exemption for those agencies that use reserves with "limited duties." This exemption is granted for those agencies' reserves who do not perform general enforcement duties and do not work under direct supervision of a POST certified officer. POST regulation 10005 is also changed which mandates reserves are to receive the same 24 hour requirement of Continuing Professional Training. Regulation 10008 has been amended and requires requalification if there is a three year break in service and defines a Level I reserve as one who work and average monthly minimum of 165 hours. The regular Basic Course minimum hour requirement is 664 hours effective July 15, 1995.

For more information, contact Area Consultants of the Training and Compliance Bureau at (916) 227-4862 (Reference Bulletin 95-12).

Don't Give Up
by Pam Helmke

Every year I spend some time giving advise to seasonal park ranger staff asking "How do I get a permanent position with a park agency." Unfortunately here is no easy answer. The best advise I can give is, Don't Give Up!

With California's budget problems affecting every public service agency, park ranger jobs tend to be few and far between. However, there are still jobs available. If you are a seasonal looking for that first big break here are a few suggestions to help improve your chance of landing that full time slot:

• Don't limit yourself to one agency or area. We'd all like to work in Yosemite but reality is most of us will work somewhere else. Use the resources available to you, like PRAC's agency director and job line to find out which agencies hire rangers. Contact those agencies and find out how to apply.

• Check back on a regular basis with those agencies you've identified. Just because they're not hiring now doesn't mean there won't be an opening or two in the future.

• Keep your resume current and ready to go. Sometimes the application windows are very short and you need to be able to move fast.

• Practice your interview skills. Co-workers and supervisors are often willing to do mock interviews to help you get a leg up on the competition. Check with your local community colleges and employment centers for short courses on improving your interview skills or resume.

• When you do land the interview, look sharp! Dress in suitable business attire, coat and tie for gentlemen; conservative dress or business suit for the women. First impressions do count.

• Speak clearly and make eye contact with your interview panel. You want them to know that you are the best candidate for the job.

• Make yourself stand out from the crowd. Go one step further than the minimum requirements. Advanced training such as EMT certification, boat handling skill, technical rescue certifications, instructor certifications in first aid and CPR all count. Learn a second language.

• Get to know the people and agency before you interview. Set up a ride-a-long, visit some of the agency's park lands, perhaps attend an interpretive program. Introduce yourself to some the field staff. Ask them for advise.

Above all else, don't get depressed and don't stop trying. It take an average of two to five years for a seasonal to get a full time job, and that estimate was made when the government agencies actually had funding. The jobs are out there, you just need to keep plugging along.

The Signpost
As administrator of a recreation and park district, it is vital to look beyond the daily struggles and envision the big picture.

Because of this, my philosophy and attitude towards our own park ranger program changed dramatically over 15 years with the district.

The Fulton-El Camino Recreation and Park District ranger program provides an opportunity for young law enforcement or natural resource students to patrol district parks, enforce alcohol, parking and other county regulations: answer questions; remove graffiti; assists with park maintenance; control traffic; and provide a vital link between the community and administration.

As a recreation lead, I wonder why Sacramento County did not take care of security problems in the parks and provide additional programs?

Now I know.

Park ranger are vital at our district for these reasons:

- The public perceives parks as unsafe. Providing park rangers in uniform, in a marked patrol car or on mountain bikes relays the fact that we care about our residents and visitors and make every effort to create a safe and fun atmosphere for them and their children.

- Rangers are the best public relations tool an urban area can use. By hiring helpful, friendly and courteous staff, rangers act as an extra set of eyes in parks. They can report park damage, remove graffiti, answer citizen questions and assist during park and recreation functions.

- Rangers can react immediately to neighbor’s concerns and take positive action. If a neighbor spots suspicious activity happening in a neighborhood park, a quick telephone call can be made and a park ranger is able to respond within minutes. Reality dictates that city or county law enforcement cannot respond as quickly to this type of emergency.

- Park rangers are trained to handle 99% of the enforcement-related activities within district parks. Whether it is a serious as missing children to drug paraphernalia or as mundane as directions to the restrooms, park rangers can accomplish the job efficiently at a reasonable cost to the residents.

- Any agency can create rules and regulations for behavior within park boundaries. Signs posted throughout the parks inform people as to rules and regulations but we all know the key is the ability to enforce these regulations within reason.

Park rangers are the perfect tool for enforcement of parking, alcohol, inappropriate behavior and dog-related problems.

Security needs a place in the budget

Park security needs to have a place in the budget that is just as important as the basic recreation park fundamentals.

A park that is perceived as unsafe will suffer diminished attendance; thereby breeding additional inappropriate behavior.

The California Attorney General’s Report, GANGS 2000; A Call To Action, discussed the “Broken Window Theory.”

This theory states that the key to social decay is a rising level of neighborhood infrastructure disorder that residents fail to challenge over time.

When one window is broken and not fixed, almost overnight more problems develop and the neighborhood declines.

This same theory applies to parks. If graffiti or vandalism occur, it must be fixed immediately.

Park rangers can play a vital role in the overall attitude of the agency and avoid the broken windows.

On the other hand, a park that is vibrant, well maintained and busy throughout the day has less likelihood of problems, decay and deterioration.

The cost of the security program is well worth the savings in infrastructure repair and positive public relations benefits it receives.

In the big picture of operating a full-service recreation and park agency, the small cost of a high-quality security and enforcement program is well worth the effort an expense.
Region V has not been very active for a long time. I have not had much time this year. We received 13 new Rangers out of the Academy last April for our District. We structured a training program to provide specific operational information which was not covered in the 16-week academy. Aside from that and the need to concentrate on the daily operation of our park with only a couple of seasoned veteran, time has been a huge problem for me.

In addition, the Los Angeles County deal has finally been settled. Not only has it been a personal interest to me since 1972 but it raised it's head out and changed my commitments until a week ago. Our Chief was sent from Lake Perris off to run the State Lifeguard Service taken back for LA County Lifeguard Service after 45 years. This resulted in alot of work being redistributed to the State Parks that sent their staff to run the prodigal beaches brought home. However, these have been returned to the LA County and are no longer a part of the State Park System.

Things are certainly tough in Southern California. I was hoping that this would be a banner year for Rangering but it hasn't. This profession is showing the early warning signs of extinction. Populations have become fragmented and specialized. Habitats are being reduced and modified by outside influences. Niche occupation is being threatened by competing species. And the main thing is that species has failed to develop a defense mechanism.

In today's society, traditions have no meaning. What we seem to forget is that traditions are the basis for the primumordial need to be a social species and have provided a uniting theme and direction to our lives since we could stand erect.

The one thing that remains the same is that despite political noises of quality of service, cost-effectiveness, budget limitations, and service reductions—political power will prevail. What we don't see in Rangering is the elimination of well "rounded programs" om which Rangers are not distinct bureau from the mainstream of an agencies park management. Being a peace officer can be the best tool to help manage a park area, but the end it could be the Achilles heel to Rangering.

The point being that in order to further these interests a strong professional organization is a necessity. To make it a success we all need to be active. Keep each other informed. If you need something or would like something done—then talk about it with someone. But remember only you know what is best to deal with your concerns and needs. No one of us can make this happen as a single person. I have heard it time and again that PRAC seem to be an organization for Park Rangers "del Norte." There is no such philosophy or basis for this. The reason, I have been told repeatedly, is because all the Workshops are scheduled there. Well, we can't expect them to foot the bill to bring their dog and pony shows to Southern California.

Not when we have a handful of paid members and no money to pay those costs. We have a number.

On another note..........

I have been calling old members to get them active and paying their dues. The City of Oceanside has eliminated their Ranger program. There are a number of previous PRAC members who lost their jobs and would like to get back into Rangering. They really miss it! Some have gone into security work.

I joined PRAC back in 1978, I was one of the first if not only member in Southern California. I would have joined the Southern California Park Ranger's Association if there had been one but there was no other organization. We all work with volunteers in our jobs, because of this do we think I don't do volunteering I run'em. Stop and think about it. For those who think another Park Ranger Association of Southern California is needed I'm sure the bottom line is arrived at very quickly, will there be enough paying active members to make it work. There simply is already an Association, we would need active members volunteering their efforts to make any organization work. If there is the question of someone wanting to be the Power, all you need to do is put your name on the ballot. We can form a committee or work with the needs of your group. PRAC is not active in Southern California because we all are not active—no one is topping any one of us from doing what we want to do. We just aren’t doing it ourselves. It is important for us all to do something. I decided last year—yeah, PRAC is there, PRAC is sponsoring the conference, I live in Riverside, I need to help.

You need to help—give up some of your time. If each of you will just do one thing—one workshop or one article—we can make it happen. Do it now. Give me a call.

Region V Meeting
Scheduled for
Thur., Nov. 9, 1995
at Lake Perris SRA
2 hour P.O.S.T. Video a Training
will be available

The Signpost
Smitty's Book Report

Well, I think I finally found it. The ideal reference book on the ecology of California. I was “grazing” through my favorite bookstore on the main “drag” in Mendocino, when I ran into a book that I couldn’t resist picking up. The book was titled, *Natural History of California*. For some reason that caught my eye. I don’t know why, do you? Like always, I immediately checked out the price. Twenty dollars! Wow, not bad! As usual, I thumbed through some pages and read a few lines to get a feeling for the author’s style. Interesting. Not at all “textbooky.”

In the introduction, the author, a Professor at Fullerton State, tells us that the book is, “organized around geographic regions using, as a starting point, the 12 geomorphic provinces described by the California Division of Mines and Geology. Superimposed on these regions are the natural biotic provinces based on climate and living organisms. The result is a sequence of chapters in which the various regions of the state are characterized with respect to climate, geology, and biotic communities.” basically, the book has something for all of us wherever we work.

Up until this time, my favorite book on California ecology was *An Island Called California* (Elna Bakker, University of California Press, 1971) My backcountry boss at Yosemite sent this book to all of us to read prior to reporting to work one summer. I am glad he did. It became a favorite. However, Schoenherr's book is also nicely organized and very easy to read and understand and is more comprehensive. He illustrates concepts with easy to follow ecological examples. As an example, his discussion on the ecology of the redwood forests is one of the better discussion that I have ever read about that subject. Schoenherr often cites the importance of parks in the protection and preservation of all California species. In fact, many of the photographs taken for the book were shot in parks throughout the state.

I like a book that not only informs, but is entertaining to read. This book falls into that category. It is not just a reference guide. You are not going to read it in one sitting, however. The book is 772 pages long! At twenty dollars, even you can afford to have it in your library. At the very least, it should be in your next interpretive budget request.

Schoenherr, Allan *A Natural History of California*, University of California Press, Berkeley California, 1992

Remember, take the time to read. “Management Without Knowledge is Dangerous.”

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Exhibits and Displays

by Paul Pettit

In case funds are tight, an idea you might want to consider is: “Case-a-Critter”

Individuals, businesses, and school groups can become exhibit sponsors. This is a great community service project! The sponsor's name could be displayed on a gold plaque on the finished exhibit that becomes part of the collection. Help build a strong case for education!!

-San Diego Natural History Museum
# PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

## Board Officers 1995

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## Membership Application

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**Voting Membership**
- Regular: $35

**Non-voting Membership**
- Agency:
  - (1-10 persons—2 mailings): $45
  - (11-50 persons—5 mailings): $70
  - (50+ persons—10 mailings): $90
- Student: $10
- Associate: $15
- Supporting: $50

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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.

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