

## Mark Your Calendars

Make your calendars! Reserve the time off! Make plans to migrate! 2001: An Open Space Odyssey is coming to Sacramento, CA. March 15, 2001, the adventure begins!

From **March 15-8, 2001**, park personnel throughout the Golden State will start to gather at the Holiday Inn Northeast for their annual bonding experience (also known as the California Park Conference). You are invited to attend the festivities and witness this spectacular event. You will have a rewarding and educational time as you participate in many of the seminars and outdoor activities. Some of the traditions of past conferences will be carried on: the meeting of long lost friends; field trips to area parks, educational centers and recreational sites; an auction and/or a raffle; prominent speakers in the field of parks and recreation and POST training. There will also be some new experiences. (I won't spoil the surprise, you will just have to wait a little longer to find out what's new. I will tell you that we will be learning and experiencing many new technologies.)

Between now and March 15, 2001, the Conference Committee will be meeting and planning these events. If you would like to be a part of this Committee or would just like to give your two cents, please contact the PRAC Conference Committee Chair, CeeCee Coleman (I got married!), by e-mail at <ceelcee@juno.com>. If you do not have access to e-mail, please call her at (916) 979-9622.

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## Bike Patrol Training Opportunity!

by John Havicon

I have arraigned a bike patrol class in Sacramento with the Sacramento County Sheriff's Academy.

The class, (**October 18,19,20**), will be the basic (24 hour) course and will teach patrol riding techniques, making law enforcement contacts and basic bike maintenance. The Instructor, Rick Neilson is a POST instructor and the class will be POST certified. Rick has been teaching the class for eight years.

The field training will be on the American River in Sacramento. Classroom training will be at the Sheriff's Academy, which is also conveniently on the American River. I am arraigning camping at one of our parks on the river, for those who wish to camp. There are also several nearby hotels.

So far the cost will be \$105 for PRAC members for the three day event. I'm trying to get the academy to reduce the cost which will be passed on to you.

Anyone interested, please contact Doug Bryce at 800-994-2530

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## Good-bye to a Friend

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

At the beginning of my shift,  
as I hike through the park.  
Early morning or after dark,  
I think of the ones  
Who have been an influence in my career.

The person I think of, and from others  
the same I am told.  
Is a giant of a man,  
with a heart of gold.

Someone, who loved the outdoors,  
had a passion for life.  
Bragged about his kids,  
and doted on his wife.

He was an excellent teacher with a listening ear.  
Always had an encouraging word,  
and when needed would give you a kick in the rear.

John, as you hike that trail  
to Heavens gate.  
As a former student  
I know you won't be late.

To all of your students,  
each year you would say  
"Be there, on time, ready to work"  
Words I live by, each and every day.

Good-bye my friend, instructor, mentor.

# From the President's Desk

Dear Fellow members,

Well it's been a long and busy summer for me and I'm sure your parks were just as crowded. It's time to move into my recovery, clean up and repair mode.

Several of you have contacted me and asked about the Park Ranger-Peace Officer legislation and where we are going with it. The Peace Officers Research Association of California, (PORAC) is the main agency carrying the legislation and it may be decided on, with or without our support. PORAC would of course like to see our support with this and I want to give you the opportunity to make that decision.

Before we get to that point, it was decided that we need to develop standards of what a Park Ranger is. What specific skills are needed resource management, interpretation, public safety, fire suppression, medical and law enforcement, (Peace Officer and non sworn), to perform our duties. We all know what's involved with our jobs, but nothing has ever been documented. With the standards in place, we can provide some structure to exactly what our job is and what type of training is needed to maintain it. Our secondary goal is to PRAC provide some quality training that will benefit all of us.

The Standards and Training Committee has developed a survey which is being sent out to every known agency in California, with Rangers or employees with similar duties to develop help us learn what skills and training they require for their Rangers. It's a very thorough survey and we are hoping to get some good information from it. We will need everybody's help in filling these out with their most accurate information and making sure they are sent back. After the surveys are returned, we will start compiling the information and start working on standards and training. Be sure to look for your survey packet in the mail. We expect to send them out in September/October.

If you have any further questions or concerns, please feel free to call me, (916-875-6672) or email me, <onbelay@innercite.com>.

*John Havicon*

President

## From the Past Presidents Rocking Chair

by Russ Hauck

### I've Got Good News and Bad News...

There are many happenings in the Park Ranger world in Southern California; some good, some bad. I'll start with the bad.

The City of Burbank Park Ranger program is gone. It had been struggling for quite some time and finally folded. The Park Ranger program was under the direction of the Burbank Police Department, and for a myriad of reasons, it failed. It is not likely that this program will ever be resurrected.

The City of Long Beach Park Ranger program is under the microscope. The new Police Chief wants all law enforcement responsibilities to be under his direction. The likely plan is the creation of a Park Patrol, using non-sworn, armed security guards, similar to the City's Marine Patrol Officers. The Park Rangers would have their duties restricted to El Dorado Regional Park, focusing on interpretation and guest relations. The Director of Parks and Recreation does not favor firearms, so they would likely give up that currently issued piece of safety equipment.

The City of Los Angeles Park Rangers are battling their administration over a Memorandum of Agreement that was recently signed with the Los Angeles Police Department. This MOA severely limits the law enforcement role of the Park Rangers. They would still be peace officers, but would be limited to writing citations for dogs off leash and illegally parked vehicles. They would further be instructed to make contact with violators to explain the rules, but be

prohibited from taking action if compliance was not obtained. This would require them to contact LAPD to issue citations for alcohol in the parks, being in the park after hours, etc.

As for the good news, effective May 15, 2000, the Glendale Park Ranger program became recognized by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) as a member agency. The Glendale program is a Specialized Agency in the non-reimbursable category, whose rangers are entitled to all the benefits and privileges afforded to all member agencies (except training reimbursement).

And finally, some really good news. You may have heard about this story in the media. A couple of months ago, an Anaheim police officer was shot during a traffic stop. Off-duty Long Beach Park Ranger Carlos Ortiz was passing by when the officer first pulled the car over. Based on his training and experience, Ranger Ortiz felt that something was not right about the stop. He made a u-turn and as he approached the location, he saw that the police vehicle was still in its original position, but the violator vehicle had left the scene. Ranger Ortiz got out of his vehicle and as he approached, he saw the police officer lying on the ground, bleeding profusely from the face and neck. Ranger Ortiz removed his shirt and used it to apply direct pressure to the wound. He used the officers radio to call for help. Because of his quick actions, Ranger Carlos Ortiz saved the officers life and he is expected to make a full recovery. Congratulations Carlos!

# "My Turn" (To Preserve and Protect)

by Kelly Byrne

Senior Park Ranger I & Former Region 4 Director

I am sure many articles and letters are arriving at the *Signpost* due to the nature of the beast in determining whether or not to support legislation to eliminate Peace Officer status from the classification of Park Ranger. I feel a need to add to the remarks in the heat of the debate.

I work in the city of Los Angeles as a Peace Officer Park Ranger and have been an active member of PRAC for the past nine years. My personal opinion on the subject is irrelevant, but the current situation in my fair city is very dramatic and could happen anywhere.

Under the Penal Code, the city of Los Angeles can only be an armed agency if the General Manager of the department of Recreation and Parks determines it is a good idea. PRAC's current vote has nothing to do with guns and that is not what I will dwell on. However, because the new GM wants nothing to do with guns or law enforcement, a Memorandum of Agreement with the LAPD is being discussed which would eliminate the job of Park Ranger assisting in enforcing municipal codes in the parks. This will also increase liability for the Rangers as we are being asked to do "a little enforcement," kind of like being a "little bit pregnant," it cannot be done without some type of problem occurring.

The role of the Park Ranger is to protect and preserve parkland. The Park Ranger is a jack of all trades within their environment. If you are expected to do law enforcement, you should be given all the tools and training to do the job safely and effectively. I would hope that those of you who lead nature walks would certainly be prepared before you take a group out and not just take off in sandals and take a trail you have no idea where it goes. So why do we think it is okay to take on non-law abiding park patrons without being prepared?

I realize every agency is a little different, but the job of protecting and preserving parkland is universal. Park Rangers need and should expect the best training there is in the field of law enforcement, education, emergency response, natural resources and most importantly, dealing with the most basic to the most bizarre of human behavior.

The city of Los Angeles needs the exclusionary clause (Public Resource Code 4022b) requiring Rangers be Peace Officers. My fear is that the current GM will deplete the Rangers job and change the classification. I want to be able to protect and preserve the parklands. My other complaint is that the current GM refuses to accept Ranger input on trail condition and multi-use management. That doesn't leave much for a Park Ranger to do in the city of Los Angeles.

No matter what the outcome of PRAC's vote and decision, I will continue to support the association. I do not agree with threatening to leave PRAC just because a democratic vote doesn't go your way. Stick around because the next vote my go your way, or more to the point, maybe it is time you and your agency become more involved.

I hope I can count on other Rangers to assist the City of LA in our fight to protect and preserve our urban (and some rural) parkland. Being a Peace Officer is not what makes a Park Ranger, but rather than eliminate titles and qualifications I feel we should add to them. We should require a degree, EMT license, teaching experience, field research, fire and rescue training. We do the entire job why not demand the training and the tools. Then we can demand the pay raises.

For more information on the LA city Rangers, log onto <<http://laparkrangers.com>> or leave me voice mail at (323) 913-4688x1505 (24 hour availability).

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## Region 1 Update

by Mike Chiesa

I hope you all had a safe summer. Now that summer is over I will be attempting to put together a workshop or two and possibly a social gathering for Region 1 in this fall. I would like to know if there are any topics the members of the region would like to have covered. So you know what area Region 1 encompasses, it includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Napa, Lake, Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties. For members in these counties, I am your representative on the Board of Directors. If you have any issues, questions, comments, or suggestions please feel free to call me.

Some possible suggestions for workshops have included a workshop on the different types of fencing used in parks, with some hands on practical work, clandestine drug lab awareness, and bomb and explosives identification. If there are any additional topics for workshops that may interest you, please let me know.

In addition to being the Region 1 Director, I am also over-

seeing the Standards and Training Committee. The committee is now comprised of 17 members with Amy Lethbridge and Lee Hickinbotham Jr. volunteering as co-chairs of committee. By the time you receive this article, the standards and training agency survey should be complete or near to it, and the committee will begin sifting through the data and working with the other committees to come up with some recommended minimum ranger training standards. If you are interested in volunteering on this committee, please feel free to contact Lee, Amy, or myself.

As usual, membership recruitment is always encouraged, so please be sure to tell your friends and co-workers about PRAC and what it has to offer. If you need any membership brochures, let me know.

Hopefully I will be seeing many of you in the fall. My e-mail address is <[mchiesa@mcn.org](mailto:mchiesa@mcn.org)> and my phone number is (707) 847-3245.

# Santa Rosa Ranger Academy Celebrates Graduation of 100<sup>th</sup> Class

The Ranger Academy at Santa Rosa Junior College will graduate the 100<sup>th</sup> class on **December 20th, 2000**. The graduation ceremony will be held at 3:00 PM in the **Petaluma Community Center**, 320 North McDowell Blvd., Petaluma, CA 94954. A reception and social hour will be held immediately following the graduation ceremony at the same location. All former students, graduates, instructors, evaluators, role players, staff members and others associated with the Academy over the past 22 years are cordially invited to attend, and "reconnect."

The Ranger Academy was designed and developed primarily for students that are interested in working for the National Park Service. The curriculum was selected to provide a good, solid foundation for seasonal rangers desiring to work in National Parks. The original 200 hour program developed in 1977, has been gradually increased to 290 hours today.

Over the years, many county and municipal park agencies have utilized the Ranger Academy for their basic law enforcement training. Sonoma County Regional Parks, Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District, Palo Alto City Parks, San Joaquin County Park Department and Monterey Park Department have all participated in the training many times since the first session in March 1978. Also, Sonoma State University and Oregon State University have sent students to the academy on a regular basis as a part of their environmental studies curriculum.

A grand total of 2,438 students have graduated from the Ranger Academy since 1978. Many are now district rangers, chief rangers, and superintendents in national parks as well as U.S. park police officers, deputy sheriffs, deputy U.S. marshals, state trooper, border patrol officers and agents of other departments and agencies both Federal and State. Several are attorneys and are working as prosecutors at the county or federal level.

Most of the instructors in the Ranger Academy have been involved in the program for many years; some from the very beginning. For example, Field Solicitor Ralph Mihan and Chief L.E. Officer (Retired) Lee Shackelton were instructors in the very first program and are still involved—100 programs later. Other instructors that have become permanent fixtures in the program are: Alex McMahon, Deputy District Attorney, Sonoma County; Pat Hanley, Sgt. U.S. Park Police (retired); Sam Edy, U.S. Park Police; Kathy Hughes, Criminal Law Instructor, SJSU; Don Ulrich, U.S. Park Ranger (formerly FBI); Zach Moore, Lt. U.S. Park Police; Jay Eickenhorst, U.S. Park Ranger; Ron Hamann, U.S. Park Ranger; and Scott Dunn, Deputy Sheriff, Sonoma County. These dedicated instructors, along with a long list of evaluators and role players have been responsible for the success of the Ranger Academy for the past 20 years.

Santa Rosa Junior College began training rangers in 1978, following the release of the NPS "Law Enforcement Task Force Report" which recommended this training program

as a minimum standard for law enforcement officers in the NPS. Since 1978, some 34 colleges and universities have offered the same training in various formats such as weekends and evenings or part of a broader based program of park management, or peace officer standard and training. There are presently 12 schools conducting the training program.

The Santa Rosa Ranger Academy is an intensive 290-hour program, offered 3 times a year in seven-week segments. Students earn five semester units of credit from Santa Rosa Junior College.

During the seven weeks, students cover such topics as accident investigation, defensive driving, defensive tactics, firearms, and report procedures. Students are also involved in role-playing scenarios in illegal hunting, building search, campground disputes, domestic family problems, courtroom testimony, interviewing, crime scene management, report writing and accident investigation.

The course curriculum has changed substantially over the years. Accident investigation has increased from 16 to 20 hours. Defensive tactics has doubled, plus an additional 8 hours of baton training. Firearms also has doubled from 20 to 38 hours. Report procedures has increased from 6 to 8 hours, plus an additional 4 hours on violation notice preparation.

The Ranger Academy was located for 17 years at Los Guilucos, off of State Rt. 12 in Santa Rosa, California. In 1995 the lease expired and the academy moved to its present location at the U.S. Coast Guard Training Center, off of Bodega Highway, in Petaluma, California.

Students in the program have come from every state in the union. Although most students were previously employed by the NPS, there have been several from the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Corps of Engineers, Bureau of Reclamation, Coast Guard and many municipal and county park agencies.

The placement rate for seasonal ranger positions is almost 100 percent. Graduates from the Ranger Academy are in demand because they usually deliver excellent performance.

The staff at Santa Rosa Training Center hopes that many former students can attend the **100<sup>th</sup> Graduation on December 20**. In order to get an idea of the number of guests, we welcome a note, a fax, a call or email, as follows:

Address: Santa Rosa Ranger Academy  
609 Tomales Road  
Petaluma, CA 94952

Phone: (707) 776-0721

Fax: (707) 776-0814

Web Site: [www.santarosa.edu/publicsafety](http://www.santarosa.edu/publicsafety)

# Odds, Ends and Weekends

By Jeff Gaffney

## Stress

I have been under a lot of stress lately and I thought I would take this opportunity to pass along some good techniques for dealing with stress. At least that was my plan but then I got stressed out when I couldn't find the statistical information I wanted to use. I know it's in one of my piles around here somewhere...no sense in getting stressed about it though. Then (follow my train of thought here) I thought I would just share some of the things I do to disconnect from everything else (where do park rangers go to get away from it all??? the city??). But then I remembered I have been reading more and more lately which is an excellent way to retreat for a while (still following my train of thought???) I then thought of books I would recommend but I didn't want to step on Smitty's toes so I'll leave you with these last couple of eclectic thoughts. Nevada Barr books are awesome and I know I'm preaching to the choir here, but for something to read that should peak any ranger's interest and yet not remind you too much of work you can't go wrong. An enjoyable vacation right at home. For those few who don't know, Mrs. Barr is a former National Park Ranger who writes murder mysteries with national parks as backdrops. Her style and detail are amazing, as a stress reducer I highly recommend reading any book she has written.

## Political/Law Enforcement Committee

I have contacted most of my committee members and I was hoping to have a meeting with POST and the committee but that is becoming less of an option as I write. The Standards and Training I have been working on with POST (peace officer standards and training) aren't going so well. I've gone to Sacramento twice and I've had numerous conversations with them, the news is so-so. POST is to law enforcement pretty much like the Red Cross is to first aid and CPR. This is why I have been trying so hard

to convince them to let us pick and choose the training we feel is appropriate. They however are governed by the legislature. It has basically been explained to me that we have the options of: following the full academy guidelines; following the guidelines set forth for reserves I, II, or III's; or we can get together with the state parks academy and try to work something out. I will update everyone when something more clear has been muddled out. Our standards of course can be our own but they will carry little weight and provide little protection against lawsuits.

## Training

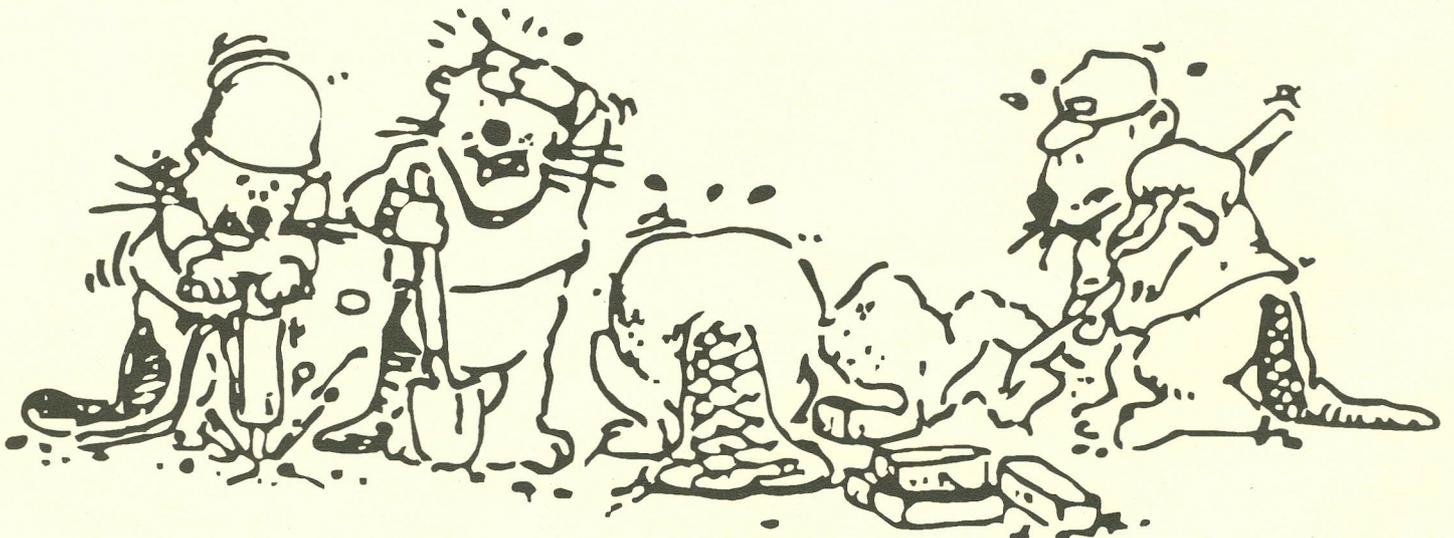
Ken Miller is working on resource management training for **September 18<sup>th</sup>** starting near Los Gatos, in Santa Clara County.

## Safety Retirement

Many twists and turns as always. By the time you read this the Governor should have on his desk and hopefully signed AB 439 providing safety retirement for Sacramento county and Santa Clara county park rangers. During the course of running this bill it became apparent that PERS would like to include all park rangers in the safety system, permissively however (you would have to negotiate for the benefit). I would recommend all peace officers submit a request for safety reclassification to PERS in the very near future. PERS will probably be running a bill for inclusion of all park rangers this coming year. Our county prevented them from doing it this time. Call or e-mail me with questions

## Miscellaneous

Anyone who may be interested in PORAC membership and all the protection and benefits it affords them should contact me. I have found a relatively easy way for them to obtain membership.



# Bicycle Patrol Class

Sponsored by  
**Park Rangers Association of California**

October 18, 19, and 20

The class will be the basic (24 hour) course and will teach patrol riding techniques, making law enforcement contacts, and basic bike maintenance.

The Instructor, Rick Neilson, is a POST instructor and the class will be POST certified. Rick has been teaching the class for eight years.

The field training will be on the American River in Sacramento. Classroom training will be at the Sheriff's Academy, which is also conveniently located on the American River.

I am arranging camping at one of our parks on the river, for those who wish to camp. There are also several hotels near by.

For more information contact:

John Havicon  
(916) 875-6672

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**Bike Patrol Class**  
**Presented by PRAC**  
**October 18, 19 and 20**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

PRAC Member

\$105 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Others

\$125 \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to PRAC

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to PRAC, P.O. Box 292010, Sacramento, CA 95829 (800) 994-2530 Deadline: 10/13/00

# Resource Management Workshop

September 18th (Monday)

9:00 a.m. — 4:30 p.m.

Sponsored by

Park Rangers Association of California

and

Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District

Presenters will be Open Space District Rangers Phil Hearin and Ken Miller, and Resource Management Specialist Jodi Issacs

The workshop will begin at St. Joseph's Hill Preserve located south of Los Gatos.

We will visit three sites within the Open Space District and discuss:

- \* Strategies for Restoration of Disturbed Areas;
- \* Prescribed Burning to Encourage Native Plant Growth; and
- \* Acacia and Eucalyptus Removal Strategies.

The workshop is limited to 18 people as van transportation will be provided between the three sites.

## Workshop Schedule

9:00 a.m. St. Joseph's Hill  
11:00 a.m. Leave St. Joseph's Hill  
12:00 Noon Russian Ridge (Lunch)  
12:30 p.m. Russian Ridge workshop  
1:30 p.m. Leave Russian Ridge  
2:30 p.m. Pulgas Ridge  
3:30 p.m. Leave Pulgas Ridge  
4:30 p.m. Return to St. Joseph's Hill

Porta-potties are at St. Joseph's Hill, We will make a quick side trip to the Skyline Ranger Office for flush toilets at Russian Ridge. There are no toilets or water at Pulgas Ridge.

For additional information contact Ken Miller at (408) 866-1240.

## Resource Management Workshop

Presented by PRAC and Mid Pensula Regional Open Space District  
September 18, 2000 — St. Joseph's Hill

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Agency \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

PRAC Member

Others

\$45 \_\_\_\_\_

\$60 \_\_\_\_\_

**Make check payable to PRAC**

Choice of Sandwich for lunch:

Turkey and Avocado \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetarian \_\_\_\_\_ Cold Cut Combo \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to PRAC, P.O. Box 292010, Sacramento, CA 95829 (800) 994-2530 Deadline: 9/12/00

# An Open Letter To PRAC

Dear members:

I joined PRAC as an associate member a few years back. The spirit of the brotherhood of the profession after attending a few a workshops and conference made me upgrade to regular member status. However recent events seem aimed at dividing this brotherhood by defining the role of park ranger into a box.

I have been working for Humboldt County Parks for the past nine years. We wear a uniform, collect fees, clean bathrooms, pick up garbage, enforce park rules and regulations, (use of citations), administer first aid, and act as a liaison between the park and its visitors. Everyone agrees that I am a park ranger, including other departments in the county and the general public, even though my official title is Park Caretaker. Over the years it has become obvious that the title park ranger carries much more respect and compliance from the general public than park caretaker and we are working to change our title.

In our attempt to change our title to ranger we are already facing some opposition due to costs, increased training, and retirement. We operate 13 parks with a full time staff of 5 and hire 5 seasonal employees for the summer. Our annual operating budget is \$30,000 and we generate approximately \$160,000 in revenue each year. Finding more funding out of the general fund is not a possibility. So we are looking at other title changes, will this change our job or what the public perceives us to be? I don't think so in the least.

Public perception defines us much more than our actual jobs. If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quakes like a duck its probably a duck. It works for our profession as well. As long as we wear a uniform, are dealing with issues in the park in any way shape or form, we are considered rangers. No matter what our title is.

It saddens me to think that we too have become to specialized. Rangers to me were always a jack of all trades position. They dealt with water lines, visitor information, picked up trash, led nature hikes...The recent emphasis on law enforcement is important for our protection but maybe a better title change would be park police if that is the direction that agencies feel they need to pursue to protect their parks and visitors. I do not carry a firearm or feel the need, want, or desire to carry one for my protection. (I do own and use firearms for recreation purposes). I enforce park rules and regulations, other lawbreaking activity is handled by the sheriff dept. Enforcement issues are not always that clear in black and white but what really is? If this profession changes to more of a law enforcement orientated tittle maybe caretaker isn't so bad after all.

Please don't get me wrong! There is much that needs to be addressed in our profession, and the training outline has brought many aspects of how varied our jobs are and the skills we all need to have at our fingertips every day. But maybe we should try to impress upon the public our different and varying roles rather than defining the title to a specialized classification. I enjoy being out at the park. I do not dread getting up and going to work in the morning. I look forward to visitor contacts, working outdoors, even cleaning the bathrooms is a great chance for teaching the public about costs of operation, answering questions, or just to meet your park visitors.

Rangers protect the park from the people and the people from the park. They are not considered the brute squad or the bad guys. We are the good guys helping everyone to enjoy their park experience. If your main duty is patrolling the park and enforcing rules and regulations consider the title of park police. This will clear up problems with PERS, safety retirement, and training requirements. Otherwise let the park rangers stay as a generalist position. I believe that is the best way to serve and protect our parks and the public that uses them. Lets not divide this great organization that I believe is working so hard to include everyone by offering maintenance tracts, interpretation tracts, and enforcement tracts.

Everyone always tells me you have the best job in the world and you know they're right.

Respectfully,

Pat Boyle

# To Catch a Thief

by Walt Young

Parks have never been immune from crime. For this reason, one of the historic Park Ranger duties has been the providing of protection for both the park and the park visitor. This spring, several of our busy trail head parks experienced a wave of burglary from motor vehicles.

We were being hit on average once to twice a week for several months. We increased patrol of the parks, embarked on a public education campaign, and to the extent our limited resources could be used, conducted plain-clothes operations.

Nothing worked until we happened to be at the right place at the right time. Increased patrol resulted in the felony arrest of two suspects who were caught breaking a locked vehicle window with a burglary tool. We thought that our troubles were behind us, but with our suspects still in jail, the crimes continued.

It was time to start thinking out of the box. We knew that the typical target was a solo female hiker driving an SUV (no trunk). The crimes generally occurred between 3:00 P.M. and 6:00 P.M. during the weekday. We needed to find out how these crimes were taking place right under our noses.

Ranger Ken Nelson came up with our ace in the hole. He developed the MRCA Trash-Can-Cam. The Trash-Can-Cam concept is simple; place a DC powered video camera system inside a dummy trash can. Our standard trash can has a dome lid which prevents discovery of the system. A pinhole camera was mounted in the side of the can, and the tape deck, deep cycle battery, and controls all fit in its bottom. We always place a real can next to the Trash-Can-Cam so that park users can deposit their trash properly.

The results from the new combination of patrol, investigation and camera were shocking. We learned that our parks were being hit by criminals roving in organized packs. The car committing the burglary was supported by both lookout and back-up cars. Communication between the criminals was achieved by using both cell-phone and pager. Although this case is still under investigation by our agency and two police departments, we can reveal that two additional suspects have been arrested on felony charges, and that additional arrests are anticipated.

As an agency we learned an important lesson. There may be a reason why you can't get a handle on certain crimes. The criminals may be operating at a higher level of sophistication than any of us realize. The Officer Safety implications for this level of criminal sophistication speaks for itself.

**Legal considerations:** No article would be complete without the standard legal admonishment to consult your agencies staff counsel regarding this type of program. Video recording (without audio) of public parking areas, with public notice, where there is no expectation of privacy, should be approved by your legal department. Our camera targets ranged from bait cars designed to catch suspects looking for valuables, to general roadway monitoring in an effort to establish a vehicle use/crime occurrence connection. Camera targets were specifically selected to tape suspects engaged in criminal activity.

If you would like more information on building this camera system, please E-Mail Supervising Ranger Kevin Perrine of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority at <perrine@smmc.ca.gov>.



# To be a Peace Officer or not be a Peace Officer

by Ken Miller

At the very minimum I hope that all of the recent debate concerning ranger training standards (peace officer in particular) has gotten people to at least think about issues. Dave Brooks wrote a very thought provoking article in the last Signpost about ranger standards. Possibly requiring rangers to become peace officers is definitely a charged issue and one that the PRAC board will have to take a long hard look at before making any decisions.

I do support requiring rangers to be sworn peace officers, I was a peace officer ranger when I worked for San Jose Parks and am still a peace officer ranger for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District. Both positions are unarmed positions. I don't believe that a rangers job duties will necessarily change whether they are peace officers or not. My current job duties are about equally split between maintenance and public contact including park law enforcement. Certainly the law enforcement can run the gamut from good to bad but 99.9% of it is dealing with off-leash dogs, cyclists without helmets, and the typical park rules violations. Often times a verbal warning is all that is needed to gain compliance. If the law enforcement is beyond the scope of my duties, training, and equipment I defer it to the Sheriff's Department.

I think that any uniformed park employee can and will encounter similar situations in their respective parks. The public just sees the uniform and I'm certain that the majority of them don't know whether a ranger is a peace officer or not.

Requiring rangers to become peace officers is not a call to change their current job duties and responsibilities. I see it as a way of standardizing training across the board, From the start I've also said when setting any new standards start small. The current minimum standard to be sworn as a peace officer is PC 832 which I believe is either a 40 or 60 hour course. I think of PC 832 as a minimum class good to make a person aware of hazardous situations.

As I mentioned earlier I support requiring rangers to be peace officers from a standardization and training point of view. From an individual point of view being a peace officer can be beneficial. The Peace Officer Bill of Rights offers protections to peace officers concerning procedures during investigations and also some liability immunities.

Requiring rangers to be sworn peace officers will not necessarily change their current duties. What it will do is increase training standardization as well as offer procedural protections not guaranteed to non peace officers.

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## Year of Challenges & Change

by Lori Charett

They say challenges & change build character. I have faced many this year already, and I bet many of you have too. Is it a new millennium thing or what?? Our world is full of change and ironically, that is one of life's two guarantees. At times, it really is a challenge to change or adjust as fast as the circumstances demand, but I like to look at it as another one of life's lessons and face it optimistically. I feel the more we adapt to change and the challenges we face, the more flexible, understanding, empathic and versatile we become. In our profession, we can't have too much of that. In addition, it is rather easy to stay in our little niche that we create for ourselves. If you want and management lets you, you can stay in the same park for the rest of your career. But...is this serving you and the public well? OK, so you prefer to do interpretation, will it hurt you to work outside your box and learn resource management and/or law enforcement? I figure it can't hurt to be your agencies best asset, or another agencies future asset. Think about how versatile you are. Is there a project or park you would like to learn more about to enhance your professional development? What can you do to keep from being stagnant- even if you can't move to another park? Are you still learning and gracefully accepting new challenges? I think these are questions we all must ask ourselves and ponder. At some point change is necessary. New doors are opened, but they won't open for us, we must open them ourselves. Take the initiative to open some doors and see what challenges await you on the other side, go ahead.. Its fun! Oh one last note on this subject. Don't close the doors behind you, leave them all open- I think you all know that one! In my last article, I mentioned that I was transferred back to Balboa Park from Chollas Lake.

I have been with the Metro Parks Division for six years (mostly in beautiful Balboa Park) and even though there is still so much more to learn there, I will be joining the Coastal Parks Division Ranger Program at Mission Bay Park on August 11. Mission Beach—here I come! I am looking forward to the new and exciting challenges. There is no doubt I will miss the top notch people I work with and for in Metro Parks. Yet, I will have the opportunity to meet and work with many more great people in my new assignment.

Not to add to the confusion, but you may have noticed my last name has changed. I have taken my maiden name back... um, need I say more? Yes, change is good!

On another note, I am still looking for someone to chair the Interpretive Committee. Several of you have offered to help (which I appreciate), but in order to get this off the ground and especially in light of my new assignments, I need a chairperson to lead this group of talented, eager park professionals. Please contact me at my newest work number (858) 581-7604 if you are interested in helping. You may also email me at <parkfuzz16@aol.com> (One thing that remained the same!).

I am currently planning another training for late October....stay tuned! I anticipate the training to be a full day and have an interpretive focus. The training will be as high quality as in the past, yet still very reasonable in price. I know you will be reading this in September. I hope to get the information out to you via a flyer in September, as I am still laying the ground work for the agenda and speakers. Feel free to contact me with any questions.

# Parks Lose a Good Friend

The park profession lost a true friend when John Nicholas passed away on July 3rd. John had a massive heart attack while canoeing with his wife Candy on the Trinity River. He was 64 years old. John was the founder of the Park Management Program at West Valley College. He was the one who got into a school car and traveled around northern California to ascertain whether a technician type of program was needed by agencies. He allowed me to become a part of it all and changed my life.

I always think about what my life would have been like if he hadn't appeared. John left the program for a while when he decided to coach football and only teach two classes, Fire Suppression and Backpacking, and then came back into the program full time after his career as a coach ended. John had just retired from West Valley as the Division Chair of Applied Arts and Sciences. He had coached at several high schools before coming to West Valley in 1968. He most certainly has touched the lives of many people in the park field as well as his professional colleagues.

The family has asked that donations be made in his memory to the Nature Conservancy. You can send them to the San Francisco office: Nature Conservancy, 201 Mission Street 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105. You must include Candy's address if you want her to know what you have done in John's memory. Her address is: Candice Nicholas, 140 Carl Drive, Scotts Valley, CA 95066.

We will all miss him.

*Smitty*

## A Book To Report On

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

When I read that Smitty was putting down his pen, I was sad. He has recommended many books that have provided great information, as well as fun reading. I volunteered to continue the article for a couple of reasons. The first reason is that the article provides a source of information to the park professional that is a valuable tool for our jobs. The second reason is that I am relatively new in this field and have a lot to learn. I am interested in reading anything that pertains to parks, resource management, and the ranger profession. Recently, I have been seeking information on wilderness first aid. I patrol over 2,000 acres at the park where I work. Most of the areas are accessible only by foot, which limits the time in which EMS responds.

There are two books that I have just finished reading. The first is *Wilderness First Aid*, by Tod Schimelpfenig. The second is titled *Wilderness 9-1-1* by Eric A. Weiss. Both books are informative, easy to read and include descriptive illustrations. The prices range between \$14-\$16 and each of these books are small enough to carry in your pack. Hey, who would have thought that you could keep an airway open by sticking a safety pin through someone's tongue and pin it to his or her shirt? You will find this as well as many other incredible wilderness first aid tips in both of these books.

Take the time to read and enjoy the books!

## II Commandments for an Enthusiastic Team Submitted by Ken Miller

1. Help each other be right—not wrong.
2. Look for ways to make new ideas work —not for reasons they won't.
3. If in doubt—check it out.
4. Help each other win and take pride in each others victories.
5. Speak positively about each other and about your organization at every opportunity.
6. Maintain a positive mental attitude no matter what the circumstances.
7. Act with initiative and courage as if it all depends on you.
8. Do everything with enthusiasm - it's contagious.
9. Whatever you want—give it away.
10. Don't lose faith—never give up.
11. Have fun!!

*From Ian Percy,  
Canadian Training Resources Group 1984*

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