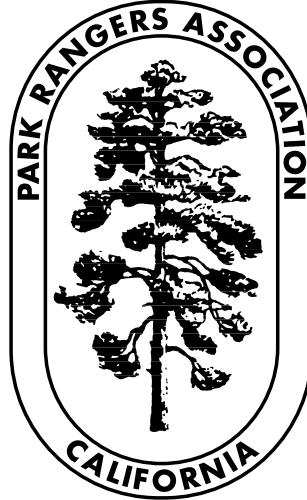


The Signpost

November–December, 2003



Region 2 Update

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr

Summer has ended and winter is quickly approaching. **Region 2** concluded it's summer with a BBQ at Alum Rock Park in San Jose. We had approximately 40–50 people show up from all over the region. I think the person who traveled the farthest was Steve Thompson from Monterey County Parks. West Valley College Internship class also showed up and I signed up 9 new student members. I would like to give a special thanks to Pam Helmke who was kind enough to BBQ so that I could go around and socialize with all of our members.

The *Standards and Training* review committee had it's first meeting in Sacramento. We reviewed some documents for the PRAC domain certificates and it looks like we may possibly have two people receive the PRAC *Generalist Ranger Certificate* at the 2004 Conference in Anaheim. If you have met some of the domains and would like to receive a certificate that goes towards achieving the final certificate, mail copies of your documents to PRAC c/o Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

As my term as the Region 2 Director comes to an end in December, I just want to thank all the members for being part of a great organization. I hope to see all of you at the 2004 Conference in Anaheim.

West Nile Comes to California

by John Havicon

For the last three years, we have heard the warnings that West Nile Virus was slowly making it's way to California. Well that day has come. On August 20, the first evidence of the virus was discovered in Imperial County with infected mosquitoes captured. On October 9th of this year a Riverside County resident fell ill to the virus, after working on the drains along the Santa Ana River. Several dead birds infected with the virus have been recovered in Riverside, San Bernardino, San Gabriel, Coachella Valley and Imperial County.

As park rangers, we should be concerned as we are at a higher risk than most. West Nile Virus has similar symptoms as encephalitis but it has a higher death rate. Most healthy persons will survive the virus with little to no symptoms. Some may encounter headaches, Muscle ache, fever and fatigue. The elderly and those with lowered immune systems have a greater chance of death.

Working in mosquito country makes it a little difficult for us to protect ourselves. It is recommended to avoid dusk and dawn, when mosquito activity peaks. Wear long sleeves and long pants and other protective clothing. Apply insect repellent, according to the manufacturer. Make sure windows and screens have tight fitting screens.

If you locate dead birds in your parks, you can report them to the California Department of Health via their web site: www.westnile.ca.gov. They are interested in mostly in the crow family, (crows, magpies, jays, and ravens), but you can report any specie of bird.

2004 PRAC Conference

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr

PRAC CSPRA C-O-N-F-E-R-E-N-C-E. Park conference, park conference, come and enjoy the 2004 conference in Anaheim, heim, heim. Sing the song and come along and have some fun in March. PRAC CSPRA C-O-N-F-E-R-E-N-C-E!!!!

The 2004 Parks Conference is just around the corner. If you thought the 2003 conference in Tahoe was the best conference ever, wait until you come to Mickey's hometown. I hear that the sessions are going to be some of the best ever. The field trips are going to be like no others and the banquet is going to be a time that will go in attendee's minds for conferences to come.

So make plans now and don't miss the 2004 conference in Anaheim.

PRAC CSPRA C-O-N-F-E-R-E-N-C-E.

From the President's Desk

I HOPE YOU ARE ALL PREPARED FOR WHAT THIS WINTER MAY BRING YOU. I ALWAYS GET EXCITED THIS TIME OF YEAR. WINTER IS MY FAVORITE SEASON FOR MANY REASONS. I ENJOY THE STORMY WEATHER WINTER CAN BRING US. I ALSO LIKE THE FACT THAT WINTER IS THE SEASON THAT NOT ONLY ENDS AN OLD YEAR BUT ALSO BRINGS IN A NEW ONE. SOME MAY CALL ME WARPED BUT I KNOW THERE ARE MANY OTHERS THAT SHARE MY OPINION, MANY OF WHOM ARE FELLOW PARK PROFESSIONALS. WITH THE END OF THE YEAR UPON US, IT IS ALSO **TIME TO RENEW OUR MEMBERSHIP DUES** AND TO **CAST OUR VOTES IN THE ELECTIONS FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS'** POSITIONS THAT ARE UP FOR REELECTION. LOOK IN THE MAIL FOR YOUR RENEWAL NOTICE AND A BALLOT IF YOU ARE A REGULAR OR HONORARY MEMBER. IN ADDITION TO VOTING FOR BOARD OFFICER POSITIONS, YOU WILL ALSO GET A CHANCE TO CAST YOUR VOTE RELATING TO THE CREATION OF A PRAC REGION 6 FOR NEVADA. THE OTHER ISSUE TO BE DECIDED ON THE BALLOT IS WHETHER OR NOT WE SHOULD CREATE A RETIRED PARK PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP LEVEL. THIS IS A HISTORIC VOTE FOR OUR ASSOCIATION, SO YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS YOUR CHANCE TO CAST YOUR VOTE. BE SURE TO RETURN YOUR BALLOT AND DUES RENEWAL AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THESE ARE INTERESTING AND CHALLENGING TIMES WE ARE GOING THROUGH. MANY OF US ARE STILL STRUGGLING WITH BUDGET ISSUES AND THE UNCERTAINTY OF WHAT PROBLEMS ARE YET TO COME. IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO WORK TOGETHER AND HELP EACH OTHER THROUGH THESE DIFFICULT TIMES. PRAC IS PARTNERING WITH THE CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS FOUNDATION AGAIN TO HOLD THE **2ND ANNUAL PARK ADVOCACY DAY**. AS YOU MAY RECALL FROM LAST YEAR, THAT IS A DAY WHERE PARK SUPPORTERS GO TO SACRAMENTO TO LOBBY LEGISLATORS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PARKS AND PARK FUNDING. I WILL KEEP YOU INFORMED OF WAYS TO BE INVOLVED WITH PARK ADVOCACY DAY. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO VOLUNTEER TO HELP OUT WITH THE EVENT, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO CONTACT ME.

BE SURE TO MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE **2004 PARKS CONFERENCE** THAT WILL BE AT THE LOVELY **ANAHEIM-GARDEN GROVE CROWNE PLAZA RESORT, MARCH 8-11**. THE CONFERENCE PLANNING TEAM IS WORKING HARD TO BRING YOU ANOTHER TOP-NOTCH CONFERENCE. CHECK YOUR MAIL FOR YOUR REGISTRATION PACKET THAT SHOULD BE COMING OUT AROUND THE HOLIDAYS. FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON THE CONFERENCE, VISIT OUR WEB SITE. I HOPE TO SEE YOU IN ANAHEIM.

I AM PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT **WE HAVE REACHED THE MEMBERSHIP GOAL** I HAVE SET FOR THE ORGANIZATION OF 300 MEMBERS. WE CURRENTLY HAVE AROUND 340 MEMBERS. GOOD JOB TO EVERY ONE FOR DOING THEIR PART IN RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS. WE SHOULD ALL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE PRAC TO OUR FELLOW PARK PROFESSIONALS AND ENCOURAGE THEM TO JOIN. THE MORE OF US THERE ARE WORKING TOGETHER, THE MORE WE CAN ACCOMPLISH.

I HAD THE PLEASURE OF ATTENDING THE CERTIFIED INTERPRETIVE GUIDE COURSE HOSTED BY THE MRCA AND INSTRUCTED BY AMY LETHBRIDGE AND HER STAFF. I LEARNED A LOT WHILE HAVING FUN WITH A TOP-NOTCH GROUP OF FELLOW PARK PROFESSIONALS. THIS 40-HOUR COURSE IS CERTIFIED BOTH BY THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR INTERPRETATION AND PRAC. THIS COURSE FULFILLS THE PRAC LEARNING DOMAIN FOR INTERPRETATION. THE COST OF THE COURSE WAS WORTH EVERY PENNY AND INCLUDED UNIQUE CULINARY EXPERIENCES. I EVEN SIGNED UP 7 NEW MEMBERS AT THIS TRAINING COURSE. IF ANY OF YOU EVER GET A CHANCE TO ATTEND THIS TRAINING, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND IT. GOOD JOB TO AMY AND HER STAFF FOR PRESENTING A HIGH-QUALITY TRAINING COURSE.

THAT'S ALL FOR NOW AND LET'S BE CAREFUL OUT THERE!

Mike Chiesa

A Book to Report On

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr

I was going through the books on my shelf and came across an oldie but a goodie. The book is titled "Park Ranger Guide To Wildlife" by Arthur P. Miller, Jr and costs around \$13.00.

Arthur Miller interviews over one hundred rangers from across the country to give a first hand account of wildlife in their region. As you read the accounts you feel as if you are right there on a nature walk. This book is great for the visitor, new ranger in the field or experienced rangers who need to regroup and get a fresh look on interpreting from other rangers in the field.

I enjoyed the book again and recommend it as a book to have on your shelf.

Take the time to read and enjoy the book.

Advanced Officer Training for Park Rangers

John Havicon

Advanced Officer Training for Park Rangers will once again be offered this year from January 26 to January 30. This is 40-hour POST certified will be held at the Sacramento Regional Public Safety Center. This class differs from regular AOT courses as it is geared for specifically for Park Rangers in park settings.

Monday January 26—Legal Update

Learn the current changes in laws applicable to Park Rangers. Northern California District Attorneys will discuss: Current laws; Search & Seizure; Miranda Warnings and Courtroom demeanor.

Tuesday, January 2—Basic Investigation

A former Bay Area investigator discusses basic investigative techniques for: Crime scenes; Burglaries; Robberies; Rapes; Interviewing witnesses and victims and law enforcement resources

Wednesday, January 2—Interview Techniques

A former Bay Area investigator discusses how to interview suspects; Interrogation; Using Miranda; Observation skills and Amendment rights.

Thursday, January 29—Fish & Game Laws

Fish & Game Wardens will discuss Current Fish & Game

regulations; Trespassing; Firearm and ammunition restrictions for hunters

Thursday, January 29—Specialized Reports

How to write reports specific to burglaries; assaults; robberies and other crimes and what elements should be included in your reports.

Friday, January 30—Resources

Held at the Effie Yeaw Nature Center. Discuss how to talk to visitors regarding natural resources and resource protection, basic review of flora and fauna

Friday Evening, January 30—Advanced Firearms, Night shoot

County Parks Range-Masters Steve Ingalls and Morris McGee will familiarize you with the advantages and disadvantages of shooting in the dark.

Class will be held from 8:00am to 5:00pm Monday to Thursday and 10:00am to 7:00pm Friday. Cost for this training will be \$35.00 for PRAC Members and \$45.00 for non-members. For more information, please contact John Havicon at 916-875-6672 or email: jhavicon@sacparks.org

It's Time to Vote!

DON'T FORGET TO MAIL IN YOUR VOTES FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS. THIS IS ALSO A GOOD TIME TO RENEW YOUR PRAC MEMBERSHIP. ALL MEMBERSHIPS EXPIRE AT THE END OF THIS YEAR!

A Gut Feeling **by Lee Hickinbotham Jr**

A while back I was doing some work behind the ranger station. I looked up and noticed this elderly woman looking my way. I smiled and went back to working on my project. About 30 minutes later as I was heading out on a bike patrol I noticed the same woman walking past the ranger station again. I got this gut feeling that something wasn't right, however, I was distracted by some visitors who had gone off trail down into the pickle weed. As I was educating the visitors on why they shouldn't be standing in the middle of the pickle weed, the elderly woman that I had seen earlier came up to me.

She was Hispanic and did not speak a word of English. I can not speak Spanish so we were trying very hard to communicate with each other. I asked one of the visitors that I had just educated if they spoke Spanish. They said that the lady was saying something about a body of water. I got out the park map and tried to point at different locations on the map that she may recognize. She just seemed frustrated and walked off. My gut feeling was telling me that I shouldn't just leave this lady alone. So I decided to follow her on my bike. As we past the nature center I went

in and explained the incident to one of our naturalist. The naturalist said that she spoke Spanish and would go out and talk to the woman. By this time the woman was about a 1/2 mile down the trail. The naturalist caught up with the woman and brought the woman back to my location.

We ascertained that the elderly woman had walked over from an adjoining preserve approximately 7-miles away and was lost. She had her granddaughter's car keys and did not know how to contact her granddaughter. We also ascertained that she had diabetes and had not eaten or had any water for about two hours. I contacted the ranger from the adjoining preserve and asked if anyone had reported a missing person. He informed me that he had been looking for the lady for approximately an hour and a half.

I returned the woman to her family and all was well. The moral of this story is that we need to trust our gut feelings. Look for the things that seem out of the ordinary and follow through. If I hadn't followed this woman she could have gone into a diabetic emergency and passed out on the trail.

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The *Signpost* is published by the Park Rangers Association of California (PRAC). The Association mailing address is P.O. Box 153, Stewarts Point, CA, 95480.

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 can be mailed to David Brooks, 560 Hillcrest Dr., Ben Lomond, CA, 95005. Information can also be submitted by telephone at (831) 336-2948.

Submission deadlines are the last day of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

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JOB CLASSIFICATION OR MAJOR _____

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REGULAR.....\$45

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25 PERSONS-12 MAILINGS).....\$150

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SUPPORTING.....\$100

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