



PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

Vol. 3 March, 1998

Salt Lake City, Utah 1997 Mid-Year Conference

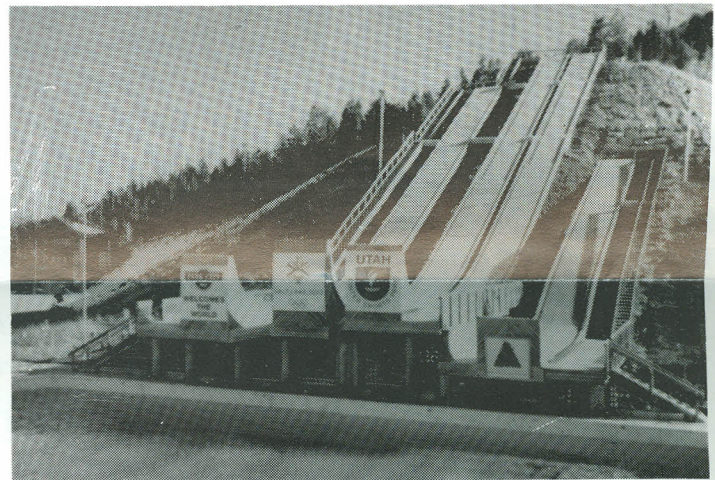
National Recreation and Park Association (N.R.P.A.), held their annual convention in Salt Lake City, Utah this past October. The Park Law Enforcement Association (P.L.E.A.), which always holds their mid-year Board of Directors meeting at this

time, and has a booth in the convention hall, were on hand to welcome the thousands of delegates from around the country. The training sessions that were offered, were very educational and interesting. P.L.E.A. had several strong presentations in regards

to park safety and recreational safety issues. The tours of Antelope Island, in the middle of the Great Salt Lake; the town of Park City, the host of the 2000 Olympic and the downtown area, were spectacular and breath taking trips.



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P.L.E.A. GOING TO FLORIDA

The 19th annual P.L.E.A. conference will be held February 25th through the 28th. The Florida Park Patrol, will roll out the red carpet for members from around the country. Training sessions are planned around Environmental Protection, Law Enforcement Patrol Techniques, and Protecting our Nations Wildlife. This truly looks like one of our finest conferences to date.

If you are interested in attending, call Captain Carl Nielsen at 941 / 332-6966 Ext. 103

P.L.E.A. on the World Wide Web www.parkranger.com





A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

CHIEF RANGER TIM CURTIN

Dear Member:

In less than two weeks, from the writing of this letter, P.L.E.A.'s Conference in Fort Myers, Florida will begin. The Conference's itinerary has been specifically designed by the staff of the Florida

Park Patrol to be educational, informative and enjoyable. Personally and on behalf of the Association, I wish to thank Colonel Watson, Lieutenant Colonel Joe Henderson, Captain Carl Nielson and the men and women of the Florida Park Patrol for their hard work and effort. This Conference has all the ingredients of a "top-notch" workshop. I'm looking forward to seeing you there.

At the conclusion of the Conference, my two-year term as President of the Park Law Enforcement Association will end. Please forgive the cliché, but time really does fly. I am grateful for having been given the opportunity to serve the Association and will continue to do so by supporting the efforts of the new officers in every way possible. I would be remiss if I did not use this forum to publicly thank the past and present officers and directors of the Association for their commitment and dedication. The accomplishments of the Association, and any future success, can be attributed to their contri-

butions of time and effort.

Their efforts alone, however, could not have sustained the Association for the 14 years of its existence without the support of its members. Each of you has played an important roll in the development and success of P.L.E.A.. Through your continued membership and conference attendance, you have encouraged and supported the Board's resolution to facilitate the advancement of the park law enforcement profession, in all its facets and howsoever organized. It is for this reason that I extend the greatest appreciation to our members for their dedication and commitment to serving the public and protecting our natural resources. It is because of you that the Association exists. I hope that P.L.E.A. can contribute, in some way, to your future success.

Sincerely,
Tim Curtin
President

BLAST FROM THE PAST

A HISTORY LESSON

by

Tim Curtin, P.L.E.A. President

In recent months I have been making inquiries into the status of P.L.E.A.'s incorporation and tax exemption. As a result, it was necessary to review many of P.L.E.A.'s archived documents in search of information. I found this information interesting from an historical perspective and wish to share it with you.

On April 17, 1984 the Association was chartered as a not-for-profit corporation under the laws of the State of Colorado. The Association's name, at that time, was the "National Alliance of Park Enforce-

ment Professionals." Members of the Board of Directors, whose names might be familiar to some, included, Jerry Wimpee-President, J.C. Lindsey-Vice President, Gordon Greenwell-Secretary/Treasurer, Ralph Hays, Jim Fletcher, Dan Murrell, Gene Moore, Andrew Hutcheson and Burbon Zeigler.

Two months later, after a heated debate during a Board Meeting held in Glynco, Georgia the Association's name was changed to the "Park Law Enforcement Association." According to the minutes of this meeting, our past President Ralph Hays may have strong-armed the rest of the board members. Thank-you Ralph, P.L.E.A. rolls off the tongue much easier than N.A.P.L.E.P.. This name change became official on February 12, 1985 when

the Secretary of the State of Colorado certified the name change by amending the Association's Articles of Incorporation.

In January of 1986, the Association applied for a certificate of authority to establish its corporate office in the State of Texas. This was done to assure that the Association's legal documents were readily available to the President and "driving force", Jerry Wimpee. Jerry still serves on the Board of Directors and is the Association's registered agent. On January 29, 1986 the State of Texas issued a Certificate of Authority to the Park Law Enforcement Association and granted a charter as a non-profit corporation. This means that P.L.E.A. must conduct its business in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas governing corporations and partnerships.

Hunters Are You Ready?

by Chief Ranger Steve Pokrywka

The hunter comes in various forms. Young and old alike share a sport that lets one get close to nature, while trying to put food on the table, or find that trophy mount for the wall. Men and women alike hit the timber of milo field trying to kick up a covey of quail or that rooster pheasant. There are bird hunters, deer hunters, small game, water fowl and many other types of hunters who enjoy getting out into the wilderness.

This sport of hunting, which so many enjoy, could not be what it is today without enforcement of the rules and regulation. Protection of our wildlife and enforcing the rules which govern those that hunt fall into the hands of the many



park rangers,, and conservation officers of this state.

Granted, park law enforcement officers do not have to deal with the consistency of criminals and crimes as that of our local city or county police agencies. However, there is one important factor that we must be aware of in our profession and that is the hunter carries a weapon. It may sound paranoid, but that aspect alone makes the job duties of the park and wildlife officer very interesting.

Think about it for a moment. Checking a few fishing licenses at the area

state lake seems easy in comparison to finding a group of people stalking game and armed with shotguns in the middle of the woods. Safety and common sense play a vital role in the way we approach our jobs.

I cannot think of any city police officers who would like to be on this end of our beat.

Our job during this time of year is one of the most dangerous around. State and local authorities are short staffed, and it becomes a game of cat and mouse with the illegal hunter and poacher. Most of the time the criminal wins because their are just not enough of us to go around.

The judicial system can help us a great deal. We need tougher sentences and stronger prosecution for those that we catch. We continue to work hard and train on all aspects of our job to keep our wildlife and environment safe, but there are just too few of us to go around. That is where the general public can help us. Just a few simple things would make our jobs as park and wildlife enforcers easier.

Being aware of the surroundings in your neighborhood is a big part of the help we need. You may see a vehicle in an out of the way place on the way home from work or school. Noticing a pickup truck spotlighting in the dark for several nights, or hearing a gunshot late at night in the nearby woods, are just a few of the things that should come to your attention. This is not just taking place on county roads whether, a majority of the illegal activity is taking place right on town, and on the city outskirts. You do not have to go out and ask people questions, but there is vital information you can relay. Here are a few simple things that concerned citizens can do to help us out.

What to do if you suspect poaching or illegal hunting.

1. Know law enforcement agencies phone number or call 911.
2. Vehicle description (tag number, color, make, model)
3. Place and time. Names and addresses if known.

4. Violation that you think may have been committed.

5. Do not try to handle yourself-contact authorities.

P.L.E.A. RANGER JOKES

A Park Ranger making his rounds comes across a vehicle parked who are obviously engaged in some type of sexual activity. The Ranger, politely as possible, knocked on the window and asked, "What do you think you two are your doing?" The gentleman says that he and his girlfriend are doing the mamba. The officer smiles and replies, knowing whole heartily what is going on, "This is no place for this type of activity, and you should just mamba right on out of here."

The couple leaves, and the Ranger continues his patrol. Just around the corner, there is another car which appears to be up to the same thing. The Ranger approaches, knocks on the window, and asks if everything is alright. The lady inside says officer were practicing the tango. By this time, the Ranger is getting frustrated and tells the two to leave the park, and practice their tango in a motel or somewhere, but not in the park. They leave.

The night continues and much to the Ranger's disbelief he drives up on another vehicle with the windows all steamed. The Ranger, again annoyed by the nights activities, walks up to the vehicle, knocks on the window and asks, "Is everyone fine in there? Before the couple could answer he says "No, don't tell me." "You two are doing the bossanova." There is silence, then the lady leans over to the window and tells the Ranger, "Not really, but more like doing the boss a favor."



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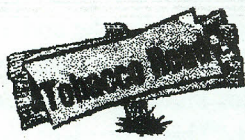
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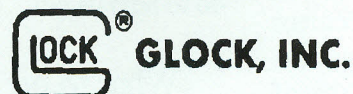


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Crisis Management in Your Parks

by Steve Pokrywka, Chief Ranger, Wyandotte County Parks

Do you have a plan when a crisis knocks at your door? For most of us in the field of parks and recreation, we only see the good things that happen day in, and day out. There are times when a good plan, for handling a crisis could save you, and the reputation of your park or agency.

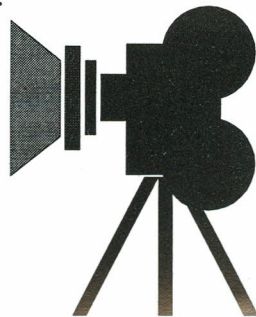
A crisis can be one of several things. A disgruntled employee, accidents, injuries to a park patron, a drowning, a shooting, rape, bomb scare, or domestic violence can bring your park to the front seats of the media arena. Having a plan of action will help your organization when the need arises. Some of you may go years before something bad happens, but when it does, it will be to your benefit to have a trained staff to handle any crisis.

Television and newspapers are our friends, we watch and read them every day, keeping informed of the things that take place in the world. The media can make a crisis out of a minor incident, by blowing it out of proportion, and jeopardize everything that your staff has worked so hard for. Now if you can think about their purpose and realize that most of the news they report on is negative, you start to think about, "what if?" They love bad news and dwell on it. So now, let something go wrong in your park or facility, and see how they treat you. Have a game plan in case it happens to you, and here are a few things to consider when making up your crisis management plan.

SECURING THE SCENE. This is best done by law enforcement personnel, but can be done by qualified or trained staff. Keep others from destroying evidence or crowding an area first and foremost. The farther you keep people away from the action the less likely they are to know what is going on. They will not be forming opinions, but asking for facts, and quite honestly you may not know the facts. The less congestion you have, for whatever crisis situation, it is easier to think when there is not a bunch of people around. Talk

to witnesses, and get their names, addresses, and phone numbers.

THE PLAN, Know who will be in charge if something happens. This person will assign other duties to individuals as needed. Establish a command post if needed, to talk with people about what you are going to do. This could be your office, a shelter, or a couple of vehicles. Decide if you will need more help, and where it will come from. Remember phone lines or other communications are important at this time.



THE MEDIA. Have a person ready to talk to the press. This person represents your organization, they should be able to think and talk logically about any incident. They should be well mannered and groomed. Practicing with your staff may help you find the right person. Get the facts, because giving out the wrong information is worse than giving out no information. Never tell the media, "No comment at this time." They will eat you up, and you will come across as uncooperative. They will make news on what they think might have happened. Give them a little so they can do their jobs. You do not have to give them names, especially if family members have not been notified. Schedule a press conference for later in the day. Remembering that the media has deadline will help your relationship throughout the ordeal. Quiz the media on what they might know already, and ask them what they are going to be asking. Do not wait for something bad to happen to get in touch with the media. Use them to your benefit for civic functions, programs, and other so-

cial events. Establish a relationship before the crisis.

WHOM TO NOTIFY. Family, friends, preacher, doctor, police, fire and the list can go on. Emergency response teams, rescue units, and scuba-diving teams are a few of the specialty groups available, but knowing who to contact prior to an incident make it easier than during a crisis.

Hopefully, your park or facility will go on without any downfalls, but if you give consideration to a crisis management plan you will be far ahead in the long run, and maybe save the reputation of your agency.

Let's Take Pride in Our Profession

By Gary Balling
Morton Grove Park District

My pet peeve is that some in our profession don't see the value in what we do.

At a recent workshop, a discussion began on the topic "as a professional working in parks and recreation, I don't get no respect." My response is that respect is earned through developing trust and believing in your own value and the value of your work and those you serve. We made the decision that parks and recreation would be our vocation, our life's work. We continue to live with this choice, or perhaps move on to some other worthwhile occupation.

In examining my career over the years, I always come back to these truths:

- In public service we have the greatest opportunity to make a real difference.
- The field of parks and recreation is the most positive career a person could choose.
- The best jobs in the world are in the parks and recreation field.

Calender Of Events

FEB. 25 - FEB. 29, 1998

P.L.E.A. 19TH ANNUAL
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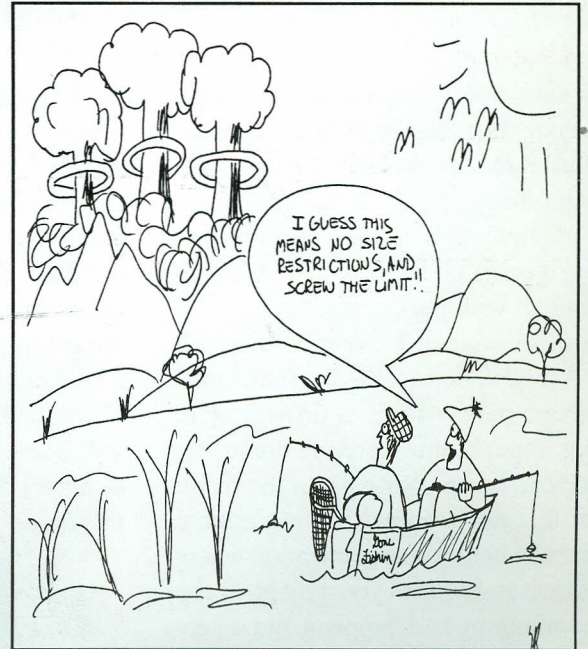
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