

EXPLORER

The Park Law Enforcement Association Newsletter

SUPPORTING THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE KEEPING OUR PARKS & WILDLIFE AREAS SAFE

Volume 8

Winter 2003

President's Message

By Captain Stuart Foland
Johnson County (KS) Park Police Department

Time has flown by so fast since being elected President of PLEA in March of this year. I have been networking with President's of current PLEA State Affiliates such as Kansas, Ohio, Illinois and Utah and other members of PLEA. I appreciate all the work our members are doing in their respective States, carrying on PLEA's efforts. Park law enforcement training plays a major role throughout the year within the State Affiliates and the contact person for each Affiliate is listed in this newsletter. If you would like to contact them they are just a phone call away. Other possible States we hope will affiliate with PLEA are Florida, Missouri, Colorado, New Mexico and North Carolina. I have had discussions with our members in these States so more people are aware of PLEA and hopefully some will become involved with our Association.

On October 18, 2002 PLEA held its Mid-Year Board Meeting at the NRPA Congress in Tampa, Florida. We had ten Board members attending and had a great meeting.

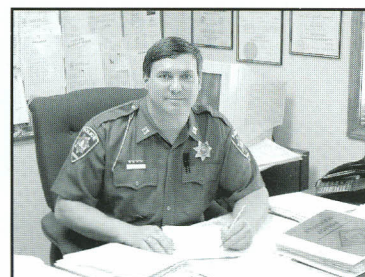
I would like to pass on to all members that PLEA's financial situation remains strong with most of our funding yearly comes from part of the registration fees at the Annual Conference and our membership dues.

Chief of Rangers, Mike Burko of Lake Metro Parks Ranger Department sent me a letter of interest for consideration on being appointed to the PLEA Board of Directors. After Board discussion, Chief Burko was unanimously elected to the Board. Chief Burko continues to be involved with PLEA and has for many years. Congratulations go to Chief Burko and we look forward to working with him over the coming years.

The NRPA Congress in 2003 will be held in St. Louis, Missouri and the Board discussed specific PLEA sessions/programs to be submitted to NRPA's Program Planning Committee. Retired Captain Bill Jacobs of the Minneapolis Park Police Department coordinates PLEA's program ideas and assists with session proposals.

Captain Jacobs and others presented a half a dozen great program ideas, which generated discussion and included several programs submitted by Assistant Chief Ranger, John Nesbit with the St. Louis County Park Rangers. Thank you John for the

great program ideas. Captain Jacobs asked to e-mail him a copy of your submitted proposal at captainwaj@juno.com and to Dr. Bruce Wicks at bew@uiuc.edu, which serves as PLEA's liaison to the NRPA Program Planning Committee and on the PLEA Board. Submission deadline to NRPA is December 6.



Captain Stuart Foland

Norm Lapera, Past President of PLEA and Editor of PLEA's Newsletter, the "EXPLORER", reported that another issue would be coming out soon and for all members wishing to submit articles and to future newsletters please send them to him by e-mail at nlapera@ebparks.org.

The Hamilton County Park Rangers in Cincinnati, Ohio will host the 24th Annual PLEA Conference from March 6 – 8, 2003. The Conference will be held at the Radisson Hotel in Covington, Kentucky. Please mark your calendars and hope you can attend. Conference brochures will be sent out soon and Hamilton County will be rolling out the red carpet for the Conference and one you won't want to miss. Contact Lt. Steve Newsom at (513) 521-3980 if you have any further questions on the Conference.

Membership renewals will be coming out near the first of the year and hope you will continue to support PLEA even though you might not be able to attend our Conference or other activities throughout the year. Your support is very important to us and allows us to carry on our mission.

Oklahoma Parks Division in Oklahoma City has accepted to host the 2004 PLEA Conference.

Please see **PRESIDENT** on page 7

PLEA Officers

Stuart Foland
President
Johnson County Park Police

Larry Brownlee, Sr.
Vice President
Maryland – National Capital
Park Police

Fred McCormick
Treasurer
Minneapolis Park Police
Department

Steve Newsom
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Wyandotte County Parks

R. Daniel Crone
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

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Bill Jacobs
Minneapolis Park Police
(Retired)

John R. Bryd, Sr.
Durham Park Rangers

Tim Curtin
Forest Preserve District of
Dupage County

L. Nathaniel Pinkard
Mill Creek Metro Park District

Mike Burko
Lake Metroparks Ranger Dept.

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Kansas PLEA
Todd Lovin
KS Wildlife and Parks

Illinois PLEA
Mark Johnson
Fox Valley Park District

Ohio PLEA
Greg Stephens
Five River Metro Parks

Utah State Park Officers Assoc.
Roland Bringham

Newsletter

Norman Lapera
Editor
East Bay Regional Park District
nlapera@ebparks.org

Colorado Rangers Use Volunteers to Educate Visitors about Wildfire

Jefferson County Open Space Park Rangers

Golden, Colorado

Jefferson County Open Space Park Rangers rarely miss opportunities to turn bad situations into positive public programs. The ranger crew, consisting of 13 patrol rangers responsible for regulation enforcement, public safety, and emergency response in 16 Open Space parks and 13 Open Space properties along Colorado's Front Range, embraced a daunting public education challenge this summer.

Hot, dry summers are no stranger to Colorado's Rocky Mountains. We are accustomed to the arid environment west of Denver and the area's long wildfire season that usually lasts from early July to late October. However, from the start of the 2002 fire season in early April, it quickly became apparent that this year we would see a fire season like no other. Weeks later the prospect of severe wildfire in Jefferson County Open Space parks came to the forefront of ranger duties with the advance of the 130,000 acre Hayman wildfire. Consequently the rangers created a plan to educate each Open Space visitor about the extreme wildfire danger.

The goal the rangers set forth was simple: educate the park system's nearly 2 million visitors about the role of fire in the environment and prevent human-caused wildfire in the parks. The rangers knew that their message needed to be sensitive and accurate as well as clear and absolute. But how can thirteen rangers responsible for protecting over 40,000 talk to every park visitor about wildfire? We went back to our indispensable resource known as volunteers!

F.A.T. or Fire Awareness Team volunteers came from intensive volunteer recruitment following the outbreak of the Hayman fire. This 77-person volunteer team began to assist Open Space Park Rangers immediately with enforcement of the County's ban on smoking in the parks and the use of outdoor grills, camp stoves and campfires.

F.A.T. members were also charged with the mission of educating park visitors about wildfire and its effects on Open Space. Using Fire Information Stations in picnic areas and at trailheads, F.A.T. members answered questions about the status of wildfires around the State, the potential for wildfires in the upcoming month, and basic fire prevention and protection questions. In fact, F.A.T. members could even tell you what slurry is made of!

During the summer of 2002, F.A.T. volunteers were found educating park visitors on evenings and weekends throughout the Jefferson County Open Space park system. When the fire ban was lifted in early October, the F.A.T. Team had provided 940 hours of service during 151 visits to Open Space parks. The work of the F.A.T. volunteers was invaluable to the ranger staff.

PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION

Board Member Roster 2003

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Greg Stephens/President
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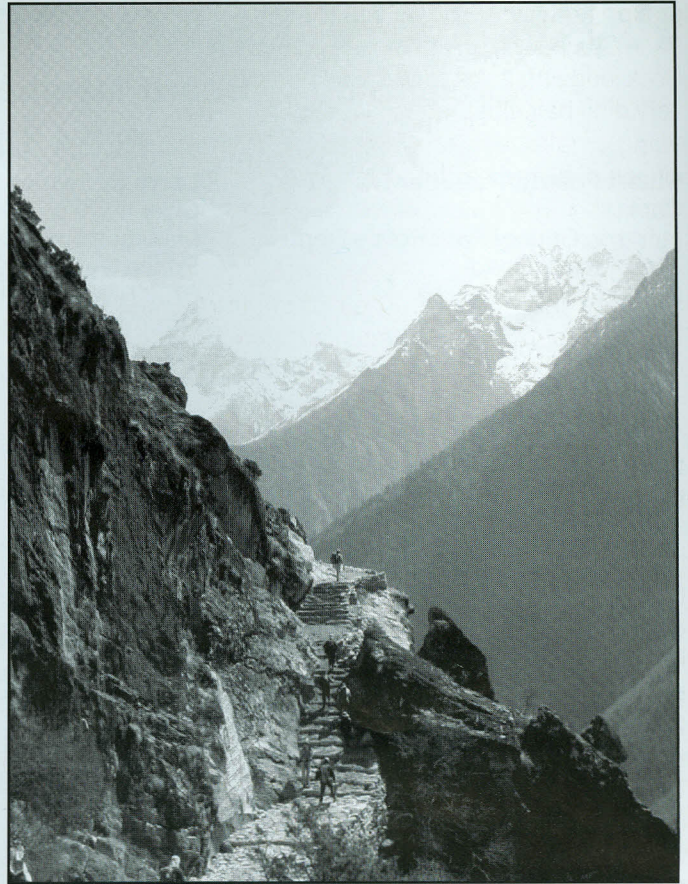
Mount Everest

By R. Daniel Crone
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

This past spring, my wife and I traveled to Nepal to trek in the world's highest park, Sagarmatha National Park. In preparation for the trip, we hired a reputable guide company out of Seattle, (Alpine Ascents International) gathered the required mountain gear, and were compelled to perform a considerable amount of prior physical conditioning. On a rating system of one to five, the trek was rated most strenuous at a five.

After a few days in Thailand we joined 11 other trekkers in the group at the Yak and Yeti Hotel in Kathmandu Nepal. From there we flew by Twin Otter to the trailhead of 9,000 feet in Lukla. The trek required tent camping in snow and a rigorous 100-mile trek in the Himalayas at high altitude. The climb proved very physically demanding for anyone. Use of the "rest step" with proper breathing, cadence, and proper hydration were imperative.

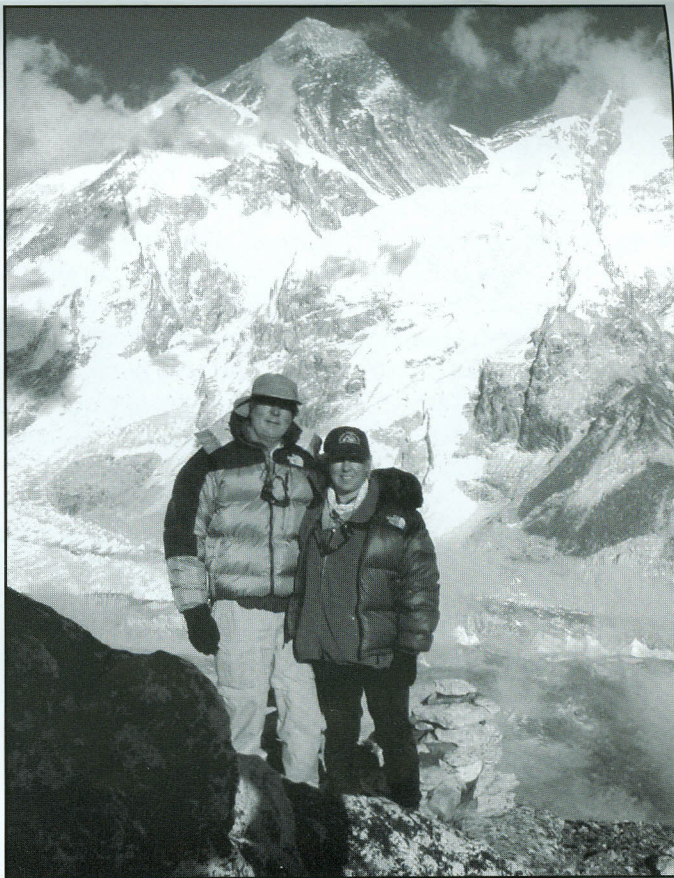
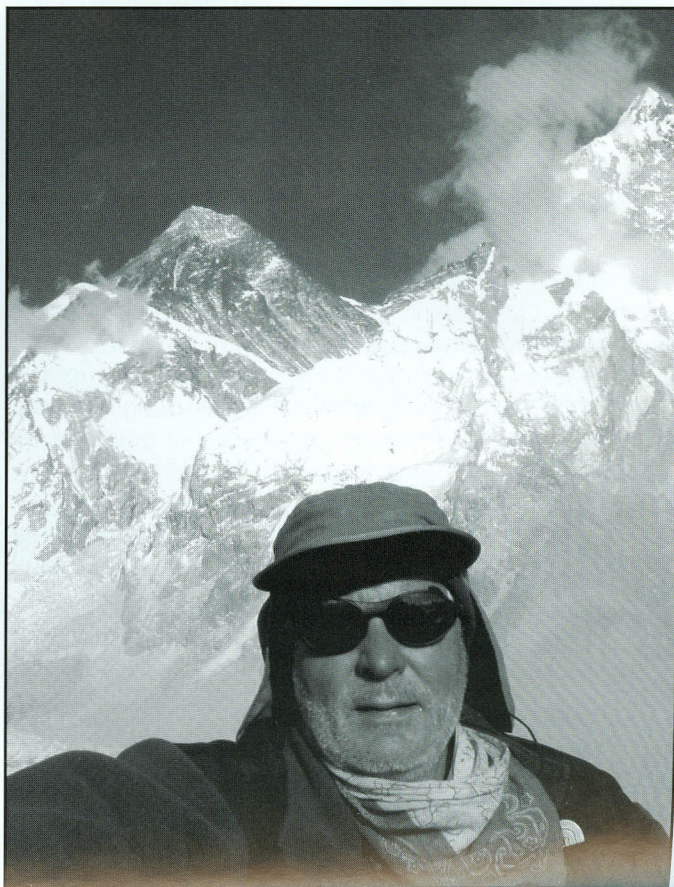
The company provided twenty-six Sherpas that cooked, carried, and guided the expedition. Twenty-seven yaks were utilized to carry cargo on the mountain trails. It took our



group 11 days of walking to acclimatize and reach Everest Base Camp, with an additional 5 days to hike back to Lukla. Rock ledge trails, "Indiana Jones" like suspension bridges, very dirty hair, fluctuating weather patterns, freezing cold, being awakened by Maoist rebel gunshots, stomach ailments, altitude sickness and fatigue were factors to be dealt with. The trek would prove to be the most physical (and mentally) demanding thing we have ever done. We developed a genuine friendship and respect for the Sherpa staff and their culture. Their strength, endurance, and tolerance for high altitude exertion, along with their genuine concern for our well-being, were amazing.

We saw the most beautiful and majestic mountains on the planet – Everest, Lhotse, Nupse, Ama Dablam, Pumori to name a few.

Near the end of the trek, we spent two nights over 17,000 feet at Gorakshep where we were awakened by the rumbling of avalanches. From there we trekked through glacier rock, ice, and loose gravel to Everest Base Camp at 17,600' meeting several persons that would soon summit Everest. Our expedition was cybercast on www.alpineascents.com where information is archived under 2002 Everest Base Camp Trek. The highlight was ascending the peak of Kala Patar at 18,200', enjoying a spectacular view of Mt. Everest and the high Himalayas, and taking the opportunity to reflect on our accomplishments.



U.S. Forest Service officer dies in deer accident near Bemidji

By Larry Oakes

Star Tribune Northern Minnesota Correspondent

DULUTH — A procession of squad cars will follow a hearse to a cemetery in Cass Lake, Minn., today, paying last respects to Michael Lee Staples, a police officer killed on duty Wednesday by a deer that crashed through the windshield of his moving vehicle. "It was really a freaky accident," said Chief Deputy Tom Lyons of the Beltrami County Sheriff's Office, which responded to the scene on a rural road northeast of Bemidji. It happened while Staples, 33, a law-enforcement officer for the Chippewa National Forest, was driving to work about 7:30 a.m. in his Forest Service pickup truck. According to Lyons, Staples was going south on County Rd. 27 and was meeting a northbound car when a deer ran or jumped into the road. The other car, driven by Douglas Goodman of Fort Myers, Fla., struck the deer, tossing it onto the hood of Staples' truck and through the windshield. Staples was killed instantly, Lyons said. The State Patrol is investigating and will try to reconstruct

the accident, though no wrongdoing by anyone is suspected at this point, Lyons said. Staples' death, especially in such a bizarre accident, "struck people as unbelievable, and it struck them quite deep," said Kay Getting, a spokeswoman for the Chippewa National Forest, where Staples, a Cass Lake native, had worked since 1994. He was one of two law enforcement officers assigned to patrol the forest and investigate criminal activity — often in cooperation with county deputies, state conservation officers and officers from other agencies, Getting said. "Mike had a lot of close friends and family at the Forest Service and in the community," she said. "He was active in the hunters' safety program and snowmobile safety. He was a very outgoing and friendly individual who was well-liked." He left a wife and two sons, ages 5 and 3. Friends and co-workers have set up a memorial college fund for Staples' sons. Donations can be sent to: Friends of Mike Staples, First National Bank, P.O. Box 120, Cass Lake, MN 56633.

— Larry Oakes is at loakes@startribune.com.

FIRST FELONY ARREST

Having graduated from KLETC the previous fall and starting my first full season as a certified law enforcement officer, I knew at some point I would have to utilize the knowledge gained from the academy to handle a situation. I just never thought it would be a felony arrest at the beginning of my first season.

During a routine patrol on May 5, 2001, I was making my way towards the gatehouse to close it down for the evening when a gentleman in one of the primitive camping sites began waving his arms and yelling for me to stop. As I pulled into the camp area numerous people began running up to my truck. Everyone began pointing to a female sitting quietly and motionless at a picnic table beside the lake. The information I was given was that the female in question, later identified as Sherry Dunbar of Garden City, initially began yelling at her small child while holding it over the edge of the handicap fishing dock. As people around the lake witnessed this, several arguments broke out between Mrs. Dunbar and park patrons. For some reason, Mrs. Dunbar began dunking the child in the lake while continuing to verbally assault park patrons as well as the child. By this time, the husband, who had been fishing, became aware of the situation and took the child from Mrs. Dunbar, entered a vehicle, and quickly exited the park. Mrs. Dunbar then picked up a piece of wood, approximately 5 feet long and roughly 5 inches in diameter, and began waving and pointing at onlookers while making threatening remarks.

I had not witnessed any of the above but prepared myself for a possible conflict. What I found was a quiet, courteous female jumping at the opportunity to tell me how she has been minding her own business and how no one would leave her alone. As I questioned Mrs. Dunbar it quickly became apparent that she was intoxicated and she was also becoming more agitated as the conversation continued. She stated she had consumed two bottles of hard liquor which were on a table in front of her, both of which were empty. By this time I was assisted by Scott County Sheriff's Officers and Mrs. Dunbar was taken into custody. Mrs. Dunbar did resist mildly but the verbal assault escalated. I was informed that her lawyer "Jerry Springer" would successfully file a law suit against me and win. SCSO transported Mrs. Dunbar to the police station while I got statements from a total of 9 witnesses.

The charges I filed against Mrs. Dunbar were Aggravated Battery and Endangering a child. As I escorted Mrs. Dunbar back from the preliminary hearing, she stated she did not remember doing any of these accusations. Her husband also stated since she needs help they were not going to fight the charges. Do to no past history the charges were dropped to disorderly conduct, a Class A misdemeanor. Total fines came to \$311.00.

SEE THE OUTDOORS THROUGH A YOUNGER SET OF EYES

By Luke Nihart, Tuttle Creek State Park Ranger

The job description of a Kansas State Park Ranger is as diverse as it is challenging. One minute a Ranger might be arresting the bad guy and the next minute he might be completing that trail grant that must be in by noon that day, both of which seem to take place within the same hour. Then, out of the blue, a project comes up that turns out to be one of the most challenging and rewarding in the Rangers career, hosting a youth turkey hunt. As we all know it is a Rangers job to arrest the bad guy, it is also a Rangers responsibility to mentor our younger generation and instill proper outdoor ethics. Recently, I had the opportunity to do this and see the outdoors through a younger set of eyes.

Last spring, Drew Ricketts (Seasonal Biologist), Corey Alderson (Biologist), John Hawkinson (local hunting enthusiast), Larry Larson (local hunting outfitter) and I, Luke Nihart (Park Ranger) from the Tuttle Creek State Park office developed an idea to hold a youth turkey hunt during the new youth turkey season. We selected six young hunters from the local hunters education class to guide over two days. This wasn't a free trip though; they had to produce the top six scores in the class on their final exam. A donation was given to the hunt by the local Three Rivers Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Foundation to purchase essential equipment.

After a safety orientation and gun patterning session, the first day of hunting yielded three nice toms. One weighed in at 24 pounds and had a 10 ¼ inch beard with 1 inch spurs. The second day produced only two toms. One of these birds weighed in at 23 pounds and had a 1-inch beard. Our young hunters filled five of six tags, leading to a successful weekend. Oh yeah, did I mention that this was their first time hunting. For many of the hunters, it was only the first or second time in their life that they had fired a shotgun.

Those of us that guided the young hunters discovered something that weekend. It is much more exciting to go hunting with a first time hunter and see what they see for the first time. It's almost like you are experiencing the outdoors again for the first time. The entire time spent with the young hunters afield was memorable. From the young hunter starting to catch turkey "FEVER" to the look that they get in their eyes after they have made the perfect shot is something that we will never forget. When the ol' tom struts and gobbles towards the decoys that have been strategically placed twenty yards in front of the young hunter, it's equally exciting for both the young and old hunters. Some of the hunters that we guided caught severe cases of turkey "FEVER" after they harvested their

first turkey. Turkey "FEVER" was so bad that they had a hard time walking and talking at the same time while trying to retrieve their bird. Once the turkeys were tagged we noticed that the hunters could not stop talking about the hunt. And why not, this was their first turkey, a bird that they will never forget.



If you haven't had the chance to experience the outdoors with a young person, my advice to you is to get out there and do it. It will be time well spent. The benefits of enjoying the outdoors with today's youth are three fold. First, we are introducing the outdoors to a new generation that might be able to protect our already limited supply of public hunting and fishing areas. Secondly, we are helping the younger generations learn to appreciate the outdoors and the responsibilities that comes with it. And finally, hunting and fishing with today's youth is just plain fun and an experience that that the guiding adult will not soon forget. "Pass It On".

PRESIDENT - from page 1

In conclusion, a special thanks goes to Captain Carl Nielsen, District Commander of the Florida Park Patrol in Ft. Myers, Florida that assisted PLEA greatly in several areas at the NRPA Conference. Captain Nielsen asked Field Training Officer David Pius within the Division of Law Enforcement to present a program on "Water Patrol Considerations and Operations" at NRPA on behalf of PLEA. Officer Pius graciously accepted and did a wonderful job. Thanks again David.

Captain Nielsen also provided uniformed personnel of the Florida Park Patrol to assist with the PLEA Booth during all operating hours at the NRPA Exposition. Thanks go to Captain DeGroff, Lt. Ferguson, Field Training Officer David Pius and Officer Chewning. I also appreciated them thanking me for the opportunity to assist PLEA and was gratifying for them in talking with other professionals in the field of park law enforcement and park and recreation services.

In the meantime, to all our members have a happy and safe New Year and I will be talking with you soon.

**PLEA Mid Year Board Meeting
2002 NRPA Conference - Tampa Florida
October 18, 2002**

The Board of Directors met in Tampa Florida for their mid year board meeting. Minutes from the board meeting in Maryland were read and approved. The treasurer's report was provided and indicated a beginning balance as of January 31, 2002 of \$32, 207.33 and an ending balance as of October 4, 2002 of \$21,550.03.

Other agenda items that were discussed were:

1. Update on State Affiliates - Efforts continue to recruit state affiliates and President Foland has made this a priority for his tenure. He has been in contact with members from Arizona, Colorado and Utah about their membership.
2. New Board Members - Mike Burko from Toledo Metro Parks was appointed as a Board of Director.
3. Newsletter Update - Receiving materials for the newsletter is still the biggest challenge. The goal is to have the newsletter be published three times a year. Anyone can send Norm Lapera materials at his e-mail address of nlapera@ebparks.org.
4. Future Conference Sites - 2003: Hamilton County, Ohio; 2004: Oklahoma Parks Division, Oklahoma; 2005: Colorado; 2006: Minneapolis or Illinois.

The meeting was adjourned at 1500 hours. The next Board Meeting will be held at the 2003 Conference in Ohio.

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Discussion Forums, P.L.E.A. Merchandise

**PLEA 24th Annual Law Enforcement
and Visitor Protection Workshop**
Radisson Hotel - Riverview
Covington, Kentucky
March 6, 7, 8, 2003
Host: Hamilton County Park District
Contact Person:
Lieutenant Steve Newsom (513) 521-3980

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