

# The Signpost

Nov-Dec  
1990

## From The President's Desk "Is The Grass Always Greener?" By Chis George, PRAC President

As park rangers we always seem to say to ourselves how bad things are. We continuously complain about our working conditions, our equipment and our moral. I always find it interesting when park rangers say; "Look at those guy's (another agency), how come we can't be like them?"

There is an evolutionary process within any program. We all may start out similar, grow and expand but we are all working towards a common goal. Sometimes it takes different periods of time to get to these goals but we often do. But what happens after we get there? We often complain that it's still not good enough!

I have been involved in several park agencies in my career. I have assisted several cities, counties and parks choose a course of direction when they were needing a basic goal and concept for their particular park needs. I have seen or consulted with many programs that are now members of PRAC. All of these programs have the same basic philosophy of ranger pride and integrity and all of these programs are unique.

Still there seems to be in our minds the eternal question "Is it better to work for another program?" or "Is the grass greener on the other side of the street?"

People especially park rangers are creatures of habit. I have never known a more devoted group of individuals in all my life. We rangers devote so much to our profession that sometimes when things don't go right we think our moral is low. On the contrary, our moral is not low but always high. We confuse our frustrations and problems with moral, but don't we get up every morning loving the work we do? None of us would ever want to leave this profession unless we were forced to do so. So what causes this frustration? Usually it's the bureaucratic machine and the slow pace of movement in wanting to see success.

However if we were to look in retrospect we often find that things within our specific program have gotten better. Maybe not as much as we would like to see but better. I'm sure that if we all took a little time to remember we may see some improvements. There are occasional programs that truly do have problems and this philosophy may work in reverse. One of these programs is about to celebrate it's seventy-fifth anniversary. This programs employees range from interpreters to protection. Their job



sites are proclaimed as some of the most beautiful places in the world. The program; The National Park Service.

I have long been aware of the many problems that now face the National Park Service, but I have never been a direct witness to them. Not until now. During the first week of October, I had the distinct honor of representing PRAC at the National Association of Park Rangers Conference. This was at the "Ranger Rendezvous XIV" held in Las Vegas, Nevada. At first glance the conference looked very familiar. It resembled many of our own PRAC/CSPRA conferences. I observed people smiling, hugging each other and renewing old friendships. I felt a little awkward at first since I was an outsider.

At first I wondered around the conference area looking at the displays while NPS Rangers introduced themselves asking "What park do you work for?" Imagine the surprised looks when I said "I'm with the City of Anaheim and am currently the President of PRAC." After a few moments of thought, they started to question my connection with their association and how PRAC was connected. It took a few moments to explain our association and the role that I was about to embark upon; to create a common bond of interest in career Park Rangers. I answered quite a few questions like "How is the

work in California?" and "How do I get a job in California?" and of course "What is PRAC?"

I noticed a group of very devoted employees that work for the NPS whom I think every park ranger looks to as the ultimate in the park ranger profession. The only problem is that while these park rangers are able to work in the most beautiful settings, most are unable to live a normal life. The National Park Service, while holding the jewels of the nation can not even pay their employees enough to live the American Dream. The battle cry of these employees seems to be "We're tired of being paid in rainbows and sunsets!" a very true and hard felt statement.

However these employees see hope in their future. They feel that even though things are bad hopefully they will get better. There seems to be a strong common bond within this association. They are currently building plans to overcome the bureaucratic machine that pays their employees in rainbows and food stamps. A bureaucratic machine that has substandard housing. A

machine that can't support its greatest resource, it's rangers. There was a call for help, a call that I think can be answered. Many of the problems that now face the NPS have been faced and often overcome by agencies within PRAC. During this plea for help I stood and gave voice. I informed the conference delegates that they were not alone. That there was other agencies that may be able to offer suggestions and recommendations to help in their plight. I offered the services of PRAC.

We always want to see our own program succeed. We all want to work in the best park rangers programs around. We all are proud of the accomplishments we make. Now is the time to help. We will be receiving a list of concerns and complaints from the delegates of the Association of National Park Rangers. This list will be made available to any PRAC member or agencies wishing to offer assistance. Hopefully, we may be able to help our "Big Brother, the NPS," and hopefully, all of our grass may become a little greener in the end.

Peace  
on  
Earth





# JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

## **Park Ranger I**

**\$2,054-\$2,744/month, full time**

**\$1,027-\$1,372/month, part time**

## **COUNTY OF ORANGE, CALIFORNIA**

Description: The County of Orange is accepting applications for full and part time positions as Park Ranger I. The current vacancy is part-time. Future vacancies may include full-time positions. You will be required to perform technical and professional duties involving the operation and management of a park or recreational facility; supervise park maintenance personnel; prepare and present recreational and interpretive programs; and coordinate special recreation or historical programs with other public agencies and commissions. The successful candidate will have a combination of related education and/or experience which demonstrates knowledge and abilities required by the job. In addition, you must meet the requirements for employment as a Limited Peace Officer.

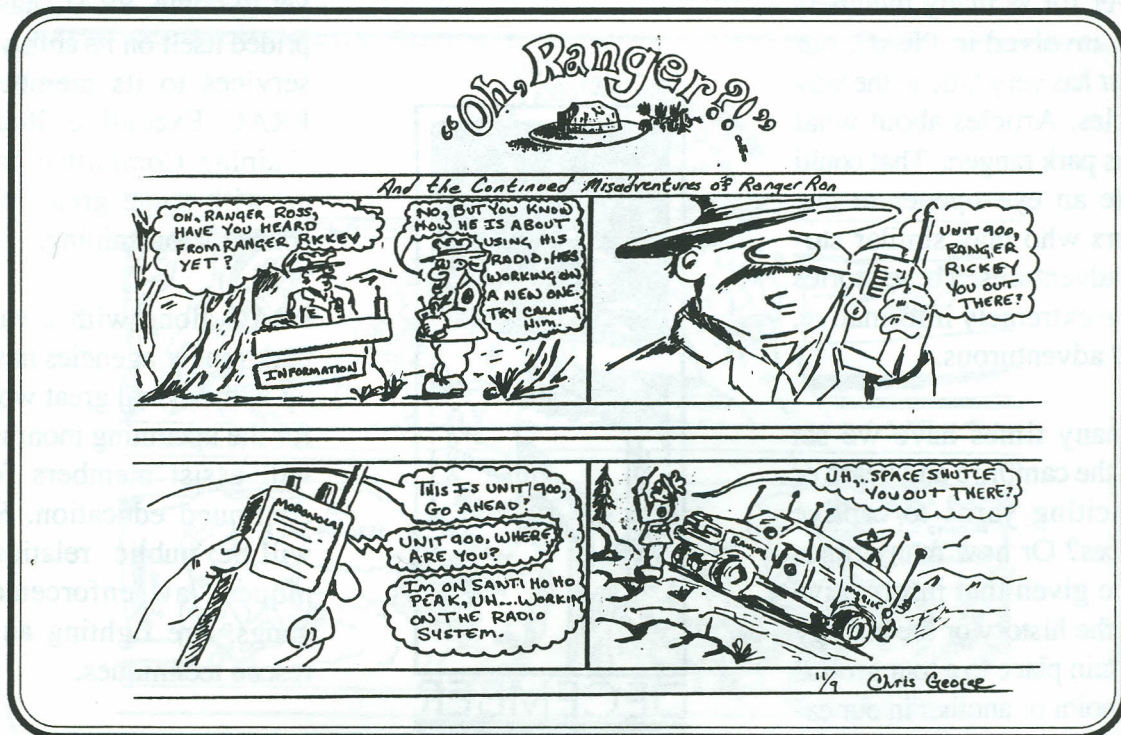
**Apply:** COUNTY OF ORANGE, Personnel Department, 10 Civic Center Plaza,  
Santa Ana, CA 92701

**Phone:** (714) 834-2844

**Closing Date:** 1/30/91

**COUNTY APPLICATION REQUIRED (RESUME NOT ACCEPTED)**

**AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER M/F**





## "Once Upon a Time...."

by Chris George

"Once upon a time".... we've all heard it from our youth. The beginning of a story that draws us in like a magnet and keeps us mesmerized until it's finished. I can think of a thousand stories I have heard throughout my life that have begun that way.

Today I really enjoy stories that revolve around our profession. I can't wait to pick up and read an article relating to the "adventures" (and sometimes misadventures) of a ranger. I thoroughly enjoy opening up and reading the *Signpost* and *California Ranger* when they arrive and finding out the latest happenings within PRAC and CSPRA.

However for as many members that are involved in PRAC, our *Signpost* has very little in the way of articles. Articles about what we do as park rangers. That could be quite an eye opener to our members who may similar stories or adventures. These stories could be extremely informative, fun and adventurous.

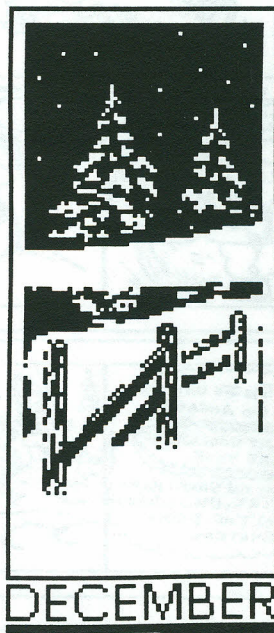
How many times have we sat around the campfire and heard or told exciting yarns to captive audiences? Or how many times have we given that informative talk on the history or the biology of a certain place to a tour group? At one point or another in our careers we've all been placed in this situation.

So I am calling upon our members to pick up their pens and think about those stories. Stories of things that you have done, know, or feel would be interesting to all park rangers.

You don't have to be a professional writer and you don't have to think that your not good enough to participate in this. It's our newsletter, so lets all get involved!

Everyone has a story to tell. It can be funny, sad, informative, poetic or technical. Some of my favorite stories revolve around Smokey Bear, so lets all make an attempt at this. Who knows, we could have a lot of fun with it and maybe have a thirty page *Signpost*! I know I can't wait to read what you have to say!

*Ed. note; The more stories the better!*



## What's this I hear bout training?

by Christopher George

As I write this, I am reflecting on a training session that my park rangers and I attended at Lake Poway.

We had the honor of participating at the first annual Park Ranger Workshop hosted by Lake Poway. During this training, Doug Bryce and myself represented PRAC in an attempt to generate interest in our association. We feel the results were successful. Many of the park rangers there appeared almost starved for information and training.

PRAC co-sponsored the training at Lake Poway and it appears that this will be the beginning of many yet to come. PRAC has always prided itself on its ability to offer services to its members. The PRAC Executive Board and Training Committee has come up with some great ideas and concepts for training.

PRAC along with a variety of park ranger agencies have come up with several great workshops for the upcoming months. These will assist members for their continued education. Subjects will be: public relations techniques, law enforcement and gangs, fire fighting and water rescue techniques.

PRAC will be scheduling at least three training programs (if not



more!) this next year in both Northern and Southern California. These workshops (in addition to the annual conference) will offer qualified training to those members interested, but found it too difficult to travel due to long distances.

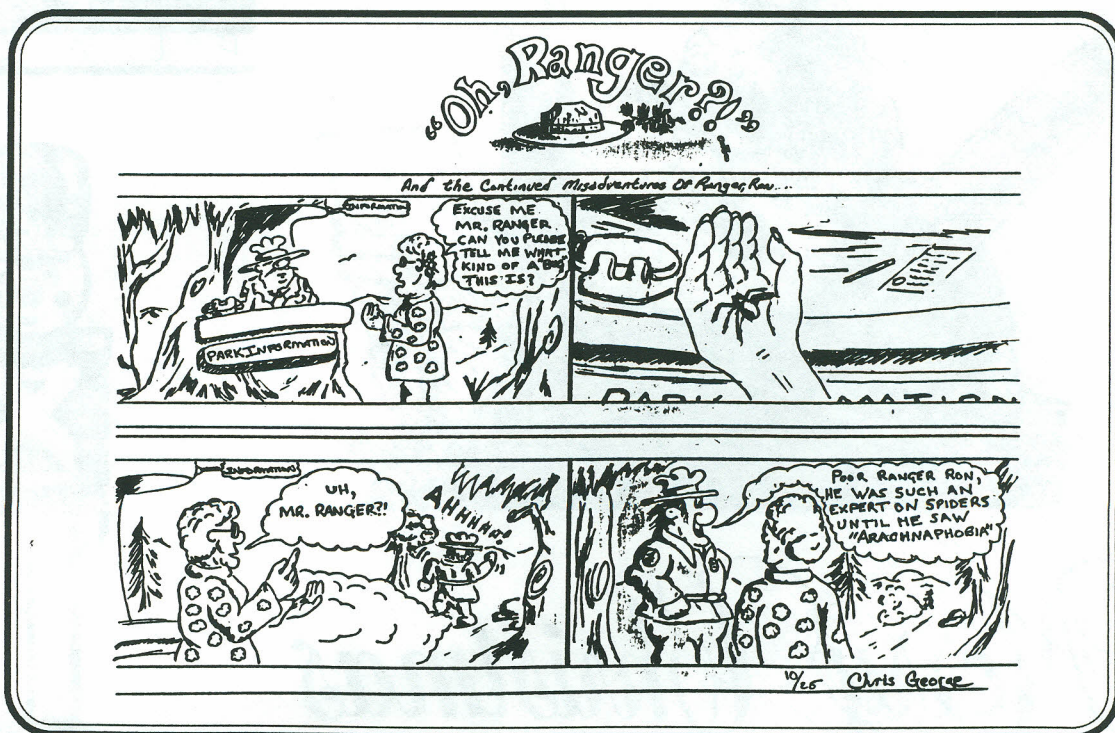
Starting this January training will be available in Concord. Rangers will have the opportunity to become certified in side handle baton, arrest, search and seizure techniques. This February rangers will be able to increase their knowledge in gangs. This training will be hosted by the Long Beach Park Rangers Program in Long Beach. Trained park rangers, with the assistance of local police experts, will offer training to rangers in identification, weapons, gang graffiti and possible solutions to this problem.

In April both the north and the south areas will be offered training sessions. Park rangers in Sacramento can learn first hand new techniques in water safety. This training will include both river and reservoir safety and rescue methods. The County of Orange will be hosting a workshop on public relations in Anaheim. This training will be designed for both law enforcement and non-enforcement park rangers. Instructors will demonstrate new methods of dealing with "problem people" through logic and psychology instead of intimidation.

The final programs offered in this training series will be in the months of April and May. Two workshops will take place in fire fighting methods. For Northern California opportunities for this

training will take place in San Jose. Southern California training will be offered at Idyllwild. Park rangers can learn first hand how to deal with forest, brush and picnic area fires. Both training sessions will be instructed by the USFS and CDF.

So there you have it. This is an exiting beginning. Your officers at PRAC hope everyone will take advantage of the opportunities that are being offered. We hope that we will be able to offer you more services and training opportunities for better understanding and career development. Let your officers know of any other training you feel is needed. As we all learn, we will all become a little more united. Hope to see you there!





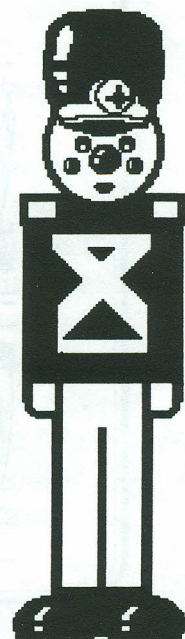
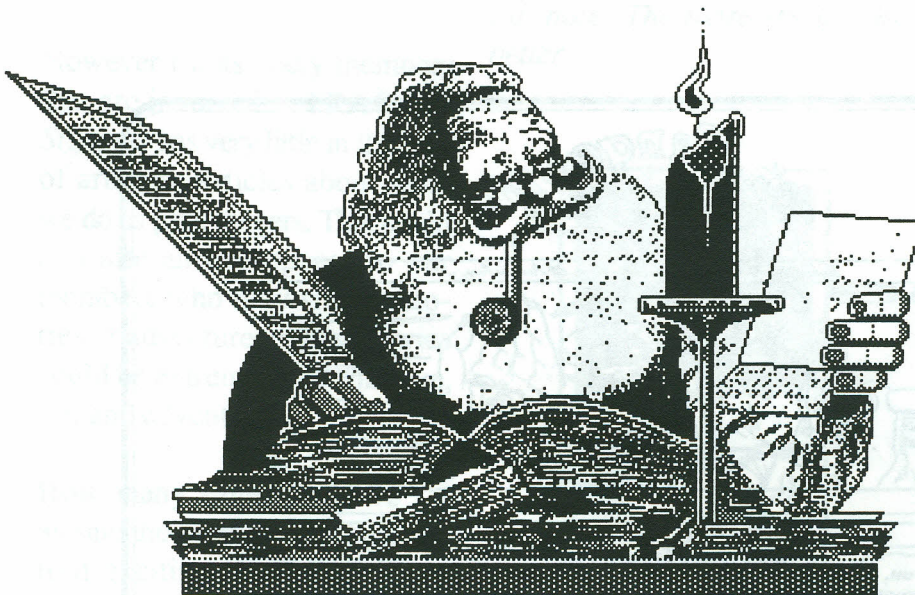
## California Ranger Update

After a long sabbatical, the California Ranger reappeared this past year. Thanks to your efforts and articles two issues were published. By the middle of February 1991 another issue should be in the mail. It is hoped that enough articles will be submitted to publish three issues during this next year. This will be possible with your help.

**"How can I help?"** you ask. One way is to submit an article yourself. You get the satisfaction of seeing your work in print as well as getting the word out about your particular subject. If you don't have anything to submit you may know someone who does. If the word gets around who knows! There may be four issues a year!

Articles should be 1,000 words or more. Please include photographs and/or other graphic material. A biographical sketch or no more than 100 words would be appreciated. Send articles, comments or subject material to:

David Brooks, Editor  
c/o CALIFORNIA RANGER, CSPRA/PRAC  
PO Box 28366, Sacramento, CA 95828-0366



*Merry Christmas*



## It's Renewal Time Again

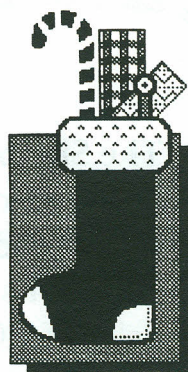
Oh No! The new year is just around the corner. That means that it's time once again to renew your membership to PRAC. There are a lot of activities planned for this next year that you won't want to miss. Training sessions, a conference in Yosemite, just to name a few. Don't forget that your membership includes the six issues of the *Signpost* and issues of the *California Ranger*. Remember to take this opportunity to support the PRAC Scholarship Fund.

All memberships expires the first of the new year. Use the enclosed renewal form today and support your profession. Renew or you will be missed.

### Special Xmas Presents

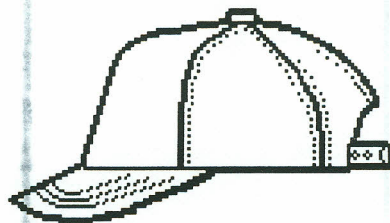
#### **Prac Polo Shirts Still Available**

PRAC is offering its members a high quality, buff colored polo-type shirt (100% cotton mesh with knit collars and sleeves) with the Association logo emblazoned on the left breast area. These attractive shirts are ideal for casual recreation outings, social activities, tennis, and golf. And, best of all, you'll be letting others know you belong to PRAC. Each shirt is only \$17.00 (including shipping and handling). Be sure to specify your size when ordering.



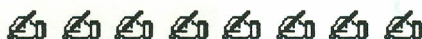
#### **Mugs & Caps**

You may have already read about the great shirts PRAC is offering its members, but that's not all! PRAC is also making high quality baseball caps (green or brown twill-type, \$7.00 each) and coffee mugs (blue and white glazed ceramic, \$5.00 each).



#### **PRAC Agency Directory**

The new revised PRAC Ranger Directory is now available. It lists agencies with "ranger personel" throughout California. The cost for this resource is \$5.00.



To purchase any of the above items, send a check, payable to: PRAC, P.O. Box 28366, Sacramento, CA., 95828-0366. Please indicate number of items requested, along with size and color if applicable.

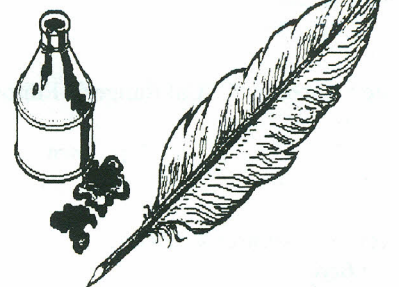


#### **HOW TO SEND ARTICLES FOR SUBMISSION**

PRAC members having access to a Macintosh computer with Microsoft Word/Write/Works, MacWrite or WriteNow Programming can write their article on the computer and mail the disk to The Signpost Editor for use in future issues of the PRAC newsletter. This will speed up production greatly. The disk will then be mailed back to the sender once it has been copied.

Naturally, for those without a Macintosh, articles may be mailed or even phoned in, in the normal way.

For more information contact David Brooks, The Signpost editor at (408) 336-2948. Disks or any other articles can be mailed to: David Brooks, 560 Hillcrest Drive, Ben Lomond, CA 95005.





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CALIFORNIA**

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1990

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**The Signpost** is published by the Park Rangers Association of California (PRAC). The Association mailing address is P.O. Box 28366, Sacramento, CA., 95828. **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 should be mailed to David Brooks, 560 Hillcrest Dr., Ben Lomond, CA., 95005. Information can also be submitted by telephone at (408) 336-2948. Submission deadlines are the last day of January, March, May, July, September, and November.

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