

# The Signpost

March - April  
1992

## PRAC News Flash!

### Workshop Update

PRAC is currently in the process of planning for future workshops, and is looking for help from its members. We need to know what types of workshops are of interest and would be attended.

Please take the time to fill out the questionnaire and send it back to me as soon as possible. (See page 5.)

My goal is not the quantity but rather the quality of workshops. I am seeking your help in accomplishing this. I want workshops that rangers will attend. The questionnaire is designed to give some direction for possible workshops. It is really only a tickler to stimulate your creative juices.

I implore you to take the time to fill out and send the questionnaire. It is the best way we have of putting together meaningful workshops.

Drop me a line if you have any comments on this or any other subject concerning workshops.

You can write or call me at:  
92 St Francis Dr., Chico, CA 95926  
(916) 895-4972

or contact your regional director. Addresses are on the back page of this issue.

*Bob Donahue*  
Workshop Coordinator

### Membership Drive Gears Up

On March 18, at the Workshop in Anaheim, Raleigh Young—Park Manager for the County of Santa Clara—took the lead in organizing PRAC Regional Directors in an intense recruitment effort for 1992. Directors Judy Morris (Region 1), Carol Fredrickson (Region 2), Cheryl Goss (Region 3), Jeff Ohlfs (Vice President), Bob Donahue (Workshop Coordinator), and PRAC members Rose Deter and Ken Miller were in attendance.

Goals of the committee include (1) getting former members back, (2) increasing new individual members by 10%, (3) increasing agency memberships by 10%, and (4) recruiting students from colleges beginning in September 1992.

Directors and other delegated PRAC members will be contacting people by telephone with membership packets being sent out upon request. If an individual does not want to rejoin or join, a "survey" will be conducted to find out why and how PRAC might better serve the Park Ranger.

Present members are asked to put diligent energy into recruiting new members from their own agency. Get involved, get motivated, get a new member. Anyone out there wants to help? If so, contact your Regional Director.

For more information contact:  
Cheryl Goss, P. O. Box 577, Pollock Pines CA  
95726, (916) 644-2545 or (916) 644-6801.

# From the Presidents Desk

## "The Anaheim Conference"

By Christopher W. George

Well, it's over!...I know that at the conclusion of this conference I could have slept for a week.

The conference overall was a success. However, there was a dark and ominous cloud hanging over the conference due to the State Park issue and many employees from D.P.R. didn't know what future awaits them.

Don Murphy, Director of D.P.R., was encouraging. Still the news that a permanent cut of 29.9 million dollars from the budget and a cut of approximately 600 employees being reassigned or laid off, did not do anything to boost any of our spirits.

PRAC agreed to stand with CSPRA and SPPOAC; to send representation and support to the legislation hearing held in Sacramento; to help reduce the cuts. Hopefully together we will overcome this ever increasing problem that not only threatens the State Park System, but to many of our own departments and programs as well.

Even through the gloom there were some sunny spots. The tour of Irvine Regional Park and Crystal Cove State Beach was a huge success. People who participated were able to see a wide variety of issues currently under debate in the urbanization of parks.

The reception held by Wayne Guthrie, President of California State Parks Foundation, was also well received. For the first time at a joint reception, collectors of badges, patches and memorabilia were able to trade, buy or just look at the many interesting items out there. I'm sure that this will be the beginning of a new tradition.

As far as the lectures went, we couldn't have had a better group of topics or speakers. The variety of ideas and discussions will be able to expand many programs into fresh thinking and new directions.

The weather was cordial enough to allow us to have for the first time a beach party (where I hear the food was better than that at the banquet!) which also was a "Night to Remember." (If any of you knows my buddy Mike Lynch from State Parks, you'll know what I mean.)

Conferences come and go, but I must say how proud I am to have been a part of this one. Not only was I acting in my official capacity as PRAC President, but as a Conference Committee member and site host since Anaheim is where my agency is located.

To those I work with on this conference, those who assisted and those that attended....Thanks! It was great fun.



## SCHOLARSHIP REMINDER

Applications for the 1992 PRAC Scholarship are due on or before June 15, 1992. All student members should have received the scholarship application packet by now. If you have not received the scholarship application, contact Doug Bryce immediately. There is ample time to complete the application and put it in the mail by the due date. Good luck!



**Editors Note:** The following is an open letter sent to the Conservation Law Enforcement Association on behalf of PRAC. It is felt that the membership should be kept informed on what is being done in their name.

March 30, 1992

Conservation Law Enforcement Association  
P. O. Box 4107  
Prescott, AZ 86302-2462

Dear Gentlemen:

On behalf of the Executive Board of the Park Rangers Association of California (PRAC), I send you and your constituents greetings.

To extend our hand in friendship, I am offering to you the opportunity to expand your concerns and endeavors to the State of California and its park, forest and conservation officers.

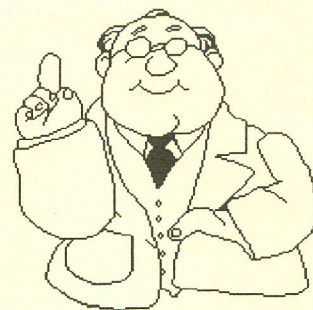
The Park Rangers Association of California is a professional organization dedicated to upholding and maintaining the mutual goals and objectives of all rangers and uniformed personnel in the State of California. Federal, state, county and city agencies throughout California are faced with similar concerns and interests, making communication and cooperation between agencies essential for the optimum protection and preservation of parks, forests and resources.

Established in 1976, PRAC membership offers an individual the opportunity to participate actively in his or her profession. Services offered include and annual state conferences held in conjunction with the California State Park Rangers Association (CSPRA) as well as other mutual associations such as the State Park Peace Officers Association (SPPOAC) and soon the Park Law Enforcement Association (PLEA). PRAC has recently become the state affiliate for PLEA. Additional services include the publication of a newsletter every two months and a semi-annual professional magazine. Participation in training sessions specifically designed for rangers and professionals offered. Establishment of state wide standards and the election of officers to govern the organization is also a service. Regular membership is offered to permanent, part-time, seasonal, retired and management personnel with uniformed experience. Agency, student, associates and supporting memberships are also available.

We would like to learn more about your association, and in turn we would be more than happy to send you more information concerning ours. It is our hope that a new friendship will begin and that together we may be able to face the many challenges facing our prospective professions.

We look forward to hearing from you.

*Christopher George*  
PRAC President



## PRAC Board Meeting March 18, 1992 Anaheim

From the minutes:

### Reports:

Membership is about the same level as last year.

Problems with agency memberships were brought to everyone's attention. It seems PRAC information often gets stalled within some agencies.

Ideas for future workshops and other events were discussed. PRAC's affiliation with CPRS will continue.

### Old Business:

Reorganization of PRAC was discussed as well as a critique of past workshops.

Bruce Weidman still requests photos of rangers in action to be used in the slide show that has been an ongoing project for a few years.

### New Business:

PRAC affiliation with PLEA was discussed.

Board meeting will be standardized to four a year, including the annual conference and the spring and fall campout. Next meeting will be in Sacramento on the second Wednesday of June.

A new committee will be formed to assist with membership recruitment.

Bob Donohue was appointed Workshop Coordinator.

Region 5 no longer has a Director.

Anyone with photos of the conference (Anaheim) was reminded to send them to Doug Bryce for the photo album.

# Joint Forces

By Chris George

Recently, the Executive Board of PRAC was approached by Vice President Jeff Ohlfs to think about broadening our organization and to become the state affiliate for the Park Law Enforcement Association (PLEA). It was discussed by Jeff that there would be benefits for both organizations if an alliance was to be formed.

PLEA is currently an association made up mostly of men and women who work in parks, forests and conservation areas as law enforcement officers throughout the United States. Their general interests are directed to working and to help solve many of the major law enforcement issues currently taking place throughout California and the rest of the country.

As a result the Board agreed with Jeff. Now PRAC is the respected affiliate for PLEA in the State of California.

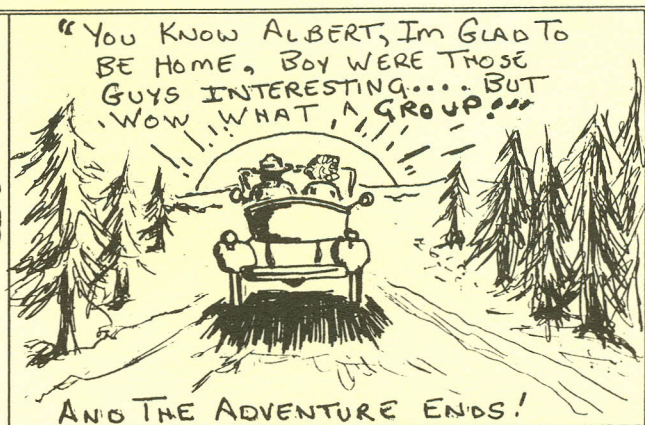
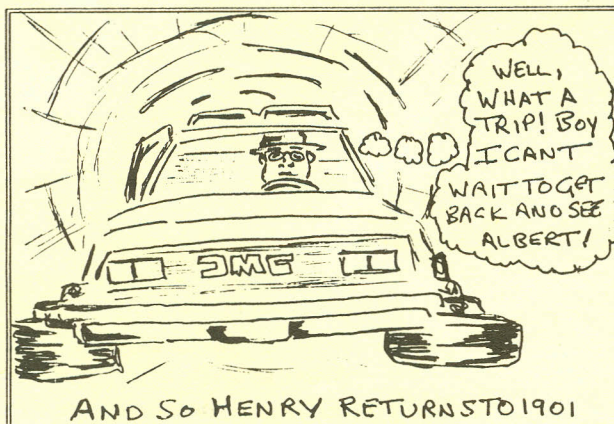
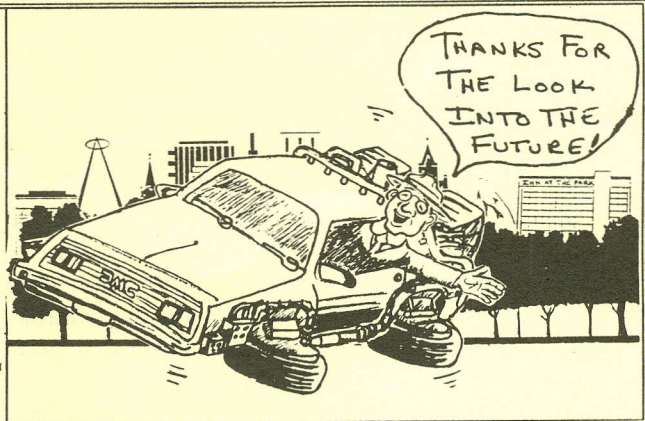
Negotiations are currently underway between PLEA's President and myself, to increase our bond and address the many issues of law enforcement for both our organizations.

As a result of these negotiations, PRAC was invited to attend PLEA's annual workshop in Kansas City, Kansas during the first week of March. Director Don Watstein of Region 5, was our represented PRAC at this event. Because of PRAC's participation, a new alliance and friendship has been made with PLEA. Currently, plans are being made to involve PLEA in a joint conference with PRAC and CSPRA.

Before this step, PRAC was accused of not being a heavy supporter of law enforcement and those rangers working in that capacity. Our concerns are not only directed toward interpretation and resource management, but to law enforcement and all aspects of the ranger profession.

## THE ADVENTURE OF RANGER HENRY WELLS

As a result of his trip into the future, Ranger Henry Wells can't wait to get back to 1901 in his new "machine"



Chris George  
92

# Workshop Survey

Which of the following topics would you like to see as workshops in the future? Please write any comments in the space provided. (Letters are also welcome.)

Supervision of staff \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Writing \_\_\_\_\_

Communication Skills \_\_\_\_\_

Wildland Fire Training \_\_\_\_\_

Trail-building \_\_\_\_\_

Starting an Outreach Program \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**I prefer;**

One-day workshops \_\_\_\_\_

Two-day workshops \_\_\_\_\_

**Send Completed From To:**

Bob Donohue  
92 St. Francis Dr.  
Chico, CA 95926

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT PERSONNEL

Greetings and salutations from the Park Law Enforcement Association and its 500 members, representing the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico. The founding fathers of PLEA decided many years ago not to be bound in name (National) to be able to serve all the park law-enforcement community. We extended the warm hand of friendship to our brothers and sisters in California.

The Park Law Enforcement Association is in the midst of expansion and dynamic changes that includes membership enhancement opportunities. We wish to enlist and count the great State of California and all of its park law enforcement personnel as part of a movement. A movement so dynamic and important for the future of our profession that no one should say no to PLEA. Your involvement at this time is crucial. It will enable us, as a professional advocacy Association for park law enforcement, to have the strength in numbers and scope. This translates into action on the Federal, State and local levels. With your help and membership, we can forge a new alliance and bright future for park law enforcement everywhere.

Presently PLEA provides a quality quarterly Journal/Newsletter to keep all professionals up to date with our profession and our association. We are fortunate to have as our editor R. J. Steele of Penn State University. He does an exceptional job as acting as the clearing house for the disseminating timely and informative park law enforcement related articles and information.

Dr. Charles Nelson from Michigan State University is presently working on updating our PLEA Membership Directory that is provided as a membership service to all PLEA members. We in PLEA would like to be able to provide a copy of our Membership Directory to every park law-enforcement personal in the great State of California. For an Annual Membership fee of just \$15.00 we can. Won't you please take the time to send in your membership dues and join us today?

We together collectively through individual PLEA memberships can make a difference in our professions' future. Thank you for your consideration of our PLEA to you the State of California.

Sincerely,  
*Arthur A. Gill,*  
President, Park Law Enforcement Association

# A Conference for Professionals Put on by Professionals

by Tyler Conrad  
State Park Ranger I

In 1992 CSPRA/PRAC/SPPOAC Conference at the Inn at the Park in Anaheim was made possible by the combined efforts of many dedicated professionals. There are several people who worked very hard on the Conference Resource Management Track sessions who have not yet been recognized for all of their efforts. State Park Ranger Mark Faull and Associate Resource Ecologist Gary Waldron were instrumental in the planning and development of the resource management sessions and the main panel discussion "Park Boundaries and Beyond." In addition Mark also co-presented the sessions on "The Recognition of Cultural Resources" and "Field Involvement in Resource Management." Bob Donohue, a Park Ranger for the city of Chico, obtained the speakers for the sessions on toxic waste, trails and recycling. Bob, Gary and Mark also introduced speakers and monitored sessions during the conference.



Executive Manager Doug Bryce's guidance and work was invaluable to the success of the conference. Doug never receives enough recognition for all the work he performs over and beyond what is required of his position for CSPRA and PRAC. Without him we would have been in a real fix. A hearty **Thank You** is due to each of these dedicated professionals!

The conference appeared to be a big hit with several of the participants. A ranger from a small city in southern California told several people that attending the conference had changed his life. After working for a year or so as a ranger he was seriously considering going to work as a police officer. The conference had inspired him to dedicate his life to being a ranger. Another person who has been a ranger for a number of years came up to me after one of the sessions and told me that he hadn't learned anything new. The session inspired him to push himself and the system towards being better resource managers. A superintendent told me after the conference that he really needed the conference to get his mind off the dreariness of our financial situation and back into the heart of our profession.

A goal of every conference should be to educate, motivate and renew our vigor for our vocation. Apparently we were successful in this regard, to some degree, for at least a few of our members. We'll probably need the conference more than ever next year. If you believe in your profession and the need to work together for common goals, we can use your help in planning our next conference. For more information contact Doug Bryce at (916) 383-2530. One way or another we hope to see each of you in 1993 in Santa Clara!



# The Peregrines of Lake Sonoma

by Scott Serena & Brian Bellew



sun rises over Lake Sonoma as Park Rangers Scott Serena and Brian Bellew load the tools they will need into the back of the truck, the Celestron Telescope, the 35mm camera with the telephoto lens, tripods, and a pair of binoculars for each ranger are tied down securely. After topping off their thermos of coffee the two rangers start up the steep, dusty road to begin another day of observation. Scott and Brian are park rangers working for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers at Lake Sonoma and they are keeping a close eye on a pair of peregrine falcons that nest in the park.

Peregrine falcons are in the order Falconiformes, along with other raptors or birds of prey as eagles, hawks and vultures. The order Falconiformes is further divided into families with falcons in the family Falconidae. Falcons are characterized by long pointed wings, long pointed wings, large heads and narrow, streamlined bodies. Peregrine falcons are slate gray on the wings, back and tail, and have a white breast. The head is white with a black cap that comes down on either side of the head to form a black "mustache." This mustache is the most distinguishing marking for peregrines in the wild. Adult peregrines grow to be 14 to 18-inches long and have a wingspan of 37 to 48-inches. Female peregrines tend to be larger than the males and can weigh up to 2 lbs. Peregrine falcons eat birds almost exclusively. They catch their prey "on the wing," diving almost straight down up to 200 miles per hour in a maneuver called "stooping." The falcon strikes with its talons, turns, and catches its prey without ever touching the ground.

The peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) is an endangered species that

has been the subject of special study here at Lake Sonoma and at other sites. During construction of the Warm Springs Dam, which formed Lake Sonoma, it was discovered that peregrines were nesting on cliffs that overlooked the area that would become the lake. Concerned for the safety of this rare bird the Corps of Engineers along with the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management and the California Department of Fish & Game set aside approximately 8,000 acres of land as a Critical Habitat Zone (CHZ). Included in this CHZ area are the cliffs used by the falcon.

Observations at Lake Sonoma over the past twelve years have documented repeated nest failures. Analysis of the shell fragments indicates that they are extremely thin, so thin that they weight of the adult peregrine crushes the egg. Chemical analysis of the shell shows high concentrations of pesticides such as DDT. The presence of these chemicals in the food of the peregrine causes an accumulation of the toxic substances in adult falcons. This build up has many effects on the falcons, among them the tendency to lay eggs with thin shells.

To help increase peregrine populations at Lake Sonoma a series of nest manipulations was done from 1979 to 1989. When observers noted an egg in the falcons nest a researcher would rappel down to the nest, called eyrie, remove the fragile egg and replace with a ceramic dummy egg that looked and felt like the real egg. The adult falcon would continue to incubate the dummy egg as if nothing were amiss. The falcon eggs were transported the Santa Cruz Predatory Bird Research Center, where they were hatched in incubators. Free from the crushing rate of the adult falcon the eggs had a much higher success rate. When the chicks, called eyasses, were

about two weeks old, a climber would return the eyasses to the eyrie and remove the dummy eggs. The adult falcons dive at the climber to protect their nest, dropping down from the sky at high speed and coming within inches of the climbers. After the eyasses are placed in the nest and the dummy eggs removed, the adults return to the nest and raise the chicks as if nothing unusual had happened.

In 1989 the nest manipulations were stopped. The eyrie was monitored to see if the falcons were able to reproduce without intervention from people. Two eggs hatched in 1989 and survived to fledge from the nest. Two more eggs were laid in 1990 but neither survived, a devastating blow to the program. Now all eyes are on the 1991 nest.

After a bumpy half hour drive Brian and Scott arrive at the observation point. They unload and carry their equipment up to the top of the hill. While Scott sets up the telescope, Brian scans the cliff with his binoculars. The male falcon is sighted, perched on a small ledge above the nest. Without warning he steps from the ledge and drops to the valley below like a feathered projectile, his speed making him a blur to the rangers. Next they center the telescope on the falcons eyrie and see the female sitting there. The inside of the eyrie is hidden and the rangers must wait for the female to move or leave the nest before they can see if the eggs are still intact.

The female peregrine sits in the nest, motionless, Zen-like she has become one with the rock upon which here nest is built. The two rangers sit much less Zen-like and finish their coffee. A half hour goes by, then and hour.

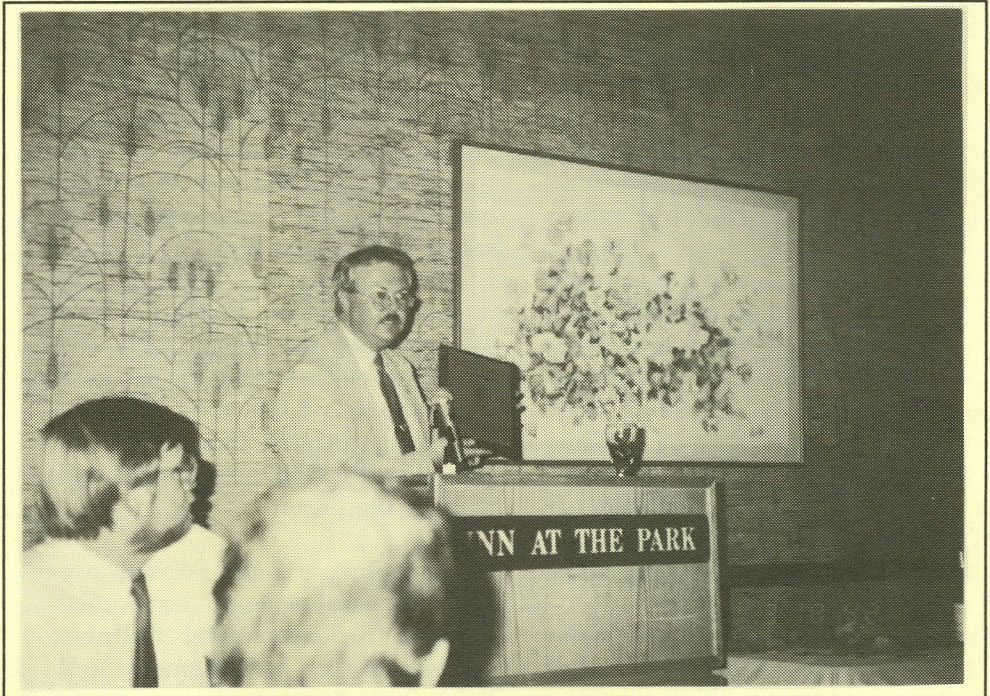
Continued on page 8.

**"Life is very persistent...it comes in at all corners."  
Saying by Dr. Sharsmith**

How do you write 100 words about a person who others have written books about? Dr. Carl Sharsmith is a very interesting and complex person who has devoted his life to interpretation and encouraging people to enjoy outdoors at Yosemite National Park.

Termed "The 100 Year Old Ranger," Dr. Sharsmith has been working as an interpreter at Yosemite National Park since 1931. He was Professor Emeritus of Botany at San Jose State University from 1937-1974. Since his retirement 18 years ago, he has worked at San Jose State University and as curator of the Carl Sharsmith Herbarium. He is discoverer of four botanical species, one of which bears his name.

At 88 years old, Dr. Sharsmith continues to lead interpretive programs at Yosemite. He is as renowned for his gift of teaching as he is of his scientific expertise. It is no surprise that the Park Rangers Association of California has selected him as this year's honorary member.



PRAC president Chris George awarding honorary membership to Dr. Carl Sharsmith at the Anaheim Workshop.

## Peregrines in Lake Sonoma

Continued from page 7.

The falcon is heard before it is seen. The call sounds something like "e-chup" repeated several times as it echoes off the canyon walls. Brian and Scott scan the sky with binoculars and spot the male falcon high above them. The bird tucks in its wings and drops toward the ground. The falcon swoops down in front of the eyrie and banks hard away from the cliff, turns, and with a flair of wings, lands at the entrance of the eyrie. The female stirs from her meditations and steps carefully over the eggs and moves to the entrance. The rangers can see one egg very clearly, but where the second egg should be there is only a lump of fuzz. The lump moves and lifts its tiny head. The female falcon takes the bundle of food from the male and returns to the nest to eat, and to feed her young.

Scott and Brian unwrap the cigars that they have been saving for this moment, and radio back to Park Headquarters that one of the eggs has hatched. Photographs

are taken of the proud parents and the new addition to the population of peregrine falcons.

By the end of the 1991 field season two of the eggs had hatched. They eyasses matured to fledglings and, after practicing at the entrance to the eyrie, they fly off to hunt on their own. Two new peregrine falcons soaring and diving in the sky above Lake Sonoma.

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Park Ranger  
Bay Model Visitor Center  
2100 Bridgeway  
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(415) 332-3871

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## EDITOR'S CORNER

### THE OPENING OF THE "LOCH"

**F I R S T**

for a little background. I work for the City of Santa Cruz, Water Department at an out of the way place called Loch Lomond Recreation Area. It is a small lake (87 surface acres), about 3 miles long with an average depth of 100 feet. Since its main function is a drinking water supply, there are no power boats, sail boats or swimming. It has been known throughout the area as a quiet place to fish and paddle around on. Normally the Recreation Area is open to the public from March 1 through September 15.

For the past few years (since the fall of 1987) the lock has remained on the gates at the "Loch." This was due to the drought and the low water levels that have been experienced throughout the state. Many of you out there may be envious because I haven't had to deal with the public. (Not necessarily true since I have spent a good part of the past 4 years

kicking people out.) Well, the bill came due this past week when we opened the gates and let the masses in. Since it started to rain around here this past February, the pressure was on to open the "Loch" again. Though the reservoir is only 65% full at best, we opened for business on April 8.

Let me tell you, it was a rangers' worst nightmare come true, "...if you open, they will come..." They came from all over the state; Colorado and Texas even. They lined up the day before in hopes of being the first one in to catch "the big one." Traffic was a disaster because the access road is narrow with sharp blind curves. Our neighbors were upset because they couldn't get out of their driveways. The fishermen were mad because they couldn't even get in. With only 200 parking spots at best and 39 boats to rent, the odds of everyone being satisfied were slim to none. In the middle of all of this was our staff who had been hired two days before. I must say that our new recruits; 15

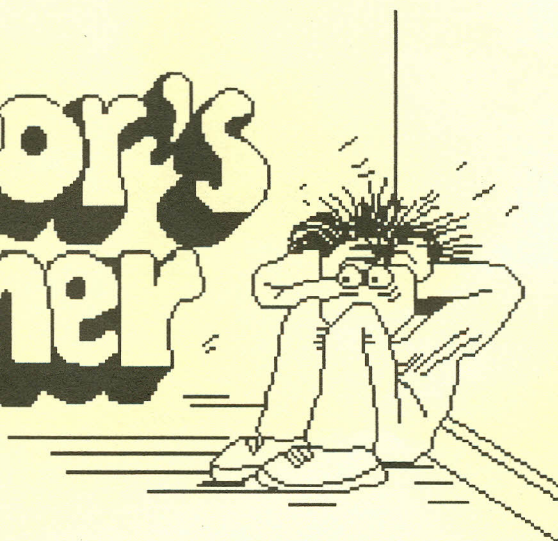
park aides and 2 rangers handled the difficult situation well. We have all to often been trained "under fire," and know what it is like. Thank you very much!

When the dust finally settled and the tempers cooled off, over 450 hundred cars made it through our gates (not counting those that were turned away) on opening day. Over 600 people walked in after parking miles away. Since then, the crowds have subsided to a more manageable size. Once again I can have a day off and do something less challenging, like this newsletter. Who knows, I may even get off work on time one day soon.

So much for my attempt at creative writing. Time to put back my editors cap and get this issue out. May your summers be uneventful and your parks be clean. (And stay opened.)

*David Brooks*  
Park Ranger & sometimes  
Editor

# Editor's Corner



**PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA**

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1992

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