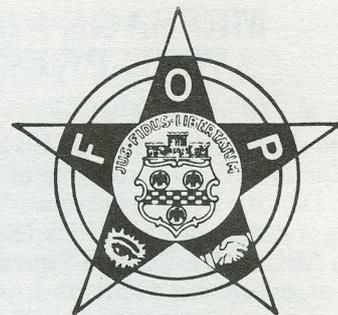


The Protection Ranger



The Newsletter of National Park Rangers Lodges, Fraternal Order of Police

May / June 1992

OPM Pay Task Force Report

The Office of Personnel Management advisory Committee on Law Enforcement and Protective Occupations met for the fifth time on April 13 in Washington D.C. The meeting was limited to two issues important to all of us. The committee reviewed the National Advisory Commission on Law Enforcement (NACLE) report dealing with pay comparisons, turnover rates and recruitment and retention problems. The second agenda item was the proposed pay system presented by the president of the Federal Investigators Association.

The NACLE report clearly showed the need for federal officers to have a revamped pay system for all career fields. The uniformed officers were the ones showing the greatest gap between their state and local counterparts. The report should give great credence to the cause of pay reform.

The proposed pay system by the Federal Investigators Association had several points that should help bring about a comparable pay system. The system would be taken out of the GS system and move federal officers into a new scale called the Law Enforcement Service (LES) with eleven steps, a 1.25% annual longevity pay, college education bonus and an expanded list of locations which would entitle officers to cost of living pay.

Overall the proposal looked good, except that the lowest grade of LES-1 is equal to a GS-4. John Grammer, the FOP representative on the task force, has just written us: "We have some serious concerns over the low pay rates in the system, and over how WASO may act in classifying rangers into these pay levels. We will be contacting the appropriate offices with these concerns." The next meeting is scheduled for April 30 1992 with the topics of overtime and premium pay.

Sample Law Enforcement Path LES-1: Entry level prior to attending FLETC; LES-2: Completion of FLETC; LES-3: Two years experience; LES-4: Corporal/Patrol, Patrol dog handler; LES-5: Sergeant/Patrol, Narcotic/Explosive Dog Handler, Special Reaction Team member, Entry level investigator; LES-6: Sergeant/Patrol two years experience, First line supervisor of special teams or dog section; LES-7: Lieutenant/Patrol Supervisor, Supervisor of larger special teams, Investigation section supervisor LES-8: Captain/Patrol; LES-9: Captain 3 years experience, Investigation manager; LES-10: Major/Patrol/Operations Branch; LES-11: Assistant Chief/Operations Branch; LES-12: Assistant Chief; LES-13: Chief of Police; LES-14: Director of Police Region.

(Continued on Page 2)

Lodge Leaders Meet With Brady & Martin

Western Lodge President Greg Jackson, Vice President Chris Cruz, and Valor Award Committee member Tom Valenta met with NPS Chief Ranger Jim Brady and Chief of Ranger Activities Dick Martin in Las Vegas on March 10, discussed a variety of issues, and made progress toward several lodge goals. Highlights of the Las Vegas meeting are as follows:

Retirement

WASO outlined its program to seek enhanced retirement coverage through OPM for many positions. Details in an upcoming Information Exchange newsletter were given to the Lodge for preview. WASO plans on working with OPM in developing a PD that would qualify for coverage. WASO has draft legislation in hand for coverage, but wants to proceed through OPM first. The Lodge will move with National FOP in its efforts to seek coverage through legislation on a more advanced timetable. WASO asked the FOP to help them identify the impact of enhanced retirement on the park service.

Pay

WASO representatives will speak with the FOP representative on OPM's pay task force to coordinate support for pay increases. WASO voiced initial support for president Jackson's proposal for supplemental pay increases for supplemental public safety responsibilities, e.g. EMT, Park Medic, structural fire, and will discuss the elements of this proposal with the FOP delegate on the task force.

Valor Awards

WASO agreed to work with the lodge for departmental recognition of those rangers involved in shooting incidents in the past three years. Agreement was also reached to work toward a peer review process for award recognition, and to study a Service award program.

NPS-9

WASO agreed to receive lodge comments on NPS-9 and DM446 updates. WASO expressed interest in the Lodge's shooting review proposal. WASO supported Valenta's effort to become involved with the national critical incident stress program, and will look at our pregnancy/light duty ideas.

Ranger Futures

The lodge proposed that a delegate from each major employee organization, ANPR and FOP, be seated on this committee looking into the future of the NPS ranger. WASO agreed to study the idea.

(Continued on Page 4)

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Chris Cruz, VP Lodge #23

The first four months of 1992 have proven to be very productive. These are some of the highlights: Meeting with Deputy Director Cables; Meeting with NPS Chief Ranger Jim Brady and Dick Martin; and press contacts with ABC, CNN, Federal Times and the Fresno Bee. We are at a turning point and need to press on. In the following paragraphs, I will address the highlights mentioned above.

In February, I had the opportunity to attend a Black History Month Luncheon in Yosemite. Deputy Director Cables was the Guest of Honor. Mr. Cables spoke to us about the Vail Symposium and that he has been charged with the responsibility by the Director in implementing the program. Mr. Cables commented to the assembled group that some of the problems that have existed in the past have been with the lack of communication to the field from Washington, and the continued studies done about the problems in the Service and lack of follow through on various initiatives in the past. I was able to meet with Mr. Cables that evening on behalf of the Lodge, and he made it clear to me that he wanted to see the recommendations put forth in Vail come to fruition. He has a firm belief that communication has to improve going both directions from WASO to the field and vice versa. Our meeting was the first step.

In addition to the highlights of the Brady/Martin meeting discussed elsewhere in this issue, we also discussed:

RESOURCE PROTECTION:

This is an area that WASO will be trying to obtain more funding for in the future. The plan is to acquire funding like they have for ARPA and our current Drug Program. This is important because if we can get additional funding this will increase our ability to more adequately protect our cultural and natural resources.

We asked that WASO help support Congressman Kanjorski who is working on a bill that would support a health and retirement benefit package for temporary employees. We also asked that WASO recirculate an old memo stopping unpaid on-call, which is still occurring in the Service. We also discussed Valor Awards and the possibility of a pay enhancement program for all the skills we must maintain. Jim was open to the idea and asked the Lodge to submit written proposals on both ideas and that they would work on them. NPS9 is being restructured from its current form to make it easier to update in the future.

Our meeting was a positive one and the door for communication has been opened. We must continue that communication both ways if we expect to see any changes. The current work being done on the pay and retirement issues which are the priorities for WASO will not come to fruition for at least 2-3 years according to what Jim Brady told us.

OPM REPORT

(Continued from Page 1)

LES Pay Grades Based on January 1992 pay scale:
LES-1, \$9.45; LES-2, \$10.50; LES-3, \$11.01; LES-4, \$11.43; LES-5, \$11.72; LES-6, \$12.11; LES-7, \$12.42; LES-8, \$12.89; LES-9, \$13.59; LES-10, \$14.90; LES-11, \$15.50; LES-12, \$18.62; LES-13, \$22.14; LES-14, \$26.17; LES-15, \$30.78.

MEET THE PRESS:

The lodge has developed a Press Briefing Book that we can present to Press Agencies when they are working on Ranger stories. I have general guidelines as to how to set one up and the core items necessary. Please contact me for more information. I have worked directly with CNN and ABC on Ranger Issue stories. CNN has aired their segment which was two and a half minutes long. ABC will air their segment in the next two weeks on ABC World News Tonight with Peter Jennings. Greg has been active in getting articles in the Federal Times and the Fresno Bee. You can help us by sending to the Lodge any article you find and any video film footage that demonstrate what Rangers do in the field. We are now in the process of setting up a video library of our field activities to share with the press and we need contribution from all over the system. If you have any interest in this area please contact me. Our goal here is to provide the most complete and accurate information about the things we do to Congress and the Press.

LEGISLATION:

The final area that I would like to discuss is the area of legislation. We need to continue to write to our Representatives and Senators in Congress about the housing legislation and all our other issues that concern us. Congressman Robert J. Lagomarsino submitted to the House HR 4708 "Housing Improvement Act for Land Management Agencies", on March 31, 1992. We need to write to him and thank him and get our local representatives to support this bill. We need to talk to our friends in the USFS, BLM, and USFWS. This will affect all of us and we must write and show our support. If you would like a copy of this bill contact me.

Many things have been accomplished but, as always, more needs to be done. I encourage everyone to get involved. Even a quick 2 or 3 paragraph letter to your Congressional representative or senator can be incredibly effective. Thanks to everybody who has helped support the Lodges #23 and #60.

FOP Valor Awards Presented To Miller, McBee, Peterson

The National Park Rangers Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police Award of Valor was presented to Don McBee, John Peterson and John Miller in three ceremonies across the country in February. Don McBee received his award during a presentation at Lake Mead NRA for courage in the line of duty during a shooting incident at Lake Mead. Park Superintendent Alan O'Neil participated in the ceremony along with Lake Mead Chapter President Glen Anderson and previous Valor Award recipient Tom Valenta. John Peterson received his award at ceremonies at a regional LE meeting in Alaska, presented by Regional Law Enforcement Specialist Steve Shackleton. Peterson's award was for courage in the line of duty during the same shooting incident at Lake Mead. John Miller received his award from an FOP member at Padre Island National Seashore. Miller was recognized for valor during a shooting incident at Canyon de Chelly National Monument.

The presentations completed the lodge's efforts to recognize rangers involved in shooting incidents in the past three years. The lodge is still working to secure agency recognition for rangers involved in these incidents. None of these rangers has been contacted regarding their incidents from any management higher than the regional level. An article regarding these awards recently appeared in the Federal Times.

Finally! Hearings Held On Seasonal Issues--Your Letters Needed

by George Durkee
Chair, Labor Committee

On December 13, 1991, Congressional hearings were held before the Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Human Resources Subcommittee, Chaired by Congressman Paul Kanjorski of Pennsylvania. The committee met to review utilization of temporary (seasonal) workers in the federal workforce. Chairman Kanjorski said: "The Subcommittee has heard from an increasing number of people expressing concerns over the utilization of temporary employees in different agencies. The concerns deal with topics such as: the types of functions temporary employees are being used to accomplish, the length of time temporary employees are retained, the need for benefits for temporary employees, and the difficulties temporary employees encounter as they attempt to secure permanent employment with the federal government."

Further hearings will be held, most immediately by Congressman Pat Williams of Montana at the end of this month. The FOP has written Representatives Kanjorski, Williams and Frank McCloskey of the Committee thanking them for their efforts on our behalf and also asking to be included in future hearings. In our letter, we also specifically recommended:

1) Step Increases

As an inducement to retain these experienced rangers, I recommend making temporary employees eligible for step increases for time in service. Wage Grade employees have had this basic right since the late '60's. Many seasonal rangers with years of service, who must maintain a high proficiency in law enforcement, search and rescue and emergency medical service, are discouraged that maintenance workers will make more than they do after only one year of service.

2) Hiring Procedures

Seasonal (temporary) rangers are extremely discouraged with the often byzantine hiring process the Park Service uses. To get permanent status, many rangers work as clerk typists for either the Service or other federal agencies--jobs they have no intention of staying with for more than the few months it takes to get that status.

I suggest making seasonal workers eligible for applying directly for permanent jobs within their agency if they have, say, 2 cumulative years of service with that agency.

3) Pay Differential for Advanced Skills

The Park Service is in the unusual position of using temporary workers for high-risk law enforcement and emergency services (similar to a police force using reserve officers on special events) for 4 to 8 months of the year. These law enforcement rangers are not paid any more than other temporary rangers for their skills, responsibilities and training and, in fact, **make less than most temporary (Wage Grade) maintenance workers.**

Most of us have also paid for much of this training on our own. Because the Service does not pay for our training nor compensate us for these extra skills, many of us are dropping our certifications--to the detriment of the park visitors.

I suggest a pay differential for each skill the agency determines is useful to a specific job. For each certification in a given skill, the Park Service would pay the ranger a differential of, say, 3-5% to a maximum of 15% of the ranger's base salary." (This last suggestion is also being pursued by the FOP at WASO for all rangers).

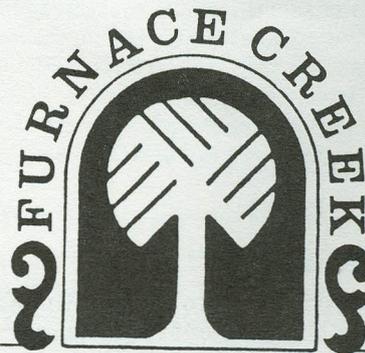
As a result of the December hearings, Representative Frank McCloskey has already introduced legislation that would allow health and retirement benefits to temporary workers who have 4 cumulative years service in 6. We called his office where an aid said that this proposal is not locked in and could well be lowered depending on what is discovered in hearings.

Success on these issues will depend **directly** on your participation. An aid to Rep. Pat Williams specifically asked that our members write both Congressman Kanjorski, thanking him for holding the hearings and especially your own Representative making him or her aware of the situation and asking his/her co-sponsorship of McCloskey's bill (HR 4159). The aid also said that Congressman Williams became interested in this issue as the direct result of a letter from a seasonal employee constituent. Letters do work!

So, write a short letter, outlining your experience and asking for support to your Representative as well as (or copies to):

Congressman Pat Williams
2457 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Paul Kanjorski
Committee On Post Office
and Civil Service
603 HOB Annex 1
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Secretary's Message

by Dave Brennan, Lodge #23

Please pay your renewal dues before your expiration date. Your membership expiration date is on your mailing label. This avoids the costly and timely process of writing you to remind you to renew. Grace periods on dues renewals call for suspension of membership if dues are more than 30 days delinquent. We have been a bit more lax than that in the hope that people will send in their dues without reminder. This policy will be more strictly enforced. If your membership expires, you are required to return your membership card to the lodge.

Getting your mail?

Please write the lodge and tell us your new address ASAP. Western Lodge members should be receiving the following publications: The Protection Ranger; State Journal; and the National FOP magazine. If you are not receiving these publications, contact the lodge.

Transferring East/West?

If you are transferring between the eastern and western lodges, write or phone your home lodge and tell them that you need to be transferred from east to west, or vice versa. We will handle the paper work. There is no cost for transferring. You must transfer if you cross the Mississippi River.

Change In Insurance

Western lodge members should note the following change in their life insurance benefits. Due to rising rates, the State lodge is now self-insured, and the amount of your coverage is \$1,000. Members joining after 2/1/92 must be a member for six months before they are eligible. The State lodge is looking for a new insurance company. Members polled supported keeping the insurance benefit for the lodge.

Call The Lodge 209/372-9216

The Western Lodge maintains a 24-hour telephone line for information requests, comments, and suggestions. If you are having any trouble with your membership, please call.

BRADY MEETING

(Continued from Page 1)

Seasonal Benefits

The Lodge asked WASO to support the Kanjorski bill to give health and retirement benefits to temporaries.

Guns & Body Armor

Procurement of weapons is in the bid process, therefore no discussion could be held on the type of .40 to be selected. They will be phased in, probably over a few years. It is safe for most parks now to order a years worth of .357 ammo. There is no specific funding for this. Money left over from buying guns will go to body armor.

Housing

There is some conflict within the service on the housing act. FTO WASO will examine the Lodge's FTO proposals.

NPS-9: A Backdoor To Mandatory Fitness Without 6c Retirement

The National Park Service may be again attempting to impose mandatory physical fitness requirements without giving rangers enhanced retirement coverage. The Lodge has obtained an advance copy of a draft of NPS-9 revisions. In section two, chapter 1, "Law Enforcement Commissions," the draft allows a ranger's law enforcement commission to be removed for the following reason: "Determination of physical unfitness (i.e. eyesight, hearing, drug or alcohol abuse, failure to meet applicable physical fitness standards) subsequent to a professional examination made at the request of the Superintendent."

The Lodge is deeply concerned over this backdoor approach to the imposition of a mandatory physical fitness program. The Lodge has historically opposed the imposition of mandatory physical fitness standards (failure to meet standards results in adverse action against the employee). The Lodge also supports grandfathering present employees in any fitness standards. The proposed standards provide no appeal, and no choice of physicians by the employee. Fellow NPS law enforcement personnel, U.S. Park Police officers, do not have a similar program. They receive enhanced retirement coverage, and have a program in which existing employees were grandfathered in. In addition, physical fitness equipment is provided at all U.S.P.P. worksites, and physical examinations are paid for. The U.S. Park Police physical fitness program is the result of a collective bargaining agreement between the officers and management.

The Lodge led opposition to the Park Service's last efforts at imposing a mandatory fitness program without enhanced retirement. National FOP President Dewey Stokes wrote directly to Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan expressing concern over the many unfair items in the program. Lodge members met with Washington officials and further expressed opposition. The program was re-written, and became a program with no adverse action. The Lodge has requested a copy of the draft of NPS-9, but has received no reply to the request. During a meeting with NPS Chief Ranger James Brady, the Western Lodge was invited to comment on NPS-9. Brady expressed a desire to improve communications with the Lodge. The Lodge will soon be re-contacting Washington to again request a copy of the draft, and expressing opposition to mandatory fitness without 6c coverage.

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Severed Lifeline: Lodge Looking Into NPS Radio System Deficiencies

The Lodge has learned that shortly before Park Ranger Bob McGhee was shot and killed during a vehicle stop at Gulf Islands National Seashore, that park's safety committee recommended improvements to the park's radio system, saying that someone could be killed by deficiencies in the system at the time. At the time of the incident, park dispatch was not in service. A BOL for the suspects had been broadcast in nearby Ocean Springs. According to the information we have, McGhee had the ability to receive this information from Ocean Springs P.D., but it is not known if he was monitoring their channel at the time of broadcast. Deficiencies in park radio systems are nothing new. A major complaint is the shared use of radio channels. In most parks with radio, law enforcement, maintenance, fire operations, and park administration use the same channel.

In busy parks, it is not uncommon for emergency operations to be interrupted by maintenance personnel talking about plumbing problems in restrooms. Maintenance personnel, busy with their own workload, do not always monitor the current law enforcement situation. The Department of Interior's Law Enforcement Manual, DM-446, prohibits use of law enforcement radio systems for non law enforcement purposes. Specifically, the manual in chapter 3.3B5 states "Law enforcement administrators shall ensure that the law enforcement radio system is used only for law enforcement purposes." In addition, the manual calls for "24-hour, two way radio capability providing continuous communications between mobile base and field units or provide for a tie-in service on a 24-hour basis with another agency."

A recent USFS study of radio communications orders all portables on all forests be equipped with remote mikes (by May 1) to avoid possible hazards from radio frequency radiation caused by holding the radio too close to the eyes and head while transmitting. "It has been clearly established that RF radiation can be hazardous due to its ability to heat biological tissue rapidly... Two areas of the body, the eyes and the testes, are particularly susceptible... ." A test showed that exposure (with a radio at 1.8 watts) exceeded recommended standards for safety when held close to the head, but diminished rapidly only a few inches away.

This report also directs forests to perform a propagation analyses of all land/mobile radio networks and to develop risk procedures when personnel are dispatched to marginal or non-coverage areas.

The FOP has worked to improve radio communications in Yosemite by requesting funding from the sale of the Yosemite Park and Curry Company be used for needed radio upgrades. Interior had suggested at one time that as much as two million dollars would be available to the park. Yosemite had planned on using nearly a million dollars to upgrade the communication system. The planned contribution to the park is now at \$250,000, which would be far from adequate to meet safety needs of field rangers.

Dispatchers are the lifeline for field rangers. Yet in many NPS areas, dispatchers are often given more responsibilities, a greater workload, and far less pay than their counterparts in other federal and state agencies. NPS dispatchers are often GS-4 or 5 level. Forest Service fire dispatchers are often at the GS-9 level or higher. Many Customs LE dispatchers are GS-11. NPS dispatchers may be responsible for monitoring the status of 25 or more field units, far in excess of urban counterparts. In addition to dispatch responsibilities, they often answer the park switchboard, answer visitor questions, file reports and citations, maintain law enforcement statistics, compile visitor use statistics, send out interpretive brochures at the same time they are responsible for taking emergency telephone calls and maintaining the communications lifeline of field rangers. With the pay and stress level, the turnover rate of dispatchers is high, and keeping quality personnel on line is difficult, further jeopardizing the safety of field rangers.

A Call For Entries: FOP Awards Program Open To All

The Western Lodge announced a national awards program for NPS emergency service providers.

National Valor Award

This is the highest honor granted by the Lodge to persons who demonstrate unusual courage involving a high degree of personal risk in the face of danger. This award is designed to recognize acts, deeds, efforts and rescues in the disciplines of law enforcement, emergency medical service, fire service, and search and rescue.

National Meritorious Conduct in Law Enforcement Award

This award recognizes significant acts and efforts in conducting the law enforcement function of the National Park Service. Significant law enforcement efforts, advancements in criminal investigations of all types, and the advancement of law enforcement programming in the NPS and its cooperating agencies are eligible for recognition.

National Outstanding Park Ranger Award

Each annual recipient of the National Valor Award and the National Meritorious Conduct in Law Enforcement Award will be considered for the National Outstanding Park Ranger Award. Deadlines for Submission Entries must be submitted to the Western Lodge no later than May 31, 1992. The 1992 Awards will cover acts from April 1, 1991 to April 1, 1992. Any individual or group of individuals may make a nomination. However, all nominations must include supporting documentation and shall be prepared and submitted according to Lodge rules. Further information on eligibility, preparation, and submission of nominations may be obtained by writing the Western Lodge or by calling Awards Chairman Gus Martinez at 209/372-0239.

Chapter Activity Highlights

Rocky Mountain

The Chapter had its first meeting and elected officers. Work will now focus on defining issues and setting up chapter infrastructure.

Shenandoah

Meeting in late April to get Seasonals together

Delaware Water Gap

Meeting of eastern parks resulted in several parks, including Statue of Liberty, becoming part of this chapter. Membership has grown from seven a few months ago to 26 at present. Steve Clark is chapter President. Assistant Superintendent Hal Grovert attended the last meeting. The chapter will work on defining local and national issues of concern.

Lake Mead

Meeting scheduled with Chief Ranger who has supported some lodge issues. Chapter to adopt a highway.

Death Valley

Voted to support FOP collective bargaining. Developed form to help resolve problems. New Chief Ranger at last meeting, supports many lodge goals. Working with Supt. on helping park seek concurrent jurisdiction. Asked to draft off-duty weapons policy. Providing trainers for Jr. Olympic school program. Next meeting to study/suggest changes for NPS 9.

Grand Canyon

Public Safety Officers' Association Published first issue of their newsletter "On Scene." Continuing work on local and national issues. Assisted CNN in news report on bad housing in NPS (Broadcast in early April). Starting a Public Safety Fund, similar to History Association funds parks use to support interpretive activities. Working with local civic associations (Rotary etc.) for donations. Call Dan Kirschner for more information.

Western Lodge (Yosemite)

Adopt-A-Highway initial clean up done. Proposal for new VP to head in-park operations. New chief ranger at last meeting supports many FOP goals. Worked with CNN on NPS housing story and upcoming report for ABC News.

Eastern Rangers Lodge

Board meeting held. Working on fundraising, drug testing. Continuing to hammer WASO/OPM on retirement packages.

South Florida Parks

19 Rangers from Everglades, Big Cypress, Ft. Jefferson and Biscayne recently met to form a chapter. Elected officers, will research local shooting review policy, discussed civic projects & decide on issues/priorities. Hope to combine efforts with nearby FOP federal agents Lodge.

Great Smoky

Initial meeting held

Chapters forming in Boston, Sequoia Kings, Organ Pipe/Saguaro, Independence, Steamtown, Padre Island & New River Gorge.

How To Form A Chapter

Chapters are the most effective way to solve local issues, influence national policy and help in your community. Contact the Eastern or Western Lodge. We recommend 6 members at a minimum. You need to elect officers, set up by-laws (which we can supply), and that's it. Most chapters begin with a meeting to gauge interest. You put up posters, talk it over, and see who comes. The Eastern or Western lodges can help you in every step of chapter formation, from electing officers to setting up by-laws and finances.

We Get Letters: Seasonal Issues

Dear FOP:

The budget constraints of being a seasonal Ranger have kept me from joining your organization thus far. But the time has come as: 1) during my last three seasons as a front country LE Ranger, I have been supplied with sub-standard defensive equipment (e.g., aged body armor, mace well past its expiration date, and an NPS issue .38 that fell apart -- I bought my own .357.) This summer, my fellow LE seasonals and I received training for ASP batons though we had all been told that the Park could not afford to issue seasonals with ASP's and ASP cases. Some feel as if the higher-ups see seasonals as an "expendable and renewable" resource.

Quite frankly, the situation stinks. A few of us expressed our views to the Park's Chief Ranger, Criminal Investigator, Park Protection Specialist, and Superintendent -- all of whom are somewhat new to their positions and are not yet set in their ways. The dialogue appears to have been productive as we've been told that the Park will allot money for the purchase of new body armor; that we'll receive new mace to replace our expired lot--the only trouble is, no one will give a date as to when this will take place. My Fellow LE seasonals and I are maintaining a cautiously optimistic attitude.

Reason #2: From what I've seen of your publication, "The Protection Ranger," your organization appears to be pro-actively and effectively pursuing better working conditions and security for seasonal and permanent Rangers, male and female alike; and most importantly, you're getting results. Indeed, the kicker/decision point to join was an article in your April/May 1991 issue, "National President's Letter on Mandatory Fitness."

Last year, my fellow LE seasonals and I received an introduction to the NPS -57 draft fitness requirements, undergoing most of the prescribed tests. Though most of us did well, many of us came away resenting the whole program for the very same reasons Mr. Stokes mentioned in his letter. As a female LE seasonal, I recognized that several test elements were biased against women, (i.e. strength requirements, chin-ups, push-ups) just as American physical education has traditionally bred and promoted the double standard of strong and fast boys/men as opposed to flexible and agile girls/women. Clearly NPS-57 has many flaws, gender and age biases are chief among them. Thanks for speaking out! Keep up the good work! Count me in!

Name withheld by request

You May Qualify For Hundreds In Tax Refunds, Here's How to Apply

(from the Grand Canyon Public Safety Officers' Newsletter)

By now most rangers know that if you are a required occupant, you can deduct your rent from your taxes (from the gross income). In addition to having income tax deducted from your pay, FERS employees and seasonals have social security tax deducted. The lodge has discovered that the park service deducts too much social security tax for required occupants who pay social security tax, and that required occupants who paid social security tax may be due a refund. Here's why. Social security tax deductions are figured out on adjusted gross income (i.e. after your rent deduction). The payroll computers compute your Social Security tax on gross income, before rent is deducted, meaning that you pay more.

Payroll officials say that it is impossible to reprogram the computers for required occupants only. To get your money, you have to file for a refund (note: this is a refund, not just an additional deduction from your income). Here's how you file:

- 1.) Use IRS form 843, Claim For Refund and Request For Abatement, one form per each tax period (one form per year.) The form is available by phone from the IRS.
- 2.) You can file retroactively back until 1989. You must file for a refund of taxes paid in 1989 by April 15, 1993.
- 3.) You must be a required occupant, and include supporting documentation with your claim.
- 4.) You must pay social security taxes, meaning FERS and seasonals qualify (CSRS permanents pay 1%, you can file for a refund if you like, but it will be a very small amount, about \$20 a year.)
- 5.) To compute your refund, multiply the amount you paid in rent in one tax year by the individual Social Security tax rate for that year (.0751 for 1988 and 1989, .0765 for 1990 and 1991).
- 6.) On the line on the claim form that says "Amount to be refunded," put the amount and the words "plus interest." Your refund should be around \$150 per year, less if you didn't work year 'round, more if you pay high rent. Your refund will include interest, computed by the IRS. This rate fluctuates between 9 and 11 percent.
- 7.) Your letter supporting your required occupancy claim should state that A) lodging is furnished on the business premises of your employer, B) for the convenience of your employer, and C) as a condition of your employment, you are required to accept it. It should document your required occupancy rent amount for each tax year.
- 8.) Mail the form and supporting documentation to the same IRS processing center that you file your income tax return to for faster service.

Documentation for your reference on this matter is IRS publication 525, which defines required occupancy, and states that "if the three conditions for excluding the value of lodging are met, the value is not included in your income, whether it is provided with or without a charge to you... (and) if the value of lodging is not income to you under these rules, it is not wages for purposes of the social security tax." Remember, you will have to file for this each year. We have documentation to support this, but before filing any of this, you should consult your own accountant as the lodge assumes no liability for the accuracy of this information. If you do receive a substantial refund from the IRS, the lodge would appreciate a donation of gratitude in an amount you deem fair for letting you know about this matter.

President's Message

By Greg Jackson, Western Lodge President

Restructuring: I've made some moves to restructure the way the lodge does business in order to increase revenues without raising dues and simplify the bookkeeping of the lodge and chapter secretaries. The first is a simplification of the way the lodge collects dues from chapter members. We had been accepting \$20 from chapter members, with \$7 going to the chapter. This is no longer the case. All members, chapter or no chapter, must pay dues in full at time of application. Twice yearly, the lodge will issue rebates to chapters based on the number of members in the chapter and the financial needs of the chapter. Next, membership renewal dates have been adjusted to the nearest quarter. This will simplify record keeping while still maintaining regular cash flow. Chapters will be told of deadlines.

Lodge finances: Although the lodge continues to grow, our expenses continue to keep pace. Our net worth is the same as when I took office. I've made the following changes: Our biggest expense is the newsletter. We've gone to a new publisher to save us about 20 percent. Next largest is our phone expense. I've drastically reduced access and use of the calling card. In addition, costs for conference calls will be shared by participating chapters through rebate deductions. We will go to a fixed expense allowance for lodge officers to better manage costs. I've appointed a lodge fund raising committee chair, and we will improve our fund raising capabilities. By reducing expenses and raising voluntary funds, a dues increase should not be necessary. All members may request financial information about the lodge by writing or calling us. The Western Lodge's recent "hat passing" among members to get extra funds was a great success. Many thanks to all for contributing above your normal dues.



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LE Retirement, Better Pay, Collective Bargaining Top Eastern Lodge Concerns Says Survey

Gaining enhanced retirement coverage is the top priority of Eastern Lodge members, according to a survey conducted by the Eastern Lodge. Second and third on the survey are pay-related issues: gaining Pay Act raises, and raising the journeyman level of park rangers to the GS-9 level. Following retirement and pay as concerns is instituting collective bargaining. The annual survey of all ranger FOP members will be in the next FOP newsletter.

The Protection Ranger

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Our Lodges are committed to improving the Ranger profession by joining Rangers together in a spirit of camaraderie to seek a cooperative relationship with management, with the goal a safe working environment, and fair and competitive pay and benefits. FOP is a non-profit organization.

Application For Membership

I, the undersigned, a full-time regularly employed law enforcement officer, do hereby make application for active membership in the National Park Rangers Lodge, FOP. If my membership should be revoked or discontinued for any cause other than retirement while in good standing, I do hereby agree to return to the Lodge my membership card and other material bearing the FOP emblem.

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP: _____

DOB (required): _____

Alliance membership (non commissioned)

Please enclose a check for one year membership.
(Western Lodge Permanent - \$27, Seasonal - \$18)
(Eastern Lodge \$20 all members.)

Enclose a copy of your commission.

I'm employed East of the Mississippi

I'm employed West of the Mississippi

RENEWAL

NPS Area (4-letter park code): _____

Mail to:

Fraternal Order of Police, Box 944, Yosemite, CA 95389

or

Eastern FOP Lodge, P.O. Box 151, Fancy Gap, VA 24328

Retirement Coverage: If You Want It, It's Up To You

If you want enhanced retirement coverage, mistakenly called "20-year retirement" by people unfamiliar with the benefit, you have to act personally or, even more effective, establish an FOP chapter in your park. First, work with your supervisor, chief ranger or superintendent to re-write position descriptions using OPM's guideline language. Specifically, your duties must be primarily "the investigation, apprehension, or detention of persons suspected or convicted of offenses against the criminal laws of the United States," or "the control and extinguishment of fires or the maintenance of firefighting apparatus and equipment." Exact wording is important, and the word "primary" is essential. This is not a guarantee of coverage, but solidly strengthens claims. Second, if you have not done so, make a request for coverage through your personnel office. Contact them for required documentation. If they cannot help, contact the lodge. Superintendents may request 6c coverage for employees. Some Superintendents have already identified the positions that meet the coverage requirements and have made recommendations to their respective regional offices requesting coverage determinations. If you would like to see a copy, write to the Grand Canyon Public Safety Officers Association, P. O. Box 1198, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023. The Lodge will be working with WASO to develop blanket PD's that will help assure retirement coverage.

The Definitive Study On Ranger Shootings

Now expanded and in its second printing, Use of Deadly Force By--Deadly Assaults Upon Federal Land Management Law Enforcement Officers by Paul Berkowitz gives detailed accounts of all known incidents of deadly force used by and against Park Rangers, BLM and USFS rangers. It is increasingly being used as a teaching tool. It should be required reading for every ranger. Order your copy from the Western Lodge. Send your name and address with a check or money order for \$12.50 (FOP members), \$13.50 (non-members) to FOP, P.O. Box 944, Yosemite, CA 95389

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Fraternal Order Of Police
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