

P.L.E.A.
EXPLORER
VOLUME 4 JANUARY 1999

www.parkranger.com

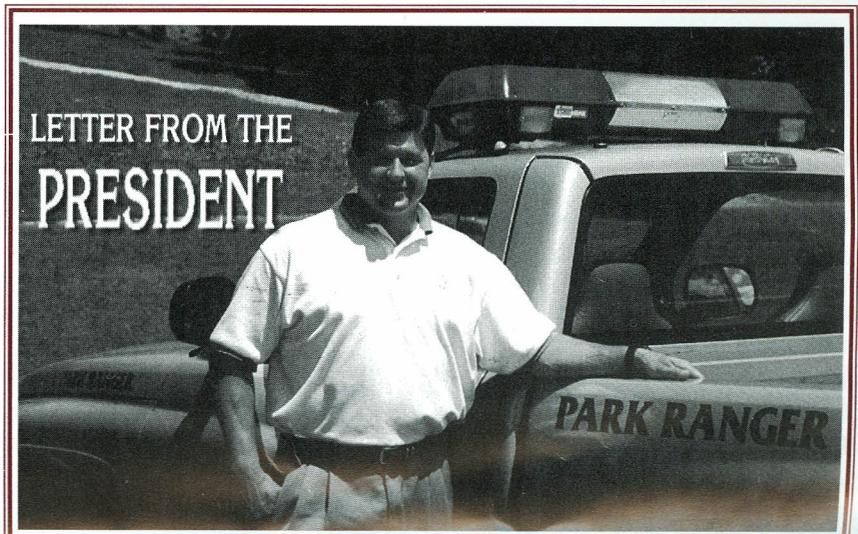
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SUPPORTING THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE KEEPING OUR PARKS & WILDLIFE AREAS SAFE

Dear Members:

With the holiday season behind us, and year end projects coming to an end, it is the perfect time to reflect on a year of many accomplishments. Personally, I hope that everyone has had a safe and productive year. This time of year we think of family and friends, but it is also a time to evaluate our departments and ourselves.

Trying to be the best we can be, not just another recruitment campaign, but in our field of park law enforcement, I believe that is what we are all truly after. We want to learn from our mistakes, and build a better agency for tomorrow. Sure it has been a long hard year, and it is really hard to get excited about the next season so soon, but the next couple of months are the perfect time to rejuvenate the troops, educate, and build for the future.



One of those ways is through training. Throughout most of the year, the men and women of my staff see each other coming and going. They work so many different shifts that it is very hard for them to all get together at one time and communicate, except at these training opportunities. In doing so, I sometimes find it hard to cover normal shifts, but I will get my rookies or part-time staff to fill in. These training sessions are very important, and great for morale, besides meeting mandated training requirements. We take turns with lunches, and each officer talks for a while on a topic of their choice. Of course, it must benefit the department educationally. We have had officers talk on astronomy, taxi-dermy and ice rescue in addition to our agencies required training.

Another great tool for motivation is the the annual Job Appraisals. Even though appraisals are not always enjoyable, it is a great time to pat those on the back that deserve it. More importantly, it is a great time to point out the things he or she can improve on for the next year. If you do not have evaluations, maybe you should consider them or possibly evaluate yourselves.

This time of year I try to have family and friends evaluate the parks and recreational facilities. Not a formal thing, but just a general conversation will suffice. You can get a good sense of how people feel about your park district through general conversation. I spoke to hundreds of people this holiday season. I asked their opinions on what we are doing in the parks and recreational facilities, and what we could do to improve. It never fails though, after talking about this life in Park Law Enforcement, I always feel better about my job and the profession that I have chosen.

So as we head for the new millennium, take some time to learn and evaluate, and at the same time, thank the troops, and don't forget to give them some fresh air. Have some fun during training this year.

Steve Pokrywka/President

Chief Park Ranger, Unified Government of Wyandotte County-Kansas City, KS Parks & Recreation

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT STAFF

Contracted by PLEA

With the increase in responsibilities of running a first class organization like PLEA, so came the growing pains. For a number of years, PLEA had run the administrative functions by themselves. This was actually done by one or two members, and usually the Board of Directors scrambling to get newsletters, merchandise, and memberships together, while trying to perform the other duties of their real jobs. While the organization grew in the past several years PLEA contracted NRPA to run the membership to try and relieve some of the stress put on the organization. This relationship worked out well, the only downside was having our membership records separated from the other functions of the Organization. Newsletters and merchandise were still handled internally, but they too were growing at the point where it was becoming a full-time job.

Looking at the big picture, The Board of Directors voted unanimously to hire an Administrative Service. That service, provided by Digital Graphiti, based out of Kansas City, would consolidate all the functions of the organization under one roof.

Membership, merchandise, web site, and newsletter, would be centralized into one location, and now the right hand would know what the left was doing.

Digital Graphiti, who has been hosting and updating our web site, www.parkranger.com, for the past year, was very interested in taking over the administrative functions, and further promoting the organization. Digital Graphiti learned from hundreds of responses on the Internet, that a number of PLEA issues were not getting the proper treatment they deserved. Digital Graphiti actually became quite excited over what PLEA had to offer, and the field of Park Law Enforcement. They answered so many questions about PLEA on-line over the last year that they became very comfortable dealing with the day to day functions of the organization.

PLEA entered into a contractual agreement for six months with Digital Graphiti, and will renegotiate for their continued services at the upcoming conference. Digital Graphiti, is also available for putting together a web page for your agency at a special rate. You may contacting them at 816 / 221-7676.

ADMINISTRATION ACCEPTS CHALLENGE HEAD ON

A message from Digital Graphiti Studios, Inc.

We are really looking forward to this new year of working with P.L.E.A.. It is exciting to work for an organization that has as much potential as P.L.E.A.. We are constantly answering E-Mail from people wanting to break into the field and wanting to know about the education requirements. We do our best to point them in the right direction- links on the site that go to educational sites, the discussion board, and we encourage them to join P.L.E.A. as Associate members. The Associate membership has been extremely popular and will certainly help to swell the ranks.

We have set some serious goals for the coming year in terms of organizing the Park Law Enforcement Association. Some of our members have not received anything since joining, and have not been receiving newsletters. We are rebuilding this membership database (out of three different ones), and patience is requested. When that is done, we can also publish the membership directory! We will make this our first priority for the coming year and have gotten a head start on the project. If you want some of the new patches and window stickers sent to you right now, e-mail us, include your mailing address, and we will get them right out to you.

At right: Corporal Coddington checks stock for an online order.
Above right: Sgt. Vance responds to the latest e-mail.



The success of P.L.E.A. largely depends on help from the membership. We will now begin publishing some of the e-mails in the Explorer in hopes of getting answers to questions from the PLEA membership. Many of you have been doing so already on the web discussion boards and your participation is greatly appreciated.



This leads us to our second goal which is to develop a listing of recommended courses and colleges that would lead prospective members into the field of Park Law Enforcement. If you know any courses or specific colleges that offer these types of courses, please let us know.

*We look forward to a year of growth for the association, both in terms of interaction and overall membership.
Thank you for your support.*

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P.L.E.A. 1998 Mid-Year Conference

CANCELLED

Due to Hurricane Georges

The Park Law Enforcement Association, while holding its midyear conference in conjunction with the annual conference of the National Recreation and Parks Association, was cancelled due to the threatening weather of the hurricane, "Georges." The conference was to be held from October 23 thru 28, 1998, at the convention center on Miami Beach, Florida.

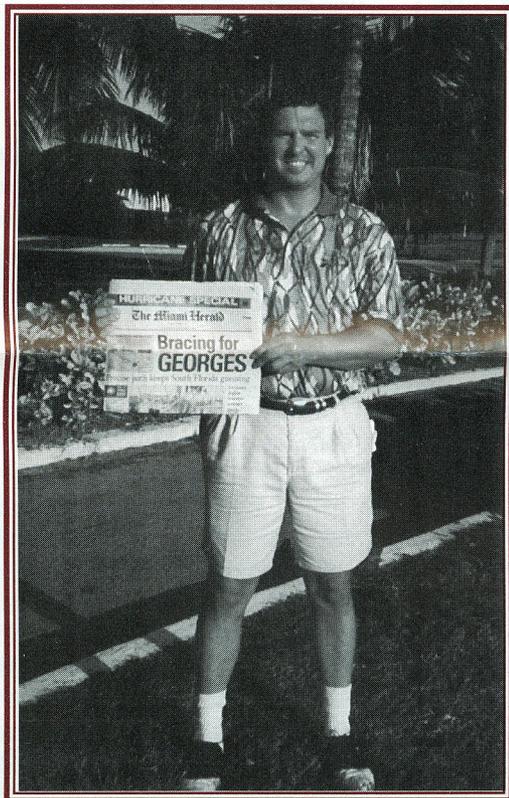


Lt. Joe Martyna gives P.L.E.A. President a tour of the Florida Marine Patrol Helicopter.

Many people wandered around Miami Beach not knowing what to do because of the forecast. The weather conditions at the time though, were simply beautiful, which only made it harder to believe, that a hurricane was on the way to ravage Florida again.

Several PLEA members attending the conference were among these confusions, not knowing whether to go home or wait out the forecast. The conference was not actually cancelled until the day of the first sessions, which added to the confusion. Everyone was trying to get out of Miami at the same time, and airlines were not sure if they had enough flights leaving out of Miami. Panic was on the faces of thousands of delegates on Miami Beach, and the scenes in the streets were frightening. Then the City of Miami Beach actually ordered an evacuation, to add to the onslaught of craziness. There were wrecks, fights, and total pandemonium for a 24 hour period.

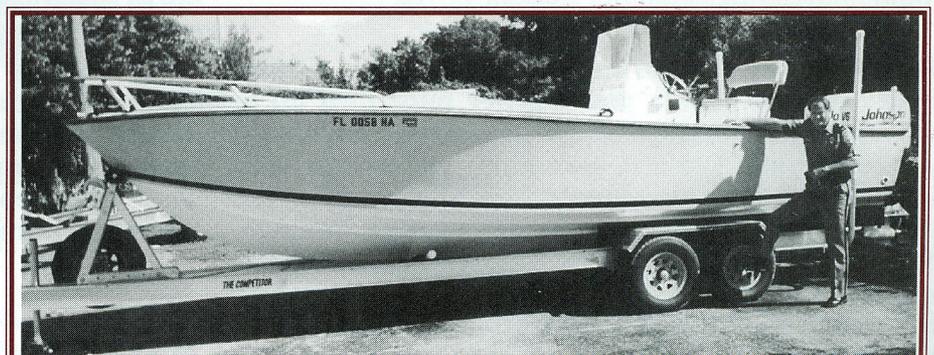
PLEA Board of Directors, who were in attendance for the conference handled the situation with superior behavior. It was a credit to their departments, the obvious professionalism and charisma, that they displayed throughout the ordeal. From our sources, all of the PLEA Delegates got out of Miami successfully and safely, but an important Board of Directors Meeting was also cancelled.



Captain Stuart Folland, Johnson County Kansas Park Police, shows off the morning headlines.

Special Thanks to Major Clark and all his staff for their hospitality and enlightenment into the process involved in preparing for a natural disaster.

With thousands of delegates from around the country descending upon beautiful Miami Beach, so were the likes of Hurricane "Georges." Attendees found themselves committed to show up to the conference without a more reliable forecast by meteorologist. Many hotel and airline reservations were already made, and most of them would not cancel without a fee accessed.



Major Ken Clark with the Florida Marine Patrol presents the undercover patrol boat that was confiscated in a drug bust.

COMMUNICATION

The Key to Success



You hear the Dispatcher call for a Park Ranger. They ask you to meet a party who was suppose to be let into the Recreation Hall to set up for the Wedding. You answer dispatch with the dumfounded tone, "10-4?" Your thoughts are automatic, who screwed this one up, or maybe you thought, not again!

How many times have you been caught off guard? I can think of thousands of instances, but will there ever be an answer? How do I change things in my agency? Is it my fault? Where do you start? Great questions, but let's get real.

I guarantee you, it is going to happen! Someone in your organization will drop the ball, and no matter how long you have been with the organization, or how much education you have, sooner or later you are going to be convicted of

COMMUNICATION BREAK DOWN

Face it, we are all human and we all make mistakes. The sooner we admit it, and quit pointing fingers, the sooner you are off and running to the new millennium with style. I know that I have blamed it on someone else before, and why shouldn't you, but these days, there is a wave of change taking place. I can sense it, and you will too.

Let me give you a few simple steps that will help you be a better communicator.

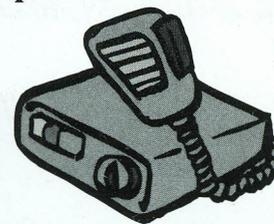
First, there will never be enough staff meetings. The staff meetings you put off till tomorrow will be the one that burns you and your department today. We have to keep in constant communication with our troops, administrative staff, maintenance department, and the recreational programming sector. Sure we may feel a little segregated from that other division, and we have a little animosity toward them also, but why keep blaming someone else. Take it upon yourself to make the change.

The key factor behind this whole process is simple. Every division within your agency must own up to this easy and simple remedy. No matter how busy, you may think, you are, once a day collaborate with your staff and **C.Y.A.** Your own staff may affect the out come of coverage for a particular function. Someone calls in sick or is on vacation. In shift meetings, pass on the particulars from the previous shift. Elaborate on tendencies taking place somewhere in your system, and double check the times for certain functions, or a court appearance. At first, your

troops will complain and they will feel like their being treated like children. Sooner or later your staff will realize how important **C.Y.A.**, is for everyone.

C.Y.A. Don't make me spell it out. Someone in your division has to be the watchdog. They have to be constantly thinking about that evening, this weekend, or the time frames during a function that are most susceptible to problems. Nip the problem, before it happens. Think the worst, and get prepared for the unexpected. Have a game plan before the fact.

C.Y.A.
(Cover Your @##)



So when a supervisor confronts you, with the question over the radio or at the staff meeting, remember they are only trying to **C.Y.A.** When your bosses double checks your schedule, remember they are also, **C.Y.A.** Nothing to get offended about as long as you and everyone else remembers what we are all trying to accomplish.

Secondly, today simple enhancement technologies related to our future are here to promote better communications for your agency. Pagers, mobile phones, and fax machines have given us no excuse for not being connected with the front office and staff. Computers access all of the previous and more. Most agencies are going to an 800-MHZ radio communication system with trunking capabilities, and a CAD system format. A lot of agencies do not want to admit that change is needed, but now more than ever it is the time to change. Sure, money is not always budgeted for such luxuries, but weighting out their positive effects on our reputations and livelihood is worth it.

What does the future hold? Computer terminals will be in every vehicle, office, and home. Officers will be able to eliminate the middleman and do most of the informational work themselves. Their back-up will be the video camera in their car, or the satellite tracking system on board their vehicles always letting supervisors and dispatchers know where the troops are. Your department must keep pace, because you know the criminals are.

Remember **C.Y.A.**, give up the egos, double-check, and grow with the future.

PARK LAW ENFORCEMENT ASSOCIATION APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

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P.L.E.A. is affiliated with the NATIONAL RECREATION & PARK ASSOCIATION

CAMPFIRE STORIES

Send us your campfire stories! Does your park history include anything worth telling around a blazing campfire?

This campfire story comes from
Ketchican, Minnatopolis

There's a cabin near the lake that has a seasonal apparition. Each Spring, the windows glow from a candle light within. Whenever a new Ranger comes on the force, we try not to let him know about the ghost light, and then get him to investigate it. They go down to the cabin, and find a old style lantern lit, and as they nervously look about, find that there is no one around. Several of the rookie Rangers have taken the lantern back to the headquarters. After a couple of days, the lantern seems to disappear. No one sees it go, it just isn't around anymore.

We have tried to find out something about the cabins previous occupants that might shed some light on this problem. The only thing we could find out was that a man named Thomas Hearn had lived there, and apparently built the existing structure in 1912. He died in 1923, a widower, having outlived his wife by six years. Maybe he is still waiting up with the light on during the spring nights so that he can enjoy the season. We don't know why the light is not seen in summer, fall or winter, but it apparently never has.

Ranger Josh Seymour
Ketchican PRSA

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CITY OF
Albuquerque

20th ANNUAL
P.L.E.A. CONFERENCE
March 3-6, 1999

**The City of Albuquerque, Open Space
Division will be the Host Agency for the
1999 P.L.E.A. Conference.**

*The conference will be held at the Sheraton
Old Town Inn from March 3-6 and the
theme will be "Managing and Protecting
Cultural Resources".*

The Albuquerque Open Space Division manages over 27,000 acres of natural park lands, including several archaeological sites and is the co-manager of Petroglyph National Monument along with the National Park Service. The conference will focus on issues of managing and protecting archaeological sites and how this differs from managing recreational lands. Tours of Piedras Marcadas Pueblo, a pre-historic Native American pueblo ruin dating back to 1300 A.D.; Petroglyph National Monument; and Acoma Sky City Pueblo, which has been continuously inhabited since approximately 1150 A.D., will be included in the conference.

The Albuquerque Metro Area is a community of close to 700,000 people in the heart of the Southwest and served by 10 major airlines. The average daytime temperature in March is in the mid fifties with a nighttime low in the high twenties.

The Sheraton Old Town Inn has a guaranteed rate of \$75. per night, single or double, from Saturday, Feb. 27 through Monday, March 8, for conference attendees registering by Feb 9, 1999.

SIGN UP NOW!

Please complete this registration form,
detach and mail with check or money
order (make checks payable to P.L.E.A.
1999 Conference) to:

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c/o Albuquerque Open Space
Division
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\$250.

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LETTERS TO P.L.E.A.

This new section of the bi-monthly newsletter will include samplings of letters received by P.L.E.A.

Letters and responses are encouraged and can be sent to: PLEA c/o Digital Graphiti
1715 Baltimore, Suite C
Kansas City, MO 64108

Or, e-mail us at: letters@parkranger.com

Greetings,

I am an area manager for the Jester Park Unit with the Polk County Conservation Board, Granger Iowa. Our areas are scattered around the Des Moines Iowa metropolitan area. We have acquired a 7-mile trail that follows the Des Moines River. This trail will be designated as a Mountain Bike Trail. It is currently used for illegal off road dirt bike and four wheel drive trucks, in the future, no motorized vehicles will be allowed on this trail.

I am seeking information on enforcement policies regarding implementation of an enforcement policy that addresses multi jurisdictional departments. This area will be shared by the Army Corps of Engineers, Des Moines PD, Iowa DNR, and local city PD's. Any information will be appreciated.

Thanks,

Mark Hurm
Park Ranger
Jester Park
Granger, Iowa 50109
515 999 2559

As asked for in the last newsletter, I'm sending you my information for the membership directory. I hope I'm not too late. Though I haven't made any of the conferences or seminars, I enjoy the newsletter and am glad I've been a member all these years. Continued success to the association and it's members!

Dave Herberg
Park Ranger
St. Louis County (MO) Parks Dept.
membership #52608
1484 Payaso Court
Fenton, MO 63026-3745
314-225-4536
ddherberg@juno.com

WHERE WERE YOU WHEN?

And the Winner Is

with your host- **Tim Curtin**
PLEA Director, Chief of Ranger Police,
Forest Preserve District of DuPage County, Illinois

In the last newsletter, we looked for names of members who had attended more than eleven PLEA workshops. Tim was guessing that the overall winner would reside somewhere West of the Mississippi- he was right. The winner was Ralph Hays, Chief of Police, Johnson County Park Police. Congratulations, Ralph!

UPCOMING EVENTS

**20th ANNUAL
P.L.E.A. CONFERENCE**
Albuquerque, New Mexico
March 3-6, 1999

N.R.P.A. CONFERENCE
Nashville, Tenn
September, 1999

**21st ANNUAL
P.L.E.A. CONFERENCE**
East Bay Regional Park District
March, 2000

E

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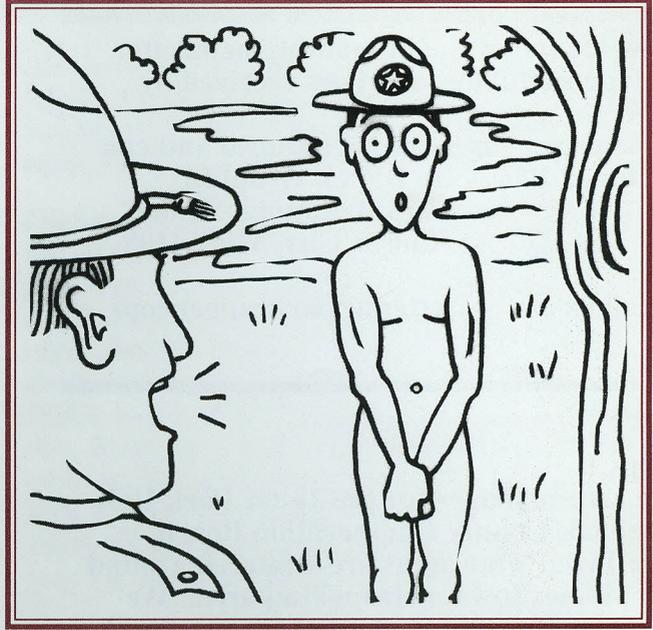
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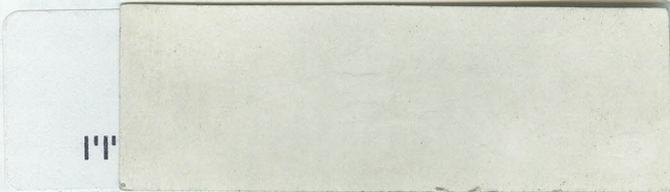
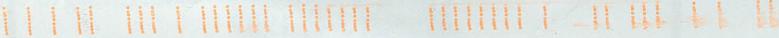


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