



PRAC: What's It All About

by Ken Miller

Many people are content to be involved with just the workings of the agency that they work for. That agency pays your salary so it better be your priority, but there is also life outside of it. (There is a world outside of the fishbowl!) PRAC gives a person an opportunity to tap into what's going on outside of their respective agency.

For me the biggest benefit of belonging to PRAC is getting to meet people who work in parks throughout the state. Through PRAC I've met people from Humboldt County down to Joshua Tree National Park. Our jobs can be different but we have a lot more in common than not. The information exchange between members shows that a lot of us have similar problems in our

parks. It's great when a solution to a problem is shared between PRAC members. We don't need to re-invent the wheel.

The joint conferences give us the opportunity to interact and exchange information with the California State Park Rangers and other PRAC members. PRAC workshops give us the opportunity to attend training that otherwise wouldn't be available in-house. The workshops have ranged from communications, law enforcement, search and rescue, mountain lions, and so on. There is no limit to workshop ideas.

Students who join PRAC find out what is going on in the field of parks and recreation and the opportunity to meet people already working in the field. PRAC provides a student scholarship.

PRAC members benefit from the mailing list and get job flyers sent to their homes. We are one of the first people to know about job openings throughout the state.

The ranger directory is a gold mine of information on park ranger jobs in the state. When my bargaining unit was negotiating for body armor and batons both the union and management took advantage of the ranger directory and called other agencies throughout the state for information.

These are the reasons that I am involved with PRAC. It's also fun! My membership allows me to tap into park information outside of my agency that I couldn't get otherwise.

Region I Bar-B-Que

Mark your calendars for **Friday May 10, 1996**. PRAC is sponsoring a BBQ at Central Park, Lake Elizabeth in Fremont from 2:00 to 6:00 PM.

Come join us for a good time. Meet old acquaintances, make new friends. We will have volleyball and frisbee. Please bring a dish to share. The fee is \$5.00.

If you join PRAC or renew an expired membership at the BBQ, you can eat for free! Your membership will be good for the remainder of the year.

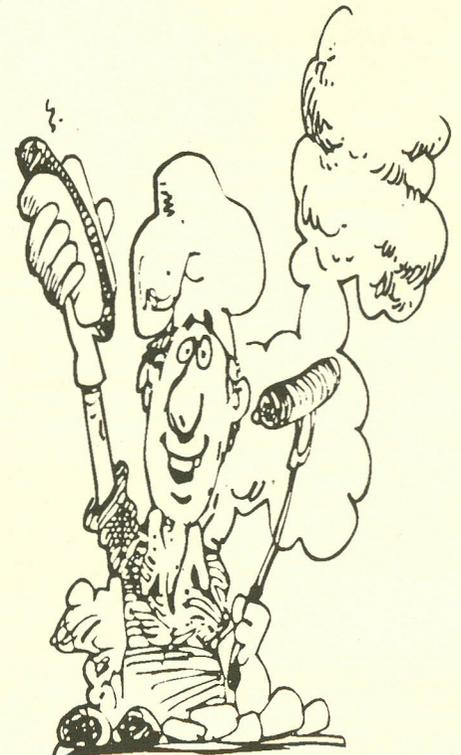
Location: Central Park Visitor Center
at Lake Elizabeth,
40000 Sailway Drive, Fremont CA

Date: Friday, May 10, 1996

Time: 2:00 to 6:00 PM

Contact: Sandy Ferreira (510) 791-4340
Voice Mail (510) 494-4895 X 5341
FAX (510) 791-4137

Please RSVP. Thanks and we look forward to seeing you.



From The President's Desk

In these times of tight government budgets many agencies are looking to cut expenses—one way many agencies choose is to cut funds available for staff training.

Continuing professional training is vital for park rangers. The complexity of a job that covers half a dozen areas, each a specialty that could be a full-time job in themselves, means rangers must work hard to remain knowledgeable and proficient. Trying to obtain training at a reasonable cost can become a budget manager's nightmare. Rangers need to develop innovative ways to receive the training they need to do the job without breaking the bank.

This is where PRAC has the ability to help. Each region offers low cost training for PRAC members one or twice a year. Communicating your agencies needs to your district director is an excellent way to get training for your agency. Offering a course to all interested members brings attendance up and costs down.

Another avenue that has been explored in Northern California is regional training. Last year rangers from the City of San Jose, City of Palo Alto and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District combined forces and sent a number of rangers to a fire department wild-land training day. Rangers worked side by side with local fire fighters and participated in a live fire training academy. There was no cost to the park agencies. The event was a positive experience for both groups and the local fire training coordinator has asked us back for this years training. Along these lines Santa Clara County Park Rangers are currently exploring the possibility of a regional training academy for new hire rangers from a number of different agencies.

PRAC, through your regional directors, can help your agency meet with and organize similar training experiences. The shrinking budget problem should not discourage rangers from seeking out needed training and education. We owe it to the public we serve to be as knowledgeable and proficient as possible.

Sharing your needs with other professionals is the first step to solving problems. PRAC can make that first step a little easier.

Pam Helmke

Gun Offenses by Juveniles on Increase

by Ken Miller

Nearly 25% of people arrested for weapons crimes are juveniles, and weapons offenses are the fastest growing youth crime. The U.S. Justice Department reported that juveniles accounted for 23% of all weapons crimes offenses in 1993 compared to 16% in 1974. Juvenile arrests for such crimes have more than doubled from less than 30,000 to more than 61,000. Attorney General Janet Reno states that juvenile arrests for violent crime will double by the year 2010. Arrest rates for weapons violations are highest for 18-year old males and next highest for 17-year old males. Urban areas accounted for 81 percent of the arrests, suburbs for 14 percent, and rural areas 5 percent.

For rangers these statistics show that things might and probably will get worse in the future. Juveniles traditionally use parks and a fair percentage of ranger contacts involve juveniles. Legally juveniles are treated more leniently than adults for typical park violations but there is still the potential for juveniles to assault rangers.

Keep these statistics in the back of your mind and don't forget officer safety even when dealing with juveniles.

Be safe!

MROSD Rangers Issued Safety Equipment

by Ken Miller

The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District board of directors has agreed to supply its 19 rangers and sworn supervisors with body armor and collapsible batons. During labor negotiations, rangers expressed concerns about their safety while working in remote areas and at late hours.

In the past 16 years there have been six assaults on rangers, two of which required minor medical care. Assaults by visitors are low but do seem to be on the increase. In 1994 rangers wrote over 200 citations and warnings ranging from dogs off leash to firearms violations.

District Rangers do not carry firearms but do carry handcuffs and OC spray. A fill unit from the Sheriff's Department can take 45 minutes to arrive. Our bargaining unit is happy that the equipment has been issued and we hope that it will help to make our jobs safer.

A Path to LDF

by David Sloan, Region 3

The Park Ranger Association of California has recently considered, researched, and dropped the idea of offering Legal Defense Fund (LDF) coverage to its members whom were willing to pay for it. For those unfamiliar with this recent chain of events, the Legal Defense Fund is similar to an insurance policy. The purchasing ranger pays a yearly fee in return for legal representation on civil, criminal, and/or administrative actions arising during the performance of duties.

PRAC members did express some interest in this plan. Despite some hard work by Ranger Byrne (City of Los Angeles), PRAC could not provide PORAC (Peace Officers Research Association of California) with a high enough percentage of our membership to gain access. The logistics of collecting the money involved by way of direct deposit from all the individual agencies in PRAC also became a difficult obstacle to overcome.

Rangers who are peace officers, (and I realize that this does not apply to all members of PRAC) may still have an option. Most recipients of LDF purchase it through their labor organization. If a ranger is a member of their local police or sheriff's union they will most likely be able to purchase the coverage through the union. If the ranger is represented by a general employees union, they can request to be offered coverage through that type of union but will most likely not get it.

A third option for the peace officer ranger is to change unions. This may involve starting a union with the other

rangers in your agency or changing representation to the local police or sheriff's labor union (providing that they are willing). Either way rangers whom are peace officers have a right to be represented by an employee organization that is primarily composed of peace officers. California Government Code section 3508 provides in part that:

"the governing body may not prohibit the right of its employees who are full-time "peace officers" as that term is defined in Chapter 4.5 (commencing with section 830) of Title 3 of Part 2 of the Penal Code, to join or participate in employee organizations which are composed solely of such peace officer, which concern themselves solely or exclusively with the wages, hours, working conditions, welfare programs, and advancement of the academic and vocational training in furtherance of the police profession, and which are not subordinate to any other organization."

The City Attorney in Roseville and city attorneys from other jurisdictions have interpreted this to include rangers sworn under Penal Code section 830.31(b). If you are a peace officer ranger you may still be able to obtain LDF coverage by switching unions (many law enforcement labor organizations offer the LDF option to their employees) and then purchasing it. I believe that it is inexpensive in the way that home owner's insurance is. You may only need it once, but if you do, it can more than pay for itself. This last option may not be a direct, easy or convenient path to obtaining LDF coverage. It may, however, work for you as it has for others.



California Duck Day — A Wetlands Festival in the Heart of the Pacific Flyway

by Sandy Ferreira, Director Region 1

If you are a wildlife enthusiast like I am and enjoy watching the birds, then I would like to tell you about this special event in Davis, California. It is California Duck Days, a premier wildlife viewing festival celebrating wetlands in the heart of the Pacific Flyway. This festival was held February 16-19, and featured a wide variety of field trips, workshops, family and youth activities, an exhibition hall with over 40 exhibit booths, a keynote speaker, music and many other interesting activities.

The purpose of this festival is to increase public knowledge and awareness of the benefits and values of California wetland habitat, waterfowl, and other wildlife resources available to the public. Field trips feature outstanding wildlife viewing opportunities from waterfowl, and other wildlife resources available to the opportunities from waterfowl, shorebirds, hawks, sandhill cranes to tule elk, pelicans and song birds. Many trips are oriented to the

beginning wildlife viewer. They are held at various wildlife refuges throughout the area. These include Sacramento Wildlife Refuge, Gray Lodge Wildlife Area, Cosumnes River Preserve, California Raptor Center just to name a few. Some of the programs include; How to make Wood Duck Boxes, Wildlife Photography, Duck Calling, California Rice Industry and Wetlands, Decoy Carving, Build A Bat House, Birding for the Beginner.

This festival is a cooperative effort by many organizations involved in wetlands management and conservation in Northern California. There is a registration fee for the 3 days, \$25.00 or \$10.00 per day. This fee includes the field trips, workshops and program.

If you didn't get a chance to attend the festival this year, mark it on your calendars for next year, it should be most enjoyable.

A Season to Remember

by Matthew B. Connolly

This article is excerpted from the Ducks Unlimited newsletter, September/October 1995.

Mr. Connolly is the Executive Vice President of Ducks Unlimited.

The last time habitat conditions were this good for ducks, Jimmy Carter was President, Billy Beer was in vogue, and gas was nearing \$2 a gallon. Mix water with plenty of nesting habitat, and watch duck numbers surge. Thanks to 36 million acres of Duck Unlimited and North American Waterfowl Management Plan habitat projects, some 80 million ducks will course the skies of North America this fall, 9 million more than the previous year. For those who have worked hard for the ducks and who have longed for their return, this season holds much promise.

In the course of just the last three years, we've seen duck populations climb to the highest levels in nearly 20 years. Since 1993, breeding populations of several duck species have risen dramatically. Numbers of breeding mallards climbed from about 6 million birds to more than 8 million

during the period. Blue-winged teal went from roughly 3 million breeders to more than 5 million in the same two-year span. Gadwall, wigeon, canvasbacks, redheads, shovelers, and green-winged teal have all shown substantial increases since 1993. The total number of breeding ducks surveyed in North America from 1993 to 1995 jumped a stunning 10 million, from 25 to 35 million birds.

Given cover in which to nest and plenty of water in which to feed, the ducks have proven their remarkable capacity to withstand even long, severe droughts. Despite the career skeptics who are forever predicting the end of duckdom, the birds have confounded the critics with dramatic gains, making this season one to remember. We cannot forget however, that much remains to be done to guarantee the sound of whistling wings.

If Only I Had More Time

by Russ Hauck

As I sit down to write this article, the calendar tells me that I'm two days beyond the deadline to submit it. In the past, two days might as well have been a lifetime with the envelope sitting in the mailbox until it was picked up at the end of the day, sorted, bagged, shipped, processed, and eventually delivered. With the advent of overnight delivery, same day delivery, fax machines, and E-mail, we tend to put off even longer those things that we used to put off until the last minute.

Our society has a "more is better" philosophy. Not only is this apparent in our habits and decisions as consumers, but also with our time. Instead of writing letters, we pick up the phone and call because it saves more time. I'm submitting this article via cyberspace because it would take too much time to mail it. Industry is creating computers that compute faster, printers that print faster, copiers that copy faster, etc. because the old ones take too much time.

The fact is, there is no such thing as more time. But because we have convinced ourselves that by making things faster we have "more time," we inevitably try to do more with our time. We try to squeeze higher priority issues into our day at the expense of low priority projects which get put off or blown off until they achieve a higher priority status and bump out the new "cellar dwellers."

I would be happy to compare my schedule with anyone's. As the Park Ranger Supervisor for a fairly new program, my time is spent recruiting, training, evaluating, and supervising staff. Because it is a small agency, I also spend a great deal of time patrolling, report writing, investigating, interpreting and dealing with the public. I am the Advisor

for my agency's Explorer Post, the Reserve Coordinator, the Volunteer Coordinator, and I sit on a number of committees and task forces.

Outside of work I am a Cub Scout leader, Little League coach (2 teams; one T-ball and one Coach-Pitch), I play on a Co-ed softball team with my wife, and I volunteer to help out with school activities. As you probably know by now, I am also the newly elected Region 4 Director for PRAC.

This is not an essay about time management. This is an essay about **commitment!!!** The reason that I'm involved in so many things is that I feel that I can make a difference. I'm involved in my kids' activities because their success is absolutely worth my time. I'm involved in so many things at work because the success of the program is certainly worth my time. The reason that I decided to run for office with PRAC is that its success is definitely worth my time. I think it is worth your time too.

This organization does not concern itself with "things." We don't manufacture products, or sell goods, or develop properties, or build structures. This organization has only one commodity: people. The primary reason that it exists is to make the professional life of its members better. Improvement is a product of commitment. If you're committed to making things better, things will get better.

But, to come full circle, the Park Rangers Association of California is people. "The Organization" is you and me. We all have the responsibility to make a difference. The next time someone asks you to do something for PRAC and you start to say "I don't have the time," stop yourself and think about it. I promise you do.

Smitty's Book Report

Hello everyone. Hope you all had a great holiday season, and are looking forward to a great conference in March. I am sure that there will be places in this issue that will tell you why I said that this conference will be great, or was great. If not, just take my word for it!

Usually, I review a book or two in this column, but this time I am going to try something different. It isn't because I have not kept up my reading. On the contrary, I am reading two books right now. One that I received for Christmas on the social history of the public lands from the Articles of Confederation to the New Deal. The other, *The Power Broker*, Robert Moses and *the Fall of New York*. This book was written by Robert Caro, and won the Pulitzer Prize. Robert Moses is a man who parlayed a position as a park commissioner into a position as the most powerful person in the State of New York. It is a large book (over a thousand pages) and takes a lot of time to get through it. I'm on page 941. Just about there. I'll tell you more in the next issue of the *Signpost*. I think it would make us all who work for government a little more alert as to what goes on around them.

What I really would like to do, is introduce you to another place to order books. I have already told you about Island Press. Hopefully, you already know about Booksellers. If not, read on. The place I am speaking of is Patricia Ledlie Bookseller, Inc. This company deals in conservation books. They currently issue five catalogues that contain a selection of recently published conservation biology and natural science books. Recent catalogues include: Botany and Soil Science, Oceans, Lakes and Streams, Fishes and Fisheries, Amphibians and Reptiles, Insects and Other

Invertebrates, and Neotropics and Mammals. The one that I just received in the mail featured birds. Any or all of the catalogues are free for the asking. Each one of the catalogues has a ecosystem/Miscellany section. I find this section one of the better sections to find books on issues that we are concerned about. Like wilderness management, or fire ecology, or restoration issues. Certainly, if you are into interpretation, browsing these catalogues would help you develop any program I could think of.

Bookseller's address is:

Patricia Ledlie Bookseller, Inc.
One Bean Road, P.O.Box 90
Buckfield, Maine 04220
Phone/fax (20) 336-2778
email: ledlie@maine.com

Hope to see you all in Ventura. It is our birthday! Twenty years! It seems almost impossible that twenty years ago, some of us met in Raleigh Young's front yard in Steven's Creek County Park and mapped out the beginning of PRAC. It was supposed to just be a Bay Area group, until one of us suggested that we make it state-wide. I believe that person was Bill Lawrence, although I don't think he would admit to that. Come help us celebrate. We plan a nice birthday get-together on the evening of March 14. I don't really know if it will be before the banquet or after. All I know is that we will have one. Hopefully, we will have as many of the "founding fathers" there as we can muster.

*Remember, take pride in your profession.
Keep up to date.
Read!*

Emma Prusch Farm Park

647 King Road, San Jose

Tour Guide/Docents Needed

An Excellent Internship of Community Service Opportunity

Purpose: Volunteers needed to guide Preschool-1st grade tour groups through Emma Prusch Farm Park. (Other volunteer opportunities are available.)

Subject: Basic information about agriculture and farm life.

When: March 6, 1996 through June 14, 1996. Tours are scheduled Tuesday through Friday

Training: Tour guides will be trained and certified on topics discussed on tours including: Emma Prusch Farm Park, Farm Animals, Rare Fruit Orchards, Composting, and Vegetable Gardens. Plus monthly gatherings for fun, park updates and idea exchange.

Comitment: 3-4 hours per week for a 4 month duration

Interested? Call Emma Prusch Park
(408) 926-5555

Wanted Park Ranger City of Santa Cruz \$2,044-\$2,875/month

The City of Santa Cruz is accepting applications for the position of Park Ranger. This position assists with the protection, maintenance and enhancement of City recreation areas and facilities by patrolling areas, performing general maintenance, and enforcing rules and regulations.

Requires High School graduation (or GED), and 6 months experience as a park ranger or general parks or facilities maintenance worker. Also requires completion of POST Level III reserve officer training course in firearms and laws of arrest.

Applications will be accepted March 4-22, 1996. For application materials contact: City of Santa Cruz Personnel Department, 337 Locust Street, Santa Cruz, CA 95060. Phone: (408) 429-3616. AA/EOE

PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

Board Officers 1996

President

Pam Helmke
(408) 277-4539
Fax (408) 277-3241

Region 1 Director

Sandy Ferreira
(510) 791-4340
Fax (510) 494-4895

Region 2 Director

Ken Miller
(415) 691-2165

Region 3 Director

Dave Sloan
(916) 774-5100
Fax (916) 773-5595

Region 4 Director

Russ Hauck
(818) 548-3795
Fax (818) 548-3789

Region 5 Director

Paul Pettit
(909) 940-5644
Fax (909) 657-8496

PLEA Liaison

Don Watstein
(805) 584-4445
Fax (805) 526-7648

Past President

Bob Donohue
(916) 895-4972
Fax (916) 342-6921

"The Signpost" & "Cal Ranger" Editor

David Brooks
(408) 336-2948
FAX (By Arrangement)

Scholarship

Bill Hendricks
(805) 756-1246
Fax (805) 756-1402

Office Manager

Doug Bryce
Office (800) 994-2530
Local (916) 558-3734
Fax (916) 387-1179

The *Signpost* is published by the Park Rangers Association of California (PRAC). The Association mailing address is P.O. Box 292010, Sacramento, CA, 95829. 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.

DavidB8480@aol.com
CompuServe: 76516,3440
eWorld:DavidB69543

Membership Application

name _____

address _____

city _____ state _____ zip _____

Phone _____

home _____ work _____

Employer or School _____

Job Classification or Major _____

Voting Membership

Regular \$35 _____

Non-voting Membership

Agency:

(1-25 persons—6 mailings) \$75 _____

(> 25 persons—12 mailings) \$100 _____

Student \$10 _____

Associate \$15 _____

Supporting \$50 _____

Park Rangers Association of California

P O Box 292010

Sacramento, CA 95829-2010

(800) 994-2530 FAX (916) 387-1179

Park Rangers Association of California
P. O. Box 292010
Sacramento, CA 95829-2010

AA

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NUMBER
12
Elk Grove, CA