

From the Past President's Favorite Rocking Chair

by Russ Hauck

I realize I am one issue of the *Signpost* behind for writing an article about the conference, but I really need to thank the people who poured themselves into it to make it such a success. I didn't submit an article for the March/April edition because I was too busy working diligently on conference planning. I didn't submit an article for the May/June issue because I had set aside my regular workload to work on the conference and I had to jump back in to that with both feet. So forgive me for taking an extra issue to write my conference thank yous.

First, I would like to thank the CSPRA folks who worked on the conference committee: Co-chair Randy Sederquist, Russ Guiney, Suzanne Goode, Frank Padilla, Nancy Mendez, Geary Hund, Cara O'Brien, Dan Preece, Kathleen Franklin, Bud Getty, Doreen Clement, Kim Baker, and many others who assisted with off site field trips and outings.

As for PRAC, there are many people to thank. Committee members who helped produce such a fine product included George Struble, Bill Lutton, Bruce Kniola, and Steven Neal; Walt Young chaired the Public Safety track, Amy Lethbridge chaired the Interpretation track, Kelly Byrne did a magnificent job with the registration, Anne Waisgerber handled many of the local arrangements and pulled many strings to get some special things included. Doug Bryce did and does each year a masterful job of pulling the whole thing together, and Sandy Ferriera came through once again (as she has for so many conferences) with a terrific showing of vendors and silent auction items. Thanks also to those members who served as presenters for some of the sessions. This was a truly magnificent conference.

I enjoy the conference each and every year. As I attended previous conferences, I made a mental note of what worked and what could have been better. We tried to include those and some new things this year. Overall, I would say we succeeded with a memorable, worthwhile conference.

As hard as it may be to believe, planning has already begun for next year's conference. Those of you in the Sacramento area should offer your services to the committee. It is a rewarding experience when the product you have worked on for a year finally arrives and works! Another hard to believe concept is that we need to start looking for a location for the 2002 conference. If you have suggestions, let your director or Doug know. Thanks again for all who helped make the conference such a wonderful event.



Always Looking

by Jeff Gaffney

I have recently been thumbing through some old *Signposts* and I came across an issue that describes the renewal policy. Policy #1 states: "Persons joining as new members beginning September 1 through the end of the year are paid up through the following calendar year."

So.... if you or someone you know is on the fence on whether or not to join maybe this will knock you off on the right side. I know it may seem I'm preaching to the choir (since the choir is the only one that gets a copy of the *Signpost*) but I know some people may talk to their co-workers and friends and I was hoping they could pass this tidbit along. PRAC membership does make a nice Christmas gift for people who are interested in the profession and hard to shop for. I am always looking for new ways to increase our membership and especially Region 2 membership (my Region). You have a month or two to recruit someone, now go out and do it.

From the President's Desk

Dear fellow members,

I want to thank you for your participation in deciding whether or not to support the Park Ranger Peace Officer legislation. Nearly three quarters of the voting members returned their ballots. Unfortunately, there was an element missed during this process which must be in place before we can move ahead with any decision.

What is missing from this is that we were to have recommended standards and training available prior to making this vote. The Law Enforcement Committee and the Standards and Training Committee are working on this but have not completed this yet. As soon as these recommendations have been finalized, we will make them available to you prior to the final vote, so you may make a sound decision on this matter.

I did learn a couple of things from the last voting process. We offered to place anyones letter on the web site in order let them share their feelings and opinions with the other members. We received nothing, except for a letter sent after the vote, from a group that has agency membership, threatening to drop their membership if we go through with this. That letter would have had more value if it were sent in a timely manner to share with the members rather than a threat to quit. Well, we now have more time for this. We would like to give you the opportunity to write and share your thoughts, which we will place on the news section of the web site.

We would also like to invite you to help out with the committees. Our goal is to establish recommended standards and training for the Park Ranger, that will provide agencies and Rangers, a baseline of what types of skills are needed for this career. There are four committees: Fire/EMS; Interpretation; Resource Management/Maintenance and Law Enforcement that will be making recommendations to a fifth; Standards and Training committee.

The last thing I would encourage is for you to become a regular voting member, if you are not. You will make more of a difference by showing your support and voting, rather than sitting on the sidelines.

Take care,

John Havicon

President

Standards and Training Committee

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

The standards committee is off to a good start. We have had two productive meetings and have planned a third for sometime in July. The objective for our first meeting was to put together a survey to find out what duties each agency performs and what training is required. Amy Lethbridge composed a draft survey and sent it out to all the committee members for review and changes.

At the second meeting we discussed the changes and recommended that the final draft be submitted to the PRAC Board on June 7th. After the Boards approval, it will be sent out to all the agencies listed in the PRAC directory. I encourage all of you to fill it out and send it back. Please add any additional comments you might have for the committee.

Ballot Results For The May 12th Vote

Should the Park Rangers Association of California support legislation to eliminate the exclusionary clause, Public Resources Code 4022(b), thus requiring all titled as "Park Rangers" in California to be "Peace Officers?"

Ballots mailed	143	Yes	55 (54%)
Ballots returned	102 (71%)	No	47 (46%)

Operations Manuals and Scope of Duty

by Ken Miller

When I wrote the heads up article a few *Signposts* ago about our two rangers who discovered the Methamphetamine lab just outside of District land I couldn't mention that the rangers were also being investigated for violating District Policy. The investigation is complete and the rangers were found in violation of a policy that states: Rangers shall not perform law enforcement duties off District lands unless the nature and location of the specific enforcement action has had prior approval or is specifically addressed in the Operations Manual.

To review the incident, the rangers were investigating a continuing problem of locks getting cut at a District gate between District property and an abandoned college site visible just a few hundred yards from the joint property line. They found tire tracks leading from District property onto the neighboring private property. When they checked the lands they found a door ajar at a building with ice bags and buckets full of chemicals in the open room. Upon discovering these items the rangers requested that the local police department respond to take over the investigation and the rangers left the immediate area.

The policy violation sounds fairly black and white so far but read on. The Basic Policy of the District states: The District will make every effort to be a good neighbor to other property owners. Adequate patrol, maintenance, and public education will be provided to minimize fire hazards, litter, noise, etc. and trespassing (my emphasis).

Another section states: Rangers should cultivate good working relationships with neighbors and follow up on neighbors reports of violations. A final section states: Law enforcement duties beyond the scope of the District ranger duties must not be ignored, but rather referred to or handled with sufficient assistance from the appropriate jurisdiction.

My take on things is that the rangers were trying to act within the scope of their duties but our administration ruled otherwise. The discipline was a written warning that cannot be grieved because it didn't cause a loss of pay or time.

My reason for sharing this story in the *Signpost* is to hopefully help others avoid going through an internal affairs investigation over a difference in interpretation of policies and procedures. Our work situations are challenging with rangers expected to do law enforcement, first aid, fire fighting, interpretation, resource management, accounting, and public relations. Oftentimes rangers are expected to perform these duties only to a certain point and then defer them to another agency. A fine line often determines when a ranger is supposed to act or request assistance and the line can move based on staff and management perceptions. Be familiar with your Operations Manual or guidelines and get clarification of any sections that are unclear. Its a lot more pleasant to do before an investigation rather than after.

Report from the FIRE/SAR/EMS Standards Sub-committee

by Walt Young

To those of you who responded to my last two *Signpost* articles with input and offers to help regarding Park Ranger standards, thank you. The following proposed standards will be forwarded to the Standards and Training Committee for their review. It represents what we as a committee believe should be the minimum training requirements for Park Rangers in the State of California.

ICS Training

The Committee recommends SEMS/ICS 100 as our minimum standard. This level of training fulfils the State legislated requirement. POST provides a 2 hour video and self test that when completed, fulfils the training requirement.

Title 22 First Aid Training

This level of training is required for firefighters, lifeguards, and police officers. It is not mandated for Peace Officers appointed under 830.32(b). The committee feels, however, that this level of training should be adopted as our standard. This 24-hour course includes CPR for the Professional Rescuer, blood borne pathogen, and childbirth training in addition to first aid. This training is available through the Red Cross.

Fire Training

The Committee recommends that all California Park

Rangers receive the 32 hour wildland firefighter training program, certified by the State Fire Marshal. We feel that this training is readily available, and valuable even to municipal park districts. We are also recommending a 4 hour block of instruction in fire extinguishers.

Haz-Mat Awareness Training

This level of training is required by state law as part of Right to Know legislation. This 8 hour class provides the student the basic safety skills.

Search & Rescue Training

This class is the only class that would be certified by PRAC itself. The subject matter would include field navigation, use of coordinate systems, initial management of the search function, track awareness and evidence management, resource requests, air operations, and an overview of rescue systems. The class length would be 8 hours.

Water Safety Training

This 8 hour class would cover non swimmer rescue for non swiftwater environments. We believe that the Red Cross still offers this class, and are still investigating certifying agencies.

In summary, we feel that adopting these standards will protect both the park ranger and their agency, as we serve the public.

But my dog is a good dog!

by Michael Chiesa

Dog contacts! Get a group of park professionals together and bring up dog contacts and I am sure you will get enough horror stories to fill volumes. At our Obtaining Voluntary Compliance workshop in January, dog contacts were brought up several times during the 3-hour block by attendees. Anybody, who has had to enforce leash laws and other dog regulations can agree that enforcement contacts with dog owners can lead to some of the most negative experiences. An extreme example of this was in December of last year, when the NPS Ranger was shot and killed in Hawaii. That encounter started with a report of a dog regulation violation.

David Brooks said that there had been some requests from people on ways to handle dogs off leash in parks. I will try to share some ideas and methods I have used to help keep dogs leashed. Most all parks have some sort of leash law or other dog restrictions. Pet owners are very protective of their dogs; in fact, sometimes it seems that some people are more protective of their dogs than they are of their human family members. Now, there is nothing wrong with this loyalty to pets but as park professionals, we must understand that people can feel that way about their dogs, and keep that in mind when we contact dog owners for leash law violations.

The methods you can use in your park for enforcing the leash law will vary depending on your authority and departmental policy. I have found the most effective way to gain compliance with the leash law is through education. Educating dog owners can be accomplished in a variety of ways including signs, handouts, interpretive contacts with park visitors to explain the reasons for leash laws, field interview cards, written warnings, newspaper articles, and citations. Any combination of the methods of education might help with gaining compliance from dog owners.

One of the most important aspects of educating park visitors is consistent enforcement of the leash law. For education efforts to be effective, all employees must strive toward educating the visitors. Any park employee who is in a park uniform or park vehicle is a ranger to the park visitors. Most visitors do not differentiate between rangers, maintenance workers, park aides, or any other classes of uniformed employees. If a uniformed employee walks past a dog owner with a dog off leash, without making some effort to educate the park visitor, then the impression is given that it is OK to have a dog off leash. The next employee who stops to make contact for the violation could be thought of as just harassing the dog owner. I am not encouraging untrained people to make enforcement contacts or place themselves in jeopardy; however, any employee can casually approach a visitor and simply remind them of the leash law in a friendly tone or hand them some literature

explaining the dog regulations. If the visitor refuses to comply, then the non-enforcement employee should simply walk away. If you have an employee with enforcement authority close by, you can report it to that employee and let them make any additional contacts, which are necessary. You should never approach an aggressive dog or park visitor if you are not trained and equipped to handle the situation.

A good handout for dog owners is a tool that can be utilized by all employees to educate dog owners. Most parks have some sort of written material with the park regulations printed on, to hand out to park visitors. Some agencies have developed specific handouts for dog regulations, explaining the dog regulations and the reasons for them. A lot of dog owners don't realize that keeping their dogs leashed can be just as important for their dogs protection from the wildlife. The American Dog Owners Association (ADOA) publishes a business card sized handout titled "Need a Few Good Reasons to Leash Your Dog?" It is a simple handout with six reasons why dog owners should keep their dogs leashed. It is a professional, non-confrontational message that is being conveyed by fellow dog owners and might hold more credibility with dog owners than anything published by a park agency. The ADOA provides the handout free of charge to requesting agencies.

Clear, conspicuously posted signs informing park visitors of the leash law are also important in educating dog owners. It seems at times, that nobody pays attention to the signs we post but if we don't post them, the people who do obey signs will not know about the regulations. The other purpose of clearly posted signs is to help you out in court if you do issue citations for leash law violations. A sign alone, will not be an effective form of educating park visitors however. The message on the sign must be supported by the actions of park staff.

Verbal warnings alone of park visitors do not seem to be effective. I have found that once you have left the area, the dog is off leash again, or at the very least, you will encounter the same dog owner violating the leash law again another day. I have found that by obtaining identification from the dog owner and the name of the dog, it takes away the protection of anonymity, from the violator. A lot of people think that you will not remember their face but if they know you have recorded their information they might be more reluctant to violate the law again, knowing that their warning had been documented. Only employees who have the legal authority to ask for identification should use this method. Two ways to record the offenders information can be on a field interview card or on a written warning form if your agency has either of these options available. If not, simply write it down in a note-



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The Signpost

I was Thinking... (uh-oh)

by Jeff Gaffney

I was thinking of what I was going to write about in this months *Signpost* when a cloud of nostalgia hit me and I felt the need to write about how to write (did that make any sense?). I can remember the first few articles I wrote about various topics that were of extreme importance to me. I didn't have a clue how to put them together, who to send them to, or even if I should put my name on it (or how to put my name on it). The truth is when you get right down to it, writing about the things that you really care about is easy, it's the English language and my computer that I usually have trouble with. I guess what I'm trying to say in a very, very roundabout way is write an article. It doesn't matter what the article is about or how long the article is, just put it out there and see what happens. We all have something to learn from each other and this a chance to do that. Pick up an old *Signpost* or any journal/magazine and see if there is a style of writing you like, if not make up your own style and run with it. I want to hear from other people and share in the experiences, I get tired of reading about my simple life. Contact any Board member or David Brooks if you would like help or guidance (all our information is on the back of the *Signpost*) Take a chance.....

Patrolling Beyond the Truck

by John Havicon

This summer, I'm going to try something new in my parks. I am going to venture beyond my patrol truck, walk out into crowds of picnickers and just say hi! I know what your thinking, Big Deal. Well, I think it is a big deal. Its a lost art that rangers should be using all of the time. Think about this! How much time do you sit in your vehicle just driving around? Do you ever just stop and talk to people or is the only time you talk to them when their in violation of something. Is driving around the park enough visibility to ensure the park visitor is having a quality visit or is there more you can do? My point is that as stewards of the parks, we need to start communicating with our visitors and ensure that they are enjoying their visit.

I would like to encourage all of you to take a little time out of your busy patrol schedule and go from picnic table to picnic table or campsite to campsite, and introduce yourself. A simple "Hi, How are you doing?" does wonders for your image and builds the confidence of the park visitor in you. It's also a good time to invite them to events in the park, talk about safety issues or just some good old information of history or nature. This summer, don't be that ranger that just drives around, peering through his/her window. Join me in making new park friends.

But my dog is a good dog!

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book. I do like written warnings because the violator signs it and receives a copy. This seems to carry much more weight than a verbal warning and if I do end up issuing the person a citation, I always attach a copy of the written warning to the citation and submit it to the court with the citation.

The last method of education for dog owners is a citation. A citation can be one of the most effective forms of educating the park visitor and can also create the most negative experience for you. There are some dog owners, who no amount of explaining, signs, handouts, or warnings will persuade them to comply with the leash law. They feel they have a right to let their dog run loose if they want. With these people, a citation may be the only form of education that works and although they may not agree with the leash law, they will remember the fine they had to pay the last time they were cited and they don't want to pay again. In my county, the fine does increase with additional violations. I usually do not issue citations on first-time contacts with dog owners who violate the leash law unless it is flagrant violation or the dog owner makes it

clear that no amount of lower levels of education will make them comply. What does seem to happen, is once you do write citations, the word does get out among the dog owners and compliance can increase.

I hope these tips give provide you with some ideas on how to handle dog violations in your parks. The methods you use will vary depending on the types of parks you manage, your demographics (campgrounds with a changing population versus neighborhood parks), your local ordinances and regulations, your level of authority, and your agencies' policy. No matter what methods you use, the most important thing to remember is your safety.

For copies of the hand-out "Need a Few Good Reasons to Leash Your Dog" contact:

American Dog Owners Association
1654 Columbia Turnpike
Castleton, NY 12033

Phone: (518) 477-8469
Fax: (518) 477-4034

from the Editor

Dear Readers;

It has been a while since I actually contributed to an issue of the *Signpost*. Events recently have brought a few things to mind that I would like to share with you.

First of all, I would like to remind you whose newsletter the *Signpost* really is. It belongs to you the readers! It is written for you and by you. Although articles are usually written by PRAC Board members, the *Signpost* is not their forum exclusively. Any one of you can submit material. In fact, I would encourage you to do so! When you have an idea or opinion, this is a good way to share it with your profession. I know that we all get wrapped up with our jobs or families. (Life does tend to get in the way at times.) But that should not stop you from expressing your thoughts when it pertains to the job you do. Getting something in print is easy. All the information is on the back page of each *Signpost*. Just write it and get it to me. It is as simple as that.

This brings up another point: the question of PRAC support for the proposed Park Ranger/Peace Officer legislation. As you can see from the recent vote, seventy percent of the ballots were returned. This issue is obviously important to you! But only one group responded in writing with an opinion. I have a feeling that more of you have strong feelings on this issue but for whatever reason have not put it out to the members at large. Make your voice heard; don't just remain silent!

Although the majority were in support of the proposal, it is not a mandate by any means. Membership voted forty six percent against it. One group has already indicated that their agency membership may be discontinued. I fear that many more members may share this line of thinking and not renew again. I must wonder if PRAC can afford to alienate nearly half of the members over this decisive issue.

Unfortunately, I do not have an answer. I have been in this profession for over twenty years now, being called a "park ranger" for most of it. Now I find that this job title is in doubt. I don't even work for a park agency, am not now classified as a peace officer and certainly will not be in the foreseeable future. And no, I don't support the notion that you must be a "peace officer" to be titled "park ranger."

For one thing, in the public mind, if you are in uniform in any park-like setting, you are a "park ranger." The concept of "peace officer" versus "public officer" is lost on the majority of the visitors. If you have a patch, wear a badge, or are just standing there looking official, you are a "park ranger" in their minds. It is as simple as that. Even volunteers get called "park ranger!" Your true job title, responsibilities and training is mostly unknown and immaterial to the public.

Another factor is the variety of agencies that use the title "park ranger." Park agencies (obviously) as well as open space districts, irrigation and water districts and many, many others all use "park rangers." For some, law enforcement is a majority of their job. For others, it plays a very minor role in their daily duties. Some of us use a mower or a chainsaw more than a citation book. We stand behind a cash register and/or type away on a computer. We talk to school groups, build docks, run water treatment plants and/or design park brochures. There should be room and flexibility in our profession to encompass these wide ranging duties without any exclusive restrictions or classifications. What better way than under the banner of "park ranger" with the positive public image that the job has always had.

I am saddened by the specialized and narrow role that "park rangers" are evolving into; I read about the training and certification that "park rangers" will need; or just about how difficult it is to get out of the vehicle and talk to visitors in a friendly, non-law enforcement capacity.

Maybe I don't want to be called a "park ranger" anymore. Maybe it would be better to be known as something else, "resource specialist" or just plain "park worker." What ever you call me, I will still be a "park ranger" to the public I serve.

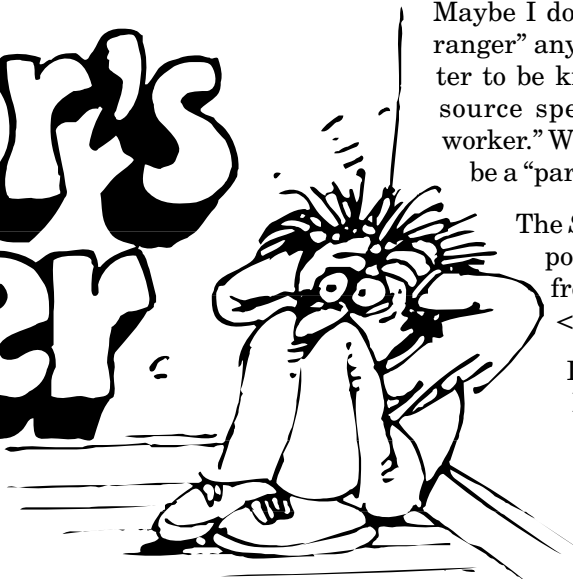
The *Signpost* welcomes other viewpoints and opinions. Please feel free to drop us a line via e-mail <prangerd@ix.netcom.com>.

It is now your turn to talk! Don't wait too long—a decision is coming soon!

Thanks for listening,

David Brooks
Signpost Editor

Editor's Corner



Smitty's Book Report

I guess there has to be a time and I think that time is here. Time to hang it up and kind of fade into the shadows. Budgets are getting tighter here on the home front to purchase books, and the old right wrist is starting to act up with carpal syndrome. Bummer! I have hoped, over the years (yes, years!) to get some of you out there to read something else besides the comics and the magazines next to the checkout counter. Something that will improve you as a professional park employee; something to make your job easier to do. I hope that some of you have taken heart. I hope that you have enjoyed the past book reports as much as I have bringing them to you. For the most part I have brought you books that were affordable and usable. Ones that belong on your shelf.

Reporting on what I have been reading was easy. I love to read. I probably read at least 30 books a year (plus or minus) on a variety of subject matter, from Tony Hillerman mysteries and the Civil War, to professional resource management texts. Sometimes I even read a book a second time a few years later. Never know what I might have missed the first time. It is a love I got early on from my mother, who read to my brother and I every evening when we were small. When we were old enough to read, we read to her. She filled our lives with books at Christmas and on birthdays and I always had a library card in my pocket. My wife and I did the same to our children. I have always thought that they have been successful in the real world be-

cause they read well. Read well, and you can usually write well. Read and write well, and you can make it in most anything you try to do. Even in the ranger profession!

Books are certainly expensive, there is no doubt. But as I have said before, if you can get a workable idea from something you read that makes sense and makes it easier for you or for those that visit our parks, then can you put a price on that idea? Ideas that work are worth money. Remember, keeping yourself up to date is (or should be) a part of your job. Just a few pages every day. Read before bed, or a place a book beside your favorite chair within reach when NYPD Blue gets repetitive, or your favorite basketball team is ahead by thirty. Don't just depend on the yearly conference. Experts tell us that you forget 90% of what you hear in a short period of time. So much for the lecture philosophy!

Maybe there is someone out there who would pick up this column and continue the cause. Maybe.... Maybe, if I find a book that needs to really be shared, then you'll hear from me again.....maybe.

PRAC has been a large part of my life for it's entire life. It's been a pleasure serving you and the profession. It is time for me to start enjoying the resources that I have helped train people to protect. God bless, and I will see you on a trail somewhere.

Smitty

News from Region 5

by Lori Hynes

Greetings everyone! I am just crawling out from under my school books and finals to see the light of day, in case you are wondering why I have been so quiet. Please accept my apologies for taking the back seat lately. I have had to focus my energy on getting through school (which I recently completed). In addition, I was recently transferred back to Balboa Park (after a two year stint at Chollas Lake Park) and I have spent some time getting oriented to my new projects.

I now have a whole new appreciation for the conference committee! Anyone who has planned any significant training knows that a lot of work goes into planning conferences. Since October 1999, I had been planning the first annual Multi-Agency Regional Training of its kind in Southern California. The "Building Connections between Resources and People" came to fruition on May 3, 4, & 5 in Balboa Park. The City of San Diego Park & Recreation Department hosted this training, but it was a collaborative effort with the National Park Service, California State Parks and County of San Diego Park & Recreation Department. On the first two days, we held track sessions that covered Park Philosophy, Multiple Species Conservation Program, Native American Cultural Awareness, Black History, Historical Preservation, Fire Management, Interpretation etc. A campfire program that incorporated

hands-on "Campfire Program" presentation techniques took place at the Mission Trails Regional Park Visitor's Center. That, along with silent auction, concluded the evening of the 4th. On the 5th, field trips were taken to a variety of our beautiful Southern California Parks and Preserves, where the participants were able to experience some of San Diego's diverse terrain. Overall, it was a success and great opportunity to be part of the planning committee. I had the pleasure of meeting some terrific park professionals from various agencies and backgrounds. Thanks to Region 4 for your support and for sending great representatives to participate. We are planning for this to be an annual training opportunity and hope to see even more PRAC members next year. If you have training ideas, or want to be involved, please contact me!

Interpretive Committee: Those members I spoke with at the Conference that were interested in helping out on the committee, I have not forgotten about you. In fact by the time you read this, it is likely we will have spoken. I look forward to achieving some goals with you and appreciate your patience. If you are interested in working toward developing Interpretive Standards for our profession and can contribute any time, talents or skills, please feel free to contact me at (619) 235- 5910 (my new work number).

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Submission deadlines ARE THE LAST day of JANUARY, MARCH, May, July, SEPTEMBER, AND NOVEMBER.

EMAIL:

PRANGERD@IX.NETCOM.COM

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JOB CLASSIFICATION OR MAJOR _____		

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ASSOCIATE \$35 _____
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