

Wear the Uniform Proudly

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

I have a confession. I do not like to wear a dirty and wrinkled uniform. Sometimes that can be a problem when you are a generalist ranger. In Palo Alto we do everything from cleaning restrooms to digging ditches to bucking up down trees. This is in addition to the public contact, medical calls, as well as impromptu interpretation.

I am always in a pressed, neat, clean uniform and polished boots. If I get dirty I will put on a clean uniform. I also make sure I always have a spare uniform in my locker.

Why am I telling you this? Well I have seen too many rangers not take pride in their uniform. We have to be proud to wear the uniform and always look professional. We are representing our agency, ourselves, and especially the "Park Ranger" profession.

We are consistently complaining about being treated like the unwanted cousin by fire and police, but have you ever seen police or fire not looking professional and neat?

I feel that as PRAC is working hard to set standards for the "Park Ranger." We should help by looking our best and having pride in the job that we so love.

OK, I will step down off my soapbox now. I need to go and change my shirt; I just spilled coffee on it.

Be proud and look your best!

PRAC Honorary Member **Kim Aufhauser**

Kim Aufhauser is this year's honorary member for PRAC. Kim is an instructor and the Department chairperson for the Park Management program at West Valley College in Saratoga. Kim continuously promotes the park ranger career.

Kim has taught us needed skills to perform our job. He has guided many of us into becoming local, state and federal park rangers. Many of us can look back and find that Kim has played an important role in our lives and our careers.

Kim Aufhauser was a National Park Ranger for sixteen years prior to becoming an instructor at West Valley. As a ranger; he developed expertise in wilderness search, technical rescue, handling wilderness emergency medical incidents (park medic and EMT), law enforcement and death investigation. Kim still maintains his State Emergency Medical Technician certificate. He is also a suicide intervention counselor and continues to be a peer counselor for critical incident stress events to emergency service workers (primarily volunteer search and rescue teams).

Kim holds an undergraduate degree in Wildlife Management from Humboldt State University and a graduate degree in Experience Based Leadership Training and Program Development from Prescott College. He now teaches students the skills to become responsible land stewards. A few topics include; backpacking, mountaineering, technical rescue, wilderness first responder, interpretive skills, 4WD training, American land use policies, and the history and development of parks in America. He has presented and facilitated training at local, regional and statewide search and rescue events to improve their knowledge and skills in extended field medical care and technical rescue. He is also the Emergency Services Coordinator for the College.

The Park Rangers Association of California thanks Kim for his continuous devotion to our organization and to the career of the professional park ranger.

From the President's Desk

Spring is upon us. It is hard to believe we have already made it through another winter. Many of us are returning from another great conference. For those of you who couldn't make it to San Diego, that's too bad, you missed out on a great event. Many thanks to the PRAC and CSPRA conference planning team members who worked long and hard to bring the membership a wonderful conference.

As we get into our spring modes and start preparing our parks for the coming summer season there is also work to be done with your professional organization. Planning is already underway for the 2003 California Parks Conference that will be held in South Lake Tahoe. The location is great. Now the work begins. We are seeking members to volunteer to serve on the 2003 conference planning committee. If you want to be involved with planning the conference, I am sure we have a job for you. We need people to help plan the training tracks, collect donations, set-up panel discussions, and many other roles. If you have a special talent, ideas, or just want to become involved with pulling the 2003 conference together, please let me know.

The PRAC Committees are still looking for members to serve on them. The Standards and Training Committee has accomplished quite a bit the last couple of years but the work is just beginning. We must now work on ways to implement the recommended standards and start offering training to help our members gain recommended training that they might not have. If you would like to become involved, we need members to chair committees, develop workshops, serve as instructors, review applications, come up with marketing and recruitment ideas, develop brochures, and talk to colleges. If you have an interest or a special talent, we have a committee that can use you. The committees include Interpretation, Resource Management & Maintenance, Fire & EMS, Law Enforcement, Standards & Training, Nominations, Membership (which includes recruitment and marketing) and the Conference. If you are interested in serving on the PRAC board, serving on a committee is a great way to learn more about the organization and gain experience applicable to serving on the board. If anyone is interested in becoming involved with any of the committees, please contact me.

The board has decided to start investing in mutual funds, stocks, and bonds. For years, PRAC funds have solely been invested in a standard savings account, bringing low returns. The board made the decision after a recommendation from Doug Bryce. It is hoped that the members money will gain a larger return with this new investment strategy.

Don't forget about the PRAC Scholarship. PRAC offers two \$500.00 scholarships for qualified applicants. Any regular or student member, who is enrolled in college, carrying at least 6.1 units with a major in park and recreation management, resource management, forestry or a closely related major, and maintains at least 2.5 GPA in all courses is eligible to apply. The application deadline is June 1, 2002 and the scholarship will be awarded in September. Last year, the scholarships were not awarded due to a lack of qualified applicants. A scholarship application can be downloaded from the PRAC web site. So, if you or someone you know is eligible, get an application in!

All right, that is all for now. I look forward to hearing from you and working with you on the various projects PRAC has going. Remember, it is your organization and you will only get out of it what you put into it. Have a productive and safe spring.

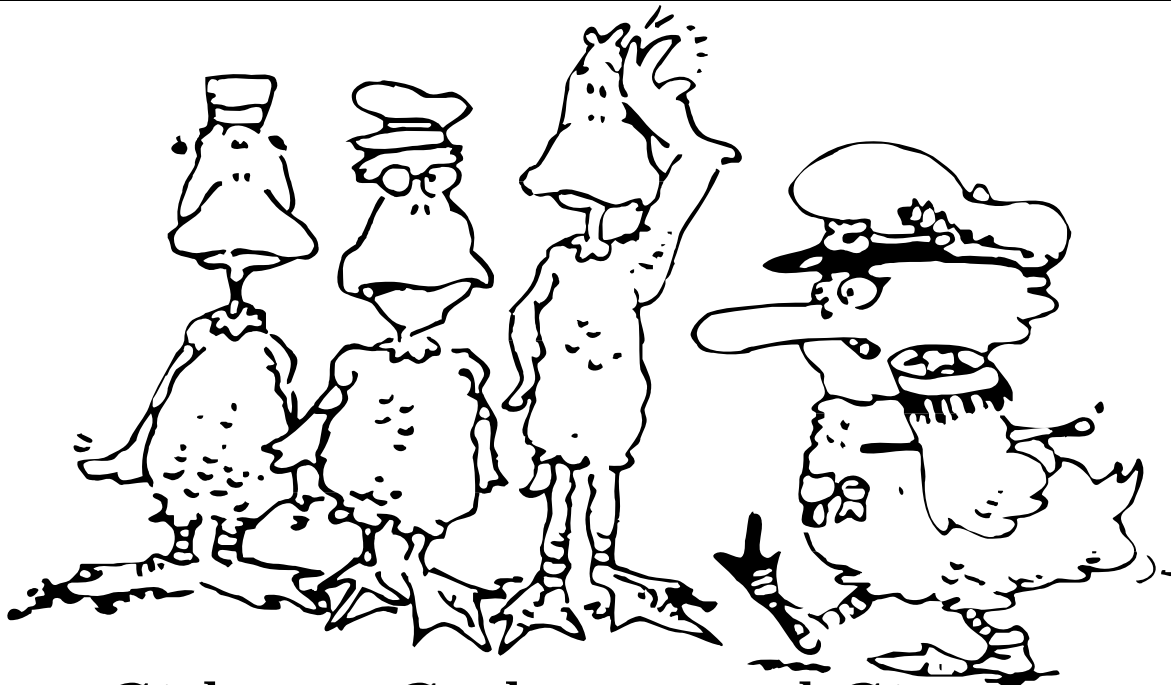
Mike Chiesa

Walkers' Ways of Working

(or at least of few of them)
by Patty Walker

1. *In God we trust, everything else we check*
2. *State the obvious—it may not be*
3. *Document, document, document*
4. *Investigate before instigate*
5. *One “look see” is worth a thousand false starts*
6. *Habits are tools to use and not misuse*
7. *Better to ask “What happened” rather than “Why or why or not.”*

(Feel free to send your additions to the Editor. We will print another compilation in the next issue.)



Gidgets, Gadgets, and Gizmos

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

Everywhere you look someone has some sort of electronic device. If you want to have lunch with someone you have to wait while they check their palm pilot. We even schedule time to check our email. If you see someone looking as if they are playing a game on their pager, they are actually sending a page or email on their two-way pager.

We are definitely in a time where technology can make the job easier. I used to make fun of the REI, GPS, GIS two way paging, cell phone carrying, laptop using visitor who would come to my park to go on a hike. Now half he

rangers I know are using this same technology to locate lost hikers, create interpretive programs and communicate with each other to share information on how to manage their parks more efficiently.

So as you page, surf, type, email, or global position yourself, just remember that you still need to get out of your truck and walk around. Also they haven't made a battery that doesn't need to be replaced or charged.

Learn to read the compass and leave no footprints.

A Tale of Two Invasives

by Steve Hogue

When many people think of the term “invasive plants,” two plants come to mind: the Himalayan Blackberry (*Rubus discolor*) and the Yellow Starthistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*). While many agencies combat these invasive species, do you know where they come from (no, not the depths of Hell) and their histories?

One may think that creatures such as the Abominable Snowman dined on Himalayan Blackberries high in Himalayan mountains, but the blackberries’ name is a misnomer. Himalayan Blackberries are actually native to western Europe. In 1885, a Santa Rosa man named Luther Burbank (1849-1926) introduced the plant to North America as a crop plant. Burbank was famed for developing the Burbank potato to combat the Irish famine in 1871. Obviously he did not figure that his blackberries would have the potential of spreading like the plague. Burbank called the plant “Himalayan Giant” because he thought that it was of Asian origin. Birds and other animals devoured, scarified, fertilized and dispersed the seeds over vast areas, eventually creating today’s headache of a non-native invasion. Different methods have been employed to remove Himalayan Blackberries ranging from manual removal, to spraying herbicides, to utilizing grazing animals.

Yellow Starthistle is another plant that has proven itself to be not only extremely annoying to humans, but deadly to horses. Yellow Starthistle is believed to have originated along the Mediterranean coast. From there, it spread out

towards Europe and the Asian steppes. It is thought that the weed was inadvertently imported sometime after 1849 to North America in a bag of Chilean-grown alfalfa seeds. Farmers often reported finding that their alfalfa seeds were contaminated with “weed seed.” Yellow Starthistle was first recorded in California in 1869. Infestations were localized due to the fact that alfalfa forage was distributed over short distances. Later, the use of tractors and other equipment spread starthistle seeds to other areas, grain fields included. Road construction, suburban development, and growth in the ranching business have all contributed to an even greater expansion of Yellow Starthistle. Today, the weed is spread over hundreds of millions of acres throughout the western United States. In California, more than 800 million acres are infected by Yellow Starthistle. This infested area has increased more than six times since 1958. Interestingly, the first Yellow Starthistle contamination outside of California was reported near Bingen, Washington in the 1920s. The believed cause of the infestation: contamination of alfalfa seed! Currently, Yellow Starthistle is located in 23 of the 48 contiguous states as well as throughout most of western Canada. The weed is also found in many temperate areas throughout the world.

So the next time you get ready to destroy some patches of Himalayan Blackberry or Yellow Starthistle, think about what an incredible journey the plants’ ancestors took to get here over the centuries, then clobber the heck out of them.

Sonoma County Park Rangers To Join SCLEA

by Mike Chiesa

The Sonoma County Park Ranger I’s and II’s had an election to vote for labor representation in February of this year. The rangers had been represented in a bargaining unit with many unrelated miscellaneous county employees, represented by the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 707. Many of the rangers, who are peace officers, realized the importance of being in a professional law enforcement organization and having access to PORAC and its LDF (legal defense fund). A movement was made over 4 years ago for the rangers to exercise their rights under 3508 of the California Government Code and be represented in a peace officer only bargaining unit.

After travelling a long hard road the Park Ranger I’s and II’s were finally granted their wish to be in a peace officer only bargaining unit and a chance to cast a vote as to who they wanted to represent them. The ballot choice was between SEIU, the Sonoma County Law Enforcement Association (SCLEA), and no representation. The vast majority of the Park Ranger I’s and II’s votes went to SCLEA. The Sonoma County Park Ranger I’s and II’s will now be represented by SCLEA for negotiations and internal af-

fairs matters. SCLEA is also affiliated with PORAC, so the Sonoma County Park Ranger I’s and II’s are also now PORAC members. The park ranger I’s and II’s will now be in a bargaining unit with other county peace officers: D.A. Investigators, Welfare Fraud Investigators, and the County Fire Inspectors. Also represented by SCLEA in separate bargaining units are the correctional officers, probation officers, youth supervisors, dispatchers, and sheriffs office management.

The Sonoma County Park Ranger I’s and II’s are excited about the change and feel better about the specialized representation we will now be receiving. As peace officers who are protected under the peace officers bill of rights, we felt it was important to have representation that is well versed in our rights and able to protect them. When working as a peace officer in these litigious times, we also felt it was important to have access to LDF to protect our own careers and futures. We are looking forward to negotiating our first contract with SCLEA and we all hope that we never have to use the LDF but we feel a lot better knowing that is there, just in case.

A Book to Report On

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

It's that time of year when I start planning out where I will spend my days off. The days are getting longer and the weather is warming up. What should I do? If it were up to my wife, I would have a honey-do list a few pages long. However there will always be time for honey-dos.

My son is almost six and I want to teach him about the out of doors. So as a family we go camping every chance we get through out spring and summer. We are always looking for new places to venture out into. As my son gets older, we get further away from the car and the kitchen sink and start camping with just the bare necessities. This year I wanted to hike into our camping areas so I did what I do best, I bought a book.

This book is titled *The Best in Tent Camping A guide for campers who hate RVs, concrete slabs and loud stereos*. It is written by Bill Mai and cost about \$14.00. This guide is really cool. It rates the campgrounds on beauty, noise, privacy, spaciousness and cleanliness. It also gives you key information such as who the campground is operated by, cost per site, registration process, elevation of campground and any restrictions. If that wasn't enough, it also gives you directions on how to get there.

If you like to camp or have a friend whom likes to camp, buy this book!

Remember to take the time to read and enjoy the book.

Changes in PERS Retirement

by Steve Hogue

Recently, as some of you may have read on the PRAC Internet Message Board, two California Assembly members authored and won approval of two very important Bills dealing with retirement.

Assembly member Joseph Nation sponsored Assembly Bill 1082 (AB 1082). AB 1082 expands the definition of "local safety member" in terms of CAL PERS safety retirement. The Bill now creates section 20423.5 of the Government Code to include peace officer park rangers (as defined by 830.31 PC) in the classification of "local safety member." Section 20441 of the Government Code was also amended to include county park rangers whom are peace officers to be included in the "county peace officer" category for safety retirement purposes. Of course, on the local level, these changes are only as good as your union's negotiating ability. Obviously park rangers who want to pursue safety retirement will need to successfully negotiate with their governing boards or councils before the new legislation becomes a reality.

I thought it would be interesting to point out that when this Bill was put to a vote in the Assembly, there were no votes against it. However, there were 10 votes against it in the Senate. For informational purposes, the following State Senators voted against AB 1082:

Richard Ackerman, James Brulte, Ray Haynes, Maurice Johannessen, William Knight, Tom McClintock, Dick Monteith, Bill Morrow, Rico Oller, and Charles Poochigian.

Unfortunately, I could not seem to locate anything on the California Legislature's corner of the internet stating why a legislator voted against any particular bill. In the case of AB 1082, the only agencies that would seem to lose any money due to passage of it would be local agencies who permit it through signed negotiations.

Also passed through the California Legislature was AB 616, sponsored by Thomas Calderon. This bill permits local agencies to adopt new CAL PERS retirement plans. The new plans include 3% @ 60, 2.5% @ 55, and 2.7% @ 55. Member contributions for these plans rise from the current 7% (for 2% @ 55 and 60) to 8%. The Bill also includes similar language for those covered by the County Employees Retirement Law of 1937.

I am rather excited by the passage of AB 616. My local branch of Service Employees International Union has already successfully negotiated for unit members to be covered under the new 3% @ 60 plan (we were covered by the 2% @ 55 plan). Based upon the charts available at the CAL PERS web site (www.calpers.ca.gov), my own final retirement has increased 13%. I strongly encourage all of you out there to bring these new retirement changes to your union's attention if you have not already. Also stop by CAL PERS' web site and view the various retirement charts available. There's no better time to start planning for tomorrow than right now.

**Park Rangers Association of California
Board Officers
2002**

PRESIDENT

MIKE CHIESA
(707) 847-3245
FAX: (707) 847-3325
E-Mail: MCHIESA@MCN.ORG

REGION 1 DIRECTOR

MIKE NICHOLSON
(925) 373-5775
E-Mail: PRKRANGR@PACBELL.NET

REGION 2 DIRECTOR

LEE HICKINBOTHAM JR.
(650) 617-3156
FAX: (650) 858-2659
E-Mail: LEE.HICKINBOTHAMJR@YAHOO.COM

REGION 3 DIRECTOR

STEVEN HOGUE
(530) 895-4758
FAX: (530) 895-9825
E-Mail: SHOQUE@CI.CHICO.CA.US

REGION 4 DIRECTOR

WALT YOUNG
(310) 858-7272 EX 102
FAX: (310) 858-7212
E-Mail: YOUNG@SMMC.CA.GOV

REGION 5 DIRECTOR

TOM ASH
(909) 926-7416
FAX: (909) 926-7418
E-Mail: TASH@CO.RIVERSIDE.CA.US

PAST PRESIDENT

JOHN HAVICON
(916) 875-6672
FAX: (916) 875-6632
E-Mail: ONDELAY@INNERCITE.COM

THE SIGNPOST EDITOR

DAVID BROOKS
(831) 336-2948
FAX: (By ARRANGEMENT)
E-Mail: PRANGERD@IX.NETCOM.COM

Scholarship

BILL HENDRICKS
(805) 756-1246
FAX: (805) 756-1402

Office Manager

CAROL BRYCE
Office: (916) 558-3734
FAX: (916) 387-1179
E-Mail: PRAC2000@EARTHlink.NET

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 can be mailed to David Brooks, 560 Hillcrest Dr., Ben Lomond, CA, 95005. Information can also be submitted by telephone at (831) 336-2948.

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

email:

PRANGERD@IX.NETCOM.COM

Membership Application

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY STATE ZIP _____

PHONE _____
HOME WORK

EMPLOYER OR SCHOOL _____

JOB CLASSIFICATION OR MAJOR _____

Voting Membership

REGULAR \$45 _____

NON-VOTING MEMBERSHIP

AGENCY:

(1-25 PERSONS-6 MAILINGS) \$75 _____

(> 25 PERSONS-12 MAILINGS) \$100 _____

STUDENT \$20 _____

ASSOCIATE \$35 _____

SUPPORTING \$100 _____

Park Rangers Association of California
P O Box 292010
SACRAMENTO, CA 95829-2010
(916) 558-3734 FAX (916) 387-1179

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

FIRST CLASS