



Interpretive Skills Training

October 21-25, Pacific Palisades, CA

This fall, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), in cooperation with the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) and the Park Rangers Association of California (PRAC) will present a comprehensive five-day interpretive training. Participants will have the opportunity to complete requirements for both the new PRAC interpretive standards and the NAI Certified Interpretive Guide. This includes the video-taping requirements!

Interested?

Call Dan Tholund at (310) 858-7272 ext. 128 to request an information and registration package. Hurry, space is limited!

Interpretive training Opportunities - Join us!

The MRCA is offering free training to PRAC members beginning in **late September** in three locations; the L.A. River Center (near downtown Los Angeles), Franklin Canyon (Beverly Hills) and Towsley Canyon (Santa Clarita). Each class will include natural resource information, trail activities, a demonstration of a thematic program and interpretive technique practice. Held on **Saturdays from 9am-4pm**, the classes will cover plants, mammals, birds, water, Native American Culture and Ecology. Classes can be attended as a series or separately. Call Angi Bates at (310) 858-7272 ext. 132 for more information.

It's Getting Closer

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr

I am sure that you have heard by now that the next PRAC conference will be in South Lake Tahoe in **March of 2003**. It is being labeled by many (everyone involved) as the best conference ever. The planning committee has been working very diligently (sleepless nights) in making sure that you will walk away saying "*Wow I am sure glad I came to this conference.*"

I don't think I can say enough (free drinks during happy hour) about the location (South Lake Tahoe, 15 minutes from Heavenly) and the hotel (Embassy Suites, remarkably breathtaking) in which the conference will be held. The price (\$119 per night) of the rooms are so reasonable (free Breakfast, free happy hour) that I might just bring my family for a vacation (easily fit 5-6 per room).

So start making plans now (you only have 6 months left) because you don't want to be the only member ("L" word that means not a winner) who did not attend this conference.

A Shout Out

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

I want to give a shout out to the City of San Jose's Pam Helmke and Teri Rogueway. Pam and Teri did a great job in arranging an end of the year BBQ for Regions 1 and 2. They volunteered to host the event and provide the meat and drinks for a low cost of \$5.00 per person.

This is a chance for members to get together to trade secrets, play games, but mostly to have a great time with your colleagues outside of their park.

So off goes my hat to Pam and Teri for stepping up to the plate to bring us together before we meet again at the best conference ever in South Lake Tahoe in 2003. (See page 7 for more details on this BBQ.)

From the President's Desk

Greetings Fellow PRAC Members,

It is hard to believe that we have made it through another summer. Schools are back in session and most of us will start seeing a decrease in visitation, at least during the week. It is now time to start putting our parks and ourselves back together. It is also a good time for us to decompress, attend training classes to learn new skills, and to make our plans for attending the 2003 California Parks Conference at South Lake Tahoe.

There are two opportunities this fall for people to pick up some training that covers some of the PRAC recommended training standards. Hopefully some of you will be attending the **Swift Water Rescue class September 10-12**, which will meet the PRAC standard for water safety awareness training. **October 21-25 MRCA is presenting a 40-hour interpretive training** that will not only satisfy the PRAC interpretation training standard but also satisfies the NAI Certified Interpretive Guide standard. Both of these training classes offer members a chance to gain valuable skills at a reasonable price.

A picnic is being held for **Region 2 on September 19**. This will be a great opportunity for park professionals to get together informally, decompress, and network. An advanced officer course is being planned in the Region 3 area for November, hosted by Solano County Parks. Some of the topics that will be covered at the 24-hour training will be ASP baton training, fish and game update, mobile meth labs, and dealing with parolees/probationers. A discussion on recruitment and retention issues is being planned for Regions 1, 2, and 3 this fall as well.

The Board was pleased to award two \$500 scholarships after recommendations from the scholarship committee. Marion Noble is the recipient of the Thomas A. Smith Scholarship and James Oliveri is the recipient of the second PRAC scholarship. Congratulations to the recipients and best wishes to all of the applicants in achieving your goals.

The 2003 California Parks Conference Planning Committee is diligently working on organizing the South Lake Tahoe Conference. The joint PRAC/CSPRA planning committee is comprised of dedicated park and land management professionals from several agencies from across California. We are also pleased to welcome our colleagues from the State of Nevada on board the conference planning team. Nevada agencies involved with planning the 2003 Parks Conference include Nevada State Parks, Washoe County Parks, Douglas County Parks, and Carson City Parks. The US Forest Service- Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, which encompasses the Tahoe Basin from rim to rim, has committed resources to planning the conference. The El Dorado Irrigation District Rangers from Sly Park and the Sierra District of California State Parks have enthusiastically joined the planning team and will help serve as local hosts. Many exciting, inspirational, informative and fun sessions, field trips, and events are being planned for the 2003 Parks Conference. The planning committee is working on trying some new ideas for the conference that have not been done before. The 2003 Parks Conference will also feature a park and land management job fair that will be a great opportunity for job seekers and employers alike. The 2003 Parks Conference will be one of the best conferences ever and one that you will not want to miss. The usual benefit of networking at the conference is going to be enhanced by including our colleagues from the State of Nevada. Put your vacation and/or training requests in now so you can be sure to go. It is also not too late to become involved with the conference planning committee, please let me know if you are interested in becoming involved.

It is time for us to seek candidates to run for offices on the PRAC Board of Directors. We need candidates to run for Director positions in Regions 1, 3, and 5. Serving on the Board is a great way to be involved with the organization and give something back to the members. If you are interested in running for office or would like to nominate someone to run for office, please contact John Havicon. If you are not sure which region is which, I can let you know.

That is all I have for now. I hope to see you at some of the events being held this fall. Enjoy the beginning of fall and stay safe.

Mike Chiesa

Natural Resources Communication Workshop Announced

The Natural Resources Communication Workshop, sponsored by the Western Section of The Wildlife Society, will be held at California State University, Chico from **January 6-10, 2003**. The week-long workshop is designed to help natural resource workers more effectively communicate with general as well as technical audiences through personal presentations using good visual aids—especially 35mm slides and computer-generated images (e.g., PowerPoint images). Since many of the problems in natural resources management are people-oriented, more effective communication can significantly improve many management programs.

The hands-on workshop is practical-oriented and enhances participants' communication skills in planning, preparing, presenting, and evaluating presentations. A variety of topics are covered including selecting communication strategies for specific audiences, creating computer-generated graphics, and handling equipment problems. A special session entitled "Verbal Victories" provides hints for handling difficult, or even hostile, audiences.

As a special bonus, participants will receive a copy of "Effective Slide Presentations- A Practical Guide to More Powerful Presentations," a book by the course instructor, Dr. Jon Hooper. Dr. Hooper is a Certified Wildlife Biologist and longtime member of The Wildlife Society. He holds degrees in environmental communication and wildlife ecology. Jon has taught communication workshops for 25+ years in locations around the country.

The workshop has been sponsored by the Western Section of The Wildlife Society for over 30 years. The deadline for applications is *November 1, 2002*; the course fee is \$595. Late applications are accepted (they're placed on a waiting list in case of cancellations).

Applying for the workshop is easy. On letterhead, applicants should describe: (1) their current position within their agency/organization, (2) how they would use the training, and (3) any special reasons why they feel they should be chosen as a participant. Participation is limited to 16 people.

Submit applications to: Dr. Jon K. Hooper, Dept. Recreation and Parks Management, Calif. State University, Chico, CA 95929-0560. For more information, contact Jon by calling (530) 898-5811, faxing (530) 898-6557, or e-mailing "jhooper@csuchico.edu."

Up the Creek Without a Paddle

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr

Actually I should say on the trail without a cite book. Have you ever gone out on a patrol and saw someone violating an ordinance and decided you was going to write them a ticket? As you start to exit your vehicle you realize that you left your cite book on your desk or worse, you ran out of citations.

Earlier this year we (The City of Palo Alto) were issued administrative citations. Its like a Notice to Appear; however, all the money from the fine goes directly back to the City instead of being distributed to the County and State.

It is both advantageous for the ranger and the visitor. The advantage for the visitor over a Notice to Appear is that the Admin Cite does not go before the courts. There is no record at the DMV; it is a bill from the City. If you refuse to pay, a warrant will not be issued, however a lien may be placed on any property you may have. If the visitor decides to contest the citation, it goes before a hearing officer rather than a judge. The visitor can call witnesses and even cross-examine the issuing ranger.

The advantage for the ranger is that we don't have to have our citation book with us to issue a citation. All we have to do is get the pertinent information and advise them that they will be receiving a citation in the mail. No signature is required. If visitor contests the citation and we go before the Hearing Officer, the City Attorney accompanies us to do all the work.

If I meet my quota for the month I get to go to the 2003 conference in South Lake Tahoe in March of 2003. Not really, I get a toaster. However I will be attending the 2003 conference in South Lake Tahoe.

Interpretive Encounters of the Informal Kind

Common Questions can Reveal Deeper Meanings

by Angi Bates

PRAC Interpretive Committee Chair

If you are like many park professionals, you might hear the same 15–20 questions continually. They might sound like this:

What does poison oak look like?

Which agency runs this park?

Are there mountain lions here?

Who is this park / nature center / auditorium named after?

What is that tree with the big purple flowers?

Do you see any Golden Eagles coming through here?

What should I do if I see a rattlesnake?

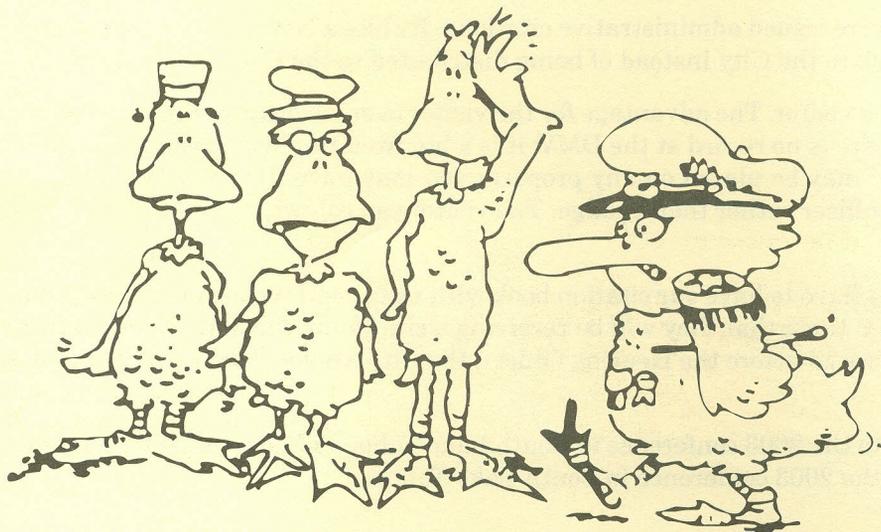
There are lots of possible responses. In many cases, if you are giving the answer without elaboration because you have been asked the same question thousands of times, you are missing out on a great opportunity to provide some informal interpretation. Knowing that the same 10–50 questions are asked repeatedly, try putting an interpretive spin on your answer. Take the advice of Wilderness Awareness School in Duvall, Washington and use the visitors interest as a vacuum that draws them toward new information in an inspiring way. First, you should research the answers to the most-asked questions in depth.

Know your resource: For instance, learn about how poison oak looks and its toxicity level in different seasons, how to minimize the effects by rubbing dirt or Mugwort on the affected area, how long you have to wash it before it gets into your system, what the person can expect to happen if they touched to leaves, how to best get it off of their clothing, etc. Know about Urushiol and how it is measured in tiny quantities due to its severe toxicity. If you want to get scientific about it, learn how it systemically attacks and what the chemical makeup looks like.

Know your audience: Gear your message toward the visitor before you. Are you explaining things to a five-year-old? Kneel down so you are at eye level and make your message relevant without making the plant (and often, all others in their minds) a scary thing. At five, they will probably know what a rash is or itchy skin and they will probably still be willing to repeat, “Leaves of three, let them be” or “If it’s shiny, watch your hiney” after you. For an adult, you might want to let them know that as long as they stay on the trail and keep their children on the trail, they will probably be fine. A dog walker will need to know that the dogs fur can carry the oils if the dog is running through the poison oak and they might catch it from petting the dog. If you live in an area populated by people who speak many languages, you might want to learn the name for poison oak in another language, particularly if the visitor will teach you. A visitor from the East Coast may be familiar with poison ivy and you might compare notes on the two poisonous plants. It’s important to be honest about what the effects are without over dramatizing. If you can find photographs of the rash, laminate a card and show it to people who ask. Carry a photo of poison oak in its different phases. If you have had the pleasure of contact with the plant, tell them what it felt like.

Add a little magic to your response for a memorable encounter: Relate the experience of having poison oak with a good story that is personal or one that is mythical. I like to call poison oak my friend. I ask children (and sometimes adults) if they want to meet my friend. I tell them that my friend taught me to pay attention to the plants because I kept getting an itchy rash and I had to learn what I shouldn’t touch. Sometimes just talking about it makes them feel like they have it, so let them know that they wouldn’t know for two days, using the day of the week for relevance. Let them know that not everyone is allergic to it and that the natives used to weave baskets of the plant. Invite them to draw the plant if they have time. Ponder why the plant is called poison oak when it is not in the oak family.

While you might think you aren’t doing interpretation because you are not leading pre-planned, advertised programs, you are probably being asked many questions that you can use interpretation to answer in a creative, memorable way. In customer service, its called “Exceeding the Guests Expectations.” In interpretation, its called revealing the deeper meaning of the resources.



Massachusetts Rangers: Similar Work and Similar Problems

by John Havicon

While visiting Boston, Massachusetts this July, I was able to spend a day with the Metropolitan District Commission, (MDC) Park Rangers to learn a little about their park ranger operations. The MDC Rangers are operated by the State of Massachusetts and handle about 20,000 acres of parks, open space and recreation areas around the Boston area and some watersheds outside of Boston.

I met with Lt. Kevin Tucker, a supervising ranger at the Middlesex Fells Reservation, North of Boston. Ranger Tucker provided me with a personal tour of his patrol area and enlightened me on their operations. His area comprised of several lakes and open space areas, along with some heavily populated urban parks and beaches. There are about 80 MDC Rangers. 20 are 9-month seasonal. He told me the MDC rangers spend about half of the time with interpretation and the other half with public safety. All of their rangers are "First Responder" trained. They have a separate maintenance staff, so they are required only to do "light maintenance." The rangers were strictly interpretation until 1995, when there was a conflict between the State Police, (who patrolled the parks and provided security at the capitol), and the state legislation. A few days later, park patrol and security at the capitol were given to the rangers.

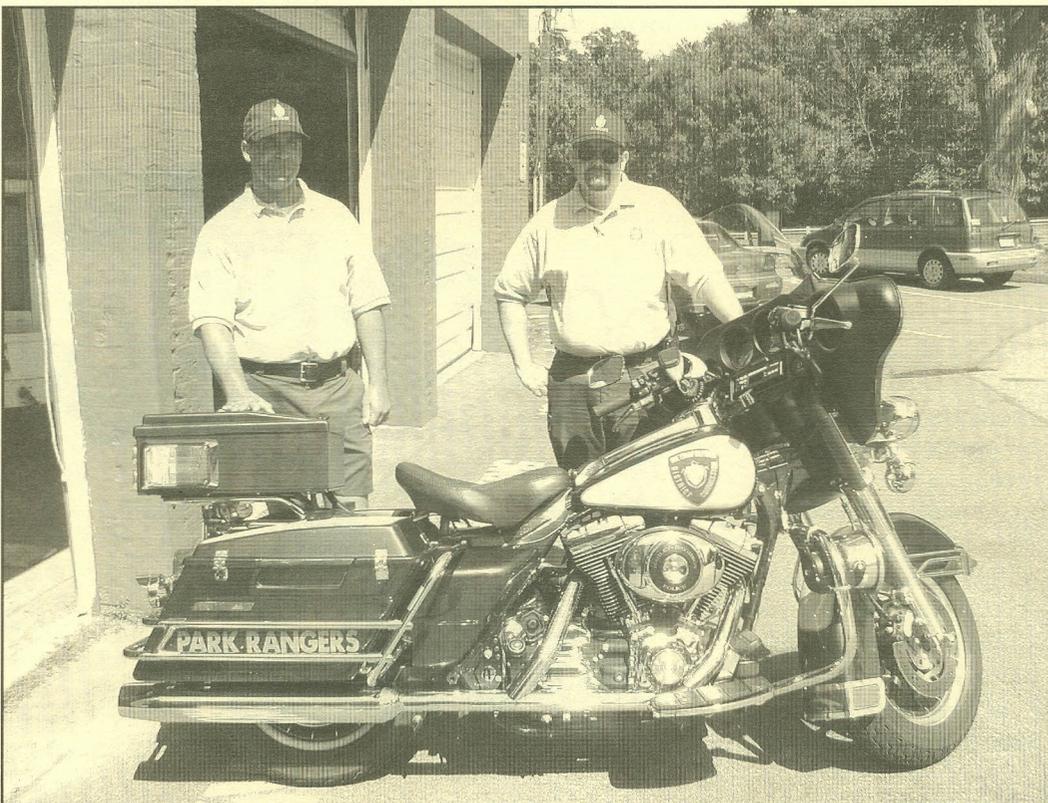
In comparison, their jobs and areas were quite similar to what I do, except for the law enforcement. In many ways,

they are going through the same problems as many of our members. I was surprised to learn that they have no authority, except for parking tickets, yet they go out on patrol and make contacts. They use the interpretive approach, giving warnings. If somebody ignores them, walks off or tells them to "beat sand" there is nothing they can do. I asked Ranger Tucker who the next level of enforcement is if a violation continues. He told me the State Police are supposed to. The police don't patrol the parks and won't respond to small violations and many police officers still remember the conflict. Their vehicles are equipped with red lights but they are not allowed to respond to emergencies. They use the red lights only for traffic control. They have a 24-hour dispatcher but are unable to do records checks on people and cars.

I was invited to ride in one of their jet boats with Ranger Marc Polito. Ranger Polito patrols the waters at a reservoir called Spa Pond. Spa Pond, (what we in California would call a lake), serves as backup drinking water for Boston, so no swimming is allowed. They also don't allow private boats on the lake, only canoes, kayaks and rowboats which they rent out. The rangers also patrol the swimming beaches in Boston by boat and jet-skis. Ranger Polito also enforces the no alcohol law, which is prohibited at all MDC parks, once again by given them warnings. Ranger Polito is also one of the few rangers trained to ride their three newly acquired motorcycles. Ranger Polito is hoping to someday to use the fully equipped

Harleys for patrol. So far, the only time they can use the motorcycles is for parades.

I found it interesting that these rangers are going through the same situations as many California local agency rangers are going through. Many are sent out to perform public safety and enforce laws but are not given proper training and/or the right tools to do the tasks. Administrators need to look at the big picture and realize they may not only be putting their own employees at risk but sometimes the public. That is one of the main reasons PRAC has worked so hard at establishing standards for park rangers. So agencies have a guideline to follow when hiring rangers and training them.



Hepatitis C: The Silent Disease

by Steve Houge

Recently I responded to a call to assist another park ranger who was going to contact a group of three men who were drinking beer (alcohol is prohibited in my park) and simply being intoxicated at a picnic site.

After arriving to the other ranger's location, we were joined by one of our city's police officers. The three of us trekked down a short trail to the picnic site where three drunken transients were having a ball. To determine one of the transient's ability to care for himself, I asked if he was able to walk. He slurred in the affirmative. He stood up, walked about 10 feet, and fell down. After he slowly got back up, the officer and I proceeded to place him in rear wrist locks to handcuff him and take him to the drunk tank. The drunk did not feel that this was a good idea, so he decided to try to wrestle with us. Ultimately, all three of us ended up on the ground, with the suspect finally handcuffed and on his stomach.

Soon after handcuffing the drunk, he re-assumed his verbal barrage of insults and began to complain about pain to his stomach area from a recent surgery. With that, I immediately placed latex gloves on my hands which I keep handy in a pouch on my belt. The officer lifted the drunk's shirt to reveal a stitched up wound that looked very similar to the stomach birthing scene in the movie *Aliens* (no kidding). Of course, due to his struggle, the drunk's wound was starting to open back up. To make matters worse, the drunk continued to try to slide the cuffs under his derriere to get loose, which only aggravated his wound and brought more blood. Thankfully, I had my gloves on because I had to keep preventing him from getting loose until medics arrived with an ambulance. We strapped him to the gurney and sent him to the hospital with a police escort.

My gloves were bloodied and the officer had some blood on her hands. After cleaning up, we found out that the drunk had been diagnosed with Hepatitis C. Because I am not familiar with Hepatitis C, except for the knowledge to stay the heck away from it, I decided to do a little research on it.

The Hepatitis C virus (HCV) is known as the silent disease because it shows no visible signs. According to the Center for Disease Control, the Hepatitis C virus attacks the liver and is the most common chronic blood borne infection in the United States. Chronic liver disease accounts for 25,000 deaths annually (1% of all deaths). Studies indicate that 40% of chronic liver disease cases are HCV-related. Other studies state that 60% of HCV infections are a result of IV drug usage, 20% are due to sexual encounters, 10% are due to occupational hazards, and the remaining 10% of contractions remains a mystery. At least 2 in 100 people are infected with HCV. Currently, it is estimated that four million Americans are infected with HCV.

Of course, the best way to not get any infection is by using proper preventative techniques. I spoke with Raul Raygoza of the Butte County Department of Public Health. He said that the best precautions are to wear gloves when you even suspect that blood is present (which hopefully most of us already know). For those of us who wear glasses, we have an added protection, as eyes do not have self defense mechanisms. Mouths, on the other hand, while still a point of infection, can fight off many things.

After contact with blood, gloves should be disposed of properly. HCV can remain active on clothing for 7-10 days under scientific conditions. Remove any clothing that you suspect of coming into contact with blood.

Immediately clean any areas of your body that have blood. Even wiping it off with a cloth can help with prevention. As soon as you possibly can, clean with antiseptics and wash up. Do this even if you were wearing gloves. (You never know if there was a small hole in your gloves)

If you believe that you were exposed to blood through a wound on your body, in your eyes, or in your mouth, follow your agency's protocol for medical care and go to your medical care facility. Antibody tests are given at three and six months. (The body will respond to HCV within approximately 12 weeks.)

I'm sure that many of you out there dislike the idea of having yet more gear on your belts. Believe me, a glove pouch is a priceless addition to the belt. Anybody that does not wear glasses already and has contact with people in need of medical assistance, or with criminal suspects, may want to consider purchasing a pair of safety glasses to wear during those contacts. Remember, it's always better safe than sorry!



A Book to Report On

by Lee Hickinbotham Jr.

Everything that was to happen had happened and everything that was to be seen had gone. It was now one of those moments when nothing remains but an opening in the sky and a story, and maybe something of a poem.

Now that I have your attention I want to tell you about a great book I have just finished reading. The book is titled "A River Runs Through It and other stories" by Norman Maclean. The cost is around \$13.00, a great price for great entertainment.

The above quote is from one of the short stories from within the book. It's titled "USFS1919: The Ranger, the Cook, and a Hole in the Sky." It's about a young seasonal who works for the Forest Service when a ranger was hired not by how much schooling he had but by who was the toughest guy in town. It revolves around the head ranger, the seasonal and the cook and how the seasonal works hard all summer fighting fires, trying to impress his boss and hating the cook. It also includes some gambling, fighting, drinking, and most of all teamwork.

I don't want to tell you too much so that you will read the book. It is one that I highly recommend. It would be a great book to buy to read on your way to the 2003 conference in South Lake Tahoe.

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

Come One, Come All to the PRAC Region 2 BBQ !!

When:

Thursday, September 19, 2002
3:00 P.M. to dusk

Where:

Alum Rock Park, Ramada Picnic Area
in the beautiful San Jose foothills.

Cost: **Something to share and a \$5.00
donation.**

**Your \$5.00 will provide burgers
& dogs with all the trimmings plus soda**

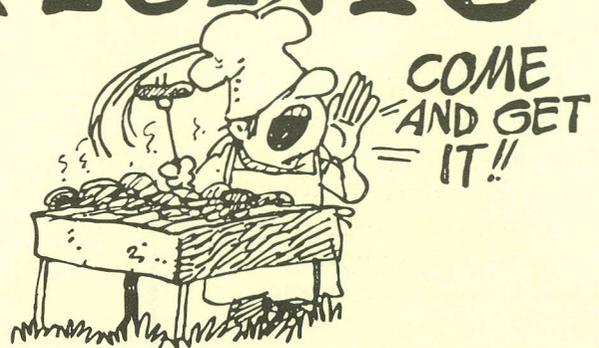
RSVP:

**Pam Helmke (408) 848-8537 or
Teri Rogoway (408) 251-3323**

Take some time at the end of the summer season to tell stories, play some volleyball, eat good food and visit with old friends. Come early and explore Alum Rock Park, California's oldest municipal park.

If your not a PRAC member, come along and join the association while you meet other rangers from across California. (Don't worry if you don't live in Region 2 come anyway and enjoy the fun.)

PICNIC



PARK RANGERS ASSOCIATION of CALIFORNIA

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2002

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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.

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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 _____

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