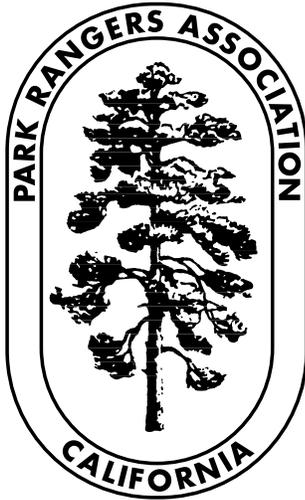


# The Signpost

September–October, 2003



## It's Election Time!

Well it's election time again for the **Board of Directors** and the **President's** position. This year we are seeking candidates for **Regions 2, 4, and 6**. I would like to encourage as many of you as I can to throw in your hat and run. We need energetic people to help guide this organization into the future. If you are a member in one of these regions, you are qualified to run as a Director. All voting members are qualified to run for President. In the last few years, this organization has gathered a lot of energy. We have done a lot not only to improve the organization but also our professional careers. We need to keep this energy flowing. We need our members to get involved!

**Region 2** consists of members from Monterey, San Benito, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara and Santa Cruz counties.

**Region 4** consists of members from Inyo, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Tulare and Ventura counties.

**Region 6** consists of members from the State of Nevada

**Duties of the Board of Directors** are to attend quarterly Board meetings and provide direction for the organizations affairs; Plan future activities for their region's members, including training workshops and social events; Write articles for *The Signpost*; Provide support for individual members; Provide PRAC's direction with state legislative issues, attend job or environmental fairs. Terms of office are two years, starting January 1, 2004. Travel expenses are reimbursed for the Board functions

If you would like to be a candidate in you region, please contact me, John Havicon, at [on\\_belay@comcast.net](mailto:on_belay@comcast.net) or (916) 875-6672. I will send you a candidate application. Election ballots will be sent out in November. If you know of someone in your region that you think would be an excellent candidate, let me know. I'll contact them for you and ask them to run.

Thank you

*John Havicon*  
Nominating Committee



## Your PRAC Website

[www.calranger.org](http://www.calranger.org)

by Jeff Price

Visit the PRAC Website <[www.calranger.org](http://www.calranger.org)> from time to time, to keep up on current activities and opportunities throughout California. You can find specific information on scholarships, your regions' representation, the Ranger Directory, organization and administrative policies, history and heritage, PRAC merchandise for sale and an overview of the membership benefits and services provided by PRAC. If there are features you'd like to see added to the website, drop a note to a Board member or President Chiesa.

Keep in touch—*stay up to date*—visit <[www.calranger.org](http://www.calranger.org)>.

# From the President's Desk

If you are reading this, then you have survived another summer season. For many parks, the passing of Labor Day weekend marks the end of the summer camping season and the beginning of the time of year when we start working on putting things back together. We also have time to start focusing on training to improve and maintain our skills. There is no better organization to help with your professional training needs than PRAC. You should receive notice of upcoming training opportunities soon. If there is training that you would like to see PRAC present, please contact your regional Director or myself.

As we get closer to fall it is time to start thinking about the upcoming elections. We need candidates to run for the offices of **President, Regions 2 and 4, and the new Region 6** for the State of Nevada. (If the members vote to create it.) This organization relies heavily on the volunteer commitment of dedicated park professionals such as you. Serving on the Board is a great way to give something back to the profession, make many new connections, and help ensure the continued success of the organization. If you would like to become more involved and in the know, serving on the board is a great way to make that happen. John Havicon is in charge of the nominating committee and has provided additional information on the upcoming elections in this edition. (See front page.)

Also with the coming of the fall season comes membership renewal time. Membership renewal notices will be going out with the ballots in November. We are a non-profit organization and as such we rely almost solely on the membership dues to give us the finances to keep doing things for our members. Our membership levels are looking good and we are close to the 300-member goal. Please keep up the good work of recruiting your fellow professionals. Anyone who joins PRAC this fall will remain a current member through December 31 of 2004. What a great deal! Recruiting members is the job of all PRAC members so we can keep growing and offering more for our members.

It is time to start thinking of dedicated individuals who contributed above and beyond to the goals of PRAC. The Board will be accepting nominations of individuals to receive the 2004 PRAC Honorary Lifetime Member Award. This is the highest and most prestigious award PRAC can bestow upon an individual that has committed themselves to the goals of the association. If you know of someone that should be recognized for their commitment, please nominate them by providing the Board with their name, contact information, and a written description of why you think they should receive the award.

The 2004 Parks Conference planning committee is off to a great start. They are working hard to plan and organize another top-notch training conference that our members have come to expect. The 2004 Conference will be held in Anaheim and the theme is "*A California Adventure-Rediscover the Magic.*" Go to the PRAC web site at [www.calranger.org](http://www.calranger.org) for the latest information on the 2004 Conference. Amy Lethbridge is the PRAC Chair for the planning committee. If you would like to volunteer or have any suggestion for her please contact her through the information listed on the web site.

We must start thinking about site selections for the 2005 Parks Conference, which will be in northern California. I will be working with CSPRA on selecting a location with a suitable venue that will meet our needs. If you have any suggestions, please contact me. As we found at Lake Tahoe, location is a very important part of the attraction of a conference. That is all I have for you for now. I hope you all have a great beginning of fall and I hope to see you at an upcoming PRAC event.

Stay safe,

**Mike Chiesa**

# **The Consultant a Web Offering**

A shepherd was herding his flock in a remote pasture when suddenly a brand-new BMW advanced out of the dust cloud towards him. The driver, a young man in a Broni suit, Gucci shoes, Ray-Ban sunglasses and YSL tie, leaned out of the window and asked the shepherd...

"If I tell you exactly how many sheep you have in your flock, will you give me one?"

The shepherd looked at the man, obviously a yuppie, then looked at his peacefully-grazing flock and calmly answered, "Sure."

The yuppie parked his car, whipped out his IBM Thinkpad and connected it to a cell phone, then he surfed to a NASA page on the internet where he called up a GPS satellite system, scanned the area, and then opened up a database and an Excel spreadsheet with complex formulas. He sent an email on his Blackberry and, after a few minutes received a response. Finally he prints out a 130 page report on his miniaturized printer and turns to the shepherd and says...

"You have exactly 1586 sheep."

"That is correct; take one of the sheep." Said the shepherd. He watches the young man select one of the animals and bundles it into his car.

Then the shepherd says: "If I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my animal?"

"OK, why not." Answered the young man.

"Clearly you are a consultant." Said the shepherd.

"That is correct." Says the yuppie, "but how did you guess that?"

"No guessing required." Answers the shepherd. "You turned up here although nobody called you. You want to get paid for an answer I already knew, to a question I never asked, and you don't know crap about my business....Now give me back my dog."

## **Ten Things You Don't Say To a Ranger**

**by Don Web**

10. The limbs I cut off that tree don't burn well, is it because ther're green?
9. Can you show me where Boo Boo is?
8. It's a park, I didn't think you needed a license to fish in a park.
7. Because they're so small, I counted those three fish as one.
6. I only had two beers today.
5. It's oregano, I brought it for the bar-b-cue.
4. But you told me I couldn't take the duck home, you didn't say I couldn't cook it here.
3. You ought to try this, I take the corn and spray it with WD-40.
2. Did you forget your gun?
1. You can't arrest me, you're just a ranger.

# Park Stinkers

## by Ranger Tom Maloney

One of the most common wildlife sightings most of us will have as we travel in parks or on trails is a little black critter affectionately called the “stink bug.”

Although not a true bug the name persists, our stinky trail companion is actually a beetle. Here is an interesting fact to share with park visitors; Beetles form the largest order (Coleoptera) of all known living organisms! Our stink beetle is from a group known as Darkling Beetles, of the species *Eleodes*, family *tenebrionidae* to be more precise.

Approximately 100 species of this beetle roam the western United States so odds are you will eventually “bump” into at least one.

I am sure most of us have already encountered this mild mannered insect on our travels in the wilder areas. If not, this fellow will be very obvious to you by its fairly large size, its shiny jet-black color and its somewhat oblivious nature as it seems to wander aimlessly and sometimes comically along. These little fellows are not aggressive, do not carry any known vectors and have very weak mouth parts and therefore cannot deliver a painful bite, or in other words are harmless.

What makes it very easy to identify this beetle is the “butts up” position it takes when it is disturbed, threatened, or annoyed. This head-standing talent has also earned it the name of “acrobat beetle” in some areas. Oh yes, it can and does emit a “stink” or odor to fend off annoying and curious

mammals. (Think of little boys with sticks.) Sometimes on busy trails you will be able to smell these beetles before you see them. This beetle is best if watched or followed from a short but respectable distance.

You may also noticed that this beetle does not fly away like other beetles do when alarmed. It is not because they are too fat or lazy but due to the fact that the wing covers are naturally fused shut. (Perhaps this is the reason for a chemical defense?)

This species lays its eggs in the spring time. The larvae which are prominently jointed and nut-brown in color hatch to feed on plant roots and tubers. Adults feed on a variety of materials mostly of plant origin. Both adults and larvae can be, but usually are not a pest to landscaping. Adults do not seem to have many natural enemies or predators, although on busy trails you are likely to see several of these beetles crushed by human traffic. If at all possible share the trails with our stinky little friends.

When visiting your local parks take a minute to acquaint yourself with our most common form of wildlife. I hope you find it rewarding, relaxing and perhaps a bit amusing. If nothing else it will give you a reason to stop, rest and enjoy your outdoor experience.

Sources: *Insects of the Los Angeles Basin*, by Charles Hogue; *Peterson field guides - Insects*

## A Book to Report On

### by Lee Hickinbotham Jr

*As the fellow approached, my eyes quickly picked up a telltale bulge in his hunting vest and a blood spot that had soaked clear through the side of the game bag. I said “What is that bulge in your game bag?” Without looking me in the eyes (a sure sign of guilt?), he said “My lunch.”*

*I said “sure it is.” I turned to him slightly, reached into his game bag, felt a set of legs and feet, and lifted the bird out. Looking him right in the eyes with my canned “you are dead” gaze, I held the bird at arm’s length and said in a commanding voice, “yeah, well what the hell is this?” Instant pandemonium! Every hunter was either on the ground or bent over laughing his heart out. What the heck? I thought. The laughter didn’t abate, and then I looked at what I was proudly waving in the air for all the world and God to see. My eyes almost fell out of my thickheaded skull. It was a @#&\* rubber chicken.*

This is an excerpt out of a book I found while looking for insect field guides. It’s written by a former California Fish and Game Warden who takes you back to his rookie years. His stories are interesting, humorous and quite enjoyable. A definite must read this fall.

The book is titled “*A Sword for Mother Nature*” *The Further Adventures of a Fish and Game Warden* by Terry Grosz and cost \$18.00.

So remember to take the time to read and enjoy the book.

# Not So Sudden Oak Death Syndrome In Sonoma County

by Denise Edwards

The National Science Foundation has funded a four-year grant for the research of Sudden Oak Death Syndrome in Sonoma County. A 2,000 hectare rectangle encompassing sections of the Sonoma Mountain Range, Sonoma Valley and the Mayacamas Range was chosen as the study area because of its diversity and because SOD has been found in this area but has not been studied enough to understand the extent of its distribution.

Scientists have determined that SOD is caused by a microorganism, called *Phytophthora ramorum*, a water mold. They are still unclear however as to how the disease is spread and to what extent this disease will have on the environment. Through this research project, they will try to correlate the spread of the disease with genetic and environmental factors, and hope to predict the effects of the spread of the disease to educate land managers and other researchers.

SOD has resulted in the death of thousands of coast live oak, California black oak, interior live oak, and tan oak. In addition, SOD has been found to cause damage to other California plants and trees such as California huckleberry, madrone, California bay laurel, California honeysuckle, California buckeye, toyon, big leaf maple, manzanita, and

California coffeeberry. Although these other plants may not necessarily die from SOD, they play a part in spreading the disease. The effects on these species will have a severe impact on the wildlife and ecosystems in California.

The field sampling procedures for this study will include collecting environmental factors in addition to DNA testing for the presence of *P. ramorum*. Plot locations were randomly generated in GIS and found using Global Positioning Systems. Each plot contains a microclimate data collection device to determine air temperature and humidity. Each plot location will be sampled for standard vegetation observations as well as for DNA analysis of the leaves. They have determined which plots were SOD positive at the time of plot establishment and will track for new infections. Of the eight plots established in Hood Mountain of Sonoma County Regional Parks, four were determined to be SOD positive thus far.

Teams of researchers will visit the plot sites three to four times per year for the next four years and will remove the plot devices at the completion of the study. As the data continues to trickle in, we will hopefully be able to learn more about the nature of this beast.

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## A Routine Encounter

by Don Web

One night this past spring, one of our sergeants was out with a couple of trainees. It was a quiet night and it seemed nothing was happening.

Upon arrival at our little lake and campground park, the rangers noted a vehicle in the day use area. As this area is closed at dark, they turned on their spotlights and soon lit up a male and two females at the rear of the area.

Using the public address system, they notified the people that the area was closed and that they would have to leave. As the people walked toward them, the male threw something into the playground area. All three subjects were dipping their hands into their pockets and dropping items on the ground.

The sergeant got that sense that something was very wrong and as they approached the rangers, ordered them to stop and then turned to a felony type situation and put them on the ground.

Remember like most of you, our rangers are not armed. However in this situation, the subjects did not know this.

The other thing that contributed to the suspense is that this area is a dead zone for the radios.

With the subjects on the ground, the ranger proceeded to cuff them. Once secured, the sergeant walked the area the subject had come from and found 18 bags of meth, 6 bags of pot and a baggy full of eightballs.

Upon reaching the spot where he had observed the male to deposit something, he found a loaded 38 revolver with the serial numbers filed off.

While the sergeant and one trainee stayed with the subjects, the other trainee took the unit and drove to the top of a hill where he could contact dispatch. Giving the info, the vehicle license, and the subjects I.D. to dispatch, the rangers soon found themselves joined by four sheriff's units.

It turned out that the male subject was a parolee at large with a 32X \$150, 000.00 warrant and the two girls had \$75,000.00 of warrants between them. The car of course was stolen.

The moral of this story; **nothing is ever routine!**

## **Keeping In Touch**

# **PRACnet List Server**

**by Jeff Price**

If you would like to share ideas and opinions with other park professionals, get answers to operational questions or get quick advice in a "crisis" at your agency, consider signing up for the PRACnet List Server.

We currently have 174 individual subscribers from throughout California who regularly discuss park related issues by e-mail. Almost 1,000 message posts have been shared since PRACnet's inception in April 2000, on topics ranging from information on the next Parks Conference to frequent agency job announcements to uniform issues to training—to a member looking for a bike patrol policy template. However, there is no requirement that you actually post anything on the list server, we have many members who just soak up the info. If you have any questions about how PRACnet works, chat with your Regional Director listed on the back of this newsletter issue or find them at <[www.calranger.org/contactus.html](http://www.calranger.org/contactus.html)>.

PRACnet is a great way to keep in touch with issues that are affecting rangers and park agencies throughout California. Membership is a free service provided by your PRAC Board of Directors. If you'd like to subscribe, either visit the PRAC Website at <[www.calranger.org](http://www.calranger.org)> and click on the *PRACnet* link, or just send your name and e-mail address to us at <[webmaster@calranger.org](mailto:webmaster@calranger.org)> with a note to sign you up for PRACnet.

## **Another Book Review**

**by Tom Maloney, Senior Park Ranger**

*Aircraft Wrecks in the mountains and deserts of California*  
*A guidebook to locating historical aircraft crash sites in California*

*Author: Gary P. Macha*

Now that things have quieted down somewhat in the parks you may have decided to finally explore that far ridge or canyon which you have never had time to before. As you approach the area the sunlight reflects off something far off and shimmering.

Being a seasoned ranger you automatically think *trash!* You grumble something about ^%\$#@! littering visitors and grab a trash bag and head off toward what you are pretty sure will be the remnants of some teenage party, complete with beer cans and wine bottles. More grumbling as you hike up and through unfamiliar terrain. Then maybe it strikes you as odd that there are no human trails this way? Humf! Must be old hippy trash you say to yourself. But when you get closer you find ....metal parts, aluminum, lots and lots of riveted sheet metal, maybe some broken glass, maybe 50 caliber shell casings! Wow, you say, this is weird trash! What happened here? What could this be? And most of all, who can you call to ask?

Well, now you have a source. Just like many other useful field guides you can now find out how many known aircraft wreck sites are located in or near your home or park. You can purchase the book listed above for about \$19.95 + tax or go on line to: <[www.aircraftwrecks.com](http://www.aircraftwrecks.com)> and inquire about any suspicious wreckage in your area.

Here is how I got hooked, I was patrolling an area which had recently been grazed down to stubble and dirt when I started seeing small bits and pieces of metal. Nearby a huge pit turned out to be an impact crater. The plane which crashed in my park was determined after much research from the books author to be a wreck from the year 1946 of a NAVY F-4U, a WWII fighter. Fortunately through a military records search it was found out that this pilot bailed out prior to impact and survived. This is a very interesting and historical crash site which we now use in some of our parks interpretive walks, talks and slide shows .

I share this story to make you aware that park resources are not always natural or archaeological, they certainly can include unusual historical sites such as this.

If you know of a wreck site in your area, feel free to contact Pat Macha at ***Pat@aircraftwrecks.com*** or via the website. Pat is always interested in discovering and recording lost sites. He is also an interesting guest speaker and has made this a life goal to document as many of these fascinating sites as possible.

As a book to have in your library I would recommend this one highly.

*Note: With any luck we will have Pat Macha as a speaker at the 2004 PRAC conference in Orange County.*

# a Book Review

## by Don Pearson

We've all been there, you know, that mandatory training your boss signs you up for because he or she thinks it would be good for you. When in reality they found a few unspent bucks in the training budget and they're afraid if they don't spend it, their training budget will be cut next year.

So, off you go to that one-day training. Not really wanting to be there and hoping the instructor will let everyone out early because after all, it's Friday and he knows rangers work weekends.

Once there, you are bombarded with handouts, which you know will be round-filed before Monday rolls around. On the other hand, if you are like me, you put your training materials in a box so they are readily available if your boss asks how the training went. The only problem with this method is you never know which handouts go with which training.

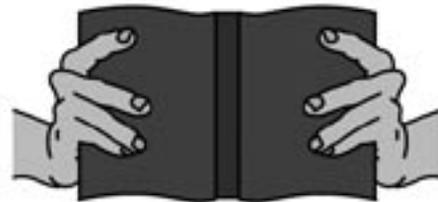
All kidding aside, training is important and we can always find something to bring back to our workplace to better our skills. As for those mountains of handouts, yes they too are worthy of sharing with your coworkers.

Recently, I was going over my mountains of training manuals, handouts, and books, trying to put some order to them, when I came across a book I had picked up some years ago while attending a leadership training class. The book is titled; *Lessons In Leadership From Your Neighborhood*, by Bunny and Larry Holman. The book is a collection of short stories written by world leaders, as well as down-home folks, like you and me, who have made a positive difference in their personal lives and communities. The book is about 500–pages in length and has something for just about everyone who must deal with people.

Personal testimonies about change, honesty, and tolerance in the workplace while sharing proven experience that has helped others to excel in their chosen profession makes up 90% of the text.

One can best describe this book as *Chicken Soup for the Leader in All of Us*. The book is easy reading cover to cover or you can select those topics that best relate to your own interests. However you choose to read it, it is a great book to motivate one's leadership skills.

Cost of the book is about \$30.00.



## Region Five News

### by Don Web

As another summer season winds down, I am reminded that when you have one of those days where it seems nothing happens, enjoy it.

Several things are in the works for Region Five. I am putting together a list of the people and agencies in the region to work on some quarterly training. I would like any of you that can, to email me with your contact info. You can reach me at <rangers@hesperiaparks.com>.

I also would like to hear from you as to what you would like to see in the way of training and or if you have a certain topic you would like to share or teach.

Right now, I have people I can line up for the POST first responder renewal course. It is 12 hours and we would have to either have it on a Saturday (long day?) or over a period of time. Cost will be minimal.

I am also working on a friend who teaches a drug awareness class. This class is designed to help you recognize a person who is on drugs and to know what the reactions from this person could be. It is useful for officer safety.

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**Submission deadlines are the last day of January, March, May, July, September, and November.**

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