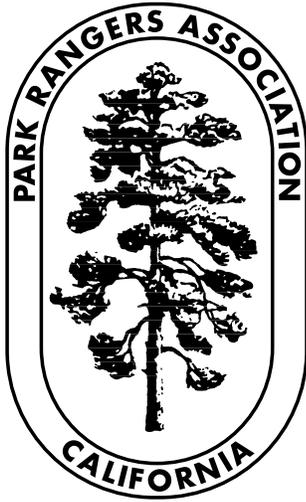


# The Signpost

May-June, 2006



## 2007 California Parks Conference Returns to Yosemite!

by John Havicon

Yosemite! The place where it all began for park rangers when Galin Clark served as it's guardian back 1866. We have been given the opportunity to have our next conference here so we revisit our ancestral roots. With all of the abundant resources the National Park and National Forest offer, we are guaranteed to provide some excellent training and education.

Next year's conference is being held at the Tenaya Lodge, just outside of the Wawona entrance to Yosemite. Tenaya Lodge is a first class resort with an excellent conference center and excellent meals. Tenaya Lodge is providing an amazing room rate of \$84.00 per night.

I (John Havicon) will serve as your Co-Chairman along with State Park Ranger Dana Jones. We look forward to bringing you some incredible experiences and training.

Mark your calendars! The 2007 Conference will be **March 5<sup>th</sup> through March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007**. I look forward to seeing you there!

# JOIN US!



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## Looking for Someone?

by Pam Helmke

Join us on **Friday, May 12<sup>th</sup>** at Alum Rock Park in San Jose for a nose-to-the-ground course on searching for missing persons with bloodhounds. San Jose Police Officer Kevin Baughn and his bloodhound will be on hand from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Learn the types of tracking dogs, how to preserve the point last seen and how to work with the handlers & dogs. Class room time will be followed by a mock search through Alum Rock Park.

Cost is \$20.00 and includes lunch. To reserve your space contact Pam Helmke at:

[region2@calranger.org](mailto:region2@calranger.org) or call 408-277-5254. (POST approval is pending)

# **From the President's Patrol Truck**

From the Presidents Patrol Truck

It was thirty years ago that Park Rangers Raleigh Young and Bill Lawrence, on a flight back from New Mexico, discussed forming an association that would keep park rangers informed of the latest park trends, provide training and establish a network for rangers up and down the state. Bill and Raleigh took their idea to Park Management Instructor/NPS Ranger Thomas Smith and the three of them, along with Walt Cacace, Bob Garcia, Dave LaClergue, Ron McCall, John Nelson and Rich Wilkins sat in Raleigh's front yard and formed the Park Rangers Association of California. A year later PRAC had its first conference and five years later PRAC and CSPRA came together to start the partnership that we have today that holds our California Parks Conference!

This years California Parks Conference was a great success. There were some doubts in regards to having a California Parks Conference in Laughlin Nevada. However, conference co-chairs Dave Updike and Pam Armas along with the planning team provided a conference that gave us great sessions, entertainment and a banquet that has to be one of the best I have attended.

At the annual general membership meeting the board brought a motion to the members to make a change to the By-laws. The motion is to allow conference calls at the board meeting when there are not enough board members present to make a quorum. Since this is a change to the By-laws a vote by mail is required by the membership. Secondly, there was a motion from the membership to have the Board pursue recommendations from CSPRA on a possible merger of the two organizations and to report back to membership in three months. Lastly, Walt Young has been working with Napa College to provide PRAC with the ability to be POST certified in our training's. We will have more information in the next newsletter on the progress.

Every year PRAC seeks nominations from the membership for the Honorary Ranger Award. This year the award was presented to the Director of Mountains Conservation Recreation Authority Joe Edmiston. To read Joe's bio go to [www.calranger.org](http://www.calranger.org).

We were surprised and honored to receive an award from the California State Park Rangers Association. CSPRA presented PRAC with an award recognizing our association for its 30 years of professionalism and partnership.

Last, but not least the location of the 2007 conference was announced. PRAC and CSPRA decided to bring next year's conference back to the park by having the conference in Yosemite at the Tenaya Lodge. If you thought the 2003 conference in Tahoe was the best conference ever please join conference chairs John Havicon (PRAC) and Dana Jones (CSPRA) to make Yosemite 2007 the greatest conference ever attended. If you are interested in being on the 2007 planning team contact John at [region3@calranger.org](mailto:region3@calranger.org)

That's all for now. So until next time.

*Lee*

# So How Does Your Agency Compare?

by Matt Cerkel

Recently Trent Finch, the sole ranger for the City of Grass Valley, contacted me. He has been dealing with some problems with how the ranger program there is being run. Some of the issues are common among rangers and one seems unique to my knowledge. He has also done some interesting research on how various ranger agencies have their rangers perform their duties.

The City of Grass Valley started its ranger program a couple of years ago. It seems it was at least in part started to deal with law enforcement issues, especially drug related problems in the City Parks. The City appointed its ranger as a public officer, not a peace officer as is required by Public Resources Code Section 4022 for any local agency establishing a ranger program after January 1, 1990. Given the nature of the job (at least to me) peace officer status would make for more sense than public officer status. The City's failure to do designate its ranger as a peace officer would seem to violate PRC 4022.

The common issue being dealt with in Grass Valley revolves around ranger safety equipment. Currently only pepper spray is issued. Given the duties for the Grass Valley ranger, with law enforcement duties being 75% of summer duties and 45% of winter duties and that 65% of the law enforcement incidents are drug related it would seem more than pepper spray is needed. From my 11 years as a ranger performing law enforcement at the minimum body armor, handcuffs, and a baton are needed to perform the law enforcement duties in a safe, effective manner.

Ranger Finch conducted research on how 16 similar agencies equip their rangers, compare their various duties, and what level of authority the rangers have. The results are interesting. Here is a summary:

## Ranger Designation

67% Limited/Peace Officers (PC 830.31(b))  
33% Public Officers (PC 836.5)

## Safety Equipment Provided

93% Pepper Spray  
67% Handcuffs  
60% Baton  
60% Vest  
20% Firearm  
13% Stun Gun

## Level of Citation Authority

100% Infraction  
80% Misdemeanors  
40% Felony

## Laws Enforced by Ranger

67% Local & State Laws  
33% Local laws only (local ordinances and regulations)

## Level of Response

87% First Responders on all calls  
7% First Responder on most calls  
7% Do not respond to calls

## Physical Arrests

69% PD/Sheriff handle all aspects of physical arrest  
31% Ranger makes arrest and PD/Sheriff transport

## Arrests and Detentions

42% Do foot pursuits  
50% "Follow & Report"  
8% No foot pursuits

## Vehicle Lights

87% Emergency Lights and Siren (47% Blue/Red, 33% Red, 7% Blue)  
13% No Emergency Lights. Amber only.

## Level of Vehicle Response

69% of agencies with emergency lights have the authority to respond "code 3"

Some of the interesting facts are that there are agencies that appoint their rangers as peace officers, but issue only pepper spray. While there are public officer rangers equipped with body armor, handcuffs, batons, and pepper spray. There are agencies with peace officer rangers with only 10% of their job duties being law enforcement. While there are public officer rangers with 80% of their job duties being law enforcement. There are also examples of agencies employing peace officer rangers that drive non Code 3 equipped vehicles, while other agencies see the need to have their public officer rangers operate Code 3 vehicles.

This research leads me to believe that at the state level some standards need to be established on how rangers are equipped. Specifically, three issues that need to be addressed are the need for standardized safety equipment for any ranger performing law enforcement. The standard level of equipment should be body armor, handcuffs, baton and pepper spray, at the minimum. Also all rangers that respond to emergencies should drive Code 3 equipped vehicles, with peace officer ranger having red and blue lights and public officer rangers having red lights only. A third issue is providing all rangers with law enforcement du-

*(Story continues on page 5)*

# Dog Safety 101

by Lori Gerbac, Region 5

As Rangers, we often come across dogs (on/off leash, with/without owner) of all shapes, breeds, sizes and behavioral tendencies. There are stray/abandoned dogs in our parks, dogs left in vehicles, and dogs guarding illegal encampments. We are often charged with the responsibility of responding to dog bites in our parks, dogs creating a nuisance, or sick/injured dogs. Consequently, we are left wondering how to deal with such circumstances safely, especially if we do not have the resources at our fingertips to safely restrain or capture a dog that is a threat. Dealing with unknown dogs or any critter for that matter, can be hazardous. We typically rely on the Animal Control pro's to assist in many cases. However, in my experience, they too are spread thin and the wait time for them is too long, the threat may be imminent and you need to do something about it now! I hope the following information is useful to you in preventing a dog bite or other unfortunate incident.

According to dog behaviorists, **attitude** is the most important aspect of safety. Insuring your own welfare starts with knowing what is going on, what can happen and being prepared for whatever occurs. The biggest enemy of safety is panic and that can be controlled with an attitude of expectancy and preparation. Until you are in the vehicle, or shelter, never presume you are safe or secure.

Proper attitude means **awareness**. Many bites come from dogs you didn't know were there. Don't be taken by surprise. Be aware of the possibilities each situation presents. A good way to develop an attitude of awareness is to mentally play "what if?" What if the dog you are facing is sick? Rabid? Starving? Not alone? Has marked this territory? Hurt? Abused? Frightened? A biter? A trained attack dog?

Many signs may help you read the situation. Is the dog wearing a collar and license? If so, you can be somewhat assured of immunizations which implies some medical care and socialization (don't assume too much though!). Look at the condition of the dog, whether it is matted, groomed, thin, injured, etc. it will give you a starting point in determining the level of caution you should take. Don't presume the dog you were called about is the only dog there, is friendly, healthy, well treated, properly trained, and the first time it has been approached by someone in uniform (some dogs really dislike uniforms). The previous person in uniform may have chased the dog, scared it, tried capturing it, etc. That dog now associates

that negative behavior with anyone in uniform—that means you!

Ask yourself: "What am I saying to the dog?" Never mind intent; we seldom intend to get bitten. What message is the dog getting from you? Did you communicate without knowing it? Possibly, because of the incredible sensitivity of canine senses. Dogs can smell you change your mind. Know what you are doing and do only what you mean because the dog will react to what you do.

Most bites can be avoided by being aware of the situation, being prepared for it and by not stimulating defense reflexes. Here is what people do *wrong* that triggers defense patterns and increases bite probability. In **bold** is a brief explanation of what is the right thing to do.

- Face it straight with shoulders square to it. This says you are ready to attack. Dogs whirl and snap from a sideways position on in defense; they attack straight on. Your stance is important! **Stand still; face slightly sideways on an angle.**

- Stare directly into its eyes. This is a dominant gesture or challenge. A defensive dog will look peripherally but an aggressor will stare right in. By doing so, you're telling the dog your intent is dangerous. **Look at the dog's ear, chest, or top of its head.**

- Presume it's alone, healthy, safe, stable, on neutral territory or any unprovable condition.

- Be pushy and try to make an immediate friend. Until you have successfully communicated your harmless intentions, a rush to be a buddy is simply a charge at a dog, usually with all the wrong body postures.

- Take your eyes off the dog. Whether the owner or anyone else arrives, if you look at them instead of paying attention to the dog, you invite a bite the moment your attention is distracted. **Keep an eye on the dog.**

- Invade its critical zone (usually means you are close enough to touch it). The distance can vary with each dog and circumstance. Don't presume you are at a safe distance and let your guard down. Watch the dogs body language. **Let it slowly enter your critical zone rather than you intruding on its space.**

- Corner or box it in so it has no way out but through you. If you do this and signal threats,

(Continues on page 5.)

The Signpost

# Dog Safety 101

*(Continued from page 4.)*

the dog has little choice but to attack to get free. **Avoid trapping or cornering it, give it room to move, steer or guide it toward a vehicle or pen.**

- Reach down at it to grab it or to allow it to get your scent. Dogs are more likely to bite UP at something coming down at them. **Bring your fist up slowly from below rather than shoving it down from above, this applies to equipment too.**

- Stick or point your fingers at it to let it get your scent. This is more threatening than a flat or round object coming toward it. **Slowly offer your fist for scenting.**

- Lean over it. This is intimidating and domineering, it never conveys a gentle, positive message. **Keep your upper body vertical. If you reach down, squat instead of bending at the waist.**

- Use a deep, low vocal tone. Dogs perceive the low tone as a more threatening message. High yappy barks mean play; low, deep growls mean nasty business. **Use high vocal tones, sing-song sounds that blend are more relaxing than sharp sounds.**

- Show a snarling facial expression. Dogs recognize the difference between showing a lot of tooth and a lot of teeth. A lot of tooth is a threatening snarl; a lot of teeth is a grin and

means play. **Smile and show a lot of teeth (not tooth).**

- Touch the back of its neck. Dogs typically kill at the back of the neck; by touching there you're telling it you mean harm. **Pet it under the chin and on the throat and chest.**

- Grab its collar. This never means good to a dog; people grab collars to punish it or force it.

- Make sudden, rapid movements. Few good things come at a dog fast but painful things do. The faster you move, the more alert the dog will be for an attack. Running away triggers a chase response; most will chase you if you run. **Use steady, well coordinated movements. The smoother and slower you move the less threatened the dog will feel.**

When you have made tentative friends with the dog, you can relax it with a "handshake." Place your palm under its belly and gently budge up. You just told it you do not mean harm; that you are close enough to hurt it but you do not intend to. Do not lean over it to do this.



Before any physical contact, make sure you see no signs of an injury, surgery or illness. Physical contact is supposed to relax and reassure, not hurt or injure. **Good judgment must always prevail.** The only way to spot a sick dog is to observe so many dogs that you get an idea what's normal and can recognize abnormal. If in doubt, do what's safest.

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## So How Does Your Agency Compare?

**by Matt Cerkel**

*(Continued from page 3)*

ties with the same legal protections. The Peace Officer Bill of Rights currently covers only peace officer rangers, while public officer rangers have nothing to protect them. This should change, anyone performing law enforcement and making arrests, and yes a citation (Notice to Appear) is an arrest, should have the same legal protections.

Finally, on a public safety level all rangers should have minimum level of EMS training and should be equipped with AEDs. Rangers are the most likely to be the First Responders in parks and should have the training and equipment to deal with the likely emergencies to occur in parks.

# Remembering

by Pam Helmke

On May 5<sup>th</sup> a memorial service will be held in Sacramento to honor California Peace Officers who have died in the line of duty. Five names on the memorial are from our California parks community. The National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington D.C. also bears the names of many more park professionals who made the ultimate sacrifice. Each name inscribed at these memorials is a life to be remembered, cherished, and never forgotten.

If you cannot attend the Sacramento service, please, find that special area in your park or open space and take a few moments to reflect and remember.

## In Honored Memory

Officer Kenneth. McGregor	East Bay Regional Parks	EOW: June 4, 1974
Park Ranger Richard Schnurr	California State Parks	EOW: Nov. 26, 1974
Park Ranger Patricia Scully	California State Parks	EOW: May 6, 1976
Officer Howard Huang	L.A. County Parks and Recreation	EOW: March 11, 1984
Park Ranger George Kowatch III	California State Parks	EOW: Nov. 2, 1987

*"We are rangers. We keep those who would harm the land as well as those who would harm their fellow man at bay. We care for the sick, search for the lost, assist those who cannot assist themselves. Sometimes we bring home those who would not otherwise return."*

Mark Magnuson, Chief Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park  
*Remarks from the memorial service for Jeff Christensen, NPS Park Ranger,  
Rocky Mountain National Park*

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## Junior Ranger Stickers are Here!

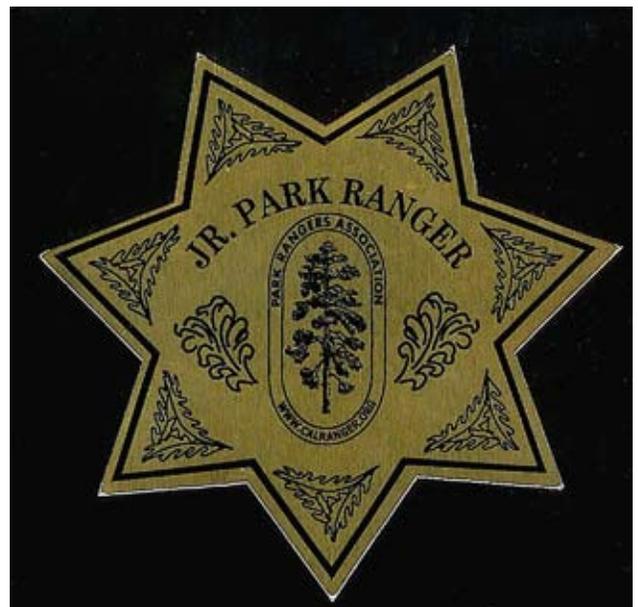
by John Havicon

The new updated version of PRAC's Junior Ranger stickers have arrived and are ready to be purchased. The new stickers use the seven point star and have the PRAC logo with the redwood tree at it's center. These are great interpretative tools to your young and old park visitors alike. Use them when your educating children about nature, the environment or park rules. They also serve as small rewards when you see visitors doing the right thing such as picking up litter, wearing a bike helmet or having a leashed dog.

Cost for the stickers are 100 stickers for \$10.00 plus \$1.00 shipping or 1000 stickers for \$80.00 plus \$8.00 shipping. You can purchase the new stickers by downloading the order form from PRAC's web site, [www.calranger.org/merchandise.html](http://www.calranger.org/merchandise.html), and mailing it to:

### PRAC Merchandise

P.O. Box 153  
Stewarts Point, CA 95480



# Park Training Institute

## Wildland Fire Fighting, Law Enforcement, Interpretation,

Search & Rescue, Park Maintenance, Resource Management training and more! The Park Training Institute (PTI) is a program of the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA), serving the unique needs of parks and park staff since 1998.

Training courses are held at park locations throughout Southern California.

All PTI trainings are staffed by professionals currently working in parks, therefore, offering a unique park perspective. Instructors are experienced and certified in relevant course work by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), Park Ranger Association of California (PRAC), National Wildland Coordinators Group (NWCAG), American Red Cross, American Heart Association, California State Fire Marshal, and the National Association for Interpretation (NAI).

Most recently, PTI attended the Parks Conference in Laughlin as an exhibitor, supporting the tri-state park movement of California, Arizona, and Nevada. PTI hopes to offer training services to our new park colleagues, and raise the standards and training of the park profession.

### Upcoming training include:

**Wildland Fire Academy** S190 & S130, Mon. May 8–Fri. May12, 8:00am-5:00pm

**Wildland Firefighter Yearly Refresher**, Wed. May 31, 8:00am–5:00pm

**Wildfire Powersaws** S212, Monday, June 5–Wed. June 7, 7:00am–5:30pm

**Portable Pumps and Water Usage** S211, Wed. June 19–Fri. June 21, 8:00am–5:00pm

**Intermediate Wildfire/Weather** S290, Sun. July 8, 15, 22, & 29, 8:00–5:00pm

### Also coming this year:

Wilderness EMT, Title 22, 2 Day Storytelling Workshop, Certified Interpretive Host, Native American Games and Craft Workshop, Leadership Ropes Courses, Fire Making Survival Skills

For specific information about classes, including locations, times, fees, and certification requirements, please call us at 310-858-7272 ext.132 or email us at

[parktraining@mrca.ca.gov](mailto:parktraining@mrca.ca.gov)

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## Do You Have the Power?

by Lee Hickinbotham, Jr.

Do you have the power? The power to do your job effectively? The power to enforce the ordinances in your park? The power to make a difference?

As Park Rangers we have the power to do all three, however, we have another power we often overlook. I've heard it referred to as "icon power."

Icon power is the power of the uniform and the status of being a Park Ranger. We have an image that the public perceives us to be. The tan and green uniform, the friendly smile and the Smokey the Bear hat is the image most have of a Park Ranger. We are a trusted source of information and advocates for success. We are role models for this and future generations. Contacts may go easier if we use this hidden and forgotten power.

As peace officers we can get into the police mode. Asking the public "what are you doing" instead

of "how are you doing?" On occasion we forget that we are stewards and protectors of the land. Visitors come into our parks to recreate and to have a pleasant experience. However, at times when they let their dog off leash or go off the trail to look at something interesting, we might treat them like they are criminals coming to hide in our parks. Don't get me wrong, criminals do come into our parks and we need to have our game face ready when that happens. However, we need to look at the big picture. We need to provide more education and use the icon power to gain compliance. We need to get out of our trucks and walk through the picnic areas, camp grounds and along the shore line every now and then. We need to introduce ourselves to the regulars who come into our park. We need to use icon power to earn the respect of our visitors.

So, do you have the power?

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**Submission deadlines ARE THE LAST day of JANUARY, MARCH, MAY, JULY, SEPTEMBER, AND NOVEMBER.**

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